**Be Active Wales Fund expands to give more communities a sporting chance**
Sport Wales is expanding its Be Active Wales Fund to help support even more communities across the country to stay active throughout the Covid-19 crisis and beyond.

When the fund was initially launched in July, the two priorities were to provide immediate financial support so that not-for-profit sports clubs and organisations could stay afloat, and also to assist their return to activity by helping to cover the cost of them meeting Covid-19 safety guidelines.

Now, the fund is being expanded so that grants of between £300 and £50,000 are also available to support clubs with their future plans. Funding can help them to be more innovative in their approach, to become sustainable for the long-term, or do more to tackle the inequalities that exist in sports participation.

For example, clubs may have fantastic ideas to increase opportunities for black and minority groups, people with disabilities, or women and girls. Sport Wales also has a specific target of improving opportunities for people living in areas of deprivation as research suggests that these disadvantaged communities have sadly fallen even further behind in terms of participation during the pandemic.

More than 450 clubs have benefited from a share of over £650,000 so far, and millions are still available for Sport Wales to distribute through the Be Active Wales Fund thanks to money from Welsh Government and re-purposed funding from the National Lottery.

Sport Wales Chief Executive Sarah Powell said: “Community sport is currently on pause to support the national firebreak. However, it will again play an important part in keeping Wales active and supporting a healthy lifestyle as we move out of this period.

“The fund is here to support local clubs and whether they are at the stage of protect, prepare or progress, we want to ensure that sport is ready and able to provide vital assets to local communities through these difficult times and beyond. The ‘progress’ element of the fund provides us with a chance to support more clubs who are ready to think about doing things differently in the future. Depending on the circumstances of your club, you should decide which element of the fund you want to apply for.

“In response to the medium and long-term challenges presented by Covid-19, some clubs may have innovative ideas around new approaches for how their activities are delivered, or the type of activities they deliver. We may be able to support with funding to make those ideas a reality.

“As a guide, these ideas may involve improvements or adaptations to your facilities, using technology to engage more participants, upskilling volunteers, or buying new equipment.

“We are particularly keen for clubs to consider how they could provide more opportunities to groups who are under-represented in sport and are less likely to be physically active. We must take action to offer more opportunities that tackle these inequalities.”

Be Active Wales funding is only open to not-for-profit clubs and community organisations. Applicants should only apply for one element of the Be Active Wales Fund at any given time – either to ‘protect’, ‘prepare’ or ‘progress’.

Applicants who have already received funding for either the ‘protect’ or ‘prepare’ elements of the Be Active Wales Fund are also able to submit an application for ‘progress’ funding.

Sarah added: “We must continue to do everything we can to encourage people to be active and provide safe opportunities for them to do so. Sport and physical activity is fun, it makes us feel better, it’s good for our health, and it’s sociable. Sport is needed more than ever.”

***Suggested partner quote to be included:****(insert name)* from *(insert organisation)* said: “These are extremely challenging times for our community clubs and organisations, so we are very pleased that the Be Active Wales Fund is available to support as many of them as possible through the pandemic. If any *(insert sport name / local area)* clubs or organisations need advice or assistance regarding their applications, please get in touch with *(insert details of who they should contact within your organisation)*.”

For more information about the Be Active Wales Fund, please visit [www.sport.wales/beactivewalesfund](http://www.sport.wales/beactivewalesfund).