



Annual Report 2022 – 2023



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A message from John Oxley, CEO

Our first year as Stockport Active CIC has been one filled with challenge along with substantial success. Establishing the new business, with a new Board of Directors and Executive team provided the opportunity to **align the organisation’s objectives with the key strategic aims of the Council.**

This has enabled the organisation to establish **new purpose** and a **new approach** which embeds Stockport Active CIC as a critical delivery partner, and one which has quickly developed collaborative relationships that are essential to leveraging impact at a neighbourhood level.

Using **physical** activity to profoundly affect not just the physical, but also the **mental and social well-being of our communities** has enabled our teams to enhance the lives of people, and most importantly, those who are traditionally under-served.

Of course, recovering the trading performance of the business post-pandemic and then coping with the extraordinary effects of the soaring cost of

energy and the cost-of-living crisis has been far from easy. However, the efforts of everyone involved has meant that our management of these things in such turbulent times has been testament to the **measured approach and smart judgement** of the Directors and the senior leadership team.

Significantly, the recovery of our **membership surpassed our expectations** in year one, and our swimming scheme now attracts **more students** than ever before.

Despite an ageing stock of facilities, our **customer satisfaction** levels measured by the standard NPS metric, was consistently above the UK average; the result of outstanding commitment by our colleagues.

Our commissioned **Specialist Physical Activity Service** has provided essential and in so many cases, **life changing support to over 2000 people.** Additionally, we are delighted to have been awarded further **National Lottery funding** so that the **R Time** project is sustainable for another three years. This is

alongside a range of programmes delivered by our **Active Communities** team who have specifically provided opportunities to traditionally excluded parts of our community and have built effective collaborations with multiple organisations in true systemic fashion.

Whilst considerable progress has been made in this first year, the prevailing challenges of increased competition and the unceasing investment demands that a large and tiring portfolio of assets brings should not be under-estimated. Notwithstanding this, the Board and the Leadership team are fully aware that success will only be achieved through **placing ‘neighbourhood’ at the heart of strategy,** confronting difficult issues, and taking an innovative and collaborative approach to re-imagining the active wellbeing service.

This year’s hard work and accomplishments, along with the re-positioning of the Life Leisure brand and the tag **‘Live well, live life’** provides the foundation to sustain and further extend its impact upon population health within neighbourhoods right across Stockport.

Our purpose and mission

Our purpose is simple: “**we exist to improve the lives of others**”. We believe that physical activity can enhance the health and well-being of communities and we work to positively impact the mental, social, and physical good health of local people. This drives everything we do and is as relevant for our workforce as it is for our customers. Our mission is “**to develop a healthier and more active community**” and we enshrine all of this into our strap-line “**Live well, live life**”.



To help us achieve our new purpose we have created three pillars:

- We **promote** daily activity
- We **connect** across the system with health, social care, education, and other partners, and deliver health intervention and preventative programmes
- We **provide** facilities and activity programmes that enable communities to take charge of their own health



Financial overview

2022/23 represents Stockport Active CIC's first year of trading. It has been a challenging year with the escalating utilities crisis impacting upon costs particularly during the second half of the year. Notwithstanding this, recovery from the pandemic has been substantial and whilst unable to mitigate against the extraordinary increases in energy costs, there has been considerable growth in income with many areas back to pre-pandemic levels.

For the financial year 22/23, we have recorded a break-even position when accounting for funding support of £2.125m from Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. Most significantly and to provide context, it should be noted that utility expenditure increased by £1.61m when compared to financial year 21/22.

Summary	2022/23
Income & Expenditure	
	£'000
Income Turnover	9,434
Cost of Sales	(68)
Gross Profit	9,366
Admin Expenses	(11,491)
Operating Profit / (loss)	(2,125)
Management Fee	
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	2,125
Operating Profit / (loss)	0

Social value

Social Value is defined through the Public Services Act (2013) which requires all public sector organisations to look beyond the financial aspects of a contract and consider how services can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area. The **Social Value Calculator** is recognised across the active well-being sector and has been developed in partnership with **Sheffield Hallam University and Experian**. The research provides a clear picture of how **community sport and physical activity significantly contributes positively** to all five outcomes identified in the government's sports strategy, Sporting Future, and demonstrates the social impact the investment and the provision of our services provide.

We are delighted and proud to report that over the course of 2022-23, the services provided by Life Leisure have contributed **over £9.3M in social value**, making a **substantial impact upon the health, happiness and productivity of the people of Stockport**.

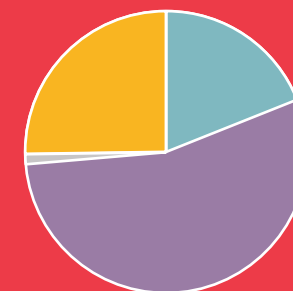
Physical and Mental Health: Total savings in health and care costs achieved through the reduced risk of various health conditions and the average annual costs per person diagnosed with health conditions = **£1,779,968**

Subjective Wellbeing: The value of higher wellbeing derived by sports participants from engagement in sport = **£5,153,747**

Individual Development: Improved educational attainment through sports participation valued using lifetime productivity returns and higher starting salaries after graduation = **£58,223**

Social & Community Development: Savings in the criminal justice system costs derived from the reduced crime rates for young people, plus increased social capital derived from enhanced social networks, trust and reciprocity = **£2,356,640**

Total Social Value = £9,348,568



- Physical & Mental Health
- Individual Development
- Subjective Wellbeing
- Social & Community Development

Total Social Value per person = £116.45

Total saved for NHS partners
- **£76,193** in GP visits
- **£590,105** linked to reduction in type 2 diabetes
- **£169,564** linked to CHD Strokes

82,053 unique participants

13,025 participants from low socioeconomic groups

2022 - 2023 timeline



Promote

Marketing and branding

The pandemic exposed that considerable health inequality exists across Stockport, with many people denied the access and opportunity to live well. Our response has been to really examine our purpose, to **become more relevant to more people** and be seen as a ‘preventative health’ service.

Throughout 2022/23, our marketing effort has been aimed at changing people’s perceptions of Life Leisure, so that we are viewed as a health and wellbeing organisation. Each campaign has highlighted the emotional and social benefits of engaging in physical activity, which saw us record our greatest month of all time in January 2023 for memberships sales.

The re-positioning of the Life Leisure brand is an evolutionary, yet meaningful change, so that it better

represents our new purpose and mission. We have softened our logo and colour palette to convey a **welcoming, caring and encouraging** brand that is more recognisable as a health and wellbeing organisation.



FIND YOUR WHY

MY WHY IS:
THE STAFF
GO THAT
EXTRA MILE

“

No Joining Fee & Bring A Friend For 2 Weeks!

Memberships include access to up to 9 Stockport centres and a FREE personalised programme with continuous reviews.

NEW MEMBERSHIP PACKAGES!

For full details, please visit: www.lifeleisure.net

lifeleisure

WHAT'S YOUR CHOICE?

CHOOSE TODAY!

Enjoy a swim in one of our 5 pools

Workout in one of our 9 fitness suites

Pick from over 300 weekly studio classes

Enjoy a cuppa at one of our coffee mornings

Relax in one of our health suites

Access our kids classes and swimming

No joining fee and bring a friend for 2 weeks!

Train local and access up to 9 Life Leisure Hubs across Stockport.

For full details, please visit: www.lifeleisure.net

lifeleisure

Promote

Digital

Aligning with the Council’s ambition to be a ‘**radically digital Stockport**’, the last 12 months has seen significant advances in our digital platforms, making our services more accessible than ever before. A big focus has been on redeveloping the website as there was a need to simplify this platform for our customers and make it easily accessible on multiple devices. The project was the first digital platform to launch within the new branding style. Since its launch in January, we have seen substantial impact and growth:

Since its launch in January, we have seen:

Searches:

34,000

NEW SEARCHES

18,000

DIRECT SEARCHES

1,500

ORGANIC SOCIAL SEARCHES

Devices:



44,000

MOBILE USERS



10,000

DESKTOP USERS



1,200

TABLET USERS

Our mobile app has continued to grow with an average of **over 6000 active users each month**. This is a **93% increase** from 2021-22 and represents 50% of our overall membership base. We are now redeveloping our mobile app by introducing new features that will enhance a customer’s health and wellbeing journey. This work will continue into 2023/24 as part of our digital transformation strategy.

(Data accurate as of January 2023 - March 2023)

Promote

Memberships

As we recover from the pandemic, it is encouraging to see that our membership levels are increasing year-on-year which means more people are investing in their health and wellbeing. With over 12,000 members (as of March 2023) our membership levels have increased by 80% in comparison to the previous year.

Based on customer feedback, we have restructured our membership packages so that they are **affordable, easier to understand and offer access levels that truly benefit our customers.** This includes introducing brand new membership features, such as kids and teens add-ons to any adult membership, that encourage physical activity across all demographics.

Key membership figures: April 2022 - March 2023

THROUGHPUT:

Average of 138,000 visits per month

SALES:

Sold 8821 memberships

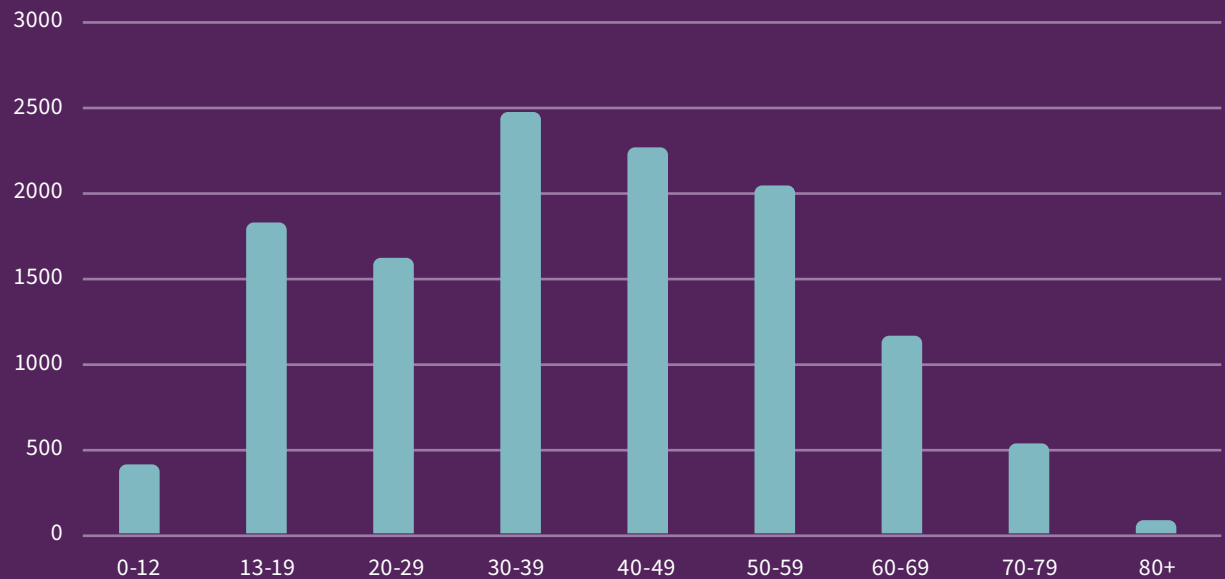
LIVE MEMBERS:

Growth of 1,640 live members

GENDER:



AGE:



Promote

Customer feedback

It is vital that we seek feedback from our customers to ensure that we are providing a service that allows people to live well and live life. As we move towards becoming a health and wellbeing organisation, we are still learning about the way our customers incorporate physical activity into their everyday life. We gather feedback through a variety of channels, including our online platforms, social media, **Net Promoter Score** (NPS), surveys and face-to-face conversations with our customers.

Everyone who walks through our door has a **story to tell** and it's always great to hear the ways in which we are helping our local community to improve their mental, social and physical wellbeing. Here's just some of the positive feedback we have received over the past 12 months:

Here's just some of the positive feedback we have received over the past 12 months:

"As I have said many times, Life Leisure is life itself. Like so many, I have found mental and physical benefits and will always try and encourage people to give it a try."

Lucy

"Great staff and facilities with a non-judgemental space where everyone is treated the same, no matter what your size or fitness level is."

Sharon

"Great range of classes, good effective app and friendly staff"

Tara

"The gym has great facilities - Swimming pool, Sauna, Steam, Jacuzzi, Weights, spacious lockers, children's water playing area and friendly staff."

David

"Good range of classes on offer, plenty of equipment in the gym and professional, yet friendly, staff. Best gym in the world!"

Elaine

Pauline

"I'm a 74 year old woman that feels very comfortable attending various classes and using the gym, thanks to the staff."

Samuel

"Friendly staff who greet you at the door and say hello in the gym. It's important for newcomers to feel welcome and comfortable enough to ask questions."

Connect

Active communities

Every day, we work hard to engage and collaborate effectively with a wide range of partners to ensure we make the vital contributions that impact local communities and improve the lives of the people around us. This doesn't necessarily mean enticing people to work out in one of our hubs. In fact, over the last 12 months our dedicated Active Communities team have been working out in communities right across the Borough to specifically **engage some**

of the most traditionally under-served and physically inactive in our neighbourhoods.

The Active Communities team are vastly experienced in delivering programmes and interventions which directly increase levels of physical activity. Placing the participant at the heart of programming is embedded within our approach and we work with residents, community groups, clubs, and National

Governing Bodies to facilitate a programme of use which is inclusive and can be accessed by all. Our ethos of delivering the right activity, at the right time, in the right environment ensures that movement is embedded within the culture of the Borough.

Here are some of the successes Life Leisure has achieved in our local community:



9,200

HOURS OF ACTIVITY



7,500

SESSIONS ACROSS STOCKPORT



83,000

VISITS



3,000+

FOOD PARCELS & LUNCHESES PROVIDED TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO NEEDED IT

SECURED OVER

£400,000

OF FUNDING RECEIVED TO CONTINUE WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

Connect

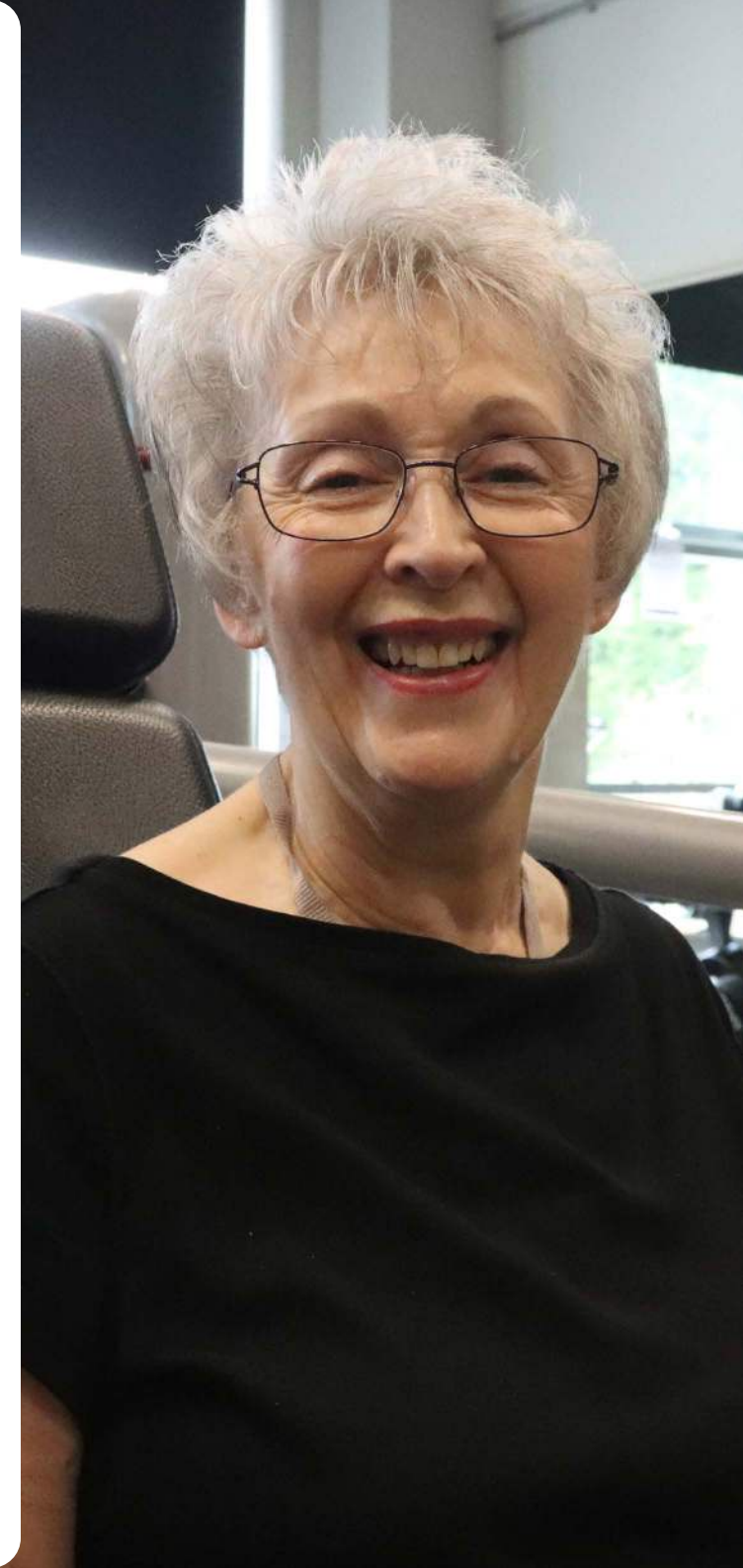
Health initiatives

Physical Activity Referral in Stockport (PARiS) is the exercise referral scheme delivered by Life Leisure and is designed to help people completing less than 30 minutes of exercise per week and living with chronic health conditions, to become active and improve their health.

A joint partnership between Life Leisure and Public Health, the scheme is delivered by a strong and experienced team of health and exercise professionals, who provide guidance, support and motivation towards health improvement. Over the last 12 months, PARiS has continued to grow with 2287 referrals received, compared to 1691 during 2021/22, **an increase of 35%**. The programme delivers 30+ supervised activity sessions per week, across Stockport and offers access to each of our facilities for those who are more comfortable to attend alone.

In addition, we provide a 6-month **falls prevention exercise programme** called Stay Steady. This is delivered **in partnership with Public Health Stockport** and supports participants to remain steady on their feet through simple but effective exercises. Over the last 12 months, we have seen a **60% increase in referrals**, receiving 290 in comparison to 181 in 2021/22.

All classes are delivered by qualified Postural Stability Instructors who provide a safe and enjoyable environment to encourage participants to gradually improve their strength, balance, coordination and mobility. We follow an evidence based postural stability programme, as recommended by NICE (2015), which is shown to decrease falls by 54% and we are proud to offer this to our local community.



Connect

Our people

Our people are the beating heart of our business and we always recognise the important role they play in achieving our goals as we pivot to becoming a health and wellbeing organisation. Our **culture** has been developed on our WATCH principles and these will remain core to our people’s development as we introduce our internal brand “Love Life Leisure”.

Since the pandemic, recruitment into some critical roles has remained a challenge. This is a consistent theme across many sectors, and we are proud to have worked to continually adapt our **learning and development** opportunities, particularly for young people, and sustained operations right across the Borough.

In January 2023, we conducted our first **Workforce Survey** since 2019 and have established a series of specific actions in response. Notably, there will be a heightened focus on employee engagement, the relaunch of our **PB Awards scheme**, and increased attention to employee wellbeing. In addition, the importance and value we place on our staff is

paramount which is why the Board and Executive leaders have committed to becoming a **Real Living Wage employer** within the next three years.

During the year, we have appointed six mental health 1st aiders who are available to support colleagues and triage into wider support services where necessary, as well as extending our complimentary staff membership so that our workforce has full access to ‘live well’ themselves. We are committed to becoming a real living wage employer within 3 years, and our first ever ‘Staff Summit’ will take place during summer 2023.



485

EMPLOYEES

97.7%

STAFF RETENTION RATE
(1 YR SERVICE)

51%

49%

£1.06

GENDER PAY GAP

£1.00

76%

OF STAFF LIVE IN STOCKPORT

Connect

Partners and stakeholders

Our business exists to positively affect the lives of the people of Stockport. To achieve this, we continue to work with a wide range of partners from across the Borough and Greater Manchester to ensure that our services are available to residents right across the community.

We deliver leisure and wellbeing services for our residents on behalf of Stockport Council. We have aligned our strategy to support the **Stockport Borough Plan** and the **Stockport Active Communities Strategy** and work extensively with various partners from across the local authority to achieve our aim and objectives. Our delivery model focuses on neighbourhoods rather than assets and this allows us to reach people directly where they live and offer solutions which are relevant to them. We are proud to be a collaborative partner across both public and voluntary sectors to enhance the well-being and activity levels of residents. This joined up approach to support the wider council estate will allow for better provision across our communities.

Throughout the year, we have continued to lead the

Local Pilot work on behalf of the council, deliver commissioned services through **Public Health**, deliver the HAF funded project during school holidays, and work collaboratively with the **Criminal Youth Justice Service** and **Stockport Homes** to access £252k to deliver a youth intervention programme over the next 3 years.

We are a founding member of GM Active who play an important role across the sector as we aim to change how local leisure centres, swimming pools and fitness facilities are perceived and used. As part of GM Active, we access funding to deliver the **Prehab for Cancer** programme locally which is the first UK integrated care service rehabilitation and recovery programme for cancer patients.

Our work with **Seashell Trust** has improved access to our swimming programmes through consultation, timetabling and workforce development. Our partnership with **Age UK** continues to flourish and the introduction of “confidence walks” at Brinnington Park Leisure Complex and Life Leisure Avondale has been hugely successful.



Provide

Facilities and environment

We operate an extensive range of facilities across Stockport on behalf of Stockport Council. Whilst many of these are ageing and require significant investment to maintain the building fabric and associated plant, our attention has been to ensure that safe, clean and welcoming environments are always provided, as we work collaboratively with our Council colleagues on a longer-term development strategy.

Throughout the year, we have **invested £474k** on planned preventative maintenance and associated remedial works and invested a further **£215k in facility improvements**. We continue to work closely with colleagues in the council to identify projects which will ensure a more sustainable estate in the long term. Significant re-development of the swimming pool filtration system at Hazel Grove is such an example and is scheduled to take place in the summer of 2023.

Life Leisure have an ambition to reduce our environmental impact and reduce the consumption of both gas and power. Based on 2021/22 data, our

consumption was around 10.7 million KWH of gas and 2.7 million KWH of power. We have worked hard to reduce this by 5% and 1% respectively **saving over £70k of expenditure** in what has been a challenging year where our tariffs increased by 250%.

In partnership with the Council, we are working towards challenging targets linked to **Stockport Climate Action Now (CAN)** which aims for the Borough to be carbon neutral by 2038. We have made capital investments throughout the year which support this ambition, but appreciate there is a lot for us to do in this area. In particular, Life Leisure Grand Central requires a full refurbishment of the site with many areas of the building at end of efficient life. This includes all of the existing plant equipment and will require a significant 8 figure investment. That said, we have made some progress across the estate which includes installation of LED lights and variable speed drives to the plant equipment at Life Leisure Avondale, new air conditioning units and LED lights throughout Life Leisure Grand Central, and replacement pool covers at Life Leisure Cheadle. We plan to roll this approach out further over the

next 12 months, with work to install solar panels at Life Leisure Grand Central already underway that will generate up to a third of the site's electricity requirements.

In addition, we continue to minimise our impact on the environment and have recycling contracts in place to ensure we can reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill. Throughout the year we have **recycled 7.7 tonnes of paper and 2.6 tonnes of plastic** from across the estate and aim to increase this by a further 5% in 2023/24.



Provide

Aquatics

Public Swim

Swimming ticket revenue achieved a total income of £696,263 with over 200,000 customers accessing our pools for either a general, fun, or adult lane swim during the last 12 months. We have also provided pool space for a variety of organisations including local SEND groups, and local swimming clubs.

To assist with the pool operations, we have delivered **seven National Pool Lifeguard Courses** creating **57 new lifeguard posts** within the business. We have delivered ongoing monthly lifeguard training to almost 150 employees across the year.

Lesson Engagement

We currently have 5,687 users on our swimming lesson program. This is delivered through 834 weekly lessons, including 14 adults and seven supported swimming sessions focused on inclusion.

We have engaged **83 LEA primary and 5 private schools** from across the Borough to accommodate their curricular activity with an average pass rate of 65% which is **8% higher than the national average**.

To assist with the swimming program, we have delivered **eight Level 1 and 2 swimming teacher courses** which has provided **36 new teachers** across the year. In addition, we have 60 Level 2 swimming teachers and 20 Level 1 Assistant Teachers currently delivering in the program.

Performance Coaching

Our performance coaching programme, **Stockport Metro**, provides a **talent pathway to over 400 swimmers** across numerous age groups ranging from the academy through to high performance, including both synchronized swimming and masters. Our squads have access to all five of our pools with an average of 5,557 coaching hours and 624 land based training hours delivered annually.

Provide

Health and fitness

Despite a significant increase in competition, we have worked hard to provide a modern and contemporary workout experience. In keeping with modern trends, we installed **two new functional training spaces** at Cheadle and Houldsworth Village and launched a new group training product that was designed to create a community culture within the gyms through coaching and a high energy class experience. R1G classes are custom created programmes that have our members moving through various zones including cardio machines, functional and strength equipment. The four class types (Strength, Engine, Form and Team) provide all the building blocks for long-term health and fitness by improving each energy system. R1G has given members a new, **modern way of training**, and improves their functional physical condition, enabling them to more effectively accomplish everyday tasks.

The introduction of the **two new Master Trainers** means we were able to offer a more varied Group Exercise timetable and develop our Health & Fitness

coaches giving them the tools and techniques to create a fun, motivational and engaging class experience. The impact is a **14% increase** in participation compared to the previous year.

To help position ourselves as a leading wellness service provider and to develop our fitness teams in their personal growth so they can offer the best service possible, we introduced a new Personal Training product. A strong personal training culture is proven to **increases member engagement, improves member retention, and gets the members the best results!** The introduction of the new PT model has created another career path so that our fitness teams can really become the very best trainers they can be.



16,700

CLASSES DELIVERED



170,147

TOTAL ATTENDANCE



32,000

GROUP CYCLING



297,000

GYM VISITS

ATTENDANCE



64%/36%

GYM

CLASS

Provide

2023 onwards

Over the next 12 months, we will continue to build upon the progress made in the first year of operation and will be informed by the wider strategic objectives of Stockport Council and the Greater Manchester region, as well as responding to the socio-economic landscape and conditions which prevail. The strategic planning process that supports our Business Plan has committed to continue to pursue a transformational approach to the development of the company, shifting its focus from being facility dependent and fitness oriented, to becoming place-based and wellness-focussed.

We will:

- Continue to **re-position the brand** so it better represents our new purpose and mission
- Roll out our **digital transformation** strategy aimed at improving customer journey and improved connectivity across communities
- Undertake a full **workforce review** to ensure that the resources deployed are effective, efficient and that there is professional development consistent with a dynamic and aspirational organisation

- Embed the new **fitness proposition** developed in FY23 ensuring that service delivery is people-centred and improves average length of stay by one month
- **Invest** in the Hazel Grove & Romiley fitness experience to create more contemporary exercise environments
- **Grow** fitness membership by 12% to close FY24 at 14,000 members
- **Expand** the work of the Active Communities team and build upon learnings from the Local Pilot in Brinnington.
- Continue to develop opportunities for **health intervention** programmes working collaboratively with health commissioners.
- Improve operational quality by using **NPS and Quest** accreditation as key indicators
- Develop a **lifecycle replacement** programme in partnership with SMBC that supports the strategic and commercial objectives of the organisation
- Reduce energy consumption by 5% and use and manage resources that minimise the effect upon the environment
- Continue to work towards becoming a **fully inclusive** organisation that champions the needs of those who are least likely to be able to engage in physical activity.

‘Leisure Centres’ become ‘**Wellness Hubs**’; a ‘hub’ within a ‘place’ from which in-venue and in-community activity can take place, and where the physical, social and mental well-being of people can be improved.

Where we are going...

Stockport Active CIC becomes a credible and valued contributor to life in Stockport, existing to:

- Address **health inequality**
- Improve the **health** and **happiness** of the community
- Support the **productivity** and **prosperity** of the Borough
- Function responsibly in support of an improved and **sustainable environment**

We are an essential and pivotal partner enabling local Borough objectives to be fulfilled whilst acting as a **beacon of best practice** in support of the wider Greater Manchester ambition. Our **social** contribution is valued, and we work towards becoming **commercially** sustainable.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Our year in numbers

Active communities

AC2	61,425 leisure key visits
AC3	£13,795 secured for sports and activity clubs
AC4	419,464 swimming lessons visits (5687 students)
AC5	83,000 visits on outreach programmes and activity
AC6	906 people completed specialist physical activity service (23% increase)

Customer experience and reach

CE1	1,268,606 centre visits
CE2	641,662 visits from specified target groups
CE3	QUEST = Very Good
CE4	Average Net Promoter Score = 42 (benchmark 38)
CE5	38% retention rate over 12 months

Facilities management

FE1	£689k invested in facility improvements and maintenance
FE2	Overall energy consumption: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.2 kwh gas (5% reduction) • 2.6m kwh electric (1% reduction)

Financial management and commercial

FC1	Income less expenditure (excluding management fee) = -£2,125,000
FC2	£1.28 subsidy per visit
FC3	£417,353 secured in external grants
FC4	% cost recovery = 82% excluding management fee

Organisational governance and management

OG1	Social value = £9,348,768
OG2	5 apprentices employed
OG3	Stockport workforce = 76%
OG4	3049 training hours completed
OG5	97.7% retention of workforce





lifeleisure

LIVE WELL, LIVE LIFE.