



BUSINESS PLAN

2025/2026



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, Barnby Road Academy, Nottingham University Samworth Academy (NUSA) and Magnus Academy, through service level agreements.

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 people's lives.

In terms of levels of physical activity participation, which includes active travel and walking, the latest data published by Sport England, state that activity levels in Newark and Sherwood are below levels of the wider East Midlands region. This is a change from the previous year data from 2021-2022, where Newark and Sherwood performed positively when compared to the region.

29.9% Inactive in N&S (less than 30 mins per week)	9.1% Fairly active in N&S (between 30 and 149 mins per week)	61.0% Active in N&S (at least 150 mins per week)
26.7% Inactive in E.Mids (less than 30 mins per week)	11.1% Fairly active in E.Mids (between 30 and 149 mins per week)	62.2% Active in E.Mids (at least 150 mins per week)

Source: Fig 1. Active Lives Survey, Sport England Nov 2022-2023

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 centres are located in Blidworth, Ollerton, Southwell and also in Newark. In addition, established partnerships have continued with Newark Academy, Barnby Road Academy, NUSA and Magnus Academy, to expand the offer of the Company and improve health and fitness, of local communities.

The offer varies across each site, with Newark, Dukeries and Southwell offering wetside and dryside activities and Blidworth Leisure Centre, offering dryside activities only. That said, the wetside at Southwell offers only a teaching pool provision, following a significant leak being identified within the corroded main pool pipework in 2023.

Additional dryside and outdoor facilities are provided within Newark, in partnership with Newark Academy, Barnby Road Academy and Magnus Academy. Finally, dryside and outdoor facilities are also provided at NUSA in Nottingham, which is the Company's only facility outside the Newark and Sherwood boundary.

All leisure centres 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 Council. Each site is then leased to the Company to operate the leisure offer on behalf of the Council.

All sites are well maintained and benefit from an extensive number of repairs and renewals, which takes place within each facility on an annual basis. Where capital investment is required, this is through discussion with the Council. The largest investments within 2024-2025 have been the refurbishments of the fitness suites at Newark, Dukeries and Blidworth and the installation of solar panels 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 charging points.

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 organisations 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 health and wellbeing, 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, with a focus on mental health and the positives that sport can bring.

There are 110 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	50

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
54	56

Fig 3. Sports clubs split across the district

Whist the Sports Council may be supported by the sports development team, support is also 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 and has supported the recruitment of the workforce for the company. In December 2024, there were 10 volunteers placed within 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 remained unchanged in recent years, however with a review undertaken in 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 during 2025-2026.

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 2025-2026 are set out below and following a review of the Council’s Community Plan, the specific links to the strategy are highlighted below within the plan.

	AIMS	LINKS TO COMMUNITY PLAN	ACTION
1.	Healthy and active lifestyles		
1.1	Children and young people	Improve health and wellbeing / Raise people’s skills level and create employment opportunities for them to fulfil their potential / Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour	<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 Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) funded programme. c) Develop the school holiday provision to include developmental sports clubs and provide experience for VISPA volunteers. d) Support the N&S Council to offer events to engage with new junior members. e) Identify 2 areas in the district for delivery of holiday activities with partners including Anti-Social Behaviour team and Youth Service
1.2	Inclusion	Improve health and wellbeing / Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 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 b) Investigate the expansion of the bursary scheme to other targeted groups i.e. young people with a disability, offering additional free passes to young people. 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.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Identify other areas in the district for addressing anti-social behaviour with young people with physical activity sessions. e) Identify sessions/activities, once per month that can be offered on a 'Pay what you can' basis. f) Investigate new pathways and partners to broaden the reach of the DWP bursary scheme in Newark, Ollerton and Boughton g) Showcase the accessibility of the leisure centre offer, and adaptability of fitness equipment, by developing content for use on social media, which will build confidence for new disabled users. h) Use links with Newark College to develop talking maps for new users with visual impairments
1.3	Volunteers and workforce	Raise people's skills level and create employment opportunities for them to fulfil their potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with the district's secondary schools to develop volunteering opportunities for young people aged 14 and over. Engagement with 5 schools and a target of engaging 40 new young people on the VISPA programme. b) Include developmental/mentoring opportunities for VISPA volunteers within the school holiday activity programme. c) Recruit 5 new sports clubs to engage with and offer VISPA volunteering placements. d) Develop a calendar of events i.e. careers fairs, open evenings, for attendance by the team to raise the profile of VISPA. e) Work with partners to develop and organise/deliver mental health training for identified staff. f) Develop a series of training opportunities for staff and external individuals, which will upskill the workforce and widen access to recognised courses, including Menopause and stroke rehab. g) Review the performance and self-reflection feedback from staff to identify key personnel, for succession planning and training.
1.4	New opportunities	Improve health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Investigate the possibilities of developing and implementing a charitable arm (NewCo) of the company, in a bid to attract external funding. b) Support the Council with the development of the new Lincoln Road Sports Facility and what this may provide to the community. This will focus on the look and feel of the facility, the operations day to day and the potential long term management opportunities. c) Engage with 40 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. d) Enrolment of 3 companies to convert to the full managed membership package for the corporate scheme. e) Investigate the options for a bronze, silver, gold, and business centre packages, for corporate partners. f) Support NSDC with the development of all-weather pitches across the district, including the planning, operation and management of the pitches, for community use. g) Work with NTU's Business School, supporting the development of undergraduate projects, with particular focus on investigating a digital marketing strategy for the company, to support the business. h) Introduce a major new piece of dryside inflatable equipment at the Dukeries Leisure Centre, which will provide new activities at the site and offer greater opportunities to the young people of Ollerton and the surrounding areas. i) Introduce a new pool inflatable at the Dukeries Leisure Centre, which will support the wetside programme and offer new opportunities for the young people of Ollerton and the surrounding areas. j) Investigate options for new branding and website design.

			<p>k) Develop a new programme of poolside activities, following the completion of the new disability changing facility, built within the Dukeries swimming pool hall.</p> <p>l) Develop a series of videos to promote the facilities, which can be streamed on social media and other platforms to raise exposure of the company.</p>
2.	Accessible facilities		
2.1	Long term health conditions	Improve health and wellbeing	<p>a) Identify 10 new referral agencies/surgeries within the district and on the borders of the district per year, advising them of the benefits of engaging with the GP referral programme.</p> <p>b) Recruit 5 new referring partners.</p> <p>c) Develop trusted partners network to signpost people to the exercise referral scheme.</p> <p>d) Identify 2 staff for attendance/completion of the Level 3 GP/Exercise Referral qualification, to build capacity and resilience.</p> <p>e) Understand the demand from healthcare professionals for specialist health sessions in the Sherwood area of the district and develop an action plan to raise awareness of opportunities.</p> <p>f) Use 'World Hypertension Day' and 'Know your numbers' week to raise the profile of high blood pressure, do checks in leisure centres and community settings.</p>
2.2	Partner sites	Improve health and wellbeing	<p>a) Contact 2 schools with the offer to work with A4T with a target of developing two further partner sites within 2025-2026.</p> <p>b) Improve community access through partner facilities and review current SLAs with each partner site.</p>
2.3	Digital technology	Improve health and wellbeing	<p>a) Improve the content and functionality of the App, including increased marketing, customer feedback.</p> <p>b) Undertake a digital customer survey 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, provided by the Company.</p> <p>d) Use artificial intelligence to improve building efficiency and operations i.e. cleaning robots, customer services, swimming programmes and social media Q&As.</p> <p>e) Explore the options for leisure management system to be hosted off premise.</p>
2.4	Physical access		<p>a) Continue to ensure the buildings where possible continue to be accessible for all our customers, including those who may have conditions, which make access more difficult.</p>
3.	Financial viability		
3.1	Pricing	Improve health and wellbeing	<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 2025/2026</p> <p>c) Refining and streamlining of the block booking process and renewal of bookings, identification of other appropriate software packages.</p>

3.3	Financial services and expenditure/income	Improve health and wellbeing	<p>a) Approach sporting organisations to collect and administer the subscriptions made by members, through the Company's efficient direct debit membership collection process.</p> <p>b) Explore the options of alternative financial modelling with the Council, which will focus on an 'Agency' model to improve the company's and councils VAT position.</p>
3.3	Sustainability	Reduce the impact of climate change	<p>a) Expand the use of recycling pods for single use plastics and other recyclable materials.</p> <p>b) Review data of energy usage to understand patterns and trends alongside Environmental Audit and identify specific interventions, which will decrease the carbon footprint.</p> <p>c) Review findings of BMS investigations and implement appropriate actions.</p>

Fig 4: proposed outcomes/objectives and actions for 2025-2026

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, dryside and outdoor 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
	2024/2025	2025/2026	2024/2025	2025/2026
Badminton	£11.00	£12.00	£13.50	£14.50
Swimming	£6.00	£6.50	£7.50	£8.00
Squash	£9.50	£10.00	£11.50	£12.50
Fitness Suite	£8.00	£8.50	N/A	N/A
Fitness Suite (60+/Std/Con)	£7.00	£7.50	N/A	N/A
Fitness Suite Classes	£8.00	£8.50	N/A	N/A
Activity	Active Card Holder Junior		Non-Active Card Holder Junior	
	Current Price	Proposed Price	Current Price	Proposed Price

	2024/2025	2025/2026	2024/2025	2025/2026
Badminton	£7.00	£7.50	£8.00	£8.50
Swimming	£4.50	£5.00	£5.50	£6.00
Squash	£6.50	£7.00	£7.50	£8.00
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 2024/2025	Proposed price 2025/2026	Price variance
Activo Premier	£49.00	£50.00	£1.00
Activo Premier Flex	£61.00	£62.00	£1.00
Activo Inclusive	£31.00	£32.00	£1.00
Activo Inclusive Flex	£39.00	£40.00	£1.00
Activo Gym	£29.00	£30.00	£1.00
Activo Corporate	£26.00	£27.00	£1.00
Activo Concessionary	£26.00	£27.00	£1.00
Activo 60	£26.00	£27.00	£1.00
NSDC Corporate	£10.00	£10.00	£0.00
Activo Swim	£22.00	£23.00	£1.00
Activo Swim Flex	£27.00	£28.00	£1.00
Activo 60 Swim	£19.00	£20.00	£1.00
GP Referral	£18.00	£19.00	£1.00
Activo Rackets	£37.00	£38.00	£1.00
Activo Rackets Concession	£30.00	£31.00	£1.00
Activo Student	£20.00	£21.00	£1.00
Activo Student Flex	£24.00	£25.00	£1.00
Staff ACTIVO	£10.00	£10.00	£0.00
Staff Xperience	£10.00	£10.00	£0.00
Xperience 1	£24.00	£25.00	£1.00
NSDC XP1	£19.00	£20.00	£1.00
XP1 Concession	£19.00	£20.00	£1.00
Xperience 2	£38.00	£39.00	£1.00
NSDC Xperience 2	£34.00	£35.00	£1.00
Xperience 2 Concession	£34.00	£35.00	£1.00
Xperience Rackets	£25.00	£26.00	£1.00
Xperience Rackets Concession	£21.00	£22.00	£1.00
Xperience Student	£20.00	£21.00	£1.00
Xperience Student Flex	£24.00	£25.00	£1.00
Small Group Swim Lessons	£31.00	£32.00	£1.00
1-2-1 lessons	£72.00	£73.00	£1.00
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	£90.00	£5.00
Course Payment upfront Concession	£70.00	£75.00	£5.00
Activo Upfront	£372.00	£384.00	£12.00
Activo 60 Upfront	£312.00	£324.00	£12.00
Activo Swim Upfront	£264.00	£276.00	£12.00
Activo 60 Swim Upfront	£228.00	£240.00	£12.00

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

We propose increasing several membership prices (as per the table above) by up to £1.00 per month for the 2025-2026 period. This will be the first membership price increase in two years.

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 local authorities 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 2025-2026, 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.

In addition, and as set out in the business plan aims and objectives, the company is working with Nottingham Trent University during 2025-2026 to develop a digital strategy for the company and look at methods of how the company can engage with different target markets and demographics through various platforms.

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. All staff groups have regular CPD and training throughout the year, which is aligned with their role.

Training and development requests are available for staff to complete to further their skills and enhance the service provision.

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. This is monitored and reported on a regular basis to the Board and Shareholder Committee.

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 2025-2026 will be provided as a single payment, made at the end of the financial year and paid before the final accounts are completed.