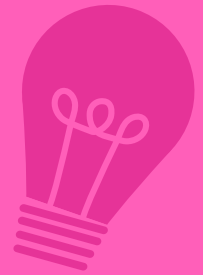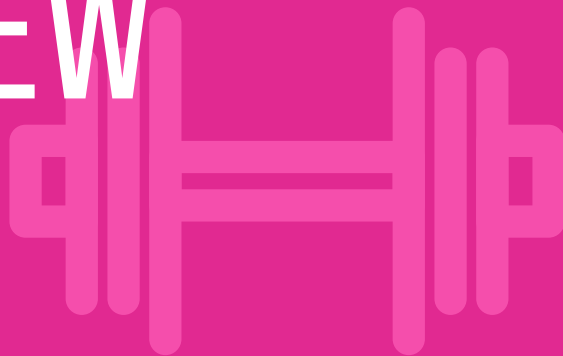# AKTIVE

INSIGHTS TOOLKIT

HOW TO COLLECT INFORMATION TO INFORM DECISION MAKING

OVERVIEW

Sport and active recreation creates happier, healthier people and better-connected communities. Increasing membership and participation in physical activity is a complex challenge. People are wanting and expecting quality experiences that increase their confidence, competence and motivation to participate in their chosen activity for life. It is important to gather and use evidence, encourage community input and develop a holistic approach to sport and recreation to sustain participation.

Auckland is a complex multi-cultural environment with many challenges and unparalleled opportunities to increase and sustain participation in sport and recreation. This has led to the establishment of *The Auckland Approach to Community Sport*, a strategic response aiming to create a world-class community sport system in Tāmaki Makaurau, community by community. This toolkit has been developed (and will be updated) by Aktive, with input from delivery partners CLM Community Sport, Harbour Sport, Sport Auckland and Sport Waitākere, based on insights and good practice examples from across Auckland.

CONTENTS

01. WHAT ARE INSIGHTS?

Understanding your community is important for helping your club / code to stay relevant. Any information and data collected about your club or community through your club database, member surveys, Council, Health and other Government agency sources and then used to make decisions, is referred to as insights.

Sport New Zealand defines insights as:

"A combination of facts, data, voice-of-the-participants, local knowledge and analysis that helps us make better decisions that in turn benefit participants."

Help grow participation and membership by understanding the needs of your members - by identifying who is participating, who used to participate, who isn't participating and more importantly, who could participate – as a player, volunteer, coach, administrator or official.

Start by thinking about what you know about:

- **Your current members (or volunteers, coaches etc.)**
- **Your previous or lapsed members**
- **The community where your club is located.**
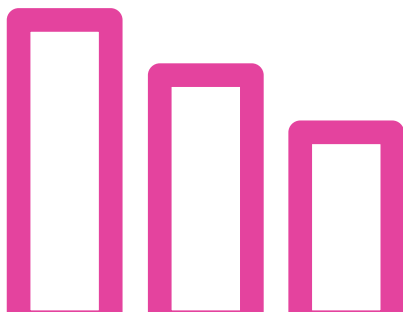
02. WHY COLLECT INSIGHTS?

Used well, insights into your community can give your club / code an understanding of where it is currently, where it is heading and the opportunities that are available in the future that may lead to decisions on what your club /code offers.

In developing greater knowledge of what people want, and why, you become responsive to the needs of participants (participant-focused). To be adaptive and responsive the wider sport and recreation sector needs relevant information to be able to:

- **target participants with the right products and services (e.g. programmes and events)**
- **respond to the changing trends in participation; and**
- **deliver enriching and rewarding experiences.**

03. CURRENT MEMBERS

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THEM?

Look at your current membership database. What information do you currently have on their age, gender, ethnicity, playing habits etc?

If your current database is low on information, think about how you can start collecting and storing this information. You could ask people to complete a short survey or registration form when they join. This can be stored either on an Excel spreadsheet or you may have a database, CRM or member management system/software.

By collecting member information, your club / code can base decisions on demographics, participation rates and many other criteria dependent on what is being collected. Attaching online, automated payments and updating of member details will increase the value and integrity of this information.

When collecting information from members either online or via methods that are more traditional like registration forms, the club / code should ensure that it is providing enough information to the members for them to understand what the club / code intends to do with the data and how it is stored.

The Policies and Procedures Toolkit covers the Privacy Act and managing membership information >>

Knowing who your members are is a great starting point, but to start to design good experiences for your members, it is good practice to ask them about their experiences within the club/code.

Sport New Zealand runs a Voice of the Participant survey which some National Sport Organisations have signed up to. Not sure if your code is involved? Have a look on the Sport NZ website, and get in touch with your Regional Sport Organisation to get your local area results.

You may consider your club/code to have the best programmes or competitions in the world, but if it is not what people want, you're wasting your time.

03. CURRENT MEMBERS

In addition, think about what information you'd like to know about your members and design a short survey to get their input. An example of the types of questions you might like to include are below:

- Name
- Age
- Membership status
- How frequently do you participate at our club?
- How likely would you be to recommend our club/code to your friends and family?
- Why do you say you would recommend? / Why would you not recommend?
- What is the one thing you'd like to see us improve in the future?

Distributing this survey to your members could be done in person, at the clubroom, or after games, or you could use a free online survey tool (like **Survey Monkey**) to send an email link out to everyone on your database.

When writing the survey think about:

- What information do you want to find out?
- How will you use the answers you get back?
- Make it easy for members to answer – keep it short and simple to answer
- If you're not sure how to word questions, SurveyMonkey has lots of example questions you can use.

Think about the best time in the season to send out your survey. The end of the season can be a good time to get people to think back and reflect rather than in the busy middle of a season. For more support on designing and using surveys, see the end of this toolkit.

04. LAPSED MEMBERS

When looking through your database, you're likely to have some members who haven't participated recently or some who have moved on. It can be helpful to understand more about these lapsed members to explore whether there are improvements you could make to your club / code.

It might be because they are dissatisfied with what the club / code has to offer, or their personal circumstances have changed. Whatever the reason, you need to know so you can determine if it's possible to get them back and to reduce the likelihood of other people leaving for the same reason. Understanding why members leave is crucial for the sustainability of your club / code.

There are many ways to get feedback from members who have left. Below are a few options:

- *Ask them:* The simplest way to find out why they left is to ask them. This can be done in person or over the phone. This is not always easy to do, particularly if the feedback is negative, but you need to know why people are leaving.
- *Questionnaires and surveys:* Asking members to put their thoughts in writing on a questionnaire or survey is one of the most well-established feedback techniques. If your club / code has an effective database of contacts for your members, it should be easy to email something out to members who have left.
- *Website feedback:* If you have a website, you can set up an area for members to provide feedback. Hopefully, you can hear about any discontent before it leads to members leaving.

Have a look at the **Participation and Membership Toolkit** for some more ideas on supporting your members

05. COMMUNITY

Ideally your club/code would reflect the make-up of your local community. Understanding your community will help your club/code determine what matters most to local people and where and how you can add value.

Compare your current members to your local area. Use the Sport NZ Insights tool to see if you are reflecting the makeup of those who live locally in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.

Knowing who we have living in our community is crucial. The next step is to understand those potential members' interests and desires so that you can design initiatives which might appeal to them and to understand how you might market your club/code to them. Promoting your offer to the community is essential to increase participating and membership.

Ways to do this are covered in the **Marketing and Communications Toolkit.**
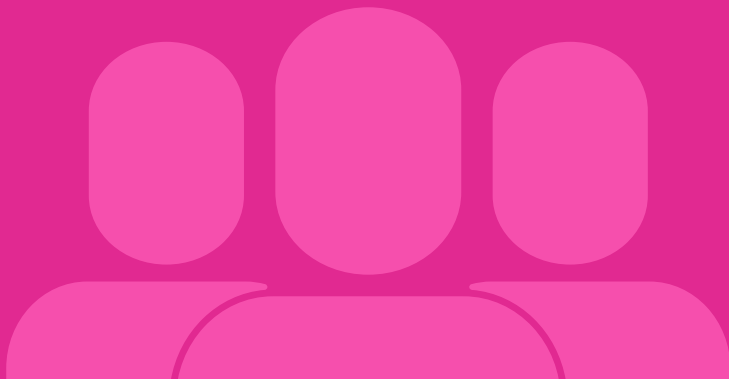
If you run an open day, or have inquiries from potential members, capture their details and follow up with them. These are called "considerers" and they will be weighing up their options and thinking about joining your club/code.

This follow up could be an email or phone call thanking them for considering the club/code. If possible, ask them a few questions about their likelihood of joining, what they liked about the club/code, and, if relevant, was there anything which put them off joining? Use this feedback positively and as potential changes for your club/code.

Sport NZ has some case studies about understanding and working with different target groups. **View here.**

Understanding your community also involves being aware of your physical surroundings. For example, are you aware of the other sports clubs and community organisations in your area? Is there an opportunity to collaborate or share facilities? Can you bring other communities into your organisation by sharing the facility to gain revenue and also potential members?

Our **Community Engagement Toolkit** gives more tips and ideas on knowing your community.

06. COLLECTING INSIGHTS

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO USE TO GENERATE INSIGHTS.

Generating your own insights? Here are some approaches you can take:

Surveys

- **Using surveys is a great way to get information from a larger group of your members. There are a number of steps you should go through when designing and using surveys to make sure you get information from them that is useful for your club / code. See flowchart on next page for survey creating.**
- **There are often university students studying sport in your neighbourhood that could assist your club/code with a survey and collecting and collating data. Many students are looking for practicum opportunities, so contact your local University or Polytechnic Sport Department.**
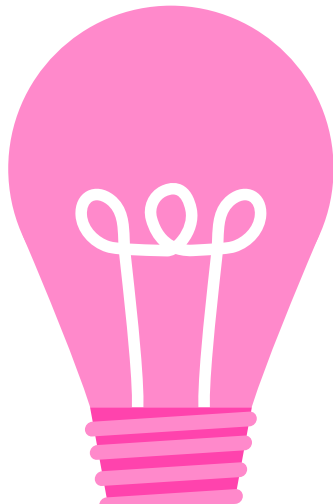
Sport NZ Insights tool - Use this tool to get a better understanding of the demographics and projected demographics of your community. It also includes information about what sports adults play, as well as details about the schools in your area and secondary schools sports behaviours.

Active NZ survey and data visualisation tool - Use this research to understand more about why people in your community play sports and the barriers they face to playing. The survey covers both young people and adults.

Voice of Participant survey - Use this survey to understand more about perceptions of the club/code experience, and what can be done to improve satisfaction amongst current club members.

STEPS TO CONDUCTING A SURVEY

PURPOSE

Why are you conducting this survey?

↓

WHO IS GOING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SURVEY?

Think writing it, sending it & collating the results
Summary should be sent to members afterwards

↓

HOW WILL YOU GET PEOPLE TO ANSWER?

PHONE
- ☑ Answer accuracy
- ☑ Rate of completed surveys

ON PAPER
- ☑ Ensure completion
- ☑ Answer accuracy

ONLINE
- ☑ Quicker to complete/distribute
- ☑ Cost effective

↓

WRITE SURVEY QUESTIONS

☑ Specific ☑ Simple ☑ Avoid leading questions ☑ Test questions

↓

COLLATE RESULTS & DECIDE ON FURTHER ACTIONS

Can be helpful to write a short summary of results to guide further actions

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What are the key things you want to find out?
Who do you want to answer the survey?

GENERATE MORE ANSWERS
- ☑ Keep survey short
- ☑ Make it relevant
- ☑ Brand survey with logo
- ☑ Send out reminders
- ☑ Make questions easy to answer

On Paper - hand out to people at the club/code events. Ensures that the survey is completed.

Phone - Someone at organisation/club could ring people ask questions. Downside is that this is a timely approach.

Online - if you have email addresses of recipients, this can be a cheap and easy way to survey people. Free tools such as Survey Monkey and Typeform.

Some tips for writing questions:
- Keep it simple and short
- Be specific
- Don't ask more than one thing at a time
- Test questions with others to make sure they are clear and easy to understand
- Ensure answer options are mutually exclusive: e.g. What is your age? 18-20, 21-30, 31 -40 etc Include all possible answer options in an answer list – or add an 'other'
- Think about what you will do with the answers – this can help you decide how to word the question, and whether it is better to include answer options for people to choose from or leave a comment box for them to write in.

06. COLLECTING INSIGHTS

Interviews and focus groups

- Sometimes you may want to explore a topic in more depth, in which case using focus groups or holding one-on-one interviews may be a good option for you.
- Interviews and focus groups usually involve fewer people than surveys but can take more time in terms of set up and analysing the key findings.

There are some things you should consider when running interviews and focus groups:

1) Why you are conducting this research and what are the key things you want to find out? Write these down and agree them up before you start.

2) Who do you want to speak to in this research and do you talk to them as a group or individually? This depends on the topic you're discussing, the location of those you're speaking to, and how easy it is to get them together as a group.

3) Who is responsible? Who will recruit the interviewees or focus group and who will ask the questions?

4) Where and when will you hold the session? Is there a quiet room at the club which you could use, perhaps at the end of a training session?

5) What will you ask? Ask open-ended questions. Think of the session more like a conversation.

6) How will you record what people say? If you can, have a note taker to capture the key points from the discussion or record the session and transcribe it.

7) How long will it take? Try to keep the sessions to half an hour for interviews and an hour maximum for the focus groups.

8) What did we find out? Summarising the main findings by identifying the key themes emerging from the discussion, supported by quotes. Keep quotes anonymous unless attendees agreed.

9) What will we do? Decide on what actions need to be taken based on the findings.

06. COLLECTING INSIGHTS

Other tools

You can also use more informal ways of collecting feedback from members. Consider things like:

- *Observation* – do your members seem happy? Are they engaging with each other? Do people visiting the club know where to go?
- *Informal chats* – you can learn a lot from members by casual chats at the club room or on the sidelines
- *Feedback/suggestion box* – consider having one available so that members have a way of providing ongoing feedback
- *Wishlist* – add a 'wish-list' to your noticeboard so that members can add their ideas of ways to improve the club. Ask them to describe their perfect club to you or even add pictures of what it would look like.

# 07. CASE STUDY

HOW INSIGHTS CAN WORK FOR A CLUB/CODE

A club/code in Auckland was seeing their membership numbers decline. They were keen to reverse this and understand how they could be more relevant for their community.

They first looked at their current membership. Their code had recently taken part in the Sport NZ Voice of Participant survey, so they asked their code for a copy of their results. They could see that while their adult members seemed very satisfied with the club/code experience, some of the parents of their youth players weren't so happy.

They could also see from their club/code database that the percentage of their youth players who were renewing their memberships had been declining slowly over the last couple of years.

The club/code wanted to explore this more, so they had some informal conversations with parents before and after practice. They kept the conversations short and focused on what the club/code could do to improve the experience.

The club/code also wanted to make sure that they heard from those who had not renewed their membership, so they sent out a short survey to those who hadn't renewed this year, using the email addresses from the database. The results were fairly consistent with what they heard from current members and allowed them to implement some changes in the club/code to deal with the concerns.
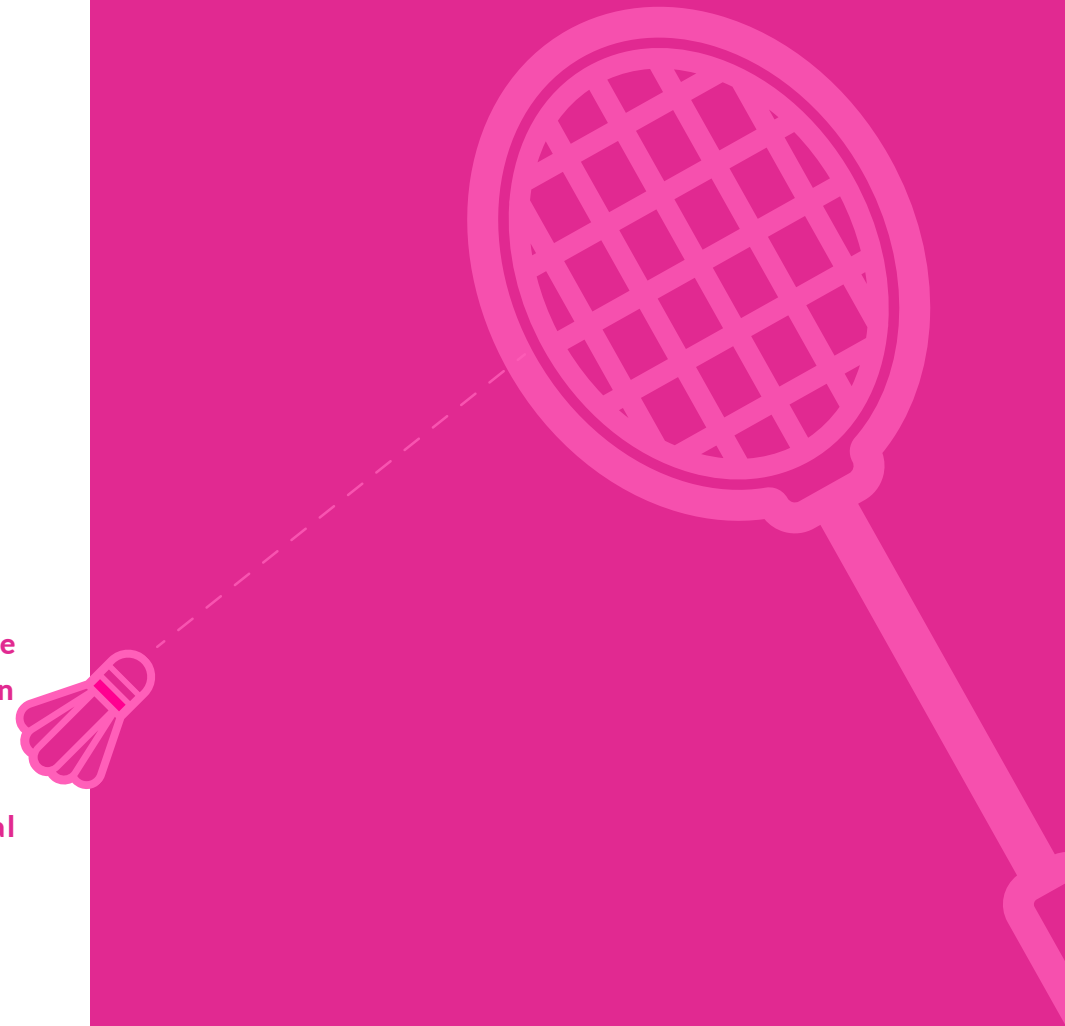
LOOKING FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

There is a range of resources available to assist with the management of your club/code. Have a look at the Insights page on the Aktive Website.

HERE TO HELP

Your Regional Sports Trust/Organisations are also here to help – please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to talk through any of this material and/or assistance for your club and/or code.

More information can be found at the following:

aktive.org.nz >>
clmnz.co.nz/clm-community-sport >>
harboursport.co.nz >>
sportauckland.co.nz >>
sportwaitakere .co.nz>>