

# B2N: MUCH MORE THAN A GAME

Impact Report - September 2016

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*“Since joining B2N I feel like a completely different person. I’m a lot fitter, more confident and I enjoy my days a lot more.”*

Project in partnership with **England Netball**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – “Back to Netball saved my life!”

### Aims

This report provides an evaluation of the impact of the Back to Netball (B2N) programme from its inception to today. It provides evidence of how B2N impacts on players' physical and mental health and social wellbeing and the contribution of the programme to local communities and exploring the extent that B2N facilitates behaviour change.

### What is Back to Netball?

B2N is an England Netball programme that has been running across the country since 2009 and has engaged over 60,000 participants since the programme began. The aim of the programme is to provide a gentle re-introduction to netball for people who have played in the past and want to re-engage with a sport they love. The sessions focus on the basics of the game including passing, shooting and footwork and always include a game to put those skills in to practice. England Netball hopes that participants will then go on to join clubs, or even form their own, or find an alternative programme such as Netball Now so they can continue to play netball on a regular and ongoing basis.

### Findings

The report identified that B2N clearly meets three key government objectives *Physical wellbeing*, *Mental wellbeing* and *Social and Community development*. In addition, 98% of all participants in the programme would recommend B2N to others, and identified the following benefits:



It was found that B2N provides an outlet for mothers in a variety of different ways. 52% of all participants reported having at least one child under the age of 18. From this sample, losing baby weight, developing an identity and improving social relationships through baby networks were key themes. B2N also develops the netball community, in addition to providing social support with coach and player interactions found to be of importance to participants within the project.

Convenience, standard of play and coach delivery were found to be potential limitations if these factors were not fully aligned. Marketing was also found to be a potential limitation, in that some participants were not fully aware of what B2N was and the standard of play that it involved.

### Recommendations for B2N

Recommendations identified through the report include:

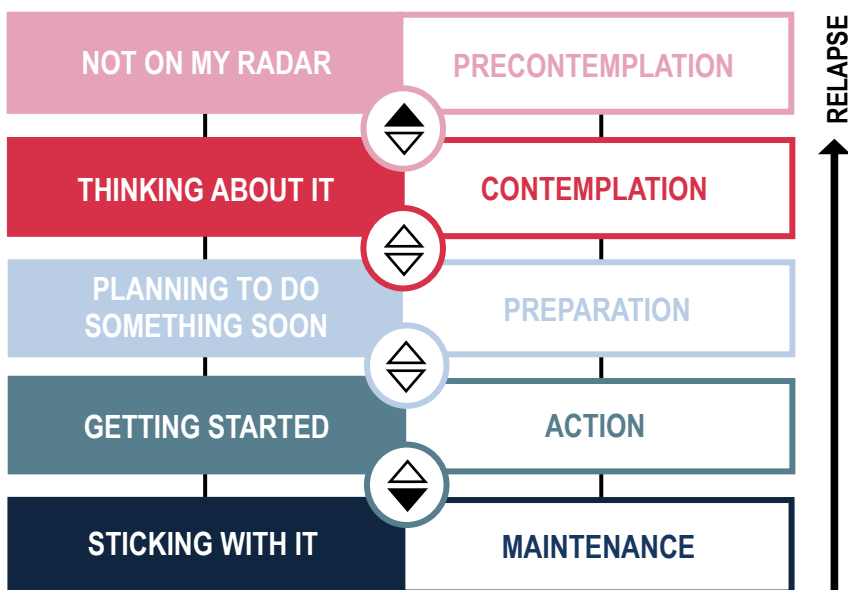
- Creating sessions suitable for the standard of participants and motive for participating.
- Introducing daytime B2N to encourage individuals are not in full-time employment to engage in B2N.
- Improved marketing through:
  - More advertisements of B2N with clear details on to meet participant expectations.
  - Developing and promoting progression routes for participants including signposting to further netball or sport/physical activities.
  - Providing further information to inform participants how to become coaches, umpires and volunteers.

## A MODEL OF BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

This report used the behaviour change model to identify how participants who engage in B2N changed their physical activity behaviour. The Transtheoretical model of behaviour change (TTM)<sup>1,2</sup> acts as a method to understand the intentional change in individual behaviour over a prolonged period of time.

The TTM is constructed from five key stages that track individuals' habitual behaviour change: *Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action* and *Maintenance*.

Figure 1: Transtheoretical model of behaviour change (TTM)<sup>3</sup>



## KEY DEFINITIONS

The following definitions have been applied within the report to identify the various stages of engagement in B2N:

### Current participants:

Individuals actively engaging in B2N sessions at the time of the project.

### Former participants:

#### *Netball graduates*

Individuals who have stopped attending B2N sessions but have continued to engage in netball through club links, and setting up teams.

#### *Activity graduates*

Individuals who have stopped attending B2N sessions but have continued or taken up a different sport or physical activity (other than netball).

#### *Relapsed participants*

Individuals who have stopped attending B2N sessions but have yet to engage, or have no further interest in engaging in sport or physical activity.



*“I’ll always go to netball if someone asks me to do something. I’m determined that those are my netball nights and I don’t let that drop for anything.”*

# IDENTIFYING THE IMPACT OF B2N

The following section provides an overview of B2N. It identifies how behaviour has changed, from initial motives and through the journey taken by the participants. Perceived benefits of B2N are presented, in addition to a key finding which demonstrates the influence of motherhood on participation and the coach's impact on B2N engagement. Findings are reported based on the participant and coach survey, and follow-up interviews.



## INITIAL MOTIVES

for participating in sport, B2N

B2N participants were asked to identify their top six motives for initially engaging in the programme. Physical motives 'Increasing physical activity' and 'Improving fitness levels' were ranked highest overall.

### Top six initial motives for engaging in B2N

1. Increase physical activity

2. Improve fitness levels

3. Relieve day-to-day stress

3. Improve overall ability

5. To make friends

6. Increase confidence

B2N has proven to be an extremely positive experience for participants and works for a large body of participants. These positive experiences are often mediated by several factors. These include the coach, playing standard/ambition of the participant and the wider netball infrastructure in the area.

*"Originally I joined as I loved netball at school and wanted to increase my fitness and physical activity."*

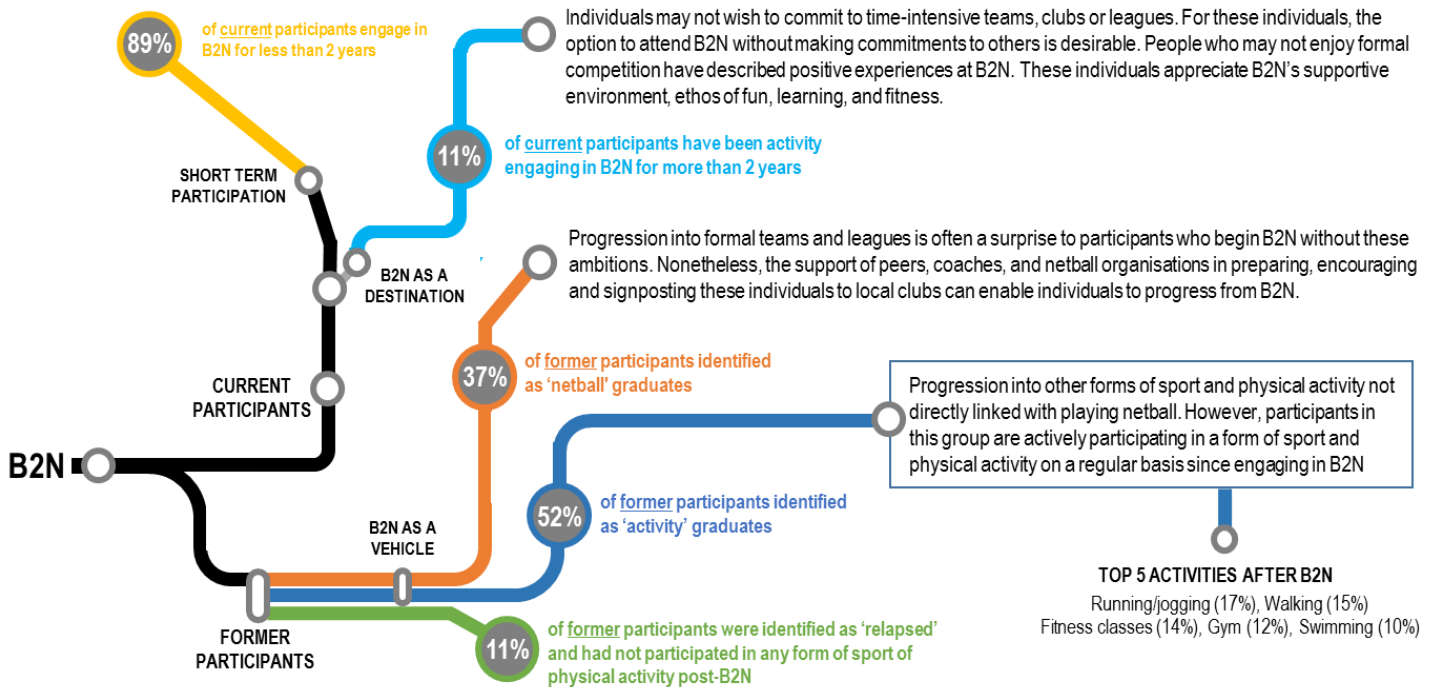
*"I used to love netball at school, and never did any exercise, but when I saw a poster about it locally I wanted to come and give it a try."*

*"I loved netball in school and wanted to get back into it, to have fun and do some exercise."*

*"I was overweight and unfit and wanted a way of improving fitness. I had been to the gym previously but didn't continue as I didn't enjoy it. Netball was more enjoyable as it was a fun way of exercising without feeling like a workout."*

# JOURNEY THROUGH B2N

The figure below shows participants' journey from previous experience of netball, participation in B2N – and for former participants – activities post B2N.



## More than a game

Brenda is a 42-year-old mum of two young children who is also in full-time employment. After starting to participate in B2N as an opportunity to meet up with her friends, she felt inspired and motivated to give something back to a sport that had re-energised her and provided her with a renewed sense of confidence. She set up a club to provide Back to Netballers with the opportunity to play competitively, something she didn't expect to be doing when she initially decided to start attending B2N.

*"It started off as a brief conversation in a pub and the playground with some friends about how we used to love playing netball when we were younger. We decided to get together and try and have a bit of a throw around, just socially between ourselves. So we started out with us having about 20 people from the village, all people we knew. Then we got an email from the local NDO and we started up as a Back to Netball session and it snowballed from there. We decided to start a team to give us something to work towards. We spent about six months losing everything, but we're lucky because people didn't come away from that being completely downhearted. We'll be going back to one of the tournaments this year and we don't plan on losing a single game!"*

PROGRESSION

QUALIFICATIONS

*Now we have two sessions a week, we've actually had five players who have gone onto a beginners umpiring course, and two of us have just passed our Level 1 coaching course. Family's a massive thing for us: I coach and my mum and sister in law's mum umpire for us- they're the 'Mumpires!' My sister's in a wheelchair now and she's found it really difficult because she can't play anymore, but she's taking her Level 1 coaching course too. My Mum was her full time carer whilst she was in hospital, she lost her life really throughout that period. But since she came to Back to Netball, she's done her Level 1 coaching course, and that confidence for somebody of that age to go out and do something outside her comfort zone has only happened because of what we've done!*

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

WORK/LIFE BALANCE

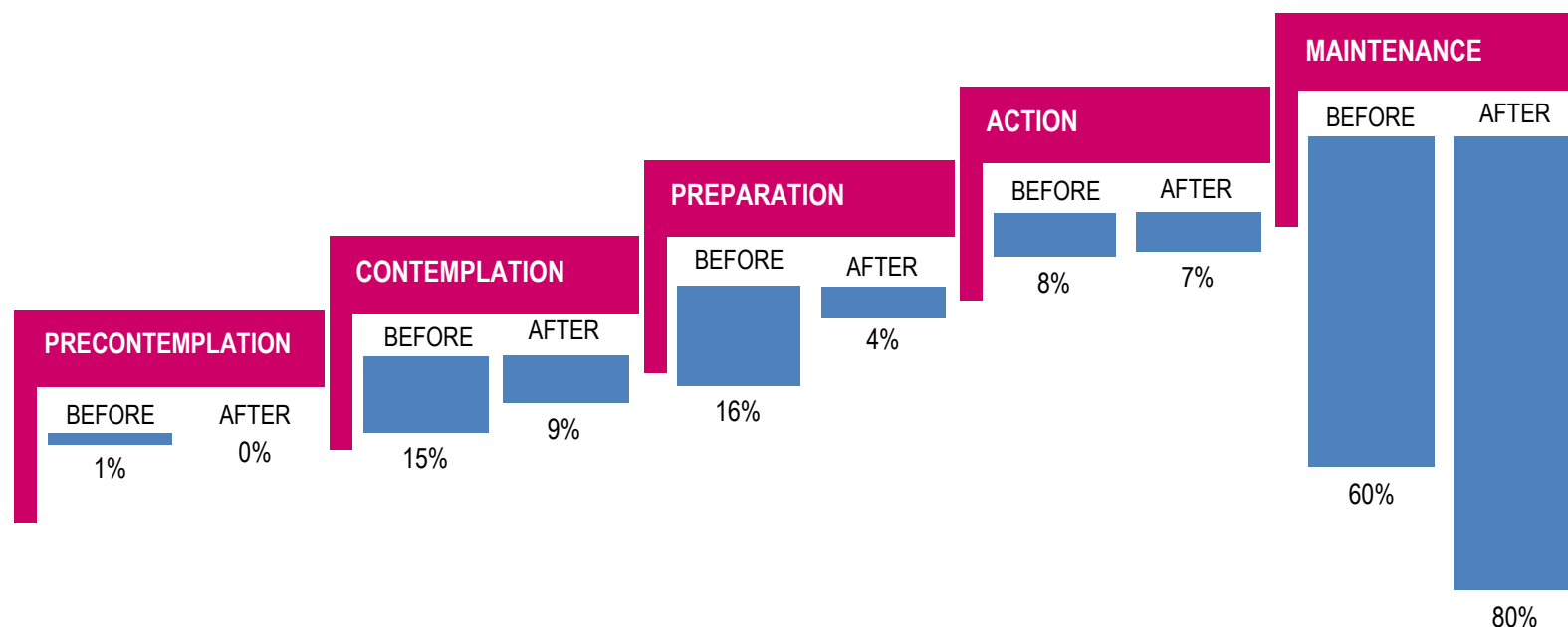
*We've organised a tournament this weekend and we've probably got about 130 netballers in one place. Some people would call it a chore, but I do it because everybody loves playing so much. I have a full-time job and two young children and I will change my working day around to try and get to games- I was a football widow for my husband, but now he's a netball widow- it's a bit like girl power!"*

# B2N HAS CHANGED BEHAVIOUR!

**KEY FINDING:** 20% of those no longer engaging in B2N are more physically active than before B2N.

The bar chart below shows a clear shift in behaviour towards sport and physical activity for the former B2N participants. Participants have moved from the earlier stages of the TTM where they are not active (pre-contemplation, contemplation and preparation) to the later stages, where they are more physically active (maintenance) for a duration of six months or more following their engagement in B2N.

Figure 2: Former participants' response identifying behaviour towards sport and physical activity before and after participating in B2N.



The following 'processes of change' were key to moving people along the pathway of behaviour change.

## CARING ABOUT CONSEQUENCES FOR OTHERS

*"When I was at Uni I wasn't doing any team sports. It was more a case of saying, 'oh, I should really try and go for a walk today'. And then I wouldn't go. But because I know I'm part of this group and we all get along so well, I just keep going."*

## SUBSTITUTING OTHER ACTIVITIES

*"I've done other sports. I've done other forms of exercise. I was running and I would go to the gym and I would sometimes do sessions like group exercise at the gym which is different from being in a team. In netball I just found that I wasn't clock watching. I wasn't counting how many minutes I had to go until I could get off the treadmill or I could finish the class that I was doing. It was just really the sport. The sport is just really good fun and that is the main thing that has kept me going."*

## SOCIAL SUPPORT

*"Socialising wasn't the main reason that I joined but it is probably something that has kept me going because the group is really nice. You do have really good fun with them and of course we have started playing in this other league as well so I see them like twice a week. You do make really good friends with everyone that you play with."*



## The spark

Rachel is 36, married and is in full-time employment. After relocating because of work, she struggled to get back into an exercise routine and had not exercised regularly since school. She started attending B2N 10 months ago, and now seeks out every possible opportunity to play netball in her local area. She hopes to progress to playing in a league and is grateful to B2N for reigniting her love of netball.

“Before I started Back to Netball I **never did any exercise**. I cycled to work but that’s it, not for enjoyment, but just to get me from A to B. Exercising was never an interest, I was completely a go home and sit on the sofa person. I was quite sporty at school and did a lot of running and obviously played netball, but when I went to university and then when I moved cities I tried playing in clubs and everyone was really good, so it put me off and I stopped going.”

INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SUBSTITUTING EXISTING ACTIVITY

I’d started going to the gym and to classes but I’d been finding it difficult to get into a routine and found **it quite boring**. I can’t do a single sit up or push up or anything, and I’ve got the upper body strength of a baby bird so I decided the gym’s not for me, but I needed to do something else as I wanted to **increase my fitness**. I was attracted to Back to Netball as it’s no commitment so if I felt like I couldn’t handle it or had to go away for work, it didn’t matter.

ENJOYMENT

Now I’m addicted to netball and I want to play as much as possible: at one point I was playing five **nights a week!** I’m six feet tall and I hate being tall, but when I’ve got the ball, when I’ve got my arms above my head, people can’t reach it and it’s the best feeling in the world! I think I’m quite good in that respect and I’m a shooter and **everyone claps when I do my job properly** and **that is just a good feeling too**. Now I’ve joined a club and I’m looking forward to playing in a league. Without Back to Netball I don’t think I’d have played this regularly and wouldn’t have joined a club – I recommend it to everyone!”

INCREASE FITNESS

SOCIAL SUPPORT

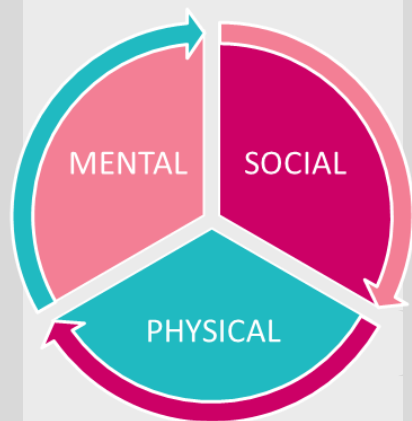
INCREASE CONFIDENCE



# PERCEIVED BENEFITS

The benefits of sport participation have been frequently reported. In particular, health benefits are often communicated in medical terms by media, government literature and sporting bodies. It is evident from both the survey and follow-up interviews that B2N has contributed to and supported their individual motivations and goals, declaring that they are fitter, gained more confidence and developed a wider social network.

This report has identified how B2N has clearly met three key government objectives.



The government <sup>4</sup> identifies a series of **five key objectives** within *Sporting Future* in the development of:

1. **Physical wellbeing**
2. **Mental wellbeing**
3. Individual development
4. **Social & Community development**
5. Economic development

## SOCIAL WELLBEING

“Back to Netball has changed my life, I had no friends and I was unfit before. Now I am out twice a week playing netball with my team mates that I can call my friends. I am just loving life!”

**70%** of all participants did not know anyone at the session before starting B2N

**89%** were comfortable with other participants believed they got on well with other participants

**55%** joined to meet new people and build relationships

**86%** Felt that they have integrated well with others

**74%** enjoyed spending time with others with similar interests

## PHYSICAL WELLBEING

“I hadn't played for a few years and had had neck surgery so wanted to get back to fitness and Back to Netball was a fantastic way to get back into it and join a team.”

Overall participants believed B2N could help them:

**84%** participate in activities that are physically challenging

**97%** be physically active

**90%** lead healthier lifestyles

## MENTAL WELLBEING

“I love netball, it is hard physically on the body and it's a challenge. When I play all other worries disappear. Plus, others count on you to turn up.”

Participants reported the following mental wellbeing outcomes:

**51%** improved confidence

**76%** felt good about themselves

**67%** said B2N helped them to relax

**92%**

OF ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE **SATISFIED** WITH THE B2N PROGRAMME

**98%**

OF ALL PARTICIPANTS WOULD **RECOMMEND** B2N TO OTHERS

# BENEFITS FOR ALL AGES

## Life begins at 40

Emily turned 40 in 2015. She used to play netball regularly but stopped participating in sport completely five years ago, citing work and family commitments as factors contributing to this decision. She started attending B2N a year ago and is now enjoying a new lease of life.

“Five years ago I gave everything up. I was a midwife and with all the shift work I was hurting a lot more, and I just thought ‘I can’t do it anymore’. But then, I turned 40 in September and something changed in me. I saw a TV programme about an amputee who was doing all this exercise and I thought it was ridiculous that I had given everything up because of a few aches and pains! Also, I’d been suffering from really high blood pressure and was bordering on having to have medication, so something really needed to change.

PREVIOUS  
ENGAGEMENT

SUPPORT WITH  
MENTAL  
WELL-BEING

I saw Back to Netball advertised and remembered how much I used to enjoy it. It’s been a massive part of my life since I was at school, and through some difficult times in my life it’s always been a constant. I feel like its part of my identity and it’s really helped me psychologically to fight off really traumatic times like depression, stress, anxiety, dealing with bereavements and my divorce. The body and mind is willing, it’s just finding the opportunity to carry on! It was really good, really friendly, I did have some confidence because I used to be quite a good netballer and I was glad to see I hadn’t lost those skills. I scored a couple of goals and I thought ‘wow, I’m 40 and I can still do it!’, and people were saying things like ‘it’s hard trying to keep up with you!’ There was a really nice mix, a variety of different shapes and sizes: older people, younger people, people who have had just had babies and so it was a really nice group.

DIVERSITY

MENTAL  
WELL-BEING

Now I feel like a completely different person. I’m a lot fitter, more confident and I enjoy my days a lot more. Plus, my blood pressure is now normal so I don’t need that medication! I’ve got a much more positive attitude about things and I enjoy each day. Throughout my life I’ve always found that no matter what I’ve gone through, once I’ve been on that court and had a game I’ve come away thinking ‘you know what, things aren’t as bad’. This time last year I couldn’t play tennis and I couldn’t run to the end of the road. Now I’ve started Parkrun, I did my first 5K recently, and my husband and I have started tennis again. I used to say ‘I can’t’, but now I say ‘I’m going to try anyway!’”

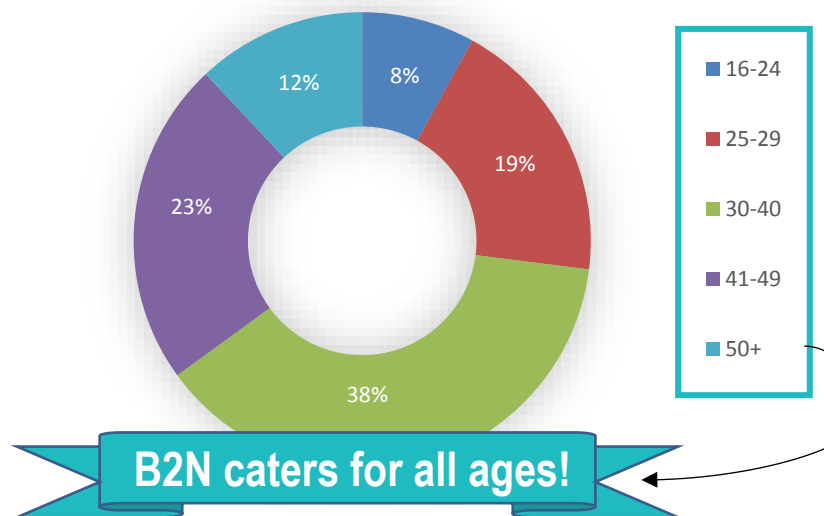
IMPROVING  
FITNESS

BEHAVIOUR  
CHANGE

# AGE OF B2N PARTICIPANTS

B2N participants were predominantly between the ages of 25-49 years suggesting that B2N caters for a variety of ages.

Figure 3: B2N participant age groups



“Netball doesn’t change, no matter what your age is, it is still the same game and you can still have that determination.”

## Losing baby weight

Many of the participants' experience B2N, because of, or in relation to, their identities as mothers. For instance, many women are initially motivated to return to netball in an effort to lose 'baby weight'.

*"Netball is very fast paced and I like that. My goal at the moment is to lose the last of my baby weight and I thought that netball would be a fun way of doing that."*

## Identity

Many women felt the need to develop their social lives, which may have become largely focused on their role as mothers.

*"After having my little boy and becoming a stay at home mum, I wanted to do something that was not associated with being a mum. I wanted and needed to do something for myself. To show that I am capable of being my own person again."*

## Social baby networks

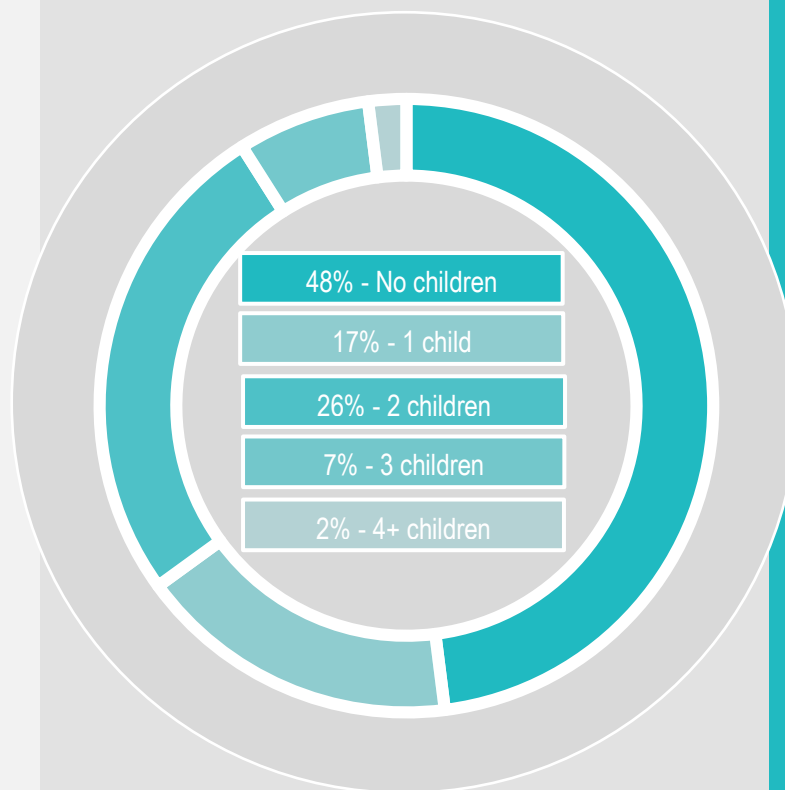
Participants often become aware of B2N through contacts gained at baby groups, schools, or playgrounds. That is not to say that all women at B2N are mothers. Indeed, 48% of participants at B2N are not mothers. This mix of mothers and non-mothers is important as it ensures that women with children can relate to other mothers at B2N, while simultaneously developing social relationships and experiencing social events that are not directly defined by motherhood.

*"I feel like I communicate with adults at Back to Netball. I'm not just at home or going to baby groups or seeing mums with their children. It is a completely different world outside of mum life. I can talk about different things that go on in netball and talk about things other than just baby based things. It has made me more confident, because not everything in my world now revolves around being a mum and having a baby."*

# 'NET MUMS'

Many of the participants experience B2N, because of, or in relation to, their identities as mothers.

**52%** of participants engaging in B2N had at least one child under the age of 18.



## Baby steps

**Cath is 24 years old and has an 18 month old son, Adam. She returned to work when Adam was six months-old but she struggled to adjust to working full-time and being a mum. As a young single parent there were three things that were key to her getting her life back on track; joining a B2N group which gave her a sense of belonging, getting fitter which helped her spend more quality time with her son, and feeling confident, which gave her a sense of purpose.**

**“**Before Back to netball, I felt like nothing more than a Mum. Every day I'd get up, get Adam ready, and take him to the park or around the shops. I wouldn't have many friends to meet as they all worked full-time. I'd tried to go back to work six months after having Adam, but I really struggled leaving him so gave it all up when I was 23 to be a stay at home Mum. I wouldn't go out much, my confidence was rock bottom, and I didn't do anything for myself. My friend told me about Back to Netball and how much she'd enjoyed it, so after a bit of convincing I decided to give it a go. At first, I was a bit scared to leave Adam, but I realised it was only for an hour a week and went along.

*Back to Netball has changed my life! I feel like I'm stepping out on my own, not as a Mum, but as Cath, and I've met so many friends who I know I can rely on. It's only an hour a week, but I've realised I can do something for myself and I've started to realise that Adam doesn't need me 24/7. I've lost weight, nearly all my baby weight now, so I feel much more confident and everyone's commented on how much happier I look!*

*Back to Netball's completely changed my life in so many ways I didn't expect. I'm now eating healthier which I know will help Adam in the future as he'll hopefully pick up my habits. Before going to Back to Netball, I might go to the gym once a week and do a load of random exercises. Now I'm focusing my workouts to benefit my netball: it's given me a real sense of purpose and a clearer focus. It's paying off too; a couple of weeks ago the coach came over to me and asked if I wanted to go and train with their team. She really thinks I'm good enough to play for them and I can't wait to start training with them! Without Back to Netball I'd still just be a Mum: it's completely changed my life!"*

## IMPACTING THE COMMUNITY

Not only does B2N have an impact on individuals, but it can also have an impact on communities that otherwise might be hard to reach.

In Toxteth, Liverpool, a B2N session has been organised during the day with the aim of integrating female asylum seekers and refugees into the local area. Toxteth is a multicultural area in south Liverpool. Since the 1981 riots, Toxteth has struggled to shift its poor reputation as a deprived area. As of 2011, Toxteth had an unemployment rate of 36%, over three times the national average. Household income is also significantly below the national average, and it is one of the most deprived regions in the UK.

Hannah is a Sports Development Officer working in the Liverpool area.

*"I was approached by Liverpool City Council because I use the facility to coach other sessions, and they wanted me to open a session for asylum seekers and refugees in the area because Toxteth is a predominantly Muslim area. Initially we thought a daytime session wouldn't work, as there's not really a demand for it, but these women aren't going to come to Back to Netball on an evening because there's men there, and their religion or culture won't allow them to be there when men are. So we wanted to create something for these women that they could come along to in an environment that's safe for them. It's not just netball, we've created a hub so they don't have to go to hundreds of different places trying to find the answer to any questions they might have, so alongside the netball they can ask questions about housing or how to get a job. Also, they might not speak English so it's a great way for them to learn a bit more of the language.*

*As a netball development officer, the social aspect of the programme is very important for both the players and also me as the coach. I enjoy being at Back to Netball and the social aspect is massively important for me and for the ladies that come along. It's great to see some of these women meeting people and coming out of their shells, hopefully they might meet other people who are in similar situations and share experiences. Plus, they're keeping fit, so everyone's a winner."*

SIGNPOSTING  
& LEARNING

ENJOYMENT

SOCIAL SUPPORT

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

OPPORTUNITIES

ENGAGING THE  
COMMUNITY



## More than just a game

Not only are B2N coaches one of the main factors behind participants continuing to participate, but Helen, a mum of three who has a long history of coaching performance teams says B2N has changed her outlook on coaching.

ENJOYMENT

I'm netball through and through, and I'd coached performance teams for ages, but I started finding it too stressful and I wanted to do something different. With Back to Netball, *they're just so happy to be there and so happy you are there coaching them so I just preferred that environment.*

INDIVIDUAL

I think the main purpose of Back to Netball is to give people the chance to take part in netball without having to worry about committing to training and playing matches on the weekend, and *it's completely on their terms.* I think it's really successful. In our club, we've had 80 people on our books, and that's probably 80 people who wouldn't have played otherwise. Some of them are playing regularly in a team, and some of them are coming on a Tuesday and *it's so they don't have to go to the gym instead!*

SUBSTITUTING  
EXISTING  
ACTIVITY

Back to Netball creates a relaxed environment for ladies who may have played netball back in the day but find the club environment a bit scary. *Back to Netball is just a bit more welcoming and they make friends,* but they get fit too. The most common thing the ladies say to me is that they can feel I've had a workout but they don't feel like it was hard work because it was enjoyable.

SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

I've seen Back to Netball change quite a few people. When England Netball had the 90 hour marathon, a group of our ladies took part. *They now see themselves as netballers, that's what they talk about.* They want the trainers, and whenever there's a tournament they're the first to sign up. But two years ago, some of them hadn't picked up a netball since they were 12 and it wasn't something they really thought about. They just came along and gave it a go, and now every week they don't miss it and *there's some really strong friendships.* Netball is now what they do! *If it wasn't for Back to Netball I probably would've stopped coaching altogether because I just wasn't enjoying the stress of the performance so it has allowed me to keep coaching.* I would've stopped if it wasn't for Back to Netball, I absolutely adore it!"

DEVELOPING  
AN IDENTITY

SOCIAL  
SUPPORT

SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT  
IN NETBALL



## FACTORS AFFECTING ENGAGEMENT

The following section outlines potential limitations identified through this project. These are 'convenience', 'standard', and 'reality vs. expectation of the coach'.

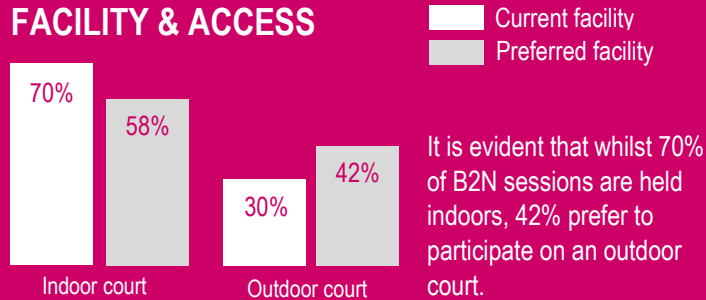
*"I work full time and I don't like driving so it's fitting it in because they are often early evening, so trying to get out of work and get to the session is difficult."*



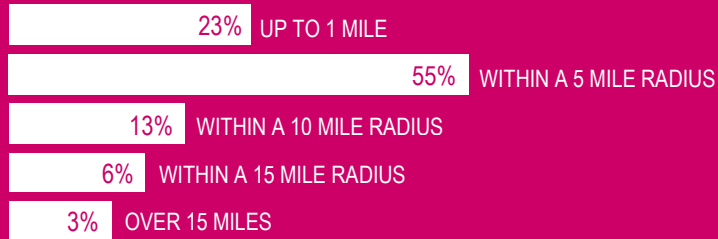
# CONVENIENCE

Convenience was identified as a limiting factor by both former participants and coaches in B2N. This includes session times, facility, time available for the participant to engage in additional activities, in addition to work/life balance and family commitments affecting engagement.

## FACILITY & ACCESS

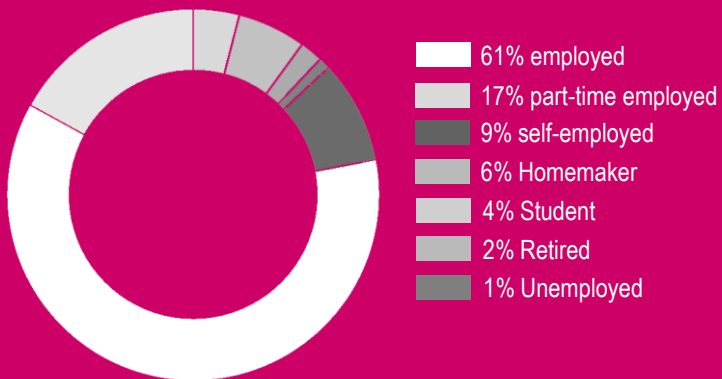


## DISTANCE TO B2N



“I think it is time and the availability of sessions. You know, when people are just getting into it, they are not going to want to travel a big distance and it is time constraints as well, they need to go somewhere local, and if something’s not local and on the right days then they’re not going to do it.” B2N coach

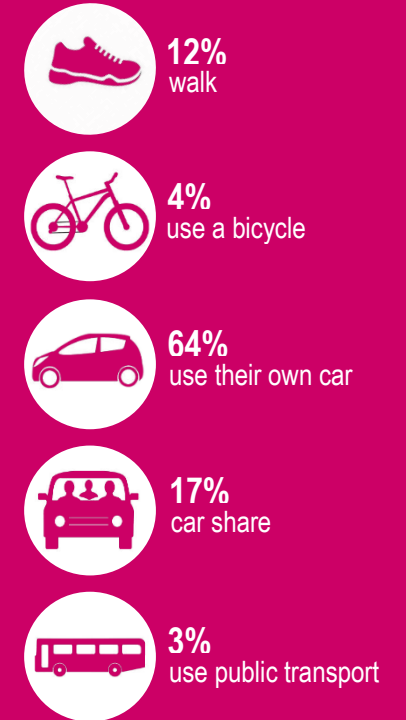
## EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS



With 39% of participants not working full time, times of B2N sessions may act as a barrier due to varied and unsociable work hours. In addition, for those working in full time employment (61%) the time and duration of the session could influence attendance and sustained engagement.

“I set out on a Tuesday thinking ‘right I want to play today’ but I’m not obliged to commit and then I look at the clock and it has gone past the time when I should have left work in order to get there.”

## TRANSPORT TO B2N



**KEY FINDING:** Proximity to the sessions may act as a limitation to engagement. With 78% of participants travelling within a five mile radius and using their own cars (64%), distance and lack of own transport could affect B2N participation.

## STANDARD

The standard of B2N sessions and the participants' ability levels featured prominently within both the survey and follow-up interviews. It is evident that standard being "too high" (for those wanting to re-engage with netball) and "too low" for those with previous experience and wanting to progress to a club is a limiting factor to sustained engagement.



“The first 2-3 sessions I did, I really enjoyed it and it met what I needed. But then people said that they were planning and going to get into competitions with other Back to Netball people. So people signed up for that and then I think people brought along friends. Sometimes somebody brought along a few people who were currently in netball teams and were really good and they kind of took over a bit and didn't want to do the drills. I suppose the classes were changing to the needs of most of the people, it just didn't really work out for me that.”

“The standard was way too high to complement the 'Back to Netball' title of the initiative. From the outset I was pitched against very 'serious' netball players who were intolerant of my ignorance and poor ability.”

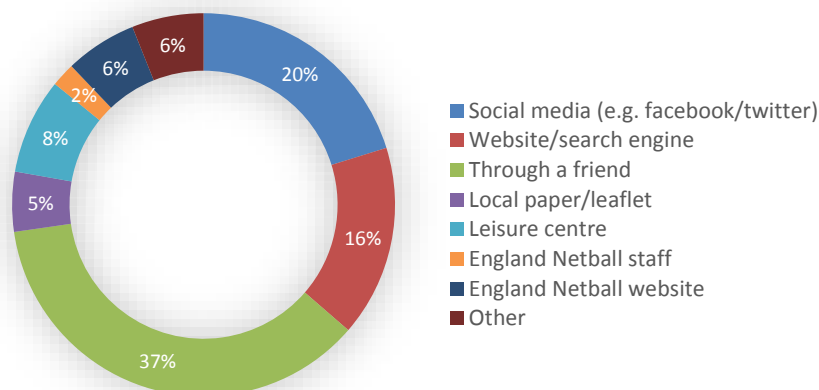
“Obviously we get some women in their 50s that have come Back to Netball and do they want to play with those in their 20s who have actually just left school and not played for four years, and they are still classed as Back to Netball?... I think it is very difficult, the one size doesn't fit all and I think it is really difficult to engage with different groups.”  
B2N coach

## MARKETING

Lack of marketing surrounding B2N was found to be a limiting factor. Some participants were not fully aware of the standard because they felt that there was not enough access to information prior to attending.

The below diagram highlights how 63% of participants knew about B2N through advertising, however this may need to provide more detail around standard and expectations.

Figure 4: Participant response identifying how they first heard about B2N



“I've not played netball since I was at school and then I started when was about 42. So you can imagine how long that was. And I'd been wanting to play in that time but I probably hadn't got the confidence to go and put myself forward. It would have helped if I had found B2N a different way. I think I perhaps I would have gone because I was actively looking for it but couldn't find anything like it. So if it was advertised better and I'd seen it, I might well have gone earlier.”

“To be honest I didn't even know the classes existed before my friend told me about it. I didn't even really realise that these kind of clubs existed for people that have not done it for years and years. I thought, you know, by the time you get to this age you would have to be in a professional netball team or that would be it, there wouldn't be any other options.”



## THE COACH IN B2N

When B2N works, which it obviously does for nearly all participants, the coach is supportive, recognises the personal ambitions, abilities, autonomy of individuals and signposts individuals to appropriate opportunities.

*"If she [the coach] left and went somewhere else, we'd massively miss her. For a couple of weeks she couldn't make it and she made sure that there was another coach there, you know, so we weren't kind of left on our own to do it which was great. But we feel that she genuinely looks after us and she cares about what we're doing and how we're progressing."*

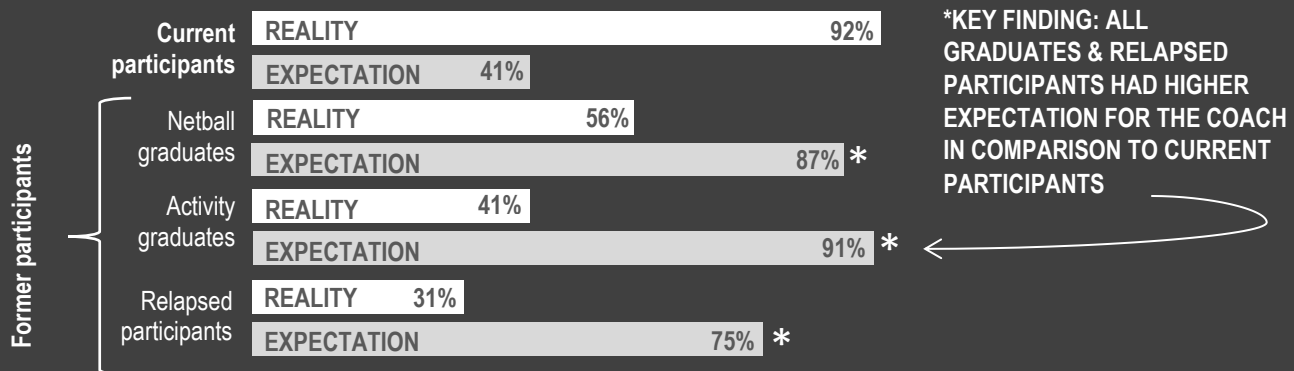
**KEY FINDING:** It is evident that both coach and participant perceptions of the role and purpose of the coach in facilitating B2N, and specifically skill development, differ.

### Reality vs. expectation

- 98% of surveyed coaches are satisfied with their delivery within the B2N programme.
- 23% believe their role is to improve participant skills.

However, when participants were asked about the coach's role in supporting skill development, the reality vs. expectation differed. Specifically, former participants expected more support and guidance than their coaches provided. This was apparent for those who went on to seek further netball opportunities and from those who no longer take part in B2N.

Figure 5: Participant response identifying their expectation and reality of the coach's support and guidance in B2N



In addition, there were links to standard of players and managing session content.

*"The people in my group were too good and just wanted to play games rather than do the warm up exercises. I haven't played netball before and didn't really know the rules so I felt a bit lost and wanted to do more of the drills etc. for fitness. I sometimes didn't get much opportunity to play as the group was very big and I didn't know what I was doing so I thought there wasn't a lot of point in me being there."*



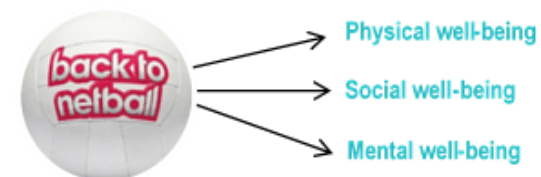


# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## SUMMARY

This report has identified how B2N successfully changed its participant's behaviour. It is clear that this programme is extremely successful and it is valued by its participants. Moreover, the programme has facilitated further netball and sporting activities for those who no longer participate. Overall, B2N has provided physical, social and mental benefits for its participants, specifically in providing an outlet for mothers and developing netball communities.

However, convenience, standard, and the coach's delivery have been identified as potential limiting factors for future engagement and new participants entering B2N.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings identified throughout the report it is clear that B2N is an overwhelmingly positive experience for participants. However, it is of great importance that the participant, coach and organiser have a clear understanding of the aims of women participating in the programme.

### Standard

It is recommended that B2N sessions are advertised and run based on participant standard and motives for engagement. Therefore, providing additional B2N sessions catering for different ability groups is recommended in order to provide additional opportunities for participants to select sessions that are most suited to their ability and purpose for participating. In doing so, it is envisaged that the programme would engage and retain participants over a longer period of time and support progression through the pathway.

### Marketing

Sessions need to be appropriately marketed with clear information surrounding the standards of play and what is specifically required by the participant. This will then avoid misinterpreted expectations among those for whom it may not be appropriate. This could include a small biography of current B2N participants, and information surrounding past experience.

## Day time B2N

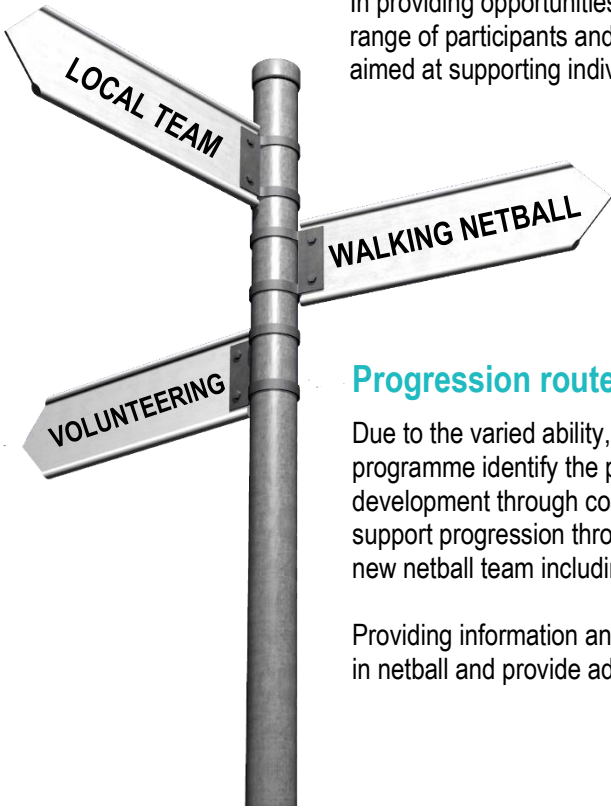
It is recommended that a percentage of B2N sessions are scheduled during the day to ensure accessibility of sessions for those unemployed or with children. It is further suggested that for sessions including a high number of single parents additional support is made available regarding childcare.

In providing opportunities during the daytime, it is envisaged that the programme could attract a broader range of participants and support the community through identifying specific areas and hosting events aimed at supporting individuals to participate in sport and physical activity.

## Progression routes

Due to the varied ability, time availability and motives for engagement, it is also suggested that the programme identify the purpose of individuals participating and provide opportunities for further development through coaching and officiating qualifications. In addition, it is recommended that to support progression through B2N, there is guidance and support available in setting up and managing a new netball team including contacts for local teams, coaches and advertising for players.

Providing information and signposting to additional opportunities could support continued engagement in netball and provide additional outlet for future programmes both participatory and volunteering.

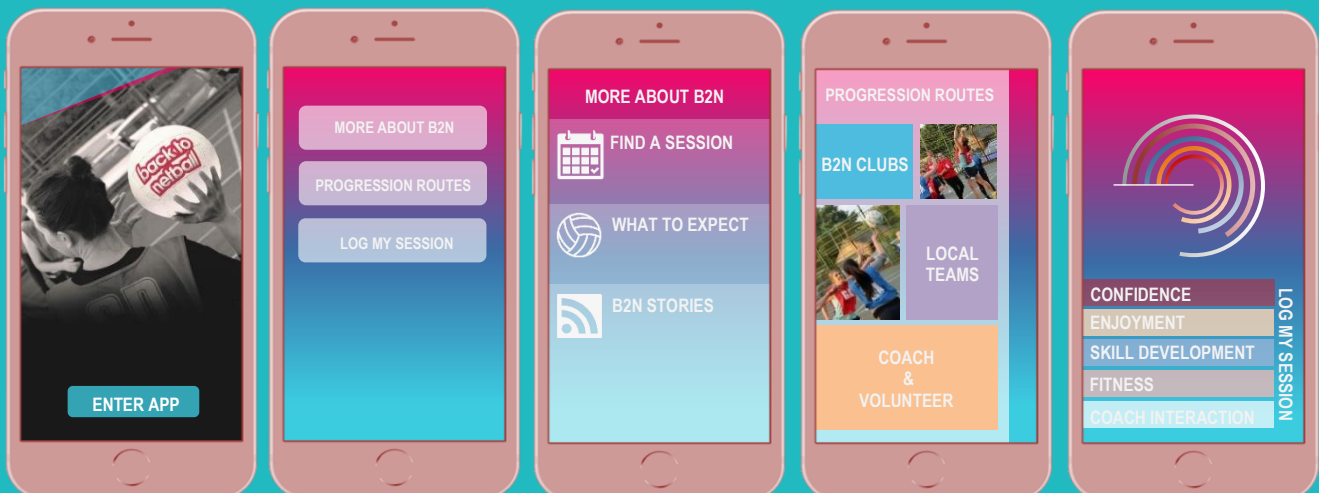


## FUTURE DATA COLLECTION

### Creating a mobile app

- Ease and access to information
- Signposting for progression
- Support monitoring

76% of UK adults own a smartphone <sup>5</sup>. Previous research conducted by LJMU in partnership sports coach UK <sup>6</sup> has identified how technology is a key facilitator in engaging participants in physical activity and sport. Not only that, it can be used to improve communication and social support through developing a social marketing platform. With the greatest percentage of participants engaging in B2N between 0-12 months, we recommend that a smartphone based application would provide additional data capture over a prolonged period of time. Creating an app would allow ease of access to B2N information whilst ensuring accurate data collection and automated data submission. It is recommended that the app capture participant data at zero, six, and 12 month intervals.



# APPENDIX

## METHOD

The research approach is based on the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change (TTM) <sup>1,2</sup> which identifies stages of individual participant engagement in sport or physical activity. This has been used to identify how participants within B2N have moved within these stages of behaviour change. A mixed methods approach, using a survey and follow-up interviews, was employed to facilitate a more robust triangulation of data for analysis.

### *Phase 1*

An initial survey (total: n=396) was used to capture participant experience and perspective of the B2N programme over a two month period. The survey provided opportunity to identify 'existing' (n= 226) and 'former' (n= 148) participants of B2N, in addition to coaches and leaders (n= 22).

### *Phase 2*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 36 purposefully sampled participants, selected for their position across the TTM for engagement in B2N, as identified from survey responses.



36

SEMI-STRUCTURED  
TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

}	22 Existing participants
	7 Former participants
	7 Coaches, Leaders and Netball Development Officers (NDO's)

## REFERENCES

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## PROJECT TEAM



### **Dr Amy Whitehead** – *Principal Investigator*

*Amy is a Senior Lecturer in Sports Coaching and Physical Education and specialises in Sport and Exercise Psychology. Amy is currently research active in the areas of coach education, decision making, and cognitive processes in both the athlete and coach population. Amy is an applied sport psychologist and works as a consultant in a variety of different sports.*



### **Dr Barbara Walsh**

*Barbara Walsh is a National Teaching Fellow and has research interests relating to physical education, sport pedagogy, and higher education transitions. Barbara is Director of School for Sport Studies, Leisure and Nutrition. Her Doctoral thesis focused on physical education beginning teachers' journeys through complex landscapes of practice. She is also interested in coaching and mentoring and has coached and mentored elite level players and coaches.*



### **Laura Quayle**

*Laura is a Research Officer at LJMU, and specialises in sports coaching research. Laura's research focuses on coach behaviours and new methods to enhance coach education. She is currently supporting senior staff members within the School of Sport, Leisure and Nutrition with large scale research projects.*



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*Ellie is a Research Assistant at LJMU. Ellie's research interests relate to behaviour change and maintenance of physical activity and health, including clinical populations. She is currently completing a major qualitative research project commissioned by League Football education as part of her MSc Sport Psychology degree.*



### **Dr Colum Cronin**

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