

Invitation to Quote

Improving the experience of break and lunch times in the secondary school environment - Test and Learn Project

**Closing Date:
Tuesday 26th August 2025**

Date 25th July 2025

activepartnerstrust.org.uk

Active Partners Trust on behalf of Active Notts and Nottinghamshire County Council's Education, Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing Hub (ESHAW Hub), is seeking an individual or organisation to take on a lead role in transforming unstructured times during the school day within the Nottinghamshire secondary school sector (not including Nottingham city). This test and learn project aims to produce recommendations and options for future service delivery.

1. Introduction to the teams

1.1 Introduction to Active Partners Trust

Being physically active is good for us, for society, health, and even for the economy. There's no doubt about that. But how do we get people moving more? That's a bit trickier, and the need varies from place to place, programme to programme, and person to person.

As one of 43 Active Partnerships (APs) across England, Active Partners Trust, working in Derbyshire and Notts, teams up with local councils, community groups, businesses, healthcare organisations, charities and more to find out what's needed. That means asking questions, making suggestions, sharing our knowledge, finding the right partners, and spotting opportunities, all to make movement part of everyday life. Because when we all work together, we can better understand, reach, and support the people who need it most.

Making our Move - [Our shared vision for Uniting the Movement in Notts and Derbyshire](#) is a new plan to guide our and partners' work over the next 10 years - where we work and how we work. Together we will address inequality and empower everyone to be active in a way that works for them. Our shared vision was informed by hundreds of people and organisations across Derbyshire and Notts. It sets out an approach that will help us to focus our efforts and resources on where we can make the biggest difference; empower our communities; and shape action.

One of the aims in Making our Move main is enabling children and young people to have positive experiences of being active throughout their childhood

To achieve this, we need to make sure:

- More young people enjoy being active
- Young people are involved in developing opportunities that are right for them
- There is an early focus on developing the skills and confidence to lead an active life
- Resource and capacity are proportionately focused on young people experiencing the greatest inequalities



Our values and behaviours define us as an organisation - they are who we are and what we stand for.

Our values

Make a Difference. We seek to positively make a difference through movement, physical activity and sport. We add value through insight and learning, influencing relationships, strengthening our networks and connections and embedding what works well.

Integrity. We will act with integrity in all that we do, being open, honest and trusted. Encouraging this culture with others.

Collaborate. We commit to collaborate, giving time and space to develop relationships, to listen, to reflect and to build shared purpose. We take collective responsibility and learn together to inform our work.

Inclusive. We ensure we are inclusive in everything we do. We are open-minded and equitable, encouraging others to reflect on how they think and act. We are a committed ally to inclusion.

Passionate. We believe in what we do. We are energetic, curious and aspire to think creatively. We are bold in our thinking, not afraid to try new things.

Our behaviours

We will

- Seek to understand and add value
- Be open and honest
- Be mindful of others and show emotional intelligence
- Lead by example, adapting our style as required
- Take collective responsibility and be accountable for our actions
- Give time and space to developing relationships
- Be open-minded and equitable
- Commit to being an ally of inclusion
- Be willing to learn and grow
- Believe in what we do
- Bring energy, curiosity and courage to our work
- Positively and professionally challenge views

1.2 Introduction to the Education, Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing Hub (ESHAWH)

- The Education, Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing Hub (ESHAWH) is a team within Nottinghamshire County Council. The ESHAWH supports local schools with work around prevention of harm, and health promotion. The team is comprised of a team manager and 7 co-ordinators who each have specific areas of responsibility relating to healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthy environments.
- Co-ordinators each have specialist areas of knowledge such as physical activity, mental health, serious youth violence, anti-bullying, online safety, and healthy relationships. Some team members have a county-wide role, while others are linked to a geographical locality. This facilitates positive working relationships with school practitioners and all the relevant partners in the locality. It also ensures co-

ordinators understand the communities the schools serve and their current presenting threats and concerns.

- The team does not work directly with children and co-ordinators do not carry out casework or observations on children. Although many enquiries focus on concerns about individuals, the ESHAWH was established to help schools to develop whole school approaches to the health, wellbeing, and safeguarding agendas.
- The team leads on the implementation of the statutory RSHE curriculum and runs a network for RSHE Leads. Additionally, the team delivers training and resources to support practitioners working with children and young people aged 5-19. The latter is informed by children and young people themselves through co-production and pupil voice work.
- Most of the team's work is funded through Public Health and is therefore rooted in a strong evidence base. Central to the team's practice is a belief that complex problems can only be solved by viewing them holistically, in context, and in partnership with those who are likely to be most affected. The team is committed to inclusion, equity and collaboration, and recognises that healthy minds and healthy bodies are closely linked to healthy environments.
- The Education, Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing Hub (ESHAWH) is commissioned by Public Health to act as the interface between other commissioned services and schools. It is also required to promote work with schools around Public Health's priorities for school age children and young people. These priorities include:
 - a. Emotional health and well-being.
 - b. Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).
 - c. Healthy eating, physical activity and obesity.
 - d. Substance Misuse.
 - e. Health Protection.

2. Background and Introduction

2.1 Since COVID, schools have had increasingly limited capacity to engage with these Public Health priorities by using a whole school approach. Currently, many schools are operating in "react mode" as they struggle to find the balance between delivering academic results and supporting pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. Consequently, schools' engagement with the ESHAWH centres mainly around

pupils and their behaviours in and out of school. Concerns often relate to pupils' ability to self-regulate and/or risk and harm. Most of the pupils referred to ESHAWH are boys, and many have a special educational need and/or are trauma experienced. They are often at risk of or have already been suspended or excluded from school. They also tend to be less engaged in learning than many of their peers. Furthermore, attainment data across all Key Stages show that boys are underachieving academically.

2.2 The ESHAWH's most recent pupil voice work with boys has identified that many boys in secondary school settings find unstructured times boring. For some, this part of the school day is when they are most likely to become involved in conflicts with peers and/or adults. It is widely evidenced that the majority of children's behaviour incidents occur within their unstructured times (irrespective of age). During these unstructured times, children may also be supervised by midday staff who have little to no training on inclusive behaviour and relationship building (their training mainly focusing on maintaining order in a dining hall, and food hygiene safety standards). The ESHAWH team have identified that for secondary school environments, improved opportunities during unstructured times may benefit the whole school community, not just boys. The team have reflected that re-designing unstructured times so that they channel energies into positive activity, help with self-regulation, confidence, self-esteem, and the continuing development of social skills will likely result in pupils being more ready for learning during the structured times of the school day.

2.3 In the ESHAWH's previous pupil voice work, some secondary aged pupils noted that unstructured times at primary school were generally more satisfying than they experience in their current settings. Several Nottinghamshire primary schools have invested time, energy and resource in recent years to make "playtimes" a valued part of the school day, recognising that play is important in its own right and has much to contribute to children's development. The current playtime landscape across Nottinghamshire primary schools is noted to be sustainably improving, with the quality of their play opportunities being enhanced through the implementation of specific lunchtime play strategies.

Opening up the whole school environment has provided more space for outdoor physical activities and learning, with additional unexpected outcomes in respect of improved behaviour more generally and pupils being more settled and ready to learn within the classroom. We know that play helps children to learn, grow, connect and thrive. ['It All Starts with Play!' – a new 10-year strategy – Play England](#)

recognises play is important in developing good mental health, trusted relationships and social and emotional development. “Play” is defined as “activity engaged in for enjoyment and recreation, rather than for a serious or practical purpose” (Oxford English Dictionary). It is important to note that play is not sport. Play is self-directed and driven by children’s social connections, with creativity and exploration being central, whereas sport is traditionally more structured, and adult led.

2.4As pupils transition from primary to secondary school, “play” drops off and many pupils become less physically active, in part based on fears around “play” no longer being socially acceptable, and also due to a lack of opportunities. Secondary school lunchtimes are traditionally focused on providing a comfort break and access to catering facilities. The scope for being physically active is only evident for those participating in planned sports activities, such as football or basketball, with their incidental movement confined due to outdoor capacity and space.

During initial discussions with selected peer groups of secondary pupils it has become apparent that some establishments’ lunch times are also used for detentions and homework rather than a break from learning. Some schools have reduced the time they allow for the mid-day break to reduce the number of behaviour incidents and to maximise the time available for curriculum delivery. Pupils identified that improving the space, the freedom to play and the opportunity for more to do within their lunchtime provision, were key factors which would enhance their school day. Pupils also suggested these factors would lead to better behaviour and readiness to learn. Many in the focus groups reflected on their primary playtimes as being the thing they enjoyed most and missed from their current school experience. *“We are still children - We can still play and develop our skills,” (boy aged 14yrs).*

3. Proposal scope and expectations

3.1 We are looking for a delivery partner to lead this test and learn project starting on 1st October 2025 throughout the course of the academic year. It is envisaged that the successful applicant will work with us to select two secondary schools within Nottinghamshire to participate in the test and learn project.

3.2 The successful applicant will be expected to have undergone appropriate safeguarding training and evidence suitability to work with young people, including a DBS check.

3.3 Requirements for applicants

We are open to applications from a range of providers, but we consider the following requirements to be key for successful applicants:

- The applicant's commitment to the project should focus on improving the pupil experience of unstructured times within a secondary school environment.
- A commitment to a collaborative approach to the project delivery - we are looking for a delivery partner who has experience of establishing and managing relationships with a range of stakeholders and the ability to manage multiple aspects of project design and delivery.
- Knowledge and experience of working with education settings or the ability to demonstrate how knowledge and connections will be built with school communities
- Experience of delivering play based experiential learning and/or outdoor activity, ideally with adolescents
- A commitment to engaging with key stakeholders, ensuring reports and outputs are communicable to a wide-ranging audience
- Experience of positively engaging with young people to co-design and deliver a project
- Knowledge of safeguarding and health and safety legislation

3.4 Considerations for submission

Individuals/organisations are encouraged to consider the following when submitting their proposal:

- How they will engage with the school Senior Leadership Team in tailoring the project to the school's specific circumstances/needs, including how students will be involved in the co-design of the plan; health and safety considerations; any associated training and development needs
- How they will review the current provision and outdoor/indoor space identifying opportunities and any potential challenges
- How they will engage pupils to co-design "play" opportunities that are right for them. This may involve physical activities but should not be confined to sports only.

- How they will seek to provide safe, quality outdoor/indoor activity that increases opportunity for incidental movement to improve young people's physical and mental health
- How they intend to increase the breadth of skills of young people through social connectedness and the autonomy to choose from and participate in a range of physical/outdoor/creative activities
- How they intend to increase the opportunity for skills and career aspirations of young people through activities which develop intra-personal and interpersonal skills, including leadership, collaboration, communication, and other "life skills".
- How they will support the professional development needs of the lunchtime supervisor workforce to ensure the young people retain autonomy over their activities but "play" safely
- How they might build on the activities to support older students to act as peer mentors/ acquire skills and experiences which will support pupil career aspirations.
- How they will remove barriers to physical activity by providing an equal opportunity for all young people to engage in 'play' activity that promotes incidental movement, nature-connectedness and community engagement for improved physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- How they will allocate their budget and resources, including a breakdown of the number of days the applicant expects to spend in each school and the cost attached, including any staffing costs; equipment/resources; miscellaneous expenses. Travel expenses do not need to be included at this stage.

3.5 Working with evaluation partners

The successful applicant will be expected to work closely with our chosen evaluation partners and will contribute to their recommendations in the final project report. We would like to use the recommendations to inspire Nottinghamshire schools to re-consider the value of students' unstructured time, in line with adolescent developmental milestones for their physical and mental wellbeing.

The role of the evaluation partners would encompass:

- Monitoring the levels of physical activity pre & post the implementation of outdoor play activity

- The role and involvement of students, staff and wider school community within the planning and development of the project, including the methods applied to elicit student and staff voice
- The training and engagement of staff and students required for the delivery of the project.
- The risk assessment and safety considerations which need to be in place, including how this skill set has been developed in pupils
- Report on the costs of project implementation and delivery, including resourcing for play provision
- Report on incidental findings from behaviour incident monitoring; attendance monitoring; pastoral support needs; attainment and classroom engagement levels; pupil wellbeing; etc.

4. Management and supervision

4.1 The applicant's contract will be with Active Partners Trust. The successful applicant will be managed through a steering group made up of key partners from across the county, including Active Partners Trust, ESHAWH, representatives from the participating secondary schools (Multi Academy Trust leads/governors, children), and Nottinghamshire County Council.

4.2 Before the test and learn project begins, the ESHAWH will collate expressions of interest from Nottinghamshire secondary schools. Once a decision is made about which schools to work with, the ESHAWH will identify and contact the two secondary schools which will be participating in the project. The applicant will be supported by the ESHAWH in liaising with the participating secondary schools throughout the project.

5. Budget and timescales

The applicant will be expected to propose a budget, which will be evaluated in line with the available funding. This excludes the costs associated with the evaluation delivery partner.

5.1 Nottinghamshire is a geographically large county and the with the location of the two participating secondary schools yet to be confirmed, we appreciate it makes it

challenging to include duration and cost of travel within your submission. Therefore, please submit your application without these costs and we will work out with the successful application the additional costs for travel time and expenses once the schools have been confirmed.

- 5.2 The applicant will also be expected to provide a timescale for their project, including the number of days they will spend working in schools and outside of schools. This timescale will be within our envisaged delivery period of 1st October 2025 to 10th July 2026, with the final project report complete by 1st Sept 2026.

6. Application process and submission:

- 6.1 To apply for the role please upload your CV and complete the submission form which can be found here <https://makingourmove.org.uk/improving-the-experience-of-break-and-lunch-times-in-the-secondary-school-environment/> by 11:59pm on Tuesday 26th August.

7. Assessment Criteria

The submission will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Evidence of knowledge, expertise and experience related to the aims of the test and learn project.
- Suitability of the proposed delivery method.
- Evidence of capacity to deliver the project within the defined budget and timescale.
- The proposed project's value for money.
- The applicant's availability within the envisaged delivery period.

Please Note:

- Active Partners Trust reserves the right to shortlist quotations based on the criteria above and undertake follow-on interviews with shortlisted candidates.

- Shortlisting will take place on Thursday 4th September 2025. Interviews are planned for Friday 19th September 2025, and it is envisaged they will be in person .

If you'd like to discuss this opportunity or have an informal enquiry, please contact naomi.jones@activepartnertrust.org.uk

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