



BUSINESS PLAN

2024/2025



THE BUSINESS

Active4Today Ltd was launched on 1st June 2015 and is an independent company registered with Companies House, with Newark and Sherwood District Council being the single shareholder.

The business consists of four leisure centres, a sports development section, and a headquarters, which collects and manages the finance of the business, including the in-house direct debits. In addition to these services, Active4Today Ltd operates additional dryside provision out of Newark Academy, Bishop Alexander LEAD Academy, Barnby Road Academy, Nottingham University Samworth Academy (NUSA) and the newly acquired Magnus Academy, through service level agreements.

As a result of Covid-19 and the various closures that the business experienced, the Company's direct debit membership offer was significantly affected. As a result, throughout 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2303-2024, the Company worked hard to build its membership back up and is currently operating at over 11,000 adult and junior members.

The aim of the business is to focus on 3 distinct areas:

- Healthy and active lifestyles
- Accessible facilities
- Financial viability

According to statistics highlighted in the Community Plan 2023 – 2027, published by Newark and Sherwood District Council, there is disparity in the life expectancy from different areas of the district, as much as 9 years. This is due to several factors that shape lives and Active4Today has a vital role to play, alongside many other partners, in improving peoples lives.

In terms of levels of physical activity participation, which includes active travel and walking, recent statistics published by Sport England state that Newark and Sherwood performs positively in comparison to the East Midlands.

25.1% Inactive in N&S (less than 30 mins per week)	13.5% Fairly active in N&S (between 30 and 149 mins per week)	61.4% Active in N&S (at least 150 mins per week)
27.5% Inactive in E.Mids (less than 30 mins per week)	11.5% Fairly active in E.Mids (between 30 and 149 mins per week)	61.1% Active in E.Mids (at least 150 mins per week)

Source: Fig 1. Active Lives Survey, Sport England Nov 2021-2022

The Company's unique selling point (USP) is that of a fully accessible service, which is family friendly and offers a wide range of activities to attract users from all age groups and all socio-economic backgrounds. The work of the Company, although complimentary, is split into three areas. These are:

- Leisure facilities
- Outreach work
- Club development

Leisure Facilities

Within these facilities, the leisure centres provide activities to various groups covering, children, adults, 60 plus, affiliated clubs and schools. These are subsequently split into three categories of pay and play, block bookings and direct debit memberships.

The leisure facilities are provided in Blidworth, Ollerton, Southwell and also in Newark. In addition, partnerships were formed with Newark Academy, Barnby Road Academy, Bishop Alexander LEAD Academy Trust, NUSA and Magnus Academy, in a bid to expand the offer of the Company and improve health and fitness, for the communities.

The offer is varied across each site, with the introduction of a new swimming pool in Ollerton in July 2021 and the transfer of Southwell Leisure Centre into Active4Today in October 2021, the facility offer increased significantly. With the exception of Blidworth Leisure Centre, which is a dryside only facility, all sites now have a wet and dryside activity mix.

The wetside provision was however, reduced during October 2023, due to a significant leak within the corroded main pool pipework at Southwell Leisure Centre, which had been in place for nearly 60 years. As a result of this, the main pool was closed and the site is waiting for the development of two new pools over the coming years, following Newark and Sherwood District Council's Cabinet decision, to invest £5.5 million pounds at the site. The teaching pool however, currently remains open and continues to provide swimming lessons and public swimming.

Additional dryside facilities are provided within Newark, in partnership with Newark Academy, Barnby Road Academy, Bishop Alexander LEAD Academy Trust and Magnus Academy. Finally, dryside provision is also provided at the NUSA academy in Nottingham, which is the Company's only facility currently, which is outside the Newark and Sherwood boundaries.

All leisure centre's set out above are owned by Newark and Sherwood District Council, with the exception of Southwell Leisure Centre, which is owned by the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust and leased to the district. Each site is then leased to the Company for Active4Today to operate the leisure offer on behalf of the Council.

All sites are well maintained and an extensive list of repairs and renewals takes place within each facility. Where capital investment is required, this is through discussion with the Council. The latest large investment has been the solar panels located at Newark Sports and Fitness Centre and Dukeries Leisure Centre. The Company is working closely with the Council’s Decarbonisation Project Surveyor, to investigate other opportunities within the centres, including the installation of electric vehicle charges.

Outreach Work

Predominantly, this area of work is provided through the sports development team, either through direct provision, or through partnership working with other providers, this includes Newark and Sherwood Activity Village, NHS, clubs, and sporting organisations.

The team over the past year has supported clubs, schools, vulnerable groups and organisation across the district. The team has delivered many initiatives including, health and wellbeing events, holiday activities linked to the national Heathy Activity and Food (HAF) programme and supported community clean up events led by NSDC. The Team is led by one manager, who is supported by two full time officers and several voluntary staff, either directly linked to the organisations which they support, or working for Active4Today through the VISPA volunteering scheme.

Team members are heavily involved in the Council’s aspirations for improving cycling and walking infrastructure across the district as well as supporting the objectives identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Facilities Improvement Plan.

Club and Volunteer Development

The local sports forums are supported by the sports development team on a quarterly basis throughout the year, providing much-needed secretariat, advice and support to volunteers and clubs through these meetings. Newark and Sherwood Sports Council, was relaunched during 2023 (it had been suspended during Covid), with a focus on mental health and the positives that sport can bring.

There are 103 sports clubs within the district broken down as follows –

Athletics / Running	Cricket	Football	Hockey	Rugby	Swimming	Tennis	Other
5	16	26	2	3	3	5	46

Fig 2. Sports clubs within the district

And this is further split across the Sherwood and Newark areas of the district, as below.

Newark	Sherwood
50	53

Fig 3. Sports clubs split across the district

Whilst the Sports Council may be supported by the sports development team, support is still provided to clubs that are not members of the Sports Council on an individual basis, and this support is offered continuously throughout the year.

The VISPA and VISPA Academy volunteering schemes are a crucial tool to recruit new volunteers into sports activities both in clubs and leisure centres. This is particularly focussed on the 14+ age group, encouraging young people to get involved in volunteering in their community and gaining valuable experience and qualifications. This route has proved very successful in recruiting the workforce to the company, and planned to increase the focus on the recruitment and deployment to community settings. In November 2023, there were 14 volunteers in leisure centre settings. These volunteers provide support and resilience for clubs, as the young people begin to take up new roles within these organisations. As part of the training and support the young people can access subsidised coaching qualifications in sport, which typically include swimming teaching, gymnastics, and trampolining.

This focus on volunteering in sport and physical activity has been unchanged in recent years, however with a review undertaken early 2024, the scheme will contribute towards the Council’s approach to increasing the number of volunteers who are active in the district in sports and leisure opportunities for the public.

AIMS AND ACTIONS

As part of the business plan, aims and actions have been identified by the Company, which focus on key parts of the business. The suggested aims and actions for 2024-2025 are set out below and following a review of the Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022–2026, the specific links to the strategy are highlighted below within the plan.

	AIMS	LINKS TO H&WB STRATEGY	ACTION
1.	Healthy and active lifestyles		
1.1	Children and young people	Ensuring a Best Start/ Improving Healthy Lifestyles/ Tackling Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Co-ordinate a series of free activities for children and families during school holidays. At least 2 free activities on 1 day per week, identified during each school holiday week, in each holiday period. b) Offer school holiday activities to qualifying children on free school meals through the Healthy Activity and Food (HAF) funded programme.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Develop the school holiday provision to include developmental sports clubs and provide experience for VISPA volunteers. d) Development of an annual swimming competition to identify talented swimmers and signpost to local clubs.
1.2	Inclusion	Ensuring a Best Start/ Improving Healthy Lifestyles/ Tackling Physical Activity/ Recognising Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue the roll out of with Shaw Mind for access to fitness suite facilities through local secondary schools to support small groups of targeted young people with mental health problems. b) Continue to offer 20 bursaries for identified young people living with mental health conditions, to access a free 12-month gym membership at each of our leisure centre sites DLC, NSFC, SLC, BLC c) Explore, pilot and develop one session targeting people with a disability engaging with a minimum of 10 people per session, over a 10-week period. d) Join National Disability Awareness campaigns to raise awareness of the disability offer and broaden the spread of publicity. e) Support the N&S Sports Council to develop a team of Mental Health ambassadors across the district. f) Approach local organisations including the Youth Service and Parish Councils to offer activities to address antisocial behaviour (work with at least 10 PC's across the district). g) Identify sessions/activities, once per month that can be offered on a 'Pay what you can' basis. h) Launch the Safer Gyms initiative in conjunction with partners, highlighting A4T involvement and accreditation of all 4 sites.
1.3	Volunteers and workforce	Tackling Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work in the secondary schools to develop volunteering opportunities for children aged 14 and over. Engagement with 5 schools and a target of 40 new young people on the VISPA programme. b) Include developmental/mentoring opportunities for VISPA volunteers within the school holiday activity programme. c) Develop a digital platform to record training, hours and progress of VISPA volunteers. d) Work with partners to develop and organise/deliver mental health training for identified staff. e) Identify opportunities for education and training for the community including first aid for children. f) Develop a series of training opportunities for staff and external individuals which will upskill the workforce and widen access to recognised courses, including STA pool lifeguard and swimming teaching, Safer Gyms workshops.
1.4	New opportunities	Tackling Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Develop the options for establishing a charitable arm of the company, in a bid to attract external funding. b) Engage with 6 new companies to build a relationship and share promotional material to take up corporate membership packages, with a view to improving the health and wellbeing of their workforce. c) Develop and host a charity event at NSFC with the Beaumont House Business Club members, to bring organisations to the facilities and experience the offer. d) Develop a series of 'master classes' for adults which will increase confidence and provide enjoyment to specialist activities. e) Be part of the Council's project group to develop options for the replacement swimming pools at Southwell Leisure Centre and the options for further development of a larger wetside and dryside facility.

2.	Accessible facilities		
2.1	Long term health conditions	Improving Healthy Lifestyles/ Tackling Physical Activity/ Addressing the needs of an ageing population	<p>a) Following the review in 2023, identify 10 new referral agencies/surgeries within the district and on the borders of the district per month, advising them of the benefits of engaging with the GP referral programme.</p> <p>b) Identify 2 staff for attendance/completion of the Level 3 GP/Exercise Referral qualification in order to build capacity and resilience.</p>
2.2	Partner sites	Improving Healthy Lifestyles/ Tackling Physical Activity	<p>a) Based on the feedback from the review undertaken in 2023, contact 2 schools each month with the offer to work with A4T with a target of developing two further partner sites within 202-2025.</p> <p>b) Improve community access through partner facilities and review current SLAs with each partner site</p>
2.3	Fitness offer	Improving Healthy Lifestyles/ Tackling Physical Activity/ Addressing the needs of an ageing population	<p>a) Review the current fitness equipment provision across all sites and undertake a replacement of all equipment beyond end of life, bring in line with industry standards and trends.</p> <p>b) Work with the Council using the above information to develop an understanding of the proposed offer in the future and how this can be translated into a tendering opportunity, for suitably qualified fitness equipment suppliers.</p> <p>c) Work with the Council to update the current capital budget identified for replacement fitness equipment and ensure sufficient finance is available before any tendering process is advertised</p>
2.4	Digital technology	Improving Healthy Lifestyles/ Tackling Physical Activity	<p>a) Improve the content and functionality of the App, including increased marketing, push notifications, job vacancies and customer feedback.</p> <p>b) Develop a digital customer survey which can be sent out annually by the Company, to assess the feedback regarding customer satisfaction.</p> <p>c) Continue to develop and roll out the self-service offer within the Company, moving all grant aid forms and applications online to speed the process up for the applicant and improve the quality of offer by the Company</p>
2.5	Physical access	Improving Healthy Lifestyles/ Tackling Physical Activity	<p>a) Work with the Council to improve the changing provision for disabled people at Dukeries Leisure Centre</p>
3.	Financial viability		
3.1	Pricing	Improving Healthy Lifestyles/ Tackling Physical Activity	<p>a) In conjunction with the Council, undertake a pricing review of all hire fees and charges, monthly membership options and pay and play per activity.</p> <p>b) Undertake the remaining price re-alignments for the memberships with a target of achieving a full re-alignment of all memberships by the end of the financial year 2024-2025</p> <p>c) Refine and streamlining of the block booking process and renewal of bookings</p>
3.3	Financial services and expenditure/income	Improving Healthy Lifestyles/ Tackling Physical Activity	<p>a) Approach suitably large sporting organisations to offer the opportunity for A4T to collect and administer the subscriptions made by members, through the Company's already established and successful direct debit memberships.</p>

			b) Undertake the procurement process for the four-year cycle of financial audits
			c) Investigate options for reducing energy costs and usage

Fig 4: proposed outcomes/objectives and actions for 2024-2025

CUSTOMERS

The business is made up of customers who are at the heart of the business. Physical access to the services by them, occurs in various ways including:

- Free of charge
- Pay and play
- Direct debit memberships
- Hirers direct debit memberships/bookings

SERVICES AND COMPETITORS

The services are split into two areas, which are indoor provision; provided by the leisure centres and partner sites and external provision; provided by the sports development section of the business. Within the leisure centres and partner sites, the services are divided up into distinct areas, wetside provision and dryside provision. These are once more sub divided into fitness suites, sports hall hire, squash courts, club bookings and swimming.

Below the Company has set out its proposed core prices for its 'pay and play' sessions. These are set out below with current and proposed prices shown. In addition, the same information has been provided for the Company's memberships.

Activity	Active Card holder Adult		Non-Active Card Holder Adult	
	Current Price	Proposed Price	Current Price	Proposed Price
	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025
Badminton	£11.00	£11.00	£13.50	£13.50
Swimming	£6.00	£6.00	£7.50	£7.50
Squash	£9.50	£9.50	£11.50	£11.50
Fitness Suite	£8.00	£8.00	N/A	N/A
Fitness Suite Classes	£8.00	£8.00	N/A	N/A
Activity	Active Card Holder Junior		Non-Active Card Holder Junior	
	Current Price	Proposed Price	Current Price	Proposed Price
	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025
Badminton	£7.50	£7.50	£8.50	£8.50
Swimming	£4.50	£4.50	£5.50	£5.50
Squash	£6.50	£6.50	£7.50	£7.50
Fitness Suite	£5.50	£5.50	N/A	N/A
Fitness Suite Classes	£5.50	£5.50	N/A	N/A

Fig 5. Proposed Core Prices for Adults and Children – 2024-2025

Membership type	Current Price 2023/2024	Proposed price 2024/2025	Price variance
STAFF ACTIVO	£10.00	£10.00	£0.00
Activo Premier	£49.00	£49.00	£0.00
Activo Inclusive	£31.00	£31.00	£0.00
Activo Gym	£29.00	£29.00	£0.00
Activo Corporate	£26.00	£26.00	£0.00
Activo Concessionary	£26.00	£26.00	£0.00
Activo 60	£26.00	£26.00	£0.00
NSDC Corporate	£10.00	£10.00	£0.00
Activo Swim	£22.00	£22.00	£0.00
Activo 60 Swim	£19.00	£19.00	£0.00
GP Referral	£18.00	£18.00	£0.00
Activo Student	£20.00	£20.00	£0.00
Staff Xperience	£10.00	£10.00	£0.00
Xperience 1	£24.00	£24.00	£0.00
NSDC XP1	£19.00	£19.00	£0.00
XP1 Concession	£19.00	£19.00	£0.00
Xperience 2	£38.00	£38.00	£0.00
NSDC Xperience 2	£34.00	£34.00	£0.00
Xperience 2 Concession	£34.00	£34.00	£0.00
Xperience Student	£20.00	£20.00	£0.00
Small Group Swim Lessons	£31.00	£31.00	£0.00
1-2-1 Flex	£72.00	£72.00	£0.00
Adult Monthly Pass	£47.00	£47.00	£0.00
Junior Monthly Pass	£27.00	£27.00	£0.00
SummerFIT	£20.00	£20.00	£0.00
Free Access - Activo Refugee	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Free Access - Xp1 Refugee	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Free Access - Xp Student Refugee	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Freeze	£5.00	£5.00	£0.00
Course Payment upfront	£85.00	£85.00	£0.00
Course Payment upfront Concession	£70.00	£70.00	£0.00
Activo Upfront	£372.00	£372.00	£0.00
Activo 60 Upfront	£312.00	£312.00	£0.00
Activo Swim Upfront	£264.00	£264.00	£0.00
Activo 60 Swim Upfront	£228.00	£228.00	£0.00

Fig 6. Proposed Membership Prices for types – 2024-2025

It is proposed that currently all prices remain the same for 2024-2025, however, as part of the business plan, the Company will review the pricing policy in line with the Council's wider review of prices across the district. Whilst traditionally the Company would introduce a pricing change in April, it is recommending that this is reviewed in the first quarter of the 2024-2025 financial year and any change to pricing is implemented on 1st October 2024.

All prices have been assessed in line with other operators and particularly local authority (LA) owned facilities. Active4Today continues to propose very competitive prices for the residents of the district, which are comparable with all other LA's within Nottinghamshire.

MARKETING

To assist with the sustainability and growth of the business, the Company currently markets and advertises extensively to attract and retain its customers and build the profile of the Company locally. Throughout 2024-2025, this will increase further in a bid to attract new customers into the business and retain the customers currently using the Company's services.

Campaigns will be focused on corporate memberships, lapsed members and families (especially in the Ollerton area, where the new swimming pool has been added). Campaigns will be primarily facilitated through social media and digital platforms; however, this will be supported where necessary with several more traditional marketing methods, to meet some local need where digital campaigns may not be the most appropriate. Advertising will also take place through schools and corporate organisations in a bid to raise awareness of the excellent facilities once again on offer.

STAFFING

To undertake the work, the Company has a team of dedicated individuals, led by a committed and passionate management team. In the region of £25,000 is invested annually into training, continuing professional development (CPD), and maintaining staff qualifications. This cost includes the Apprenticeship Levy, which supports the Company's apprentices. This enables the Company to 'ring fence' resources to recruit employees onto apprenticeships, providing valuable vocational training, whilst achieving a recognised qualification from an accredited training provider.

In addition to the training budget identified above, the Company also undertakes monthly training with all lifeguards, which is a requirement of maintaining their pool qualifications and is essential for maintaining the high standards of safety within our facilities.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Company is committed to ensure the performance of a variety of areas is achieved, aligning our resources, systems and employees to the strategic objectives identified earlier. Outcome based performance monitoring is now widely used along with narrative-based performance evidence. The performance indicators are linked to the Council's strategic outcomes and have been developed by senior Members and Officers of the Company and Council, in order to build a meaningful and robust performance framework.

FINANCE

As part of the business planning process, the Company undertakes extensive and detailed work in a bid to produce accurate budgets and forecasts. As a result of the recent proposals by the district council, the management fee for 2024-2025 will be provided as a single payment, made at the end of the financial year and paid before the final accounts are completed.