

SOCIAL RESEARCH NUMBER:

22/2021

PUBLICATION DATE:

22 March 2021

Making Change Happen

The Healthy and Active Fund: A Process Evaluation

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Making Change Happen

The Healthy and Active Fund: A Process Evaluation



Cronfa Iach ac Egniol
Healthy & Active Fund

Author(s): UK Research & Consultancy Services Ltd

RCS

Full Research Report: RCS, (March 2021). *Making Change Happen. The Healthy and Active Fund: A Process Evaluation*. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 22/2021

Available at: <https://gov.wales/evaluation-healthy-and-active-fund-process-evaluation>

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

For further information please contact:

Eleri Jones

Health and Social Services Research, Knowledge and Analytical Services

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Email: Research.HealthAndSocialServices@gov.wales

Table of contents

List of tables.....	ii
List of figures.....	ii
Glossary.....	iii
Foreword.....	1
1. Introduction and Background	3
2. The HAF Administrative Process and Timeline	6
3. Stimulating Suitable Projects.....	15
4. Design and Delivery	25
5. Views from the Projects.....	33
6. A Collaborative Approach.....	41
7. Five Ways of Working	44
8. Findings and Implications.....	49
9. The Programme Evaluation Going Forward	62
10. Implications for Welsh Government Policy Development and Programme Design ..	64
References.....	65
Annex 1 THE HAF PROGRAMME EVALUATION TEAM.....	66
Annex 2 METHODS AND EVIDENCE SOURCES.....	67

List of tables

Table 3.1: Number of potential and actual applicants.....	16
Table 3.2: HAF Projects.....	20
Table 3.3: Number of Projects and target areas.....	22

List of figures

Figure 2.1: HAF Programme Governance.....	7
Figure 2.2: Application and Award Process 2018-2019.....	9
Figure 2.3: Award and Implementation 2019-2021.....	13
Figure 2.4: Implementation and Evaluation 2021-2023.....	14
Figure 5.1: Applicants levels of satisfaction with aspects of EoI stage.....	34
Figure 5.2: Perceptions of Stage 2.....	36
Figure 6.1: Levels of collaboration: Autumn 2019.....	43
Figure 7.1: Extent to which applicants feel the HAF is likely to contribute to the WBF GA Well-Being Goals	45
Figure 7.2: Extent to which applicants feel the design of the HAF and the application process enable the five ways of working of the WBF GA Act to be realised.....	46
Figure 8.1: HAF Process Evaluation Model	55

Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Eoi	Expression of Interest
FE/HE	Further Education/Higher Education
HAF	Healthy and Active Fund
IPAQ	International Physical Activity Questionnaire
KESS	Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship
PHW	Public Health Wales
RCS	UK Research & Consultancy Services Ltd
S/SE	South/South East
SRO	Senior Responsible Officer
SW	Sport Wales
WAO	Wales Audit Office
WBFGA	Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
WG	Welsh Government

Foreword

All positive and progressive Governments want to stimulate and guide change and improvement in the policies which affect the wellbeing of their citizens and communities. They often do so through programmes of grant aid which engage external partners in a common cause to develop services and explore new approaches and ideas. The Healthy and Active Fund (HAF) is such a Programme, and we are delighted to be undertaking the HAF Programme level evaluation. The Programme has inevitably been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but will continue. The importance of its key message of the role of physical activity in promoting health is strongly reinforced by the crisis.

Being healthy and active is at the heart of a good quality of life, and a long life. Inactivity and ill health are closely associated and can mutually reinforce each other. However, it is easier to see that problem than to know how to fix it, so the HAF provides funding to voluntary and public bodies for Projects which will explore how best to intervene to achieve necessary change in behaviour and in outcomes, and perhaps in public policy also.

What Projects do on the ground is the core of the HAF's purpose. But how does Government design and implement such a Programme so as to optimise the chances of success at Project level? How does it make sure that the Programme attracts good proposals which are focussed on the right target groups? How does it best assess the bids that are made? And how does it avoid wasted effort and any sense of unfairness on the part of those organisations who submit bids but do not get a grant?

These are all aspects of the HAF 'process', which this Report describes and evaluates. It is the second major output of the overall HAF evaluation, the first being our 'Theory of Change' evaluation of the HAF. This report on the HAF process highlights many strengths and lessons to learn. It has also identified some important and interesting aspects of the HAF process which have wider implications for how the Welsh Government designs and implements grant based programmes in other policy areas.

We thank all those who contributed. Dr Eleri Jones and Janine Hale have been especially helpful in guiding the work, and many people have willingly been interviewed, sometimes on more than one occasion. They have made the work possible, whilst we of course retain responsibility for what is presented here.

The RCS team (see Annex 1) have built a substantial body of evidence to supplement analysis of the extensive documentary material. Becca Mattingley played a particularly important role in this piece of the overall evaluation and in drafting this report, and deserves special mention for both the quality and extent of her contribution.

Dr Clive Grace O.B.E.

Director, RCS Evaluation Team

March 2021

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Healthy and Active Fund (HAF) was launched in the summer of 2018 as a £5+m fund to be awarded to Projects across Wales. The HAF Programme is led by two Welsh Government policy teams (Health Inequalities and Healthy Communities in Health and Social Services, and Sports Policy Branch in the Culture and Sport Division), Public Health Wales and Sport Wales. Seventeen Projects have been awarded funding across 2019-2022, all concerned with improving people's mental and physical health by enabling active lifestyles. The focus is on Projects which either support those facing significant barriers to leading physically active lives, and/or strengthen community assets and influence behaviour change. The HAF's specific aims are to:
- Sustainably increase the physical activity of those who are currently sedentary or have very low levels of activity; and
 - Improve levels of mental wellbeing by promoting social interactions and increasing or improving access to spaces and places for physical activity.
- 1.2 An explicit context for both the HAF itself and the Projects that it funds is the sustainable development principle and the ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 1.3 Thus, the HAF's declared aims were about directly improving the physical and mental wellbeing of specific target populations. However, in practice the HAF Programme was very much intended to explore new ideas and approaches, and to do so in common cause with a wide range of external partners from the voluntary and public sectors.
- 1.4 The Welsh Government commissioned RCS to evaluate the HAF at Programme level, with separate evaluation arrangements being implemented at Project level. The aim of the Programme level evaluation is to establish how well this type of fund can identify and support Projects to make a difference to physical activity and mental wellbeing. It will determine whether a similar funding mechanism should be used again and identify lessons for programme design and delivery. The evaluation includes three elements of:
- the Programme's 'theory of change';
 - the HAF process; and,
 - overall outcomes.

1.5 The process evaluation and the theory of change work have run concurrently, and our theory of change analysis is set out in our report 'Partners in Progress'¹.

Aims of the process evaluation

1.6 The process evaluation will assess the design and delivery of the HAF, contribute to understanding the initial Programme-level outcomes, and identify lessons for how the HAF could be improved. As specified by the Welsh Government², the process evaluation assesses:

1. How well the HAF's design and delivery have enabled it to identify suitable Projects and support them to achieve the overall aims, and what the barriers and facilitators to that have been;
2. How the HAF has shaped the design and delivery of Projects (e.g. their scope, collaborations, capability of staff, monitoring and evaluation, risks and sustainability);
3. The views of Projects on the HAF and the way it has shaped their work;
4. How well the collaborative approach to the design and delivery of the HAF by Public Health Wales, Sport Wales and the Welsh Government has worked, and what the barriers and facilitators to that have been; and,
5. How well the 'five ways of working' have been embedded in the design and delivery of the HAF, including at the Project level.

1.7 This process evaluation report covers the period from the inception of the Fund through to the first quarter of project set up and delivery, i.e. up to the autumn of 2019.

Methods and evidence sources

1.8 Work on the process evaluation began by developing a thorough understanding of the various stages of the HAF. This covered the effects of the HAF's design and delivery, the views of key actors, the effectiveness of collaboration, and whether the HAF has given effect to the ways of working specified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

1.9 The process evaluation has been informed by evidence from each of the Programme level partner bodies, the 17 Project leads, the Case Officers, and some

¹ UKRCS (March 2021) Partners in Progress. Welsh Government's Healthy and Active Fund and its Theory of Change

² Welsh Government: Specification for the Evaluation of the Healthy & Active Fund – Contract no. C333/2018/2019

of the organisations which were not successful in their applications³. Further detail on the method is in Annex 2.

1.10 Specifically, we undertook:

- A review of the Programme and Project documentation;
- Interviews with members of the Project Board, and of the Evaluation and Delivery Groups;
- Interviews with Project Leads and Case Officers;
- An online survey of applicants; and,
- Additional process interviews with key staff members involved in the administration of the HAF.

1.11 In the body of the Report, Section 2 describes the HAF administrative process and timeline. Sections 3 to 7 discuss and review the process under each of the five questions posed by the Welsh Government, and Section 8 sets out findings and recommendations.

³ We have also drawn on process evaluation findings from other programmes which provide additional insight into the design and delivery of the HAF process, for example, 'Calls for Action ('C4A'), which was a Sport Wales programme developed in 2012. C4A was a new approach for Sport Wales to help tackle inequalities in participation by challenging traditional partners to work differently and by developing partnerships with new and different organisations to develop new ways of working. Members of the HAF team referred to using learning from C4A in the development of the HAF application process.

2. The HAF Administrative Process and Timeline

- 2.1 The HAF Programme was developed from two Welsh Government commitments. Discussions began in April - May 2018. '[Taking Wales Forward 2016-21](#)' included a commitment to introduce a Well-being Bond aimed at improving mental and physical health and reducing sedentary lifestyles, poor nutrition and excessive alcohol consumption. The commitment was repeated in '[Prosperity for All: the national strategy](#)', stating that it would support innovative, community approaches to encourage more active lifestyles and healthy nutrition. The Welsh Government also made a separate commitment to create a "Challenge Fund, initially for the Arts and Sports organisations, to match fund their Projects and to fuse creativity and digital exploitation"⁴.
- 2.2 In the [Sport Wales Remit Letter](#) for 2018-2021, the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport asked Sport Wales to "develop proposals for a new Challenge Fund which embraces innovation and technology to deliver an increase in sports participation, and to explore a partnership with Public Health Wales to combine it with a Well-being Bond to create a joint fund aligned to the Healthy and Active objectives of Prosperity for All". The Fund was to be the single vehicle through which the Wellbeing Bond and Challenge Fund commitments would be delivered⁵. It was proposed that Phase 1 Projects could focus on sport and physical activity with the aim of promoting active lifestyles. Other areas could be considered during future phases⁶. On 19th July 2018, the HAF Programme was announced alongside the launch of the Vision for Sport in Wales at Garwnant Visitor centre, Merthyr Tydfil.

HAF Programme Governance

- 2.3 The HAF was designed and delivered through the four-way partnership described above. Oversight for the Programme is undertaken by the 'HAF Project Board' co-chaired by senior Welsh Government officials from Health and Social Services and from the Culture and Sport Division. The 'HAF Evaluation Group' and the 'HAF Delivery Group' provide support and report to the Board, with the following governance arrangements⁷.

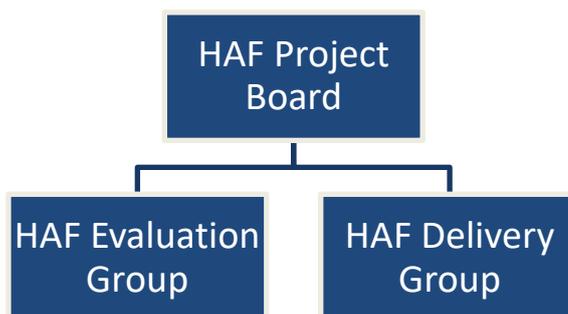
⁴ 2018.08.15 Healthy and Active Fund Project Brief Final

⁵ HAF Case Officers Background Paper

⁶ Notes: 'Meeting to discuss the Well - Being Bond-8 May 2018'

⁷ Document 'Healthy & Active Fund _ Governance Arrangements June 2019 - final version'

Figure 2.1: HAF Programme Governance



- 2.4 Members of staff from each partner organisation are represented on each group.
- 2.5 Each group has defined terms of reference and membership, and designated roles to ensure that key governance, delivery and evaluation functions are allocated.

HAF Process – the activities and functions

- 2.6 Our theory of change report suggests that the HAF potentially has a number of related theories of change, as detailed in our report ‘Partners in Progress’⁸. Although not set out explicitly by the Project Board, there is strong agreement among the key actors that one of these has been the HAF **process** theory of change. This describes how the design of the Programme itself and its consciously organised stages were intended to result in better programme-level outcomes, and this is explained in more detail below.
- 2.7 The timeline for HAF and the activities to be undertaken were set out in a HAF Project Brief⁹ and this was supported by a regularly updated Risk Register. The Project Brief highlights key activities, scheduled start and finish times and roles and responsibilities of the actors involved. The **key** activities and functions have been summarised by us as follows:
 - Marketing and communications, including:
 - developing the HAF brand/logo;
 - Ministerial launch;
 - Social media, website and newsletter promotion; and
 - Planning and delivery of 4 roadshows;

⁸ UKRCS (March 2021) Partners in Progress. Welsh Government’s Healthy and Active Fund and its Theory of Change

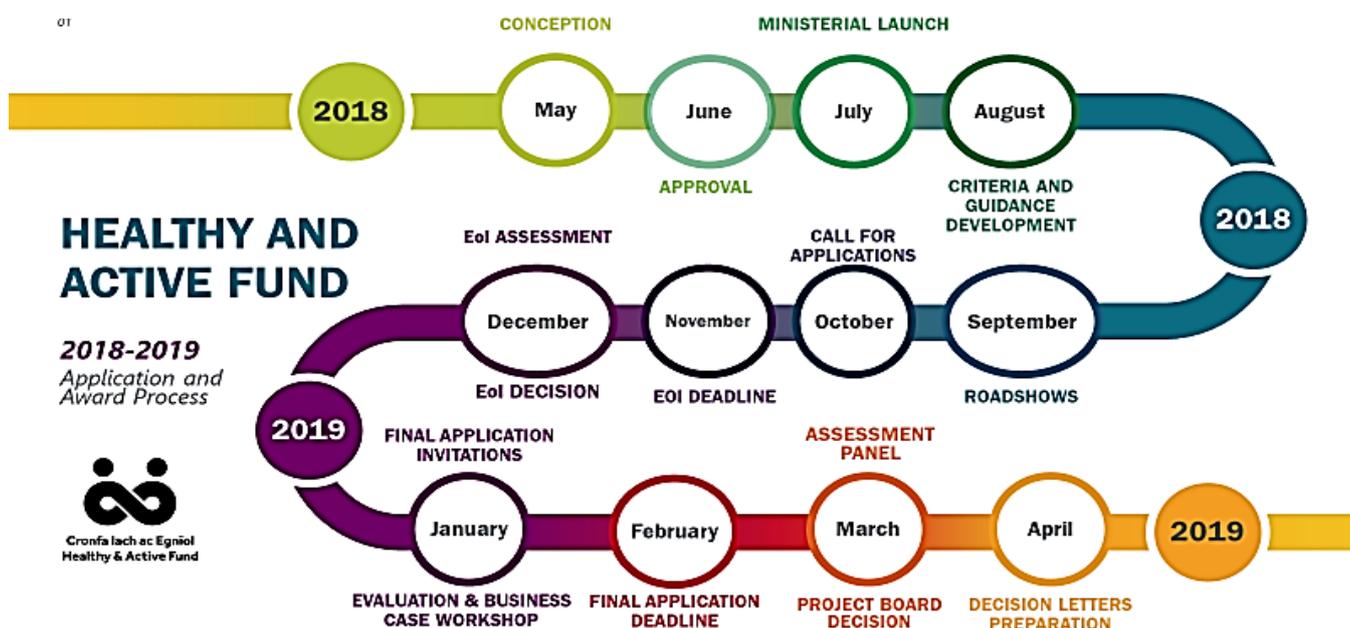
⁹ 2018.08.15 Healthy and Active Fund Project Brief Final

- Guidance and support, including:
 - Developing guidance documentation for applicants;
 - Setting up online application processes;
 - Facilitating networking opportunities; and,
 - Provision of Stage 2 workshop, and a Webinar.
- Filtering applications, including:
 - A ‘pre Expression of interest’ form;
 - An Expression of interest (Eoi) stage; and,
 - Selected applicants invited to Stage 2 to submit a full application.
- Assessment process, including:
 - Selection of panel members for Eoi stage and developing internal guidance;
 - Notification of decisions at Eoi;
 - Selection of panel members for Stage 2 and criteria for assessment;
 - Notification of decisions at Stage 2; and,
 - Completing due diligence and grant agreement processes.
- Monitoring and evaluation, including:
 - HAF Project evaluation toolkit produced;
 - Standard data template provided;
 - Case Officers assigned and Handbook developed;
 - Highlight Report template developed;
 - Objective Connect Portal created; and,
 - External evaluation commissioned.

2.8 These activities and stages were designed to contribute to the goal of funding a set of Projects that could deliver the intended HAF outcomes. While Sport Wales was the more ‘visible’ outward facing partner in the administration of the grant application and award stages, all partners were involved in the design and decision making process to achieve this result. Roles and tasks were designated accordingly based on the skills and capabilities of the organisations and individuals. Decisions about various aspects were made jointly throughout, by having representation from each partner organisation in each stage. The diagram immediately below, and those which follow later, depict these process stages and the timeline.¹⁰

¹⁰ The diagrams were kindly produced by the Sport Wales Project Manager, in response to our work with him in understanding the overall HAF process and timeline. They have also been validated independently by triangulating the information with the body of evidence we collected.

Figure 2.2 : Application and Award Process 2018-2019



2.9 As can be seen from the initial part of the timeline, the launch in July 2018 was followed by a Call for Applications (October 2018) to an ‘Expression of Interest’ (Eoi) stage. This was a filter which then led to 43 Projects being invited to submit a full application and business case for the grant, with assessments and decisions being made across March and April 2019.

Marketing and communication

2.10 This began in July 2018, when the Programme was launched alongside the launch of the new [Vision for Sport](#). The marketing and communication of HAF was consciously shaped to support collaboration - not only in terms of ideas across the two domains of health and sport, but also in the partnerships which were encouraged at Project level between organisations. It was wide-reaching in promoting awareness of the HAF amongst the various types of organisations that were seen as able to deliver its outcomes. To demonstrate the equal partnership nature of HAF, a logo was commissioned that portrayed a connected approach rather than using all three organisations’ logos on all materials. A specific communications plan was put in place, identifying a range of channels that were to be used to ensure that prospective applicants would be made aware of the grant opportunity, including a series of roadshows and a webinar hosted by the Welsh

Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). Eventbrite was used to provide information regarding the purpose of the roadshows and register attendance. Social media channels – primarily Twitter and Facebook - were also used, with posts from Welsh Government and partner organisation accounts. In addition, the HAF was promoted in existing third-party newsletters and emails to potential applicants using third party contact lists¹¹.

- 2.11 A schedule of opportunities was identified to gain national media coverage, including senior Ministerial engagement at the launch. The choice of site (Garwnant Visitor Centre) was given careful consideration as to how it could align with HAF aims: “...it would promote collaboration because it was a Natural Resources Wales site, Public Health Wales staff would attend, it was in the local authority of Merthyr Tydfil so outside of Cardiff, and a region which would likely benefit from the fund”¹². It was decided to combine the event with the launch of the Vision for Sport partly because this would also help to attract people to the launch event. The location was chosen to highlight the partnership that was developing between Sport Wales, Public Health Wales and Natural Resources Wales to support Welsh Government’s commitment to increase physical activity participation levels. The Vision for Sport was an example of that partnership because both Public Health Wales and Natural Resources Wales endorsed the Vision. The venue was also chosen to highlight the importance of the natural environment to the physical activity agenda and the message that indoor and outdoor ‘facilities’ should be considered in delivering opportunities for people i.e. using all our community assets. The decision was made to have the speeches outdoors (requiring additional contingency work in case of bad weather), to reflect ideas about getting active and the benefits thereof.
- 2.12 The intended high level outcomes of HAF - increasing physical activity and improving mental well-being - were emphasised in all outward facing promotion and internal documentation, and the wording of the overall aims has remained consistent, and as set out earlier in this report.

Guidance and support

- 2.13 The Project Board was keen to provide guidance and support throughout the application process, with an eye to encourage collaboration and achieve wide reach. Roadshow locations were chosen to enable a good spread of attendance

¹¹ Draft Healthy & Active Fund Communications Plan

¹² Programme level interviewee

and to be accessible from all parts of Wales. Interviewees described how the roadshows were designed to give a ‘flavour’ of the approach rather than full detailed guidance/criteria. At this stage, the detailed assessment criteria and selection processes were still being developed, and the roadshows were used to gather views to inform the guidance. The roadshows reflected the ways of working, and workshops specifically referenced **collaboration, innovation and sustainability**.

- 2.14 Following the roadshows, a Yammer group was launched for attendees and communicated via the Funding and Support pages on Sport Wales’ website. The rubric for the new group was explained as:

“The information shared at our roadshows is now available on Yammer. The site also provides you with the chance to connect with other people and organisations to share views, ideas and to explore potential collaborations”¹³.

- 2.15 With the Data Protection Act 2018¹⁴ by then in effect, it was less straightforward to share the contact details of those who attended roadshows, and the Yammer group was a partial solution to this. The team delivering the HAF process was in practice only a couple of people, and the HAF Programme was not their sole area of work, even for the Welsh Government secondee to Sport Wales who led on the administrative work, and who dealt with the dedicated HAF email address and was the initial contact point. Demand for support and contact was high - for example, in the pre EoI to EoI stage (between the roadshow events commencing 28 September to 15 October when the EOI stage opened), 74 separate email queries and over 20 telephone conversations were logged.
- 2.16 The HAF application process was set up by the Sport Wales Grants Department on their online grant system¹⁵. Further guidance and support were provided for the final 43 Stage 2 applicants. They were invited to a workshop held in mid Wales on 22 January 2019 to receive presentations on the 5 Case Business Model template to be used in the final application, and on the proposed monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

The filter

- 2.17 The team had anticipated a great deal of interest in the HAF from the outset, and so a filtering process was deployed, using a ‘pre EOI form’ to gather basic information

¹³ Originally shown on [Sport Wales’ Funding and Support website section](#) (no longer available)

¹⁴ [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

¹⁵ The system used currently is CC Grant Tracker. The HAF Programme was the first time Sport Wales used a **two** stage online process – other programmes have involved one stage or an offline EoI.

on applicant details and to check in brief eligibility and the applicant's understanding of amount of funding requested and grant purpose. On receipt of pre EOI, a hyperlink to the EOI application was emailed by return, including any clarification required on understanding of grant criteria/eligibility. The aim of this filter was to reduce the amount of ineligible applications submitted and to avoid unnecessary time wasting in assessment. In total, 152 pre EOI requests and 122 completed pre EOI forms were received. By the close of the formal EOI stage, 109 forms were submitted. The formal assessment process detailed below then began.

The assessment process

- 2.18 The assessment process also involved two separate stages, in December 2018 for the EOI stage and in March 2019 for full applications, and with different assessors for each. The assessment process for EOI was more straightforward and involved scoring against a set of pre-prepared criteria and eligibility factors. At Stage 2, the application process involved more stringent planning and detailed development, and a greater input of time from those doing the assessing. Stage 2 called for different skills and for business case assessment experience. All three organisations were represented. Guidance for assessors, templates, and other support materials were all designed from scratch by the Delivery Group, led by the secondee but with input from all partners. The business case assessment involved two staff each from Sport Wales and Public Health Wales and six from Welsh Government. The strategic and financial case sections were assessed by Sport Wales and Public Health Wales, in pairs. The economic case, commercial case and management cases were assessed by Welsh Government staff, also in pairs.

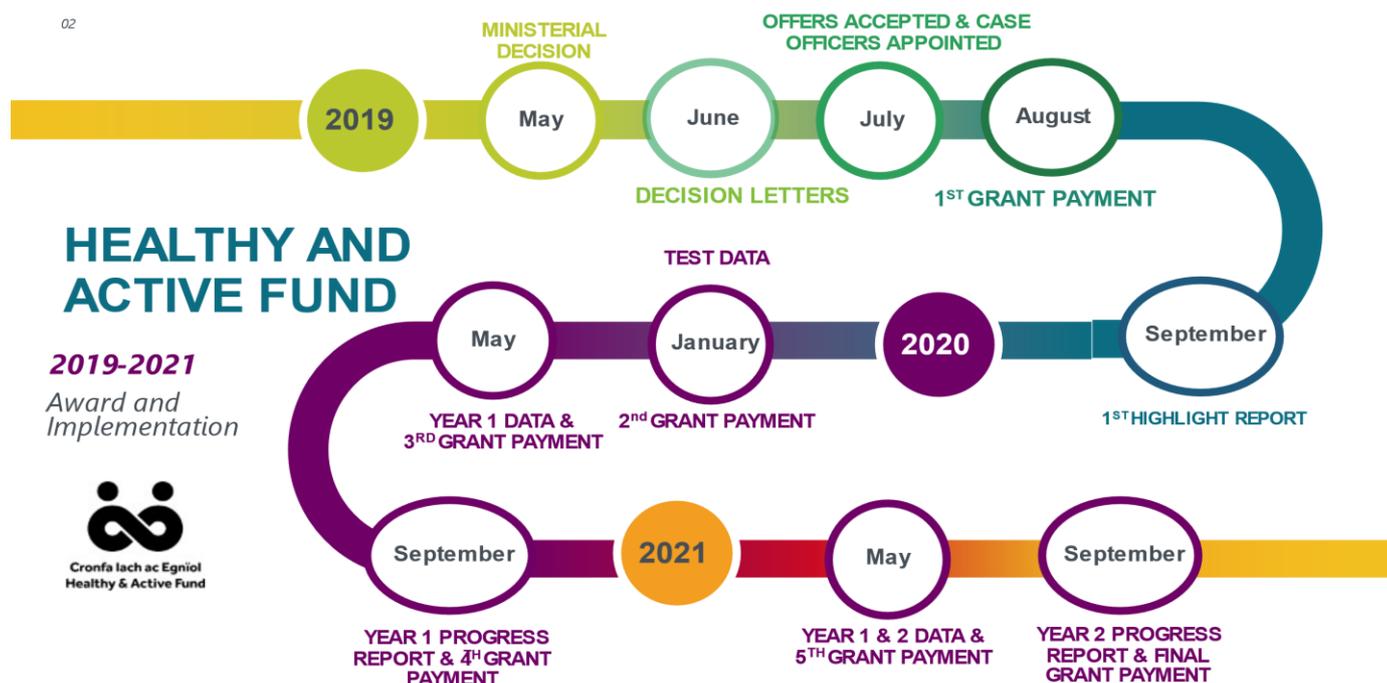
Monitoring and evaluation

- 2.19 At the Stage 2 workshop held on 22 January 2019, applicants were introduced to the proposed monitoring and evaluation arrangements, including how to create logic models for their Projects in order to support the individual Project-level evaluations, and also how to set out the baseline data and meet the attendance monitoring requirements. Projects were required to use the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) or the Physical Activity Questionnaire for Children (PAQ-C) to measure their beneficiaries' physical activity levels and/or the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (ages 8-13) and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (ages 13+) to measure mental well-being. A Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit was

then issued by email on 24 January 2019, providing further details on the approach and listing additional sources of help and advice¹⁶.

2.20 After the Project Board decision on the 17 final Projects in March 2019, Ministerial sign off was arranged, and project applicants were notified of the decision in June. The proposed timeline from this stage through to 2023 is shown below.

Figure 2.3: Award and Implementation 2019-2021



¹⁶ Healthy and Active Fund Project Evaluation Toolkit January 2019. The document refers to the following measurement tools for physical activity and mental well-being:

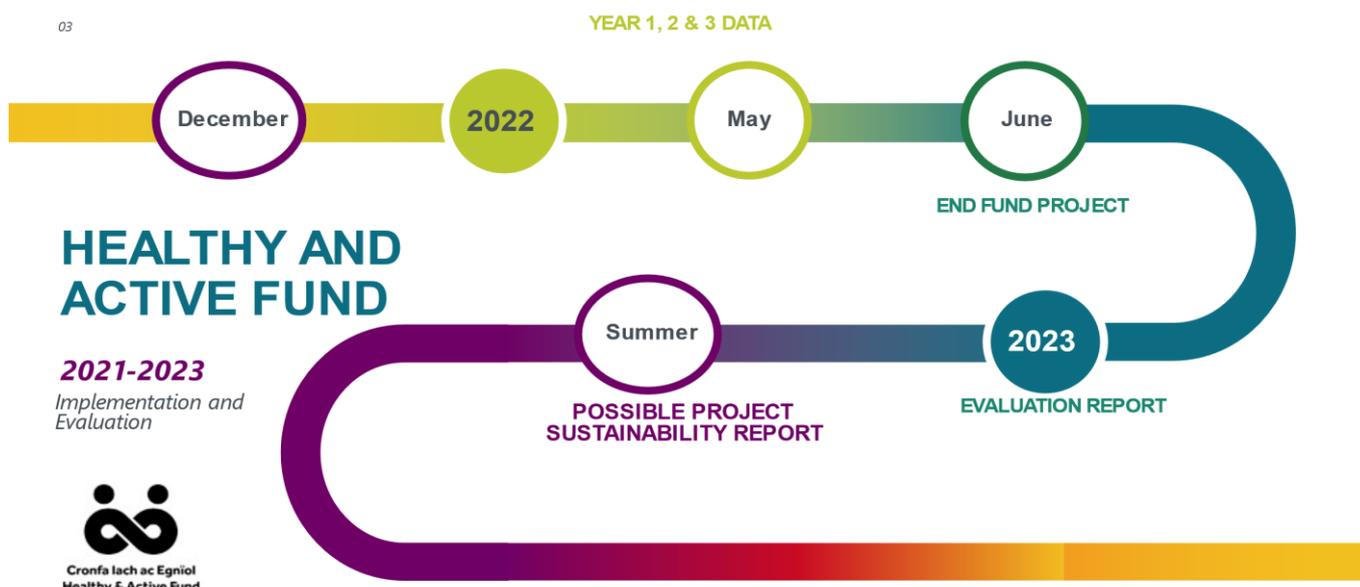
[International Physical Activity Questionnaire \(IPAQ\)](#)

[The Physical Activity Questionnaire for Children \(PAQ-C\)](#)

[Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale \(WEMWBS\)](#) (ages 13+)

[Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale](#) (ages 8-13)

Figure 2.4: Implementation and Evaluation 2021-2023



- 2.21 Since the final decision stage, further support from the central HAF team has been provided. The Delivery Group proposed the allocation of a Case Officer for each Project, based on an approach previously adopted by Sport Wales for the Calls4Action programme. The role of the Case Officer has been described as ‘light touch’ by interviewees. As stated in the grant offer letter: *“Each project will be allocated a Case Officer, who will be the first point of contact for all queries from the project lead and the liaison between the HAF partnership and the project. The Case Officer will be responsible for receiving the monitoring data and information required under the terms and conditions of this Offer and will contact the project lead during the implementation phased to agree a timetable for submitting all information and a bespoke template for project data”*¹⁷. Training and support for Case Officers was organised to help them become familiar with the HAF and with the Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit and requirements that had been issued to Projects. A Case Officer role description¹⁸ is set out in the Programme’s Terms of Reference and Governance documentation, and the HAF Delivery Group provided Case Officers with a Handbook that included project specific information and general guidance.
- 2.22 In early December 2018, the Project Board also agreed the commissioning of this independent Programme level evaluation.

¹⁷ Document ‘Healthy & Active Fund - Grant Offer Letter – FINAL TEMPLATE’

¹⁸ Document ‘Healthy & Active Fund _ Governance Arrangements June 2019 - final version’

3. Stimulating Suitable Projects

3.1 When Governments create grant aid Programmes such as the HAF they necessarily have to manage some potentially tricky challenges of administration and relationships. On the one hand it is essential that there are a sufficient number of bids of appropriate quality to justify spending the resources allocated to give effect to the intended Programme goals. To not do so would almost always be regarded as a failure, even if that meant that some public money was thereby saved. At the same time, where the number of applications is much greater than can be accommodated by the funds available, there is a high risk of substantial wasted effort on the part of applicants who are likely to be ill placed to ‘squander’ precious energy and time in doing so, with some collateral risk to goodwill and to ongoing relationships. Getting the balance roughly right is a basic design challenge in grant aid Programmes such as the HAF.

3.2 Those responsible for implementing the HAF understood this well. In some respects they risked exacerbating it by applying very high standards in judging applications in order to secure bids which were capable of delivering the Programme’s ambitious outcomes. The HAF Call for Applications and Guidance document stated:

“We encourage applications which through collaboration and integration, support people who face the most significant barriers to leading physically active lives, and in particular:

- *Children and young people up to 24 years of age.*
- *People with a disability or long-term illness.*
- *People who experience poverty or disadvantage.*
- *Older people and those around the age of retirement from work.*

Applications for Projects within the Valley Task Force Area, those which strengthen community assets (such as community/sports groups or clubs, schools and workplaces or explore and harness the contribution of digital technology or) to influence behaviour change are particularly welcomed.”

3.3 The Programme designers knew that this was a tall order. They were hoping to fund Projects capable of tackling trenchant issues amongst key target groups known to face challenges and barriers to participation. Successful applications would have to meet high standards and to satisfy an application process that was reported to be demanding, but which was seen by the Programme leads to be

commensurate with the scale of the available grants. They therefore consciously devised a process which aimed to:

- Bring the new fund to a wide range of potential applicants;
- Guide potential applicants to help them bring forward applications which would best serve the fund’s objectives and preferred approach;
- Filter applications through a preliminary stage of ‘Expression of Interest’;
- Limit full applications to those thought to be best able to meet the fund’s criteria and its demanding application process; and
- Apply a rigorous assessment and selection process in choosing the successful bids.

3.4 Thus, the HAF team designed the purposeful plan of communication and support processes described in Section 2, with the aim of reaching such organisations that could contribute to the HAF’s goals. Marketing and promotion, filtering stages and the criteria and assessment processes put in place all had elements in their design that would help identify suitable projects and provide support in the early stages of their planning.

3.5 Table 3.1 shows the engagement throughout the process, from promotion through to award.

Table 3.1: Number of potential and actual applicants

Stage	Number of attendees/applicants/Projects
September 2018: Roadshows	260 attendees (not including webinar participants)
October 2018: Pre EoI	152 enquiries received
October 2018: EoI	109 Expressions of Interest submitted Total value of applications – £20m+
January 2019: Stage 2 Full application	43 Projects invited to submit a full application Total value of applications - £12m
June 2019: Decision	17 Projects awarded funding £5.4m, with a total project value of £7.7m

3.6 This process resulted in a high level of engagement with prospective Projects. Indeed, a member of the Delivery Group commented that there was much interest

in the fund from the outset, to the extent that the number of people signing up to attend the roadshows on Eventbrite had to be restricted. The presentations from the day were made available on Yammer, so that those who had not been able to attend still had access to the content and, to a degree, the opportunity to connect with others.

- 3.7 There was also a pre-EoI process. This was regarded by the key actor concerned as a novel and potentially helpful step for potential applicants¹⁹. Effectively it involved a relatively informal exchange with one of the HAF team to ensure that potential applicants understood the key requirements – for example, that only revenue based Projects would be funded rather than capital bids. This was not integrated with the online system and was designed by the HAF Delivery Group to avoid unnecessary workload for applicants and the team themselves by helping to filter out ineligible Projects from very early on. There was a reduction in applicants from pre-EoI to EoI, although staff recognised it was impossible to say whether this was a result of the information provided or whether prospective applicants simply changed their minds. The Grants team suggested that future application processes could benefit from a better use of online smart forms at EoI stage which could be designed to flag ineligible proposals to applicants and act as a similar, but ‘virtual’, filter.
- 3.8 The Full Application stage process was informed by experience of the EoI stage and the Programme leads reflected and applied learning about how they could improve the online form and control the content applicants could and could not include. The HAF team were also aware of the high level of interest from potential applicants, and prior to Stage 2, informed applicants that the process would be highly competitive. As shown in Table 1, the amounts bid for greatly exceeded the available funding. The subsequent and main filtering process took just under 40 per cent of EoI applicants through to Stage 2. Given the rigour of the Business Case requirements, the HAF Delivery Group had expected to see around half of those invited to submit a full application do so. However, by closing date, they were “surprised” that 42 of the original shortlisted 43 applications all submitted a business case²⁰ – an unexpected scenario despite the warning of the competitive process, which clearly required more time than planned for from assessors. It also meant

¹⁹ Although we have been referred to a similar process in relation to EU funding, albeit for significantly larger sums.

²⁰ The remaining applicant was a partner in one of the 42.

that less than half of these applicants had any realistic prospect of being funded. At both EoI and Full Application stages, the majority of applications were submitted on deadline day, which created a significant volume of work for the Sport Wales Project Manager and Grants Team in acknowledging and logging the applications.

3.9 The assessment criteria set out for HAF applicants were clear and detailed, and the assessment process was thorough, and again, designed collaboratively by all HAF partners, led by the secondee and the Delivery Group. It was considered that the assessment process and the input from the Assessment Panel members would be a key part of setting up the Programme for success. Panel members (assessors) were recruited from all three partner organisations, and were selected on the basis that they would have the appropriate skills for both the EoI assessment stage and the full application stage. The support to panel members from the Delivery Group was clear and well received. Templates for scoring and assessing against the criteria were provided and meetings were scheduled for assessors to discuss and review scores and commentary. New panel members were recruited after the EoI stage for Stage 2. The 109 EOIs were split between six assessors and these individuals were selected to provide different perspectives, including health innovation, health improvement, education, the outdoor sector, and sport. A partly different set of assessors were used to look at the full Business Cases, which were the heart of the Stage 2 application process, because it was recognised that particular areas of expertise were needed. The strategic and financial case sections of the Business Cases were assessed by Sport Wales and Public Health Wales, and the economic case, commercial case and management cases were assessed by Welsh Government.

3.10 Panel members who we interviewed felt well supported and considered that the process had been flexible enough to adapt as suggestions and learning points emerged. For example, panel members were cautious about making decisions based on scores that were awarded independently on the basis of only having sight of a sample of the applications. This had been done to avoid assessment fatigue and to minimise workload. However, this was raised in a panel meeting as a concern, and so each application was scored by two assessors who then paired up to discuss and review any discrepancies. This meant that additional time was required, and this was supported by the Project Board. This approach no doubt helped to mitigate possible later challenges on scoring, but it placed additional

burdens on the HAF team's resources. It depended on additional work out of hours, and the goodwill and conscientiousness of the staff involved. It was also an example of how suggestions were listened to during the process, resulting in changes being made that would lead to overall improvements in the quality of the assessment.

- 3.11 The HAF team and the assessors understood that the process could subsequently attract a high degree of scrutiny, for example from unsuccessful applicants. There was also a sense of responsibility that this new fund was somewhat "out of the comfort zone", especially in the willingness of the HAF team to choose Projects which involved taking risks and trying new approaches. As described by a member of the HAF team: *"During assessment, members were constantly reminded that they were looking for different approaches, and to think about how things could work, maybe not just the proven approaches. As long as the application could explain clearly the thinking behind it.... It was OK if it 'might' work not 'would'. We had to keep reminding panel members that"*.
- 3.12 There was also understanding and awareness within the Sport Wales Grants Team that there was potential for them to be unintentionally biased to Projects with a greater focus on 'sport'. It was recognised that the Sport Wales representatives on the assessment panels would be familiar with some applicants and the Projects they were looking to scale-up with the funding. Therefore, they adopted the discipline of assessing the applications only on what was written in the application.
- 3.13 There were explicit discussions about the risk of making assumptions when reading applications from existing partners. There was also recognition that different assessment skills might need to be brought to bear where the intended outcomes were "broader than sport". Some interviewees from the Grants Team felt that using assessors with different expertise from different partner organisations may have had an impact on which Projects were chosen. This is perhaps a valuable approach to an assessment process – bringing different perspectives to bear may quite rightly generate different outcomes as assessors respond differentially to what is proposed. The Programme leads did perform a quick reliability test on a random sample of the 42 business case applications and the results from that exercise were favourable. Rigorous criteria and assessment processes, including moderation between assessors, can perhaps help temper and resolve such differences and produce a more collective view.

Range of applications

- 3.14 In the event, 17 Projects were chosen from the 42 full applications received. Interviewees from the HAF team spoke positively about the successful Projects and their potential impact as this interviewee noted: *“There will be huge benefits for many of them (beneficiaries). There are likely to be broad benefits – could help social isolation, cohesion, new activities, educational aspects, confidence. The benefits are massive and will vary for individuals – there will be possibly life changing individual benefits”*. The view was supported by Projects: *“Without the HAF, there would be a significant gap in Wales for this type of wellbeing funding targeted at those at risk of being sedentary, isolated and living in deprivation. It is an interesting collaboration between WG, SW, and PHW which recognises the links between their various objectives (wellbeing, physical activity, health) and leverages their money and skills to create a programme which crosses sectoral boundaries”*.
- 3.15 The strong consensus amongst the HAF team was that many more than those 17 met the criteria and could have been funded. Our review of the documentation supplied by applicants confirmed from our standpoint that the successful bids were thorough and detailed, and clearly geared to the declared aims of the HAF. An overview of all 17 Projects is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: HAF Projects: Project name, and nutshell description, followed by the lead body and the HAF grant shown against total Project cost in £K.²¹

Super-Agers-(Cwm Taf Partnership): Community based physical activity for older people and those with disability or long term illness: Bridgend CBC £490/531

West Wales Let's Walk: Walking Groups linked to GP Practices: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority £400/400

Welsh Active Early Years Programme: Intensive community based play and physical activity for young people: Early Years Wales (and Welsh Gymnastics) £371/394

Growing Together (S/SE Wales): Food growing based inter-generational activities: Keep Wales Tidy £289/289

HAPPY (Newport): Tredegar House based activities for the young and those in poverty or disadvantage: Tredegar House National Trust £280/309 & 293/247²²

²¹ The balance of funding was provided by Project applicants and their partners, sometimes in cash and sometimes in kind.

²² In this instance both the amount sought, and the amount offered changed during the application and approval process

Table 3.2: HAF Projects: Project name, and nutshell description, followed by the lead body and the HAF grant shown against total Project cost in £K.²¹

Cyfeillion Cerdded Cymru (S & SE Wales): Intense small walking group activity for older people: Living Streets Cymru £224/255

Family Engagement Project (S/SE Wales & Valleys): Community/ partner activities for young or disabled people, or in poverty/disadvantage: StreetGames UK Ltd: £399/694

Sporting Memories – S Wales: Wellbeing through sporting reminiscence and activity: Sporting Memories Network CIC £400/887

Balanced Lives for Care Homes: Improving health and wellbeing of care home residents in Swansea through physical and social activity in care homes for the elderly through volunteers and champions: Action for Elders Trust £260/260

Opening Doors to the Outdoors: Community based walking/climbing outdoor group physical activity to tackle mental ill health in NW Wales: The Outdoor Partnership £230/353

Play Ambassadors (Cardiff and Vale): Increasing play in 10 communities by 60 recruited and trained Play Ambassadors: Play Wales £179/197

Five Ways to Wellbeing: Physical Activity to Promote Mental Wellbeing – Flint/Wrexham: CAMHS based service to deliver activity for young people with mental health difficulty, and at risk of developing a mental health difficulty (community service): Betsi Cadwaladr UHB £303/484

Actif Woods Wales: Social Prescribing the Woodland Way – National: Woodland based activities and training for volunteers, groups and health care partners: Smallwoods Association Coed Lleol £383/827

BeActive RCT - involving people and communities to improve wellbeing: Multi-agency programme of accessible, person-centred sporting and physical activities in 6 communities with severe health inequalities: Interlink RCT £400/557

Babi Actif (NW Wales): Support to parents to be active outdoors with their babies during the period from conception to age 2: Eryri-Bywiol Cyf £211/261

Healthy Body - Healthy Mind (Cardiff): Physical fitness and family activities for BME women and their families: Women Connect First £375/453

Healthy & Active Newport: Alliance of statutory and other bodies in Newport to engage in schools and communities: Newport Live £374/564

3.16 Table 3.3 below shows how these Projects align to the target area sought by the HAF, as specified in the guidance and in the final application template.

Table 3.3: Number of Projects and target areas

TARGET	Number of Projects
<i>Target demographic</i>	
Children and young people up to 24 years of age	10
People with a disability or long-term illness	6
People who experience poverty or disadvantage	9
Older people and those around the age of retirement from work	9
All ages	4
<i>Type of activity</i>	
Physical activity	12
Sport and physical activity	5
<i>Desirable project area</i>	
Within the Valleys Task Force area	6
Seeking to strengthen community assets	14
Exploring and harnessing the contribution of digital technology	6

3.17 Overall, the range of Projects and the potential impact they could have for their beneficiaries has been viewed very positively by HAF team interviewees: *“Looking across the 17, they capture all the 4 demographic areas and there is a range e.g. some are in residential homes, lots of early years, so a really good fit. There are also things like long term conditions being tackled and specific things like dementia”*. There is agreement that the process has achieved a good and fairly balanced coverage of the intended target groups. There is also a balanced geographical spread across Wales. Only two local authorities (Denbighshire and Powys) are unnamed as specific project locations, and they are covered by two national Projects. As discussed in the Theory of Change report, there is consensus that this is a fortunate coincidence rather than by design. There was logic in the marketing and promotion plans, aiming to ensure potential applicants had equal

access to the grant, by promoting across different regions and by using the communication channels of relevant third party organisations. However, interviewees were less clear on what might have occurred if the top 17 had not 'naturally' achieved that good spread. Essentially, the top scoring Projects could have all been from one geographical area, or with a focus on one target group such as older people. The team were aware of the political implications of a geographical bias. Interviewees hypothesised that in such extremes, this may have resulted in the Project Board asking the assessment panel to weight the scores to achieve a better 'balance'. However, such a readjustment of the assessment criteria might have been open to challenge. In practice, the HAF team mitigated the risk of a 'poor' geographical spread through the marketing and communications approach which engaged potential applicants across Wales as a whole.

- 3.18 The result of the process has been that 'new' partners have been funded. This can be seen as a positive result. Concern was expressed by one senior actor in the sports field that sports organisations did not benefit from the grant funding as widely as they had hoped, and that this has left a legacy of dissatisfaction and a sense of a lost opportunity to fully involve them in these new areas of activity. There are few sports organisations leading Projects among the successful 17, although several are involved as delivery partners. It may be that the intended partnerships between sport and health did not transfer as successfully to Project level as they did at Programme level. In one sense this is not a problem – the organisations concerned were aware of the opportunity, and could bid, but their applications did not satisfy the criteria as well as those chosen, which was in part indicative of the 'selective' nature of some types of sports. The HAF project managers gave a presentation to the Chief Executive Officers forum of National Governing Bodies in Autumn 2019 to highlight the reasons why some applications were successful and others not.
- 3.19 The downside however, may be that traditional sports organisations will not be as fully engaged in charting these new 'healthy and active' horizons as they might have been, even though in the medium term they are potentially important leading actors in helping sport to re-orient itself to broader wellbeing concerns. Sports organisations are increasingly aware that securing public funding and support for their endeavours depends on a recognition by Government that sport has many potential collateral benefits which are relevant to the core goals of major public services such as education and health. They may need more support and guidance

and challenge to help ensure that they take opportunities to explore and exercise those linkages.

- 3.20 However, other interviewees felt that the HAF had achieved a “better mix of new partners” than previous Programmes as a result of the guidance and grant specifications, and the collaborative approach taken. These new partners may be better placed to positively engage with beneficiaries on the ground who are much further removed from ‘sport’, and who are not part of the networks that include ‘traditional’ Sport Wales partners.

4. Design and Delivery

4.1 Programmes of grant aid shape the Projects which they fund. This much is self-evident and flows from the basic features of any particular Programme – its objectives, the amount of funding available, the eligibility criteria, and so on. The process of implementing a Programme can also influence the design and delivery of the funded Projects. Of special interest to the Welsh Government was to evaluate how the HAF process influenced the scope, degree of collaborations, capability of staff, monitoring and evaluation, risks, and sustainability associated. These various aspects are addressed in this Section.

4.2 Overall, the broad scope and design of the HAF and its principles encouraged a wide range of prospective applicants to come forward. The ‘right fit’ of the grant has been mentioned in several interviews with Project Leads. It appears that many Projects reflected pre-existing ideas that were partially already in development in some cases. The HAF has allowed these to go forward and with broader scope and has encouraged Projects to extend their activities and/or work differently - such as with additional partners in the mix and with new target groups or regions.

Scope

4.3 The broad overall aims of the HAF gave Projects a good deal of scope to shape proposals to meet the needs they chose to tackle, and also contribute to the overall Programme goals. The HAF guidance that was issued set out parameters highlighting the target groups which were the Welsh Government’s priority, being those least likely to be physically active and/or might benefit particularly from the improved mental well-being associated with greater physical activity levels. But the basic eligibility criteria were drawn very broadly - as one interviewee described, “*everyone is eligible for HAF in a way*”. The parameters adopted allowed a diverse range of Projects to emerge, as in the event they clearly did.

Collaboration

4.4 A key requirement of the design of HAF was to ensure that collaboration²³ was built into the design of Projects from application and planning through to delivery, as reflected in the Call for Applications and Guidance: “*All Projects will need to involve a range of partners in their design and delivery but there must be a minimum of two*

²³ Collaboration at Programme level is discussed in Section 6 below.

organisations from different sectors and the lead body must be from the Third or Public sector. In the case of existing partnership/collaborations, it will be important to demonstrate that new partners will be involved in the co-operative seeking grant funding through this scheme or the project is a new activity for the existing partnership or collaboration”²⁴.

- 4.5 The collaboration aspect was also built into the support arrangements for applicants. The HAF team members that we interviewed made it clear that they wanted to create networking opportunities for potential applicants from the outset, with roadshows designed accordingly: *“These events provided an opportunity for potential applicants to network with other interested parties – and this was a theme that we wanted to pursue throughout the whole process. It was designed to avoid duplication of project applications, to bring people together and to share resources/ideas – align with Well-being of Future Generations”*. Another member of the HAF team commented: *“Collaboration was the primary driver and at the forefront of everything. A condition of funding”*.
- 4.6 The EoI process which followed took this forward, asking applicants to list collaborators and describe what delivery partners would contribute. This was to ensure there was an element of joint planning embedded from the outset. The EoI process also required applicants to consider (in brief) their proposed governance structure, their project and financial management arrangements, risks, and their proposed monitoring arrangements.
- 4.7 At Stage 2, the use of the five case business model as part of the application process specifically steered applicants to consider capability of staff, monitoring and evaluation, risks and sustainability within their proposals. Requiring applicants to write a Business Case was a new approach and/or new terminology for some applicants. It was based on the core components of the five case model recommended by HM Treasury and the Welsh Government but adapted to reflect the requirements of the HAF. Having looked at different templates and scoring systems, the HAF team made the decision to make the model bespoke to offer consistency in assessing the applications and *“pull out the best practice we had said at roadshows – things we were looking for”*. The subsequent Business Case

²⁴ Healthy & Active Fund Call for Applications and Fund Guidance October 2018

template²⁵ provided for applicants guided them to show the intended connection between the Project's strategic outcomes and the overall HAF outcomes.

4.8 Several Projects have been positive in their feedback about the business case process. They found it challenging to do, but it allowed them to think and plan up front, especially in considering questions of Project evaluation, an aspect for which Projects themselves have been required to take responsibility. The thorough preparation that was required saved time in the Project set up phase for successful applicants.

4.9 However, certain aspects of the initial funding criteria for applicants are not worded in the same way in the Business Case template at Stage 2. The initial criteria specified that successful bids were to be selected on the basis of the following criteria²⁶:

- Case for Change;
- Capability and Collaboration;
- Value for Money; and
- Innovation.

4.10 The Business Case template used different terminology: the Strategic Case, Economic Case, Commercial Case, Financial Case and Management Case.

4.11 In our review of the Programme documentation, value for money was an area where the Programme logic and theory of change was less clear and strong. It is not clear either for applicants or assessors how the Value for Money criterion was translated from the initial guidance document for applicants²⁷ through to the Business Case template provided. In the applicants' guidance document, value for money means: *"The project demonstrates good value for money in terms of the number of people reached in relation to the amount of investment required and there is a clear business case for the continuation of the project beyond the initial funding. There is also evidence of the ability to scale up Projects to meet wider population needs if required"*. But the Business Case template did not reference 'value for money' for applicants although it was cross referenced for assessors to show in which parts of the Business Case it might be judged. Rather, applicants were steered in the Business Case template to provide information on their delivery

²⁵ Healthy and Active Fund – Business Case Template

²⁶ Healthy and Active Fund Project Brief Project Brief Final and HAF Call for Applications and Fund Guidance October 2018

²⁷ HAF Call for Applications and Fund Guidance October 2018

model, funding sources, staffing numbers, managing the grant aid 'taper' in year 3, and sustainability or legacy once funding had ceased. Value for Money in terms of beneficiary numbers and per capita cost was not highlighted as a consideration.

- 4.12 This reflected a development in the Programme logic more towards innovation and learning rather than provision for large numbers of beneficiaries. The shift is an important one, because it helped to resolve differing perspectives amongst the Programme-level partners as to where the centre of gravity of the HAF Programme's value actually lay²⁸. Learning and innovation were rightly seen to have a potential value that would not be best expressed in terms of numbers of immediate beneficiaries.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 4.13 The HAF advanced a strong focus on learning from Projects as to the types of approaches that work in practice. Monitoring and evaluation at both Project and Programme levels was made an integral part of the HAF design, and this has been highlighted by the HAF team and Project Leads as refreshing and positive. The process of embedding monitoring and evaluation has involved the following:
- The EoI stage introduced monitoring and evaluation from early on, asking applicants to outline their monitoring arrangements, including how they would monitor direct outputs and measure and evidence their identified outcomes;
 - Stage 2 asked Projects to set out their logic models as part of their application, this being intended as a firm foundation for subsequent process and outcome evaluation; and
 - Issuing a monitoring and evaluation toolkit on 24 January 2019 which included the use of standardised survey instruments to facilitate validated measurement of outcomes at participant level. Projects are required to use the IPAQ or PAQ-C to measure their beneficiaries' physical activity levels and/or the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (ages 8-13) and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (ages 13+) to measure mental well-being.
- 4.14 Public Health Wales has led on the design of the monitoring and evaluation processes and in providing support for applicants. This was done through the development of the toolkit and through workshop presentations. Projects are

²⁸ See the HAF Theory of Change Evaluation Report (March 2021). In brief, some members of the HAF partnership doubted whether a grant programme like the HAF could result in population level change. The stronger focus on innovation provided a positive point of shared objective between the partners.

required to collect standardised participant data in order to provide a common basis for comparison and judgement of Project outcomes for beneficiaries. These data will be collated, and they will form part of the overall Programme-level evaluation.

- 4.15 However, evaluations at Project level will go much wider than these standardised data. Whilst accepting that consistent measurement across Projects is desirable to evidence a key outcome for Projects and for the Programme as a whole, Projects want to look beyond quantitative measures of participation because they consider that their impact will be wider than this. Indeed, such broader outcomes were explicitly encouraged in the HAF application process, as in the value placed on bids which could show an outcome of ‘strengthening community assets’.
- 4.16 Mechanisms are not yet in place to assure quality and consistency across the Project level evaluations. Case Officers have been assigned to Projects to support the core data collection, but they do not necessarily have the skills in this area of work to be able to offer advice without referring back to the HAF Evaluation Group. The Case Officers who have taken the role (in addition to their existing workload) have needed time to get up to speed in some cases with both the HAF Programme and their allocated Projects, and to establish relationships where they do not already exist. It is important to note that the responsibility for process and outcome evaluation at Project level has been placed with Projects themselves. It is not subject to explicit quality assurance at Programme level, which would be resource intensive²⁹.
- 4.17 At Project level, the monitoring and evaluation requirements are viewed as challenging by some, although this does not mean they consider that they should not be attempted. This is an area where the HAF may have some unintended negative effects on delivery and the experience for both the operational workforce and the beneficiaries. This is because the standardised tools do not fit all beneficiaries (particularly early years and care home residents) and their formal nature is known to be off putting for a target audience who already experience barriers to greater physical activity³⁰. In some cases, other tools are already being used locally to measure well-being, and these may be better received by the workforce and beneficiaries. Some Projects with an extended range of delivery partners - all providing different activity types for different audiences – fear that the

²⁹ A member of the HAF team estimated this role could require a 0.5 FTE post

³⁰ *Sport Wales highlighted examples from various target groups supported through the Big Lottery Programme ‘Mentor Allan’*

coordination of monitoring and the additional resources required among those staff to collect the information consistently to assure high quality will be challenging and resource intensive.

- 4.18 From the perspective of the HAF team, it was always the case of a ‘best fit’ approach, as many of the validated tools have been designed for research settings or large scale longitudinal surveillance rather than the types of activities being supported through the HAF. It was a balance of choosing tools that scored the highest in validity and reliability and could also be used for complex multi-component public health interventions such as the HAF Projects. The physical activity measurement tools have been validated in healthy populations only, and the wellbeing tools have been validated for use in healthy populations and people with mild to moderate physical and cognitive impairments. The Projects have been advised that they should only administer the measurement tools if it is feasible and acceptable for their beneficiaries.
- 4.19 Projects had worked up their proposals before finding out about the specific tools they should use or will be getting their delivery partners to use, and felt that the monitoring and evaluation specifications and toolkit were introduced somewhat late into the process at Stage 2. In retrospect, this could have been set out earlier to avoid applicants having to revise their initial monitoring and evaluation proposals, and to ensure that they allocated sufficient resources to this vital area.
- 4.20 More positively, some of the Projects have comprehensive evaluation plans in place, and these may well provide valuable additional evidence and learning that can be shared. This was seen as desirable by Projects, as suggested by this Project lead: *“Evaluation will be a continuous process, so that we can learn from experiences, share with partners to address any additional needs or make changes if necessary throughout the project. The logic model accommodates this process – valuable experience creating this document”*. Nine of the 17 will be supported by researchers in Higher Education Institutions, and in some cases, they will have a Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship (KESS) student attached to them.
- 4.21 While it will be a challenge for the HAF Programme to oversee the quality of individual evaluations and achieve comprehensive Programme level data across such a diverse range of Projects, this has been explicitly considered at the HAF Evaluation Group. The HAF has been forward thinking in making evaluation a part of the application and ongoing delivery process, and there may be ways in which

the evaluation framework for Projects can be further developed during Project implementation. Moreover, there can be important learning about this way of awarding funding with project level evaluation included, and how well (or otherwise) that works.

Risk

- 4.22 The HAF deliberately tried to allow more risk taking than in previous Programmes which the HAF team were involved in, as illustrated by this comment about the HAF design: “...we wanted to spread communication more widely than usual and to reach out as far as possible – to organisations with good ideas that hadn’t had funds to take them forward. So, they might be working on small pilots to scale later. Ministers were content with the approach and wanted to ensure the fund allowed Projects and organisations to learn about failures, to have the freedom to take risks”.
- 4.23 Funding areas that were new to Sport Wales and Public Health Wales was encouraged as long as it was based on sound reasoning and engagement with the target audience, as illustrated by this comment on the assessment process: “Panel members were honest – they might say ‘I don’t know, but the application convinces me, it has a good sense of the target group and has consulted with them’. It was important that they (applicant) had spoken to the target group. A lot of programmes are based on assumption about the ‘barriers’... (applicants) need a real sense of the communities and their circumstances”.
- 4.24 The application template allowed that judgement to be made as it steered applicants to demonstrate how they had consulted or used academic research to shape their proposals.

Governance and Leadership

- 4.25 It is important to recognise that the successful design and delivery of the HAF was owed to the governance and leadership provided through the HAF Board and Team, as much as to specific design features. The shared leadership across the Welsh Government policy teams, and the integrated approach between all four major partners, enabled the design to draw on a wide range of experience, and for ideas to be tested and challenged in a positive and constructive way, notwithstanding any differences of perspective and approach. It made it possible to settle on a Programme design which respected the various expertise marshalled in

the Board, and generate a common view both as to what the HAF was designed to achieve, and how it could best do that.

- 4.26 The leadership and governance was fit for purpose in the sense of delivering the Board's key responsibility to create a viable Programme within a tight timescale, with a good range of quality Projects, and an appropriate and integrated funding pot which had been drawn from multiple sources. The Board's responsibility will inevitably change now that the Projects are under way. This provides an opportunity for it to consider what its role will now be going forward, and in what way if any its leadership and governance functions should be revised.

5. Views from the Projects

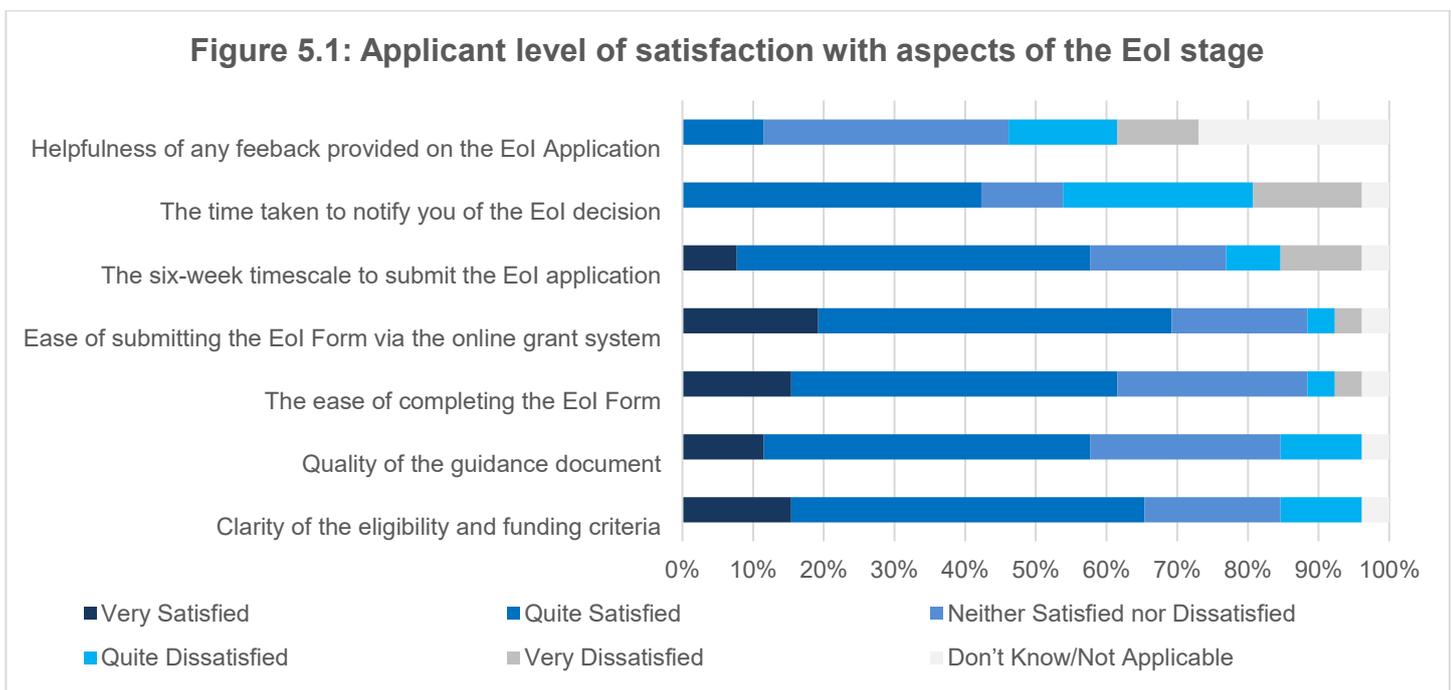
- 5.1 To optimise learning from the HAF process it is imperative that the Programme level evaluation should also look at the HAF process from the Project end of the telescope, so as to understand the views of Project representatives on the HAF and the way it has shaped their work. That is the perspective explored in this Section, including having regard to the views of unsuccessful applicants.
- 5.2 Semi structured interviews with the 17 Project Leads and their Case Officers took place during the summer of 2019, either face to face or by telephone. An online survey was developed for **all** HAF applicants and was open during October 2019. 27 responses were received – three from applicants who reached Eol stage, 14 Stage 2 applicants, and nine from successful Projects. One respondent did not indicate the stage they reached. Nearly two-thirds of respondents were third sector organisations and a third were public sector. Unsuccessful applicants were asked via the survey email invitation if they would be willing to be contacted for an interview to explore their views and experiences in more depth. Noting that the views put forward are subject to self-selection bias, three unsuccessful applicants helpfully provided further feedback in a follow up telephone discussion.
- 5.3 The HAF as a programme and its principles have been welcomed. Projects saw a need for it and were pleased to see a Welsh fund like it which ‘didn’t come around very often’. It was *“a breath of fresh air, it is an example of innovation within the funding environment. This type of thinking has been harder to come by previously”*. Another commented: *“We feel our innovative ways of working over the last decade have finally found their moment!”*.
- 5.4 In terms of the application process and the subsequent stages we found a mixture of positive and negative views among respondents. We consider the various process elements chronologically.

Eol Stage

- 5.5 The marketing and communication of HAF was generally welcomed, along with the guidance and support. Three quarters of survey respondents had attended the roadshows and over two thirds of those found the roadshows useful. Just over half joined the Yammer group, although there was mixed feedback about using Yammer. The majority of respondents who joined did not find it useful, although on one occasion, an applicant did find a new partner via this platform. One

unsuccessful applicant commented that it would have been a useful tool to provide updates on delays and decisions.

5.6 As recommended in the Programme guidance documentation, just under half of survey respondents discussed their proposal with a HAF team representative, just over half with their local public health team and two thirds with their local authority. Around two fifths discussed the proposal with a FE or HE institution. These discussions were generally considered ‘useful’, although a few respondents disagreed. Figure 5.1 below shows how applicants rated their level of satisfaction with aspects of the Eol stage.



5.7 The application documentation at Eol stage was felt to be clear and straightforward, and typical of applicants’ expectations for such a grant. Over half of the applicants responding to the survey were satisfied with the Eol guidance and the ease of completing and submitting the form via the online grant system. There was less satisfaction with the time taken in the notification of decisions and the helpfulness of the feedback process, which is discussed further below. There was an equal split between those answering ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the question ‘During the EOI stage, did you feel you had access to ongoing advice and support from HAF grant administrators when needed?’

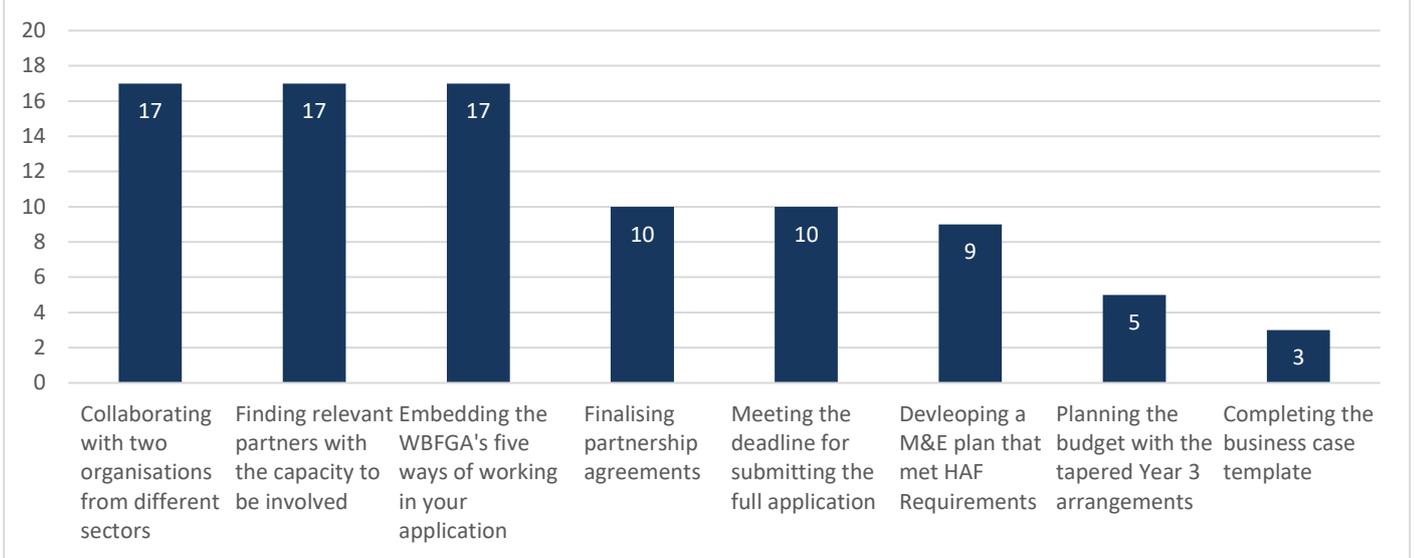
5.8 Generally though, the survey of applicants showed that around three quarters of respondents found this Eol stage ‘very easy’ or ‘quite easy’. There was little difference between the opinions of successful or unsuccessful applicants, or by

organisation type. Almost three quarters of third sector applicants found the EoI 'very' or 'quite easy' and just over three quarters of public sector applicants. Interview feedback confirmed this EoI stage was typical of applicants' experience of applying for grants and met their expectations.

Stage 2 - Full application

- 5.9 At Stage 2, there were mixed feelings on the capacity among applicants to deal with the process. The deadlines and the requirements were considered quite burdensome, even where the organisation was familiar and experienced in preparing bids. Several Projects noted that the two stage process was familiar to them as it was used by the Big Lottery Fund – while noting that Big Lottery also offered more flexibility and tailored support.
- 5.10 As with the EoI stage, the HAF team put in place support and guidance processes for the 42 Stage 2 applicants. Twenty survey respondents commented on how useful they rated the various processes:
- Three quarters found the Project evaluation toolkit 'very' or 'quite' useful;
 - Just under three quarters found the workshop held 22 January 'very' or 'quite' useful; and
 - Over half found the opportunities provided to network with other organisations interested in HAF 'very' or 'quite' useful.
 - The Stage 2 Business Case, although 'challenging', was fairly well received by successful Projects and in retrospect (for successful applicants at least) useful, giving a solid base from which to start Project delivery. The workshop organised for Stage 2 applicants was well-received and its design provided further opportunities for organisations to connect, as this Project observed: *"Also helpful was the fact that, at the workshop, applicants were placed into groups according to project type/concept ...as this facilitated further networking"*.
- 5.11 Stage 2 had a number of requirements and Figure 5.2 shows how they were perceived by the 20 survey respondents who responded about this stage.

Figure 5.2: Perceptions of Stage 2 - number of survey respondents (out of 20) rating aspects 'very' or 'quite' easy



5.12 The collaboration and partnership requirements were not an issue for most applicants, nor was the requirement to embed the ways of working, which are discussed further in Sections 6 and 7. However, completing the Business Case template and planning the budget were not always straightforward. For most aspects, the perceived relative ease or difficulty was similar regardless of whether the applicant was successful or unsuccessful in their bid. The exception was for the monitoring and evaluation requirements, and completion of the Business Case. Here, unsuccessful applicants, (perhaps unsurprisingly) were more likely to say the process was 'very difficult' or 'quite difficult'. At this stage, ten of 15 respondents to the question 'Did you feel you had access to ongoing advice and support from HAF grant administrators when needed?' said 'no', with the majority again being those who were unsuccessful. As one unsuccessful applicant commented: "A lot of time was invested in attending the Stage 2 Workshop and we thought we had matched the priorities as a result, but evidently didn't as we were unsuccessful - better clarity and more support during the application process would have allowed us to match the priorities more effectively". One successful applicant noted that the process took around three weeks, and others noted that developing effective relationships and joint plans required a good deal of time investment which although was key, could be a challenge when the organisation had a small number of staff members.

5.13 The level of disappointment for unsuccessful applicants was always likely to be high. As one respondent put it: "The Business Case was quite an onerous process and I am concerned that you have to have had quite a bit of experience to complete

such a form or a dedicated funding/bid writing person within an organisation. I feel that this potentially limits the organisations that are able to apply from a third sector perspective and favours the larger organisations as opposed to smaller grass roots organisations". This consideration was supported by the survey feedback, with almost two thirds of third sector applicants stating that the balance between the requirements of the application process and the amount of funding available was 'too much'. This compared with under a third of public sector applicants, where the majority considered the balance was 'about right'. There is perhaps a 'critical mass' issue here, as the bigger players have the capacity and experience of writing bids - some organisations even have salaried posts for such tasks.

- 5.14 There were positive outcomes from the Stage 2 process despite these challenges. In particular, the Business Case preparation pre-empted much of the necessary activities of Project development. Time spent in preparing the proposal, for successful applicants at least, could therefore be gained back later: *"It made you think through in detail – makes each stage easier at delivery, cuts down the amount of work you have to do in the project set up phase"*. Several interviewees noted the need to be mindful of the impact on organisations with less capacity and experience, and the likelihood of taking people away from the 'day job'. This was reported by both Project leads and delivery organisations, although ultimately, they can choose whether to bid or not.
- 5.15 As discussed in Section 4, many Stage 2 applicants found the monitoring and evaluation processes challenging, and the requirements were, as they expressed it, a "shock" to several, although the need for and importance of monitoring and evaluation was signalled from EoI stage early on. Around half of the 17 successful Projects expressed concern about managing the requirements. Key concerns related to the monitoring data required: *"There is quite a large amount of quantitative data to be collected, and from our experience both participants and staff find this a challenge, off putting, and that it impacts negatively on participant experience. Even the minimum we need to collect is a lot for this target group of participants. It would be nice to see more qualitative data collection expected, alongside"*. However, at Programme level it is in fact anticipated that there will be qualitative data collected at Project level, and that this will be necessary in order to reflect the variety of interventions planned by Projects. Indeed, the use of qualitative data for Project level evaluation is seen as implicit in the evaluation

requirement placed on the Projects³¹, and that the Projects should be incorporating qualitative elements into their own process and outcome evaluations.

Notification of decision and feedback

- 5.16 This aspect has resulted in negative feedback from both successful and unsuccessful applicants. Some of the criticisms raised could have been avoided with adjustments to the process, in particular offering improved feedback. The process involved a rejection letter to EoI unsuccessful applicants with standard phrases inserted according to the issue and criteria not met. The letter gave applicants the opportunity to request more feedback - primarily because of the additional workload it would have created to provide it to everyone. In some cases, applicants did follow this up. This involved the HAF lead having to go back to the applicant's EoI and understand again why it had been rejected, partly repeating the process the assessment panel had already completed. Throughout, the HAF team had highlighted the high level of interest and competition for funding as a way of partly managing the number of Projects who would be disappointed. However, Projects (both successful and unsuccessful) commented that as this high level of interest was expected and indeed encouraged, then sufficient resources should have been allocated to offer quality feedback and better support. This might raise the standard of future applications and perception of the funder/applicant relationship.
- 5.17 The following comments give a flavour of the Project view about the feedback provided: *“Some of the feedback given on areas of improvement were covered in other areas of the business case. Therefore it was felt each section was marked/read in isolation without knowledge or reference to the other sections for clarification”*; *“Feedback indicated a lack of understanding of national strategies and priorities - but this had not been highlighted in guidance information”*³²; and, *“Feedback on the strongest section, as well, would have been encouraging”*. The quality of feedback in grant processes has been an issue that funders should take account of based on research with charities across the UK³³. The Projects' view on the HAF was that better resourcing of this aspect was needed. This would go some

³¹ Communication from a member of the Evaluation Group

³² The view of one member of the HAF team was that this was implicit in the Strategic Case section of the business case.

³³ Joe Saxton and Elin Lindström (nfpSynergy 2012 and 2018) Taking nothing for granted: a research report into what charities think a model grant-maker looks like.

way to the HAF partners maintaining better relationships with existing and new partners.

Timelines

- 5.18 The HAF team decided to put pressure on their own timelines to give more time to applicants. There was a desire to apply the learning from previous Programmes and to ensure that the HAF gave sufficient time to applicants to prepare their bids. Some adjustments were made in response to questions raised in the roadshows, which involved the team improving the clarity of their guidance and the criteria for decision making. The HAF went live a week later than planned to address the feedback. Overall, the HAF team made successive efforts to assist applicants where they could, including where they put themselves under pressure to do so.
- 5.19 The biggest issue in the timeline for Projects was the implications of the delay in notifying Projects of the final decision. This was outside of the HAF team's control, and the HAF team has also noted that the delay in some Projects starting was also due to them not having partnership agreements in place, which was a condition of the grant offer. Sport Wales had to have a realignment of its budget so that it could contribute to the overall funding package. Finalising those arrangements with sign-off in Welsh Government delayed the date of notification from the expected notification date of March 2019 to June 2019. The delay to awarding funding has had considerable knock-on effects and unintended consequences for delivery and customer relationships. These include:
- Requests for Projects to submit revised budgets;
 - Delays in Projects being able to recruit staff;
 - Some existing skilled employees on fixed term contracts had to take employment elsewhere;
 - Delays due to lack of funding to organise training and book the activity providers required before beginning delivery to beneficiaries;
 - Planned activities (outdoor offers, growing seasons) affected by autumn start; and,
 - Uncertainty over whether Projects can be extended in Year 3 or whether the HAF will become a shorter Programme.
- 5.20 This issue was directly raised by 14 of the successful Projects as a barrier to achieving their intended outcomes. As well as the related administrative issues,

there are unknown implications of aspects such as losing the input of key individuals who have expertise and existing relationships with groups working with intended beneficiaries. There are also capacity issues among some of the smaller organisations involved (and their respective delivery partners) to be able to offer additional provision in Year 2 to make up for the delay should the Programme be shortened. Other effects will include the intended data monitoring returns being staggered due to different Project start times, affecting central collation and reporting of findings.

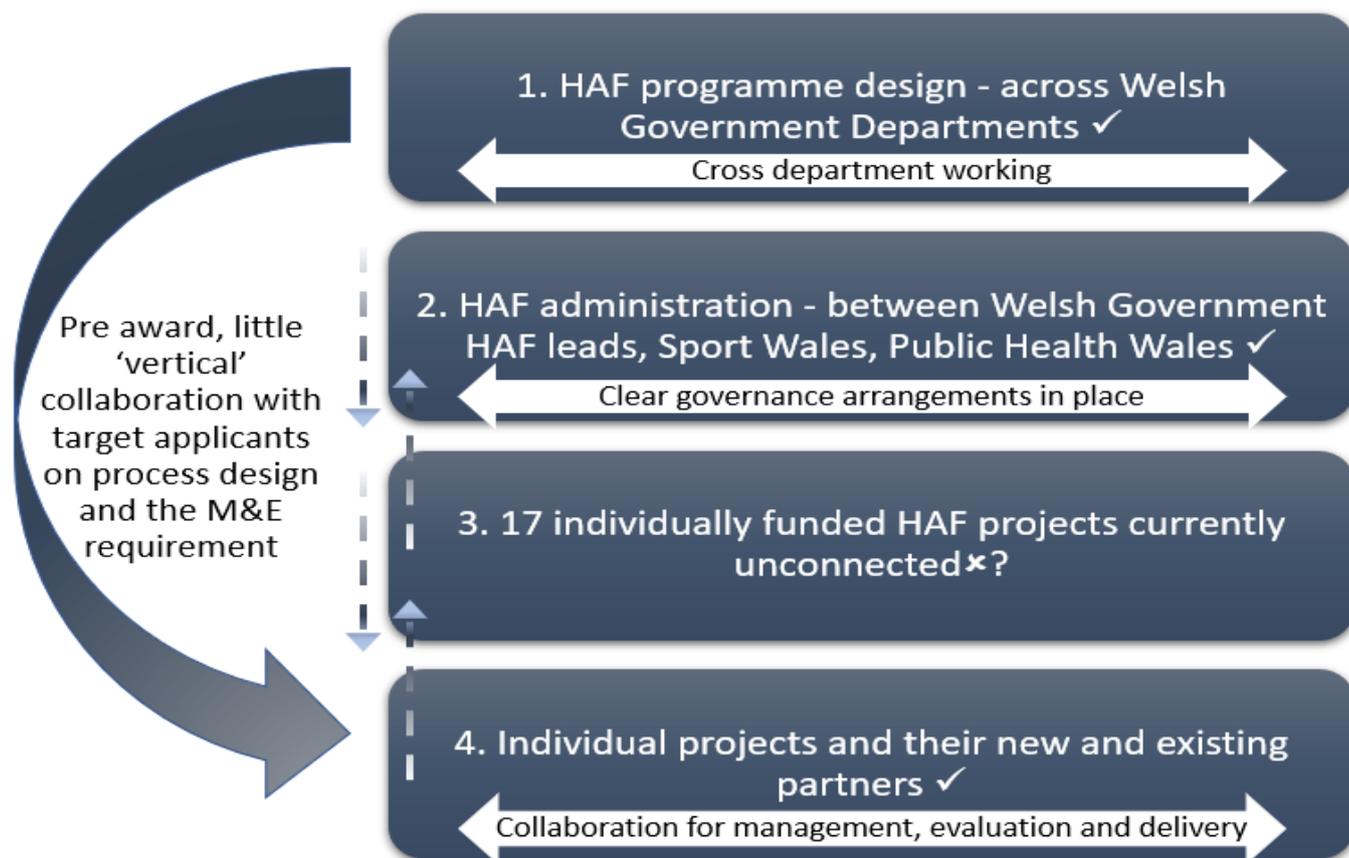
- 5.21 Conversely, some Projects found a positive in the delay in that it could allow more discussion time and background work before delivery, including the important stage of relationship building with intended beneficiaries. Previous evaluations have shown this requires time up front to achieve successful engagement and behaviour change with certain target groups. For smaller organisations in particular, this can only take place when resources are available.
- 5.22 The lack of clarity and communication also affected the Programme partner organisations and their ability to convey clear messages through to other departments who were fielding queries and attempting to manage customer relationships. This presents a risk to organisational reputation and the possibility of a knock-on effect to external perceptions of other grant schemes run by the partners.
- 5.23 This aspect has somewhat overshadowed the positive aspects of the HAF. There is a high level of agreement among the 17 successful Projects that the HAF process has encouraged collaboration. All but three survey respondents reported they had formed a new partnership with an organisation or individual as part of the HAF application process – including the unsuccessful applicants. Eight of the 17 Projects reported that the activities would not be happening at all without the funding, while others said they might have pursued their plans, but on a smaller scale. *“Without HAF, many of our programmes would have closed down and stopped rather than moving to a new and expanded stage”*. Three quarters indicate that through the HAF they are now able to extend their work to a new target group or region, or take forward a new approach and way of working.

6. A Collaborative Approach

- 6.1 The theme of collaboration was consistently articulated throughout the HAF process. It was seen as important not just in itself, but because of what collaboration could help to achieve. The administrative process required evidence of collaboration from applicants. Partnership arrangements had to be set out in applications at EoI and Stage 2. Formal signed partnership agreements had to be submitted by successful Projects prior to release of funding. As highlighted in the Theory of Change report, these arrangements went far beyond the typical endorsements and expressions of goodwill and future involvement which often accompany grant applications. Over 150 partners are referenced in the application documents, and interview feedback with Projects suggests that many are 'new', with lead applicants working with organisations previously unknown to them.
- 6.2 This was backed up by survey results, with three quarters of third sector applicants and every public sector applicant stating that they had formed a partnership with an organisation or individual new to them as part of the HAF application process. Almost nine in ten found that *'collaborating with a minimum of two organisations from different sectors'* was 'very' or 'quite' easy, as was *'finding relevant partners with the capacity to be involved in the project'*. This was regardless of whether the survey respondent was unsuccessful or successful in their application. Half of these same respondents found that the process was 'quite useful' in *'providing opportunities to network with other organisations interested in HAF'*.
- 6.3 At the Programme level, the collaboration between the four partners has involved jointly designing, leading and operating the HAF, and pooling budgets. The process has helped to establish a positive relationship between partners, and clear roles and responsibilities and a structure for reporting and decision making. The outcome has gone beyond general good working practices and the previous experiences of those involved. Members of the HAF Delivery Group reported being *"more than pleasantly surprised"* by the way working in partnership had unfolded during the process. One spoke of the effort that has been put in to make it *"a real partnership. You can tell when all organisations are bought into the partnership when they all go above and beyond, work weekends and evenings...It hasn't felt like we're three different organisations – we all want it to be a success and buy into it"*.

- 6.4 At Project level, the collaboration between the two parts of Welsh Government, Sport Wales and Public Health Wales in developing and leading the HAF was viewed positively. Projects were particularly encouraged by the explicit link between sport and health. Indeed, several interviewees noted that bringing sport and health together had long been a talking point with gestures made towards the importance of the link, but the HAF was the first time this had proactively brought the two together in a way that could support delivery ‘on the ground’. Projects spoke of a desire to work more closely with ‘health’ and felt they had a lot to contribute in terms of prevention. The HAF provided a potential way into a closer relationship to health, and a positive way in also.
- 6.5 Projects recognise the importance of collaboration and the potential benefits in the longer term. However, they also highlighted the tension in the application process in encouraging collaboration within a competitive grants process. Applicants were bidding for limited funds (and the HAF team themselves had emphasised that the process was highly competitive). This was at odds with applicants being prepared to share their ideas, and risk their plans being deployed elsewhere and thus losing out. Allocating more time within the process to support these discussions might have helped – as suggested by a HAF team representative: *“In retrospect the process was all quite intense - and if we had had more time it would have allowed us to do more on encouraging collaboration aspects”*.
- 6.6 Projects also suggested that there were other opportunities to embed collaboration within the process, namely in the development of the monitoring and evaluation requirements. One Project felt that the system they already deployed locally might have been used by other Projects if there had been the right opportunities to explore that possibility.
- 6.7 Overall, collaboration through the HAF process, particularly at Programme level, has been positive. The diagram below portrays how collaborative aspects have been deployed in the process to date (Autumn 2019) – note that ‘horizontal’ collaboration at each level has been stronger than collaboration between the various levels.

Figure 6.1: Levels of collaboration: Autumn 2019



6.8 Collaboration has been visible throughout the HAF process to date. However, what is needed are structured opportunities for the 17 Projects to collaborate now the application stage has been completed, and subsequent learning events have helped give effect to this. Projects would welcome further joint working opportunities led by the HAF team as it moves into the delivery stage. Unsuccessful applicants would also like access to information about the 17 Projects now that the funding has been distributed³⁴. This would make them aware of possibilities to connect, and avoid duplication of work, while also benefiting from emerging learning³⁵. There may be benefit also in exploring opportunities for Projects to collaborate on aspects of their evaluations, and also between the Programme and Project levels of evaluation.

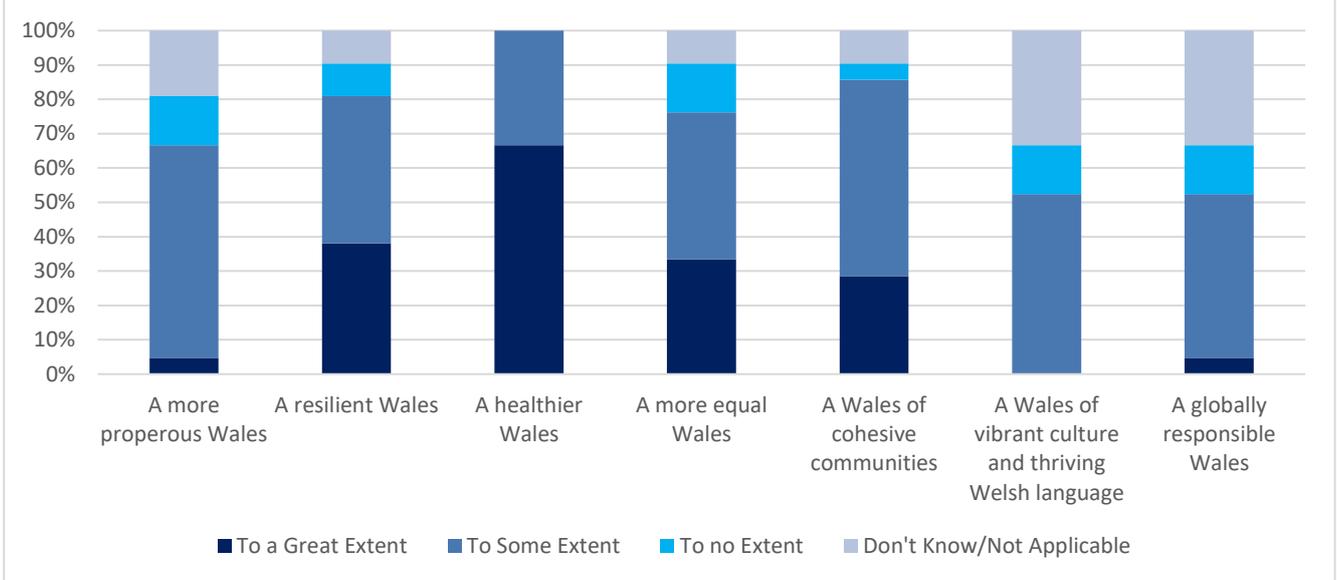
³⁴ They can now do so – all the successful Projects have been publicly named.

³⁵ Consideration is being given by the HAF team to holding an event towards the end of the second year of the Programme (2020/21) to share learning from Projects with a wider audience.

7. Five Ways of Working

- 7.1 The connection between the HAF and the five ways of working endorsed by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was explicitly set out in the Programme documentation and guidance. The Call for Applications and Guidance stated: *“Applications must demonstrate how the ‘5 Ways of Working’ of the Well-being of Future Generations Act have shaped and driven the application”*. This is repeated in the Business Case template for Stage 2 where the Strategic Case directs applicants to: *“Explain how the Project will contribute to the goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and how the five ways of working (Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement) have been incorporated into the project’s design and delivery”*.
- 7.2 In these ways, the Act and ways of working were embedded in the HAF process from launch through to award stage. Interviewees confirmed it was a ‘natural fit’ rather than aligning the HAF to the Act retrospectively, both at Programme level and among the 17 Projects, where two thirds also indicated agreement. The HAF team had confidence that the approach taken would continue, although they recognise maintaining momentum after the efforts of getting the HAF underway might be challenging.
- 7.3 The Projects considered that the HAF aligns strongly with the Act. They found it straightforward to set out how the ways of working were embedded in their activities and intended approaches. *“It really attempts to use the Future Generation Act methods properly. This means a close fit with our own working methods”*. Several interviewees commented how organisations are becoming more familiar with the language of the Act. They may already be working in many of these ways of working, but the Act provides a consistent discourse within which to describe and evaluate their work. Figure 7.1, based on 21 respondents, shows how HAF is expected to contribute to the Act’s overall goals.

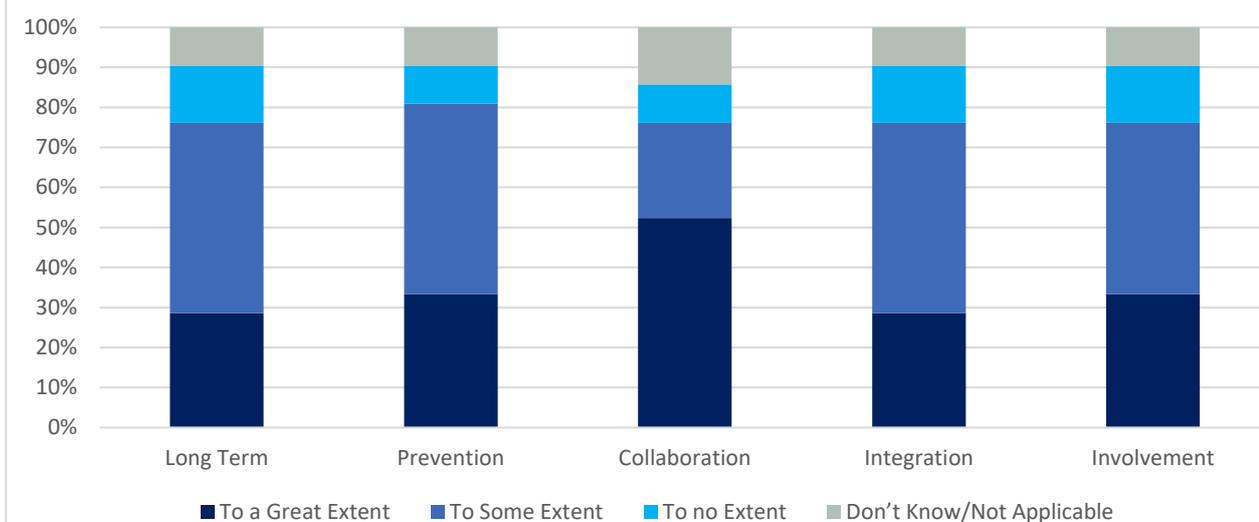
Figure 7.1: Extent to which applicants feel the HAF is likely to contribute to the WBFGA Well-Being Goals



7.4 There was clear agreement from our survey respondents that the HAF is likely to contribute to the goal of ‘A healthier Wales’ – over two thirds felt it would contribute to ‘a great extent’ and the remainder ‘to a certain extent’. There is also strong agreement of the contribution to ‘A Wales of cohesive communities’, ‘A resilient Wales’ and ‘A more equal Wales’. There was no goal where the HAF was not felt to have the potential to make some sort of contribution, although connections to ‘A globally responsible Wales’ and ‘A Wales of vibrant culture’ were the most tentative.

7.5 The online survey asked applicants to assess to what extent they felt that the design of HAF and the application process enabled the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to be realised. Figure 7.2 below shows these perceptions.

Figure 7.2: Extent to which applicants feel the design of the HAF and the application process enable the five ways of working of the WBFGA Act to be realised



7.6 Certain aspects of the ways of working in the HAF are far clearer than others at this stage in the Programme. Collaboration is at the forefront, along with the long-term nature of the work (although this is only long term in comparison with existing funding streams). Other aspects could become more prominent further into the Programme. The opportunity for the HAF's role in prevention may emerge through some of the planned Project evaluations which will explore this aspect. Some could see the potential: *"How much attention will be given later down the line in discussing sustainability options and what we mean by it? How does it impact on other budgets such as reduced need for health care?"*. The ways of working of involvement and integration were not prominent in interviewees' responses other than among Projects that connect smaller organisations 'on the ground' and those co-designing activities with intended beneficiaries and local groups.

7.7 The requirement to consider the ways of working has *"fostered a change of thinking and attitude"* and this may lead to greater sustainability outcomes. Sustainability of Projects is considered in financial terms in the Programme documentation. The Call for Applications and Guidance advised that potential applicants *"should be aware that the HAF will provide grant funding for 3 financial years which will be tapered in the final year"*. *"Only Projects that demonstrate they can be funded into the third year and beyond or will leave a legacy that will sustain the Project activity beyond the third year will be considered"*. The tapering of funding in the final year was designed to encourage early consideration of exit routes and Project closure, and the consequence for ongoing activities.

- 7.8 The relationship of the HAF to the Act has been considered in some detail by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) as part of their assessment of the Act's implementation³⁶. In relation to 'long term', their judgement was that while there were plans to monitor short term impact, there were gaps in evaluating impact in the long term, and to assess the long term sustainability of Projects, and no consideration at the outset of potential Project scalability. The WAO Report also noted an opportunity to document the impact on the well-being objectives of the Programme partners, and to assess the significance of increasing community involvement at Project level.
- 7.9 The issue of 'long term' really goes to the heart of the HAF Programme design. Full consideration of the long term aspects is difficult within a three year fund which is too short term to establish any longer term impacts. The HAF design has tried to take this into account, through extended requirements on Projects to provide feedback beyond the three year milestone. A sustainability report covering a five-year period will establish whether a Project has stopped, or has continued and evolved, and if so why and how. Those reaching Stage 2 had to outline how scalable their proposal could be with further investment and what (if any) economies of scale could be realised. However, there was some doubt among the HAF team as to how realistic some of the sustainability proposals were. One Case Officer suggested that the Act was a new way of working for charities involved in the Projects and felt that it might be *"a cultural thing for charities at the moment, where what they do is seek and apply for funding - perhaps rather than moving to models where communities become self-sustaining"*. This in turn posed the question as to whose responsibility it was to support such change in organisations through the HAF. One Project described the reality: *"We will however require further funding at the end of the programme. While this (HAF) is a significant step forwards, and a sustainability element has been built in, we do not envisage that our work could continue without being paid for by someone. If we can encourage the health sector to support some aspects of the work following the project, that would be one way forward"*.
- 7.10 While many of the Projects referenced 'seeking other funding sources' to be sustainable, other 'types' of sustainability have also been at the forefront of people's minds, such as the sustainability of any resulting behaviour changes among Project

³⁶ See: 'Implementing the Well-Being of Future Generations Act: Welsh Government November 2019 Document Reference 1536A2019-20. See Appendix 4 ps 47-51.

beneficiaries. Project beneficiaries would include both participants and the workforce engaging with them as illustrated by another Case Officer: *“The distinction here is more between sustaining engagement with participants at scale post the HAF Project which could be challenging, and there may be a more promising element which is creating a cadre of trained people who could sustain the approach”*.

- 7.11 Further consideration is needed on what ‘kind’ of sustainability is expected and what it means for the Programme, Projects, workforce and beneficiaries. The HAF’s focus on the ways of working and emphasis on sustainability makes it different from many previous grant Programmes: *“Fundamentally, it is trying to embody a new way of working into a grant process and in the outcomes of the Projects themselves... it is about how to do something now that has a long term impact on people’s lives”*. This question of what ‘sustainability’ actually means, or might mean, is one which we return to later.

8. Findings and Implications

8.1 This concluding Section is in two major parts. The first takes each of the five key 'process' questions asked by the Welsh Government and summarises our findings and conclusions on each. They are:

The HAF Design and Suitable Projects: How well did the HAF's design and delivery enable it to identify suitable Projects, and support them to achieve the overall HAF aims?

Shaping the Projects: How did the HAF shape the design and delivery of Projects - their scope, collaborations, capability, monitoring and evaluation, risks, and sustainability?

Views of the Projects: What are the views of Project representatives on the HAF and the way it has shaped them?

HAF Collaboration: How well has the collaborative approach to the design and delivery of the HAF by Public Health Wales, Sport Wales and the Welsh Government worked, and what have been the barriers and facilitators to collaborative working?

The HAF and 'Ways of Working': How well have the 'five ways of working' been embedded in the design and delivery of the HAF at both Programme and Project levels?

8.2 The second part of this Section draws out some of the additional major implications of our findings, including the following areas:

- An overall judgement on the HAF process and how it worked in terms of issues of accountability, leadership, governance, partnership, systems/procedures, resources, capacity, and so on;
- The lessons and impacts of the HAF process, including the burdens and benefits of effective grant programme processes;
- Process issues and theory of change; and
- Monitoring and evaluation.

8.3 We conclude the Section, and the report, by indicating potential implications of this process evaluation for the remainder of the HAF evaluation itself, and also for wider Welsh Government approaches to policy development and programme design.

Findings

- 8.4 **The HAF Design and Suitable Projects:** The HAF's design and delivery have enabled it to identify a broad range of suitable Projects that have good coverage across Wales and across the target areas identified in the initial Programme guidance and criteria for funding. The 17 Projects will provide activities that are aimed at beneficiaries from early years through to older age, and with a relatively equal emphasis on the types of desired beneficiary. Projects generally tackle more than one demographic and have a broad reach. Over half are targeting children and young people, older adults and those experiencing poverty or disadvantage, while a third have a focus on people with a disability or long term illness.
- 8.5 A greater allocation of the grant has gone towards supporting Projects whose planned delivery at the outset involves mainly physical activity, and just under a third where sports activities are planned. However, Projects see the need for involvement and co-design with local groups and participants, and so the type of activity delivered is likely to evolve and be shaped according to local need over the Programme's duration.
- 8.6 There has been a willingness to take risks, to try new approaches and fund new partners and a focus on learning, and with some attention to future scalability for successful outcomes. Interviewees have generally been enthusiastic about the potential of the selected Projects, and in our assessment, they are right to be so. The range and quality of the Projects owes much to the thorough 'marketing' of the HAF, and the openness of the Project Board to encourage and then entertain new partners and new styles of Projects. The conscious design process helped bring HAF to broad attention in the public and third sector communities in Wales, and guide potential applicants along the intended paths.
- 8.7 **Shaping the Projects:** The HAF sought actively to shape the Projects through explicit guidance around the key features of the intended outcomes, the importance of Project-level partnership, the use of a 'filtering' EoI stage, and the emphasis given to developing a full business case. The broad overall aims of HAF gave Projects a good deal of scope to shape proposals that meet both local needs and contribute to the national goals. They set parameters around the target demographic groups but without being restrictive. The activities to be used in delivery were not restricted, thus making the HAF accessible for a wide range of organisations.

- 8.8 The funding and assessment criteria and the business case process were explicit in encouraging Projects to adopt and embed the five ways of working and the goals of the Act. Collaboration across sectors was a requirement, and the networking opportunities, workshops and supporting presentations within the process encouraged this outcome. Several Projects have new partnerships as a result of the process. The HAF team are also aware of some new partnerships that have emerged because of HAF beyond the 17 funded Projects, and this finding was supported by the survey findings. However, for the Projects, the focus on collaboration within a competitive grants process was at odds with the reality of trying to bid against others for limited resources. This tension that was experienced by Projects is a good source of learning in the context of supporting meaningful collaboration, but with a desire to retain the benefits of a competitive grants process.
- 8.9 The HAF design also shaped Projects by imposing the disciplines that Projects needed to produce logic models and monitoring and evaluation plans. Both of these supported greater clarity by Projects as to what they were trying to achieve, how they proposed to do this, and how in due course they would know that they had done so. There is however a question as to whether the associated burdens of producing the necessary application materials were proportionate to the benefit, especially in view of the fact that only half of those invited to make full applications were likely to be funded given the scale of available resources.
- 8.10 **Views of the Projects:** The Projects welcomed the HAF and its principles, and they value the collaboration they can see between the Welsh Government, Sport Wales and Public Health Wales. The marketing and communication of HAF was generally well received, along with the guidance and support throughout the process. However, whilst the EoI stage was considered straightforward and clear, Stage 2 engendered mixed feelings as to the ability of applicants to cope with the demands of the process and the deadlines. The requirements were considered burdensome, even where the organisation was experienced in preparing grant applications. The Business Case preparation was challenging and Project interviewees felt that the information about the specific monitoring tools to be used caused some additional pressure. They knew early on that they would be responsible for project level evaluation, which was very helpful, but the specific guidance came later and created more of a challenge. Despite this, successful Projects did recognise that the

Business Case process had given them the foundations to get Projects underway more effectively.

- 8.11 After the time and effort put into a rigorous process, unsuccessful applicants did not regard the quality of the feedback as adequate. This is an aspect that has been identified in previous process evaluations for different funding Programmes³⁷. Delays in funding decisions also had negative impacts on staffing, delivery and customer relationships.
- 8.12 Despite these issues, the view from the Projects overall was that they benefited from the thoroughness of the HAF process. They increased awareness of other organisations, made new connections, and were encouraged to share knowledge and skills. The funding has enabled them to take forward and trial new ways of working and take new opportunities and services to a wider audience.
- 8.13 **HAF Collaboration:** A collaborative approach to the design and delivery of the HAF by Public Health Wales, Sport Wales and the two Welsh Government policy teams has been seen as a major theme by key actors. It has found expression, and was reinforced, through an explicitly collaborative governance structure, and a culture of equality in the partnership. We found a generally high, if variable, level of ‘buy-in’ from all partners, and a willingness to invest considerable effort. Programme level interviewees saw it as a resource-intensive process but one with clear benefits. They perceived a shared appetite to try new ways of working, and they found the prospect exciting and energising. They particularly valued the way in which budgets were shared between the partners, and the collaborative thinking around Programme design. The collaboration was in part contingent in that it enabled Government to bring together two overlapping commitments of the incoming administration after the 2016 election. In so doing it reduced the risk of duplicating efforts to improve physical activity and mental health, and enabled resources to be pooled.
- 8.14 In some ways the HAF has demonstrated an unusual if not unique³⁸ degree of intra-governmental collaboration in Wales, and especially in relation to the aspect of shared budgets. Unsurprisingly therefore, it was not perfect. Key actors came with different perspectives on how best to achieve change and improvement in

³⁷ UKRCS: Calls for Action Process Evaluation and Joe Saxton and Elin Lindström (nfpSynergy 2012 and 2018) Taking nothing for granted: a research report into what charities think a model grant-maker looks like.

³⁸ Many of the key actors in the design and development of the HAF took this view, but we triangulated it through focussed interviews with senior Welsh Government officials, and we are satisfied that the view of the HAF actors is broadly accurate.

population level physical activity, and on whether a response mode grant Programme like the HAF was likely to be a good vehicle to test and explore approaches. They also came with differing expectations as to the time needed to plan and shape such a Programme. They faced constraints in the time scales to get sign-off on key decisions, and in freeing up staff resource to manage the peaks in what was sometimes a resource-intensive process, especially in assessing applications and selecting the successful applicants.

- 8.15 **HAF and the five 'Ways of Working':** The 'five ways of working' have been very explicit in the design and delivery of the HAF at both Programme and Project levels. The HAF is a good example of taking the principles of the Act into a grant process, and has been seen by some of the key actors as helping to create a context in the Welsh Government in which, for example, collaboration could more easily flourish. The relationship of the HAF to the ways of working is variable. There is strong evidence of collaboration, and some of integration (for example in relation to budget sharing), and the notion of 'prevention' is closely associated with the inherent logic of the HAF and the Projects in seeking to alter behaviours to favour improved physical and mental health. A three year funding provision is considered by many to be too short to see the kinds of impacts desired by Projects on their beneficiaries and on working practices, and this puts a premium on applying learning from the Projects to mainstream policies and programmes. Despite the emphasis on sustainability within the application materials and guidance, it remains unclear as yet how such a translation will occur.
- 8.16 As to 'involvement', this way of working has been more apparent at Project level than at Programme level. Projects were required to evidence engagement with the local community³⁹. From a Project perspective the same emphasis was not evident at Programme level in terms of engagement with prospective applicants on issues such as timelines and monitoring and evaluation requirements.

Implications

- 8.17 The five questions set out in the Process Evaluation brief steered us to key areas of evidence in evaluating the HAF process, and presenting the results, as above. However, our analysis also highlighted wider implications of the HAF process across some key themes. An effective process for a grant programme should

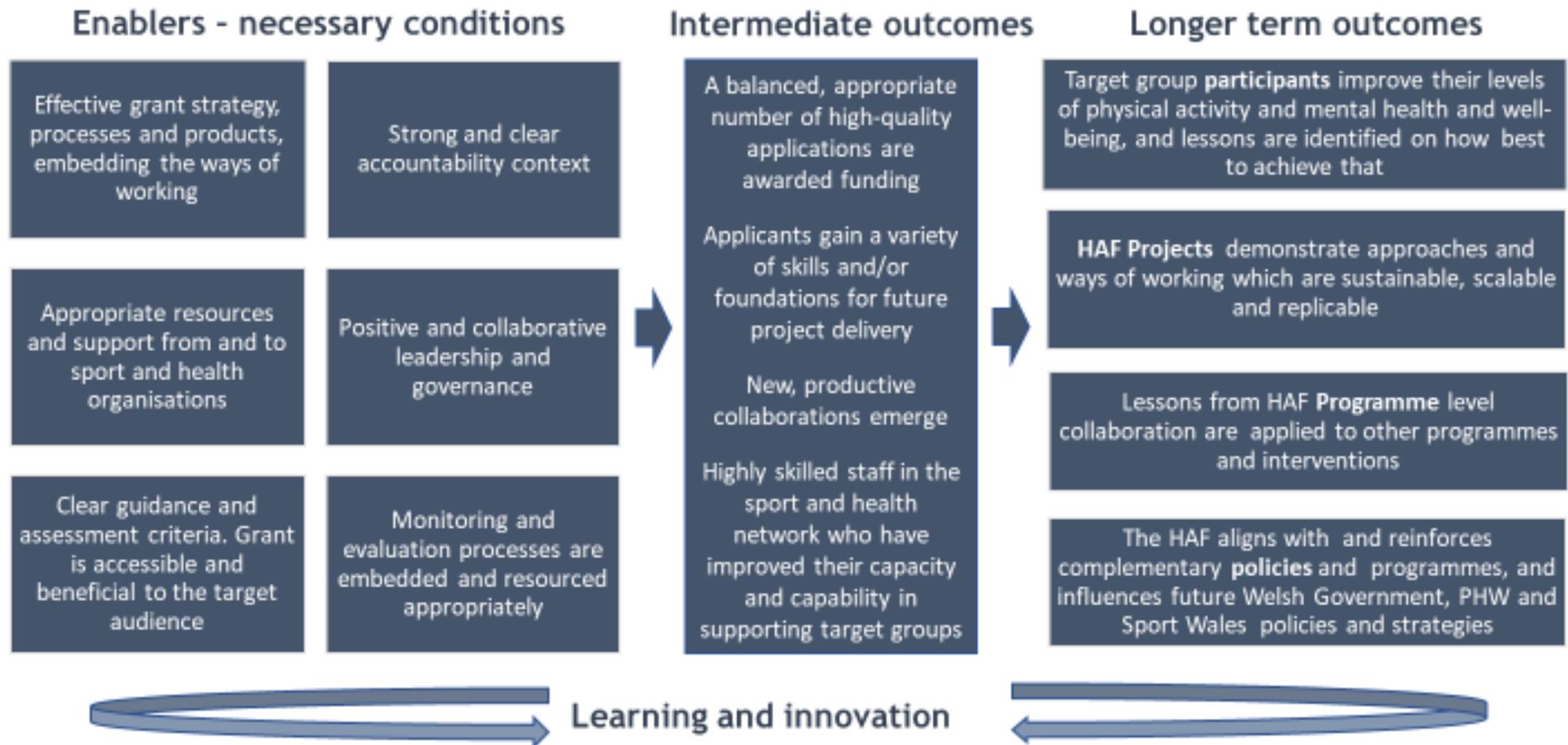
³⁹ Healthy & Active Fund Call for Applications and Fund Guidance October 2018

create the conditions to enable the necessary intermediate outcomes to be achieved which will, in turn, facilitate the ultimate longer term outcomes aspired to by the programme. We have taken what is in effect a simple logic model and combined it with a model for business excellence⁴⁰. We used the model to inform the review of the documentation and the content of interviews. It helps to identify the aspects of the HAF process which are potentially relevant to other grant programmes.

⁴⁰ It is the EFQM model – see <https://www.efqm.org/> We are using here the ‘traditional’ rather than the new EFQM model.

Figure 8.1: HAF Process Evaluation Model

Model for an effective HAF process



8.18 Our findings in relation to each of the 6 key enabling conditions were as follows:

- a) **Accountability:** The HAF operated within established Welsh Government processes and procedures, and there were clear lines of ultimate accountability through the individual Departmental and organisational hierarchies, and Ministerial decision making. This accountability was strongly and properly felt and enabled the design of the HAF to give effect to multiple Manifesto commitments and Ministerial concerns. There was also a sense of 'accountability' to the applicant 'community'. Whilst not as direct, this was also important, and seen as such by the HAF team.
- b) **Leadership and Governance:** The HAF deployed relatively standard arrangements for leadership and governance, with Joint Senior Responsible Officers (SRO) and a combined Project Board and designated sub-groups. These worked well and created machinery through which a unified Programme could be constructed, and at a determined pace. They also enabled different initial perspectives between key actors to be worked through and resolved on the issue of how best to achieve improvements in the physical and mental health of key target groups. The shared roles at SRO and Project Manager level worked well during the Programme design and early implementation. The HAF has now reached a new stage. It is one where a new forward agenda can be developed, and in which HAF governance and leadership arrangements can if necessary be adjusted. The Project Board could consider appointing a HAF Programme Director (as a role rather than a substantive post). This might provide a clearer point of referral and clear ongoing responsibility on a designated individual to actively steer the Programme and exploit and transfer emerging learning.
- c) **Strategy, Process, and Product:** The key actors approached the development of the HAF process in a conscious and thoughtful way, and explicitly attempted to shape the Programme so that it best gave effect to its main aspirations. The documentary and interview evidence, and the outcomes in terms of the quality of the Projects selected for funding, show that this was done to a good standard. There were particular successes in relation to strategy and product in combining the two manifesto commitments and fully sharing Departmental and Arm's-Length Bodies' budgets.
- d) **Resources and Support:** Programme development and implementation is always demanding and 'lumpy' in terms of staff resources, and the HAF was no exception. It was fortunate that the HAF was able to make extensive use of a senior officer from Welsh Government's Culture and Sport Division who had been seconded to

Sport Wales. He brought unique and deeply experienced perspectives, and was able to play an important bridging role. Moreover, all four partners contributed staff time and effort, and worked together in a collegiate and collaborative way. It may be that there should be a programme budget ‘top slice’ to enable the necessary resources to be available to meet the inevitable peaks, especially in the absence of the fortuitous circumstances from which the HAF benefited. However, we do not under-estimate the corresponding overhead of drafting in extra staff resources on a short term basis.

- e) **Guidance and Assessment:** Our documentary review and interviews indicate that for the most part the guidance issued was relevant, sound and timely, and that the assessment criteria were appropriate and fairly applied. There remains a question as to whether it was a little too demanding, and we address this further below.
- f) **Monitoring and Evaluation:** This was (and remains) an area of some difficulty, and we treat it more fully below.

Lessons and Impacts

- 8.19 Perhaps the most obvious impact of the HAF has been that without HAF funding several Projects reported that they would have continued their work on only a smaller scale and non-collaborative manner. They would not have been able to contribute to the piloting and experimentation which, it is intended, should be built on in the future within the mainstream of public service provision. Some would have continued to seek funding opportunities elsewhere to take their ideas forward, but in isolation or possibly only with some existing partners. Instead, Projects have acquired new partners through the application process, and they are seeing the benefits in sharing different areas of expertise. It is too early to be sure of the eventual outcomes, and successful working with new partners calls for patience and skill, and understanding of respective values before it can be translated into positive results. However, some of the pre-conditions of success have been put in place.
- 8.20 Throughout the HAF process, the HAF team reflected on how well it was working and how it could be adapted both to ‘internal’ suggestions as well as the feedback of prospective applicants. A number of suggestions for improvements to the detailed administrative process emerged from the evidence we collected. They include:
 - Practical improvements, such as better use of smart reporting in the application forms, especially at EoI stage, to avoid applications for partly ineligible Projects

that leave applicants disappointed and taking up valuable staff resources (internally and externally);

- Planning realistic timeframes for the whole process, taking account of time requirements for signing off decisions at senior level across different organisations;
- Joint budget allocations debated and confirmed at the outset to avoid a negative domino effect on resourcing at local project level;
- Appropriate resourcing for the staff designing and administering a new grant. In the main, no additional resources were allocated to support the HAF team and the roles were taken on in addition to existing work programmes.⁴¹; and
- Considering how the ways of working adopted successfully to date continue to be embedded in years 2 to 3, such as through Case Officer support and provision of further collaborative opportunities to bring the 17 Projects together.

8.21 One key overall lesson is the importance of striking the best, and proportionate, balance between the demands of the HAF process on applicants and the resulting benefits in terms of better likely Project and Programme outcomes. There is no perfect single point of 'balance' and there are likely to be voices raised in praise or criticism wherever the balance is struck. In the case of the HAF, the funding position was clearly signalled. In the event twice as many applicants than could be funded decided to complete the demanding final stage, with no explicit process for transferring these efforts into alternative productive possibilities. This is a point of learning for future programmes - other grant funds in Welsh Government have also had similar tensions with high numbers of grant applicants against the amount available.

Process issues and theory of change

8.22 The explicit recognition and commitment of all key actors to the HAF collaborative process – even those who had doubts about the efficacy of the underlying model to produce the intended results – made it the basis for a strong HAF 'theory of change'. Project Board members clearly felt that they had made a significant potential advance in working together across the public and voluntary service both in what they achieved as a practical result and in how they had gone about it.

⁴¹ A member of the HAF team observed that an alternative way to develop and implement a new programme would be to have such resources, sometimes requiring a re-prioritisation of work, or in some cases, new teams are brought together to deliver a new policy or initiative. This is dependent on the overall resource available or the ability to persuade budget holders to top-slice programme budgets to appoint dedicated staff to deliver the policy/initiative.

However, it was not subjected to the discipline of being articulated as a logic model or explicit theory of change.

- 8.23 Collaboration involves the ‘3Ms’ of Motives (why collaborate), Modes (how deeply to collaborate), and Mechanisms (which ones to employ⁴²). Of the common collaborative mechanisms HAF clearly reflects four - ‘boundary spanning’ individuals and units, cross-departmental performance targets, policy framework, and shared infrastructures and pooled staff and other resources. The HAF represented an operational rather than strategic example of collaboration, involving both intra-organisational (within Welsh Government) and interorganisational (with other entities) working, and also both horizontal (across departments) and vertical (between tiers of Government) working.
- 8.24 The key HAF actors had good reason to emphasise the exceptional if not unique collaborative character of their work. However, collaboration often runs counter to the way in which government activity is usually organised⁴³. The associated transaction and set-up costs can be high, and risk disruption of existing delivery chains. Repeated and poorly planned initiatives may even produce ‘collaboration fatigue’ and damage the impulse. It is for this reason that a clearly articulated logic model for HAF collaboration could have identified potential downsides as well as the intended positives, both in relation to HAF Programme design and process and also as collaboration was extended strongly into the Projects themselves. If what Government needs is a compelling narrative about why collaboration is valuable, then a HAF collaboration theory of change could well have contributed to its formulation. It would not have solved the problem, but might have identified the potential downsides, and then helped to mitigate them.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 8.25 The HAF process did establish explicit monitoring and evaluation arrangements at both Programme and Project levels. At individual Project level, there are some detailed and well-resourced evaluations planned which should provide valuable evidence on what works. But from Projects’ perspectives, greater involvement and collaboration over the monitoring and evaluation design and processes would have been appreciated.

⁴²See “[Improving cross-cutting working: Evidence review and expert seminar](#)”: Wales Centre for Public Policy, 2019

⁴³ These points are drawn from the WCPP Report, *ibid*.

- 8.26 Embedding monitoring and evaluation before Projects actually start work is clearly good practice, but there were concerns in using the specified tools for some of the target groups and the HAF team and Projects recognise that the specified monitoring and evaluation tools will not be suitable for all beneficiaries. The guidance might have encouraged a greater degree of flexibility in the tools used with different groups of beneficiaries⁴⁴. These issues could still be worked through with Projects (at least in part) and it is something that the future evaluation activity on the HAF could explore.
- 8.27 Projects were advised they could commission out evaluation elements of their Projects using 5% to 10% of the Project budget. Several had done this at the time of writing. It will be useful to learn whether more support for the workforce involved is likely to be needed to help gather the necessary data successfully, and to provide sufficient support at Programme level to ensure the quality and consistency of evidence captured by Projects. The HAF governance arrangements do include an Evaluation Group, and there is a process through which monitoring issues and questions can be referred to the Group via the designated Case Officers. However, as noted above there may not be sufficient resource allocated to enable this support to be close or extensive. Also there is not at present a quality assurance or control process to ensure that the evaluation outputs will be such as can be readily consolidated to give a consistent overall view of the Programme's success. This in the main sits with the Case Officers, but it is recognised that not all Case Officers may have the skills or knowledge to undertake this task. This could be explored as Project delivery develops and as Projects start the evaluation process.
- 8.28 There is an associated risk in that although the HAF process provided for a Programme level evaluation (of which this report is, obviously, part), there is not a clear connection between the Programme and the Project level evaluations. The Programme level evaluation will not incorporate the Project evaluations, although there is an intention to collate data (despite obvious challenges) on the two outcome measures as part of the Programme evaluation. This is something that could be considered further.
- 8.29 One approach that might create a more integrated and connected approach to monitoring and evaluation at Programme and Project level would be the early

⁴⁴ Consideration could be given to providing a suite of validated tools in future programmes, to cover a wider array of the target beneficiaries, and how this can be used when reporting and sharing learning at Programme level.

development of a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning plan ('MEAL'). This is an approach which is increasingly often taken in grant programmes, and especially in the area of international development⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ See for example Bond: "[Tools and methods for monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning](#)"

9. The Programme Evaluation Going Forward

9.1 In many respects the HAF process as we have evaluated it is now completed. We have identified a number of lessons, and these should be of value in future Programme design. We have also made suggestions about the HAF process going forwards, including in relation to governance and leadership. Beyond this, however, we also see implications of this process evaluation for the HAF evaluation overall, and in particular for the themes and topics of inquiry which will be central to the evaluation over the next two years. We see the following topics as candidates for thematic inquiry as part of the overall HAF Programme evaluation going forward:

- What have been and will be the implications for the HAF of the coronavirus pandemic? Will the added policy emphasis on health and wellbeing, and reducing obesity lead to any changes of direction or strategy at Project level? How have the interruptions to service delivery affected the Projects? In what ways have Projects re-thought their *modus operandii*?
- How has (and will) participation in the HAF affected the approach of participating organisations, both at Programme and at Project partner levels? Has it altered their view of the health/sport relationship? Has it altered their policies or culture? Has it facilitated future collaboration across the sport/health boundary? How has the HAF at Programme level encouraged/stimulated/guided change in this regard at Project level?
- How important is community involvement, and how significant are the actors who help connect Projects to potential participants, in enabling Projects to engage successfully with their target groups, and what role does it play in this regard? What role will the HAF Programme level have in enabling Projects to optimise these possibilities? How might effective agency contribute to building community assets into the medium and longer term?
- What are the various meanings of ‘sustainability’ and scalability for HAF funded Projects, and who holds those meanings and do they differ within the Programme and Project levels and/or between them? What can/should the HAF Programme do to improve the prospects for sustainability at Project level?
- How can the HAF Programme help to ensure that the Programme and the Project levels of evaluation are complementary and mutually reinforcing? What are the common themes and issues which need to be evaluated across the

Projects in order to optimise learning and comparison, and how will this best be built into the overall HAF Programme evaluation?

- 9.2 We see the above as all being credible candidates for thematic inquiry in years two and three of the HAF Programme level evaluation, subject to appropriate engagement and complementary approaches at Project level.

10. Implications for Welsh Government Policy Development and Programme Design

- 10.1 The genesis of the HAF lay in policy commitments which were significant enough to figure in the majority Party manifesto for the 2016 Welsh Assembly election. These were then eventually translated into the HAF Programme via a process of collaborative endeavour initially between two Welsh Government policy teams, and then involving both Sport Wales and Public Health Wales. One key question now is the extent to which the product of the HAF Programme - both in terms of actual ultimate beneficiaries and also learning from the Programme process and approach – can be fed back into the wider policy development process within Welsh Government to be leveraged for future learning and benefit. This is beyond the scope of this current piece of work, but discussions with Welsh Government colleagues involved in the policy development process have made it clear that they are receptive. The issue for the HAF Programme is to help create a feedback channel and to exercise it, using the outputs from the evaluation to stimulate and fuel the learning.
- 10.2 We also see potential for feedback from the HAF Programme and from the Programme level evaluation for the Welsh Government's wider approach to Programme design and delivery. It is clear that the key actors who 'invented', designed and developed the HAF have done so in a conscious and thoughtful way, and generally to very good effect. They have positive lessons to inform future Programme design, and also some areas of risk, choice and shortfall to share.

References

Auditor General for Wales. (2019). *Implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act – Welsh Government*. Wales Audit Office, Cardiff.

Connell, A., Quarmby, S., and Martin, S., J., (2019). '*Improving Cross-Cutting Working: Evidence Review and Expert Seminar*', Wales Centre for Public Policy, Cardiff.

Saxton, J., and Lindström, E., (2012 and 2018). *Taking nothing for granted: a research report into what charities think a model grant-maker looks like*. The John Ellerman Foundation/nfpSynergy, London.

UK Research and Consultancy Services Ltd (2019). '*Achievement, Change and Learning The Evaluation of Sport Wales' Calls 4 Action Programme Final Report*', RCS, Cardiff.

ANNEX 1: THE HAF PROGRAMME EVALUATION TEAM

Dr Clive Grace - Project Director

Tim Allen – Senior Research Delivery

Mike Bennett – Senior Research Delivery

Nick Greenhalgh – Core Research and Delivery

Sandra Harris - Project Manager

Professor Steve Martin - Research Methods and Quality Assurance

Becca Mattingley – Core Research and Delivery

Nicky Schlatter – Core Research and Delivery

Liam Whittington - Core Research and Delivery

Aled Eirug – Core Research and Delivery

ANNEX 2: METHODS AND EVIDENCE SOURCES⁴⁶

Our work on the Process evaluation began by developing a thorough understanding of the various stages of the HAF, to cover the effects of the HAF's design and delivery, the views of key actors, the effectiveness of collaboration, and whether the HAF has given effect to the ways of working specified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The process evaluation has been informed by each of the three partner organisations, the 17 Projects, their Case Officers and engagement with organisations who were not successful in their applications. We have also been able to draw on process evaluation findings from other programmes such as Calls 4 Action which provided additional insight into the design and delivery of the HAF process.

We undertook:

- A review of the Programme and Project documentation;
- Interviews with members of the Project Board and Evaluation and Delivery Groups;
- Interviews with Project Leads and Case Officers;
- An online survey of applicants; and
- Additional process interviews with key staff members involved in the administration of the grant.

Programme documentation

This included minutes/Project briefs/guidance documentation/application templates/ and the seventeen Project applications in full. The review helped establish key dates and milestones, and for the research team to develop a baseline understanding of the underlying theory of change and the criteria on which decisions would be made about awarding funding. It allowed us to familiarise ourselves with the detailed governance structure and roles of the key actors involved in the administration and design of the process.

Several meetings/calls early in the evaluation took place with one of the key actors, and this helped us clarify the details of the Programme's stages and milestones, and the thought process behind them from inception through to award. This allowed us to set out a detailed timeline of dates and understand the available supporting documentation from which topic guides for interviews could be developed.

Interviews

⁴⁶ Copies of the research instruments and more detail on the research process are available from UKRCS via Sandra.harris@ukrcs.uk

During the summer of 2019, a series of 28 semi-structured interviews (a mixture of face to face and telephone) were completed by the Evaluation Team with 21 actors. These interviews covered both the Theory of Change and the Process Evaluation and interviewees covered were from the:

- Project Board (9)
- Evaluation Group (4)
- Delivery Group (3)
- Grant administration team (2)
- Welsh Government policy officials (3)

Delivery Group members are also members of the Project Board and/or the Evaluation Group. Using a separate, but interlinked topic guide, interviews were then completed with the Project Leads from the 17 successful Projects and the Case Officers. Project Leads were often interviewed with other members of their organisation or partner organisation who had been involved in developing the application or would be leading on aspects of Project delivery. In total, 25 interviewees from Projects contributed and 11 Case Officers.

Survey

An online bilingual survey was created using Survey Monkey for all Programme applicants, regardless of the stage they reached in the overall application process. The survey covered:

- Level of satisfaction with the various stages of the application process
- Partnership development/collaboration
- Perceptions of the support provided through the HAF process
- Alignment with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the sustainable development principle

Respondents were routed to relevant questions according to the stage reached, i.e. (i) Expression of Interest (EOI) stage, (ii) Stage 2 Full Application, and (iii) Successful applicant.

Through the survey, unsuccessful applicants were provided with contact details to speak directly to a research team member if they wished to provide further feedback on their experience of the application process. Three applicants took up this offer.

The survey was open from 11th October to 31st October 2019 and 27 responses were received: 17 from third sector applicants and 10 from public sector applicants. Three respondents had submitted an EoI, 14 reached the full application stage and the remaining nine respondents were successful applicants awarded funding. One respondent did not indicate the stage reached.

March 2021