

# Active Norfolk Foundation's Impact Report 2025-2026





# The Active Norfolk Foundation

We are the Active Norfolk Foundation, an independent charity established in 2025 to help get people to be more active in the county of Norfolk.

## Our Vision

The Active Norfolk Foundation's vision is to inspire everyone in the county of Norfolk to be physically active in whatever way works for them in their daily lives, giving them the confidence that physical activity is a journey that starts with one step.

## Our Aim

To secure funding and distribute grants to advocate and deliver projects that focus on inequalities

## Our Mission

We're keen to bring new sources of funding into Norfolk to enable work on a range of community and system projects that will help us bring alive our vision. Funding secured is likely to be commissioned to other community providers and organisations who share our aims and ambitions.

To find out more about the Active Norfolk Foundation or to contact us please go to:

[www.activenorfolk.org/about-us/active-norfolk-foundation/](http://www.activenorfolk.org/about-us/active-norfolk-foundation/)  
or follow us on LinkedIn: Active Norfolk Foundation

# At a glance



**£17,500**

funding secured



**4 grants**

awarded



**42 women**

trained as football coaches



**10 balance bikes**

distributed



**Early years settings**

supported across Norfolk



**50%**

of Pitch Perfect participants  
from deprived communities

Continue reading to learn more  
about the distribution of funds  
and their impact.

# Introduction

I'm delighted to present the very first impact report for the Active Norfolk Foundation covering our early work in our first year of existence.

Despite being a brand-new charity, we feel we have already managed to make an impact aligned to our vision to 'inspire those people in Norfolk who would benefit most, to be more physically active in their day-to-day lives'. We have also been working hard to put in place the foundations for future success with good planning, governance and clarity of direction. We hope that you enjoy reading about our first year and we welcome you to join us on our journey by following us through our available digital channels.

Our first year has proved challenging as we seek to understand where we can best make an impact, who to work with to achieve that, and how to access the new sources of funding for physical activity initiatives that is a key aspect of our mission. This last point has proved particularly difficult as many funders require a financial and impact history before investing their hard-earned funds into an organisation, a history that we did not have prior to 2025.

To that end we are very grateful to the continued efforts of staff at the main Active Norfolk organisation who have provided opportunities to access funding through trusted routes to enable us to build our reputation.

In our first year we managed to acquire four important grants totalling £17.5k. Details of what we achieved with this funding can be found in the report. Our aim is to expand our grant income and portfolio of projects in 2026-27 with a particular focus on projects that support improved mental health outcomes through physical activity. We would be delighted to hear from any partners or funders who share our aims and would like to work with us to help those who need it most and would benefit significantly from being more active.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the dedicated group of trustees that have helped the Foundation on its way in the first year, as well as Eve Dewsnap and Kieron Tuck from Active Norfolk who have provided invaluable support with planning and funding through the year.



*James Wright*  
*Chair*

# Giving children the foundations for an active life

**Programme** Active Futures

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**Funder** Paul Bassham Charitable Trust.  
Norfolk County Council

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**Beneficiaries** Early years settings  
across Norfolk (ages 2-4)

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**Partners** Little Riders. Active Norfolk

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**Investment** £7,500 (bikes, helmets  
and professional training)

"We're thrilled to have been able to invest in these excellent balance bikes for early years settings within Active Futures. They'll be a fantastic resource for young children as they begin to develop their cycling skills, skills we hope will stay with them for life."

James Wright,  
Chair of the Active Norfolk Foundation

"We signed up to the training because we're really interested in learning about physical activity in the early years, but to receive balance bikes and helmets is incredible! We can't wait to share these bikes with the children in the setting and show the families!"

**Rosie Brewster** *Ladybirds Pre-school Nursery*



## Active Futures: Early years movement and confidence

Some of the most important habits in life begin long before school, in the earliest years, when play and curiosity shape how children understand the world around them. In these formative years (ages 2-4), physical activity is not just about exercise. It is about confidence and building the foundations for a lifelong relationship with movement. Through the Active Futures programme, early years settings across Norfolk are being supported to create environments where being active is a natural part of every child's day.

**Active children are more likely to be school-ready, with improved focus, learning, and social skills.**

### Building active environments

Active Futures is a Norfolk-based programme delivered in partnership with Norfolk County Council and Active Norfolk, supporting early years practitioners to embed movement into everyday practice. In its first year, the Active Norfolk Foundation secured £7,500 of funding to support this work, helping to turn ambition into practical change within local settings. That investment is already beginning to take shape in two clear ways: through equipment that sparks active play, and training that builds confidence in the adults delivering it.

### First steps to first wheels

A portion of the funding, £1,800 from the Paul Bassham Charitable Trust, enabled the purchase of 10 high-quality balance bikes and helmets. Working in partnership with Little Riders, these bikes are now being introduced into early years settings across the county, giving children their first experience of independent riding in a safe and supported environment. What may appear to be a small number of bikes has a much wider reach. Over time, they will be used by hundreds of children, each taking their own first steps (or first ride) into active play.

This initiative will also support children's transition to primary school by providing opportunities for them to ride within the setting and by promoting active travel choices with families. It is expected to contribute to increased active travel to and from school, aligning with a government priority to achieve a target of 60% of children walking or cycling to school by 2035.

## Changing culture, not just equipment

The remaining £5,500 of funding, from North Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Partnership, to be delivered in 2026, will support training for early years practitioners across North Norfolk. This targeted training offer focuses on something more long-term than equipment alone, helping staff feel confident to build movement into everyday routines, and to create settings where active play becomes the norm rather than the exception.

### Why this matters!

Active children are more likely to be school-ready, with improved focus, learning, and social skills. Physical activity habits formed before age 5 strongly influence activity levels later in life. In other words, what happens in these early years does not stay in early years. It shapes how children approach learning and activity for years to come.



Physical activity habits formed before age 5 strongly influence activity levels later in life.

# Increasing the Number of Women Football Coaches in Norfolk

**Programme** Pitch Perfect

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**Funder** Norfolk Community Fund

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**Beneficiaries** Women

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**Partners** Norfolk FA

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**Investment** £4,050



Despite growth in participation, only around 7% of qualified football coaches in England are women, according to reporting on FA-supported coaching initiatives.

## Blowing the whistle on the 'Coaching' Gap

Inspired by the continued success of the Lionesses and the growing profile of women's football, a group of Norfolk Labour councillors identified an opportunity in 2025 to help strengthen the women's grassroots game. While participation among women and girls continues to rise, a lack of female coaches remains a barrier for many clubs and communities.

Research consistently shows that women and girls are more likely to engage and stay involved in sport when they can see female coaches and role models leading the way. Partnerships were formed with the Norfolk FA and funding was secured through the Norfolk Community Fund to create Pitch Perfect, a free programme designed to introduce women to football coaching in a supportive and accessible environment.



## From watching the game to shaping it

Across four sessions delivered throughout Norfolk, 42 women took their first steps into coaching. For many, it was their first experience of standing on the sidelines as a coach rather than a player, parent or supporter. The programme equipped participants with practical coaching skills, increased their confidence and provided a clear pathway into further coach education and volunteering.

A key focus of this project was to ensure that Pitch Perfect reached communities where access to sport and training can be more limited. 50% of all participants came from some of the most deprived wards in Norwich and Great Yarmouth, helping to broaden access to coaching opportunities and create new role models within these communities.

The aim was to equip these women with the skills needed to begin coaching at their local clubs and to support their progression along the formal coaching pathway. In addition, women who were not already affiliated with a club were introduced to one, enabling them to put their new skills into practice.





## The will, the thrill and a lifetime skill

The impact has been immediate. Participants have reported already applying their new skills within local football clubs, helping to increase the number of female coaches supporting women's and girls' football across the county. For those not already connected to a club, introductions were made to local teams, ensuring their enthusiasm and newly developed skills could be put into practice straight away.

To further inspire their coaching journey, several participants were invited by the Norfolk FA to attend the Women's County Cup Final at Carrow Road. Experiencing a flagship event in the women's football calendar helped reinforce the possibilities available within the game and provided a memorable conclusion to their introduction to coaching.

By creating new pathways for women to step into coaching, Pitch Perfect is helping to build a stronger, more representative football workforce in Norfolk and ensuring that more girls can see women leading the game both on and off the pitch.



# Future Projects

**Active Norfolk Foundation has sourced funding in 2025-26 that will be delivered later in 2026. This includes:**



## **Pilling Park Junior Parkrun**

£6,000 of funding secured from the Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership to support the startup of a new Junior parkrun at Pilling Park in Norwich. This will start in late summer/early autumn 2026 and will target children and young people in one of the more deprived areas of Norwich.

## **Fakenham Junior Parkrun**

£4000 of funding from Norfolk County Council's Family hubs team to support the set up of a new junior parkrun in late 2026, targeting an area of Norfolk where children and young people have limited opportunities to be active being a minority demographic in North Norfolk.

## **Active Futures training**

Around £5,500 of funding to train the early years professional workforce across settings in Norfolk to develop better integration of physical activity into the day-to-day activities at their setting (as detailed above).

## **Mental Health – Future Projects**

We are currently working on a few potential initiatives, and sourcing funding to progress them for various target demographics in Norfolk. If your organisation is keen to support improved mental health outcomes within your own communities and target groups, please contact us for a discussion to see if our aims and outcomes align, possibly leading to joint project work.

# Thank you to our funders

- Paul Bassham Charitable Trust
- The Norfolk Community Fund
- Norwich City Council
- North Norfolk District Council





[www.activenorfolk.org](http://www.activenorfolk.org)



**Norfolk  
Community  
Fund**