

Arun District Council

leisure operating contract annual report
April 2022 - September 2023

“improving lives
through leisure”



www.freedom-leisure.co.uk



freedomleisure
where you matter

introduction

freedomleisure commenced a 10 year contract to manage Arun District Council's leisure facilities on 1 April 2016, these facilities include:

Arun Leisure Centre

Littlehampton Wave Leisure Centre

The Windmill Entertainment Centre

Bersted Park Community Centre

The winter on 22/23 was particularly difficult for the leisure sector as energy prices trebled principally in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Freedom Leisure and Arun District Council worked closely together on measures to mitigate the impact of this on the service and indeed the Council provided financial support in both 2022 and 2023. The significant changes put through the business during 22/23 as well as a softening of energy prices in 23/24 has resulted in a much more positive picture in the current year. We continue to work very closely with Arun District Council on our agenda of improving lives through leisure and indeed are keen to explore opportunities for extending our partnership.

Ivan Horsfall-Turner | Managing Director - Freedom Leisure

The council's strategic priorities for the community are as follows:

- Supporting older, more vulnerable and less advantaged people in our community
- Protecting our environment
- Enhancing sporting, cultural, community and recreational facilities

the health and wellbeing strategy identifies the following priorities for the local area:

- Encourage residents to take part in regular physical activity to benefit their health and wellbeing and for enjoyment
- Encourage young adults to take up sport to lead to life long habits
- Improve quality and accessibility of leisure activities
- Enable lower income residents to access high quality leisure

This report provides a summary of the new initiatives that have made a real difference to the Arun community.



An introduction to the UK's second largest genuine charitable leisure trust:

2022-2023 has been a challenging 18 month period for the sport and leisure sector as a whole, coming out of the back of Covid we were all affected by the utilities crisis, cost of living crisis as well as supply lines being interrupted; but Freedom Leisure has worked closely with their local authority partners to provide the best service possible during this time. Nationally, Freedom Leisure were selected as the preferred operator for 2 new leisure contracts in the last 6 months alone, increasing their portfolio to 115 Leisure Centres with 24 individual partners and now has over 4000 colleagues employed.



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115

Leisure Centres, including 2 theatres, on behalf of 24 individual clients across England and Wales.



not for profit

Freedom Leisure is a not-for-profit leisure trust which manages leisure and cultural facilities on behalf of partners across the UK to realise our vision of “improving lives through leisure”



focus

Committed to providing and developing inclusive leisure facilities for everyone. Delivering a service to exceed our customers' expectations

freedomleisure ethos

- Provide affordable and accessible health, leisure and sport facilities for everyone, therefore having a positive impact on the local communities in which we operate and serve – we aim to inspire people to be more active more often
- Reinvest surplus into quality services
- Exceed our partners' desired outcomes for local communities
- Enhance our reputation and status
- Grow and develop as a company in a sustainable way
- Develop our people
- Renew existing contracts and win new ones

freedomleisure corporate vision



Area Insight

Our approach is to provide partners and customers with a bespoke service that will inspire and excite communities to increase participation in activities. Understanding local communities is at the heart of what we do, and we have worked closely with Arun District Council to ensure the community is fully supported and engaged in our local services. We have been able to gather a proven record of success in the Arun area through our commitment to understand the specific needs of Arun residents.

36.9%

of adults not reaching recommended levels of activity



27.8%

people have a long-term life limiting illness or disability



164,889

residents live in Arun (52% female, 48% male)



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63.8%

of adults are overweight or obese



11 years

difference in male life expectancy at birth between the most and least deprived areas



2.7%

Fewer active young People (16-34) than 6 years ago (Nov 15-16)



7

wards within 20% most deprived within the country (IMD2019)



Throughput summary:



	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	April 23- Sept 23
Arun Leisure Centre	49,054	453,608	511,560	248,569
Littlehampton Wave	76,385	552,312	770,206	463,535
Windmill Entertainment Centre	2,843	25,988	13,183	4,051 Closed
Bersted Park Community Centre	1,263	14,422	12,318	7,715
Active Communities	20,810	38,923	37,635	24,424
Total	150,355	1,085,253	1,344,902	748,294

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Learn to Swim Members	April 2020	March 2022	Oct 2023
Arun Leisure Centre	1683	1826	1832
Littlehampton Wave	2365	2457	2040

Memberships	April 2020	March 2022	Oct 2023
Arun Leisure Centre	1642	1356	1369
Littlehampton Wave	3952	3206	3110



Throughput summary:



April 2022 – March 2023
Program numbers:

131,535

Contract group exercise
visits
(75,035 – 2021/22)



9,096

Contract badminton
games played
(7,835 – 2021/22)



4,154

Children attended
holiday camps



There has been a steady increase in our overall user numbers at both Arun Leisure Centre and Littlehampton Wave year on year. The standout achievements include an increase in gym usage at Arun Leisure Centre as well as similar in public swimming at Littlehampton Wave. These successes underscore our commitment to promoting a healthy and active lifestyle within our community.

While we have encountered a decline in gym membership at Littlehampton Wave, this is a common occurrence for new facilities, and we anticipate a natural stabilization over time. The impact of Covid has undoubtedly affected our growth, but we remain optimistic about the future, with plans to foster steady gym membership growth through ongoing support, personalized inductions, and consistent engagement. We aim to work with those who would not usually feel comfortable in a gym environment so that we can increase our impact on those in our community who may not have access previously. We are currently talking with the Wellbeing team in Arun District Council to explore using the Community Transport Service to reach deeper into our local areas and explore removing as many hurdles as possible for others to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Despite a decrease in swimming lessons at Littlehampton Wave and slowed growth at Arun Leisure Centre, we recognize the challenges faced by parents in our area. The tough economic climate has prompted some to withdraw their children from lessons earlier, citing both sufficient progress and the need to manage expenses. We have also seen a significant drop in schools booking lessons in term times with the cost of transport being their main decision maker. We also recognise that The Windmill Cinema did not provide user figures for 2022 onwards which lowers the average slightly.

As we navigate the challenges, that our communities face, our unwavering commitment to their health and well-being remains steadfast, and we look forward to overcoming obstacles and continuing our positive trajectory in the years to come.

2868

Soft play visits
(1711 – 2021/22)



Energy Saving Measures



One of our largest focuses for this last 18 months was what we could action to mitigate any further pressures following the energy crisis. We made immediate decisions such as turning shower cycles from 1 minute to 30 seconds and turning off the air conditioning in our gyms during quieter periods and in the cooler months. On a larger scale, we reduced all flow rates on centrifugal pumps to all of our pools. We have changed the timeclocks in our public spaces to become more energy efficient, isolated our heating and reduced the radiator circuit to just 4 hours a day. We will continue to implement the Freedom Leisure Energy Saving Non-Negotiables and improving on our already reduced impact on the environment.



Investments



This year we have invested in our facilities and been fortunate enough to collaborate closely with our partners. Some of the investment packages have been those that our customers may not see but make a huge impact to the quality of service we provide.

- Investment in replacement of the Swimming Village at Arun Leisure Centre in conjunction with ADC
- Replacement Plate Heat exchangers at Arun LC from Old Calorifiers
- New Windows Dryside at ALC in conjunction with WSCC
- £11.3k on New Pool Grates
- £12k investment by both Freedom and ADC for new Inflatable for Both Sites.
- £4k on new cleaning machines for Arun Leisure Centre.
- £5k for brand new Little Leapfrogs and child activities equipment.
- Replacement Poolside Lighting on over 40% of LED's
- Replacement flooring in Bramber and room upgrade in conjunction with WSCC
- £1.8K on New Tables and Chairs for Parties

Feedback

Our leisure centres continually gather valuable feedback from our patrons. We value the feedback received and are committed to continually enhancing our services to meet the expectations of our community.

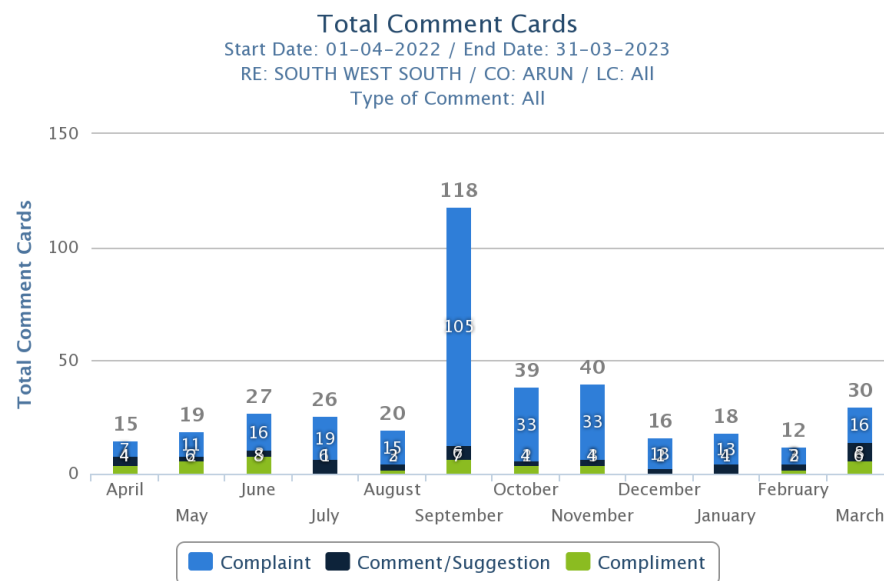
One notable concern was related to the functionality of our app, the Freedom leisure app was causing issues for users which took some time for us to resolve as we had to work with our LMS provider but this is now resolved. Additionally, we acknowledge a spike in complaints in 2022 when pool temperatures were adjusted as a mitigating action amid the energy crisis in which the pool received 45.1% of complaints through October and November.

A significant improvement that has shown a significant swing in feedback involves the complete transformation of the aging changing facilities at Arun Leisure Centre. Thanks to a substantial investment from both the Arun District Council and Freedom Leisure, we have revamped the changing village to provide a modern and more comfortable environment for our visitors.

We are always thrilled to share the positive feedback we have received for our performance in various areas. Specifically, our swift reaction times and exemplary care levels in handling first aid situations have garnered praise from individuals who have experienced such incidents. The recent decision to bring our Day Camps in-house has proven to be a resounding success, as both parents and children eagerly anticipate the upcoming half-term holidays. Furthermore, our receptionist team consistently receive commendations for their friendly, positive, and caring demeanour. Recognising that their primary role is to enhance our customers' days, they consistently contribute to creating a welcoming and positive environment for all.

In 2022/23 Arun received a total of 377 comments via feedback focus.

46 compliments
46 comments/suggestion
285 complaints – 0.02 of total visits

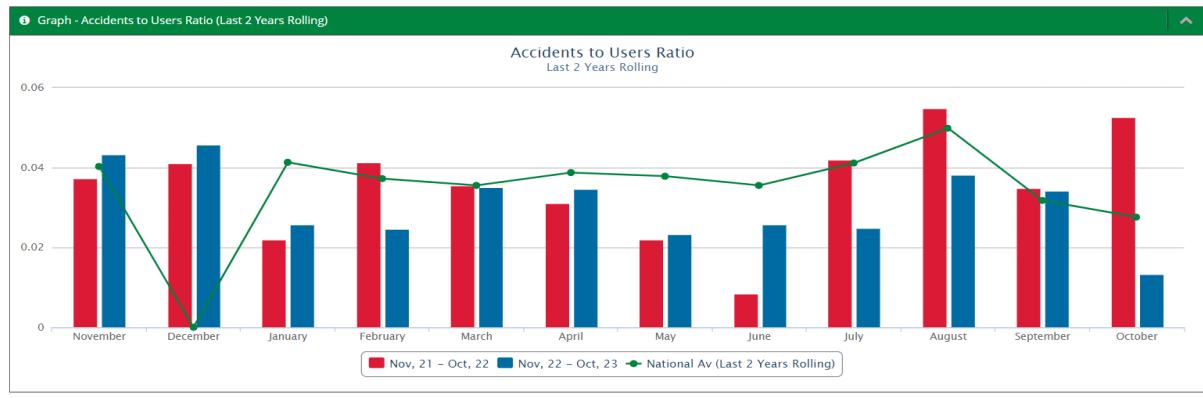
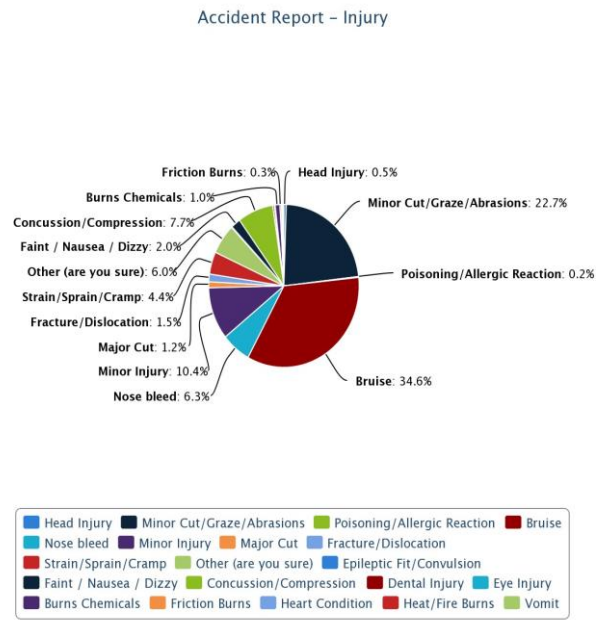




Accidents to Users Ratio

Freedom Leisure are committed to reducing accidents in our facilities and preventing them is at the pinnacle of all health and safety decisions. Across the contract between April 22 and September 23 we had just 612 recorded accidents in 1.3m visits. This equates to just 0.04% of all visits. When looking into it further, 74% of those accidents recorded on site resulting in injury have been bruises, nose bleeds or other minor injuries. The teams have a robust plan for all types of first aid incident and participate in regular monthly training.

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Accidents to Users Ratio

CON AV: 0.03%

NAT AV: 0.74%





April 2022 – March 2023	Littlehampton Wave	Arun Leisure Centre	Bersted Centre	The Windmill Entertainment Centre	SAPD	Total
Income	£2,641,650	£1,326,415	£42,674	£127,487	£125,192	£4,263,418
Expenditure	£2,207,424	£1,992,812	£98,860	£110,688	£41,870	£4,451,655
Arun Council Support	£265,001					£265,001
Net surplus / (deficit)	£434,226	-£666,397	-£56,186	£16,799	£83,322	-£188,236

At the conclusion of the 2022/2023 financial year, the Arun Area faced a deficit primarily attributable to the global utility crisis. As we continued to grow following the recovery of the Covid pandemic this was an unforeseen challenge. Despite efforts to manage other budgetary aspects effectively, the utility crisis proved to be a significant burden on the financial health of the Arun Area, contributing substantially to the year-end deficit. Arun District Council offered £265k support in 2022 for that financial year which helped greatly reduce the deficit.



April 2023 – September 2023	Littlehampton Wave	Arun Leisure Centre	Bersted Centre	The Windmill Entertainment Centre	SAPD	Total
Income	£1,806,124	£1,086,685	£33,953	£46,656	£67,210	£3,040,628
Expenditure	£1,365,067	£1,353,933	£57,163	£42,020	£14,887	£2,833,071
Arun Council Support	£205,255					£205,255
Net surplus / (deficit)	£402,972	£267,248	£23,210	£3,635	£52,323	£168,472

Looking ahead to the 2023/2024 financial year, the Arun Area has strategically positioned itself for a much stronger financial standing. Along with £205k support for utility costs from Arun District Council; several key initiatives have been implemented to mitigate the impact of utility expenses, including securing preferential utility rates. Additionally, spend line controls have been established to enhance financial discipline and ensure that resources are allocated judiciously. The focus for the upcoming year also includes a commercial drive to maximise revenue, coupled with an unwavering commitment to enhancing the overall quality of service provided. These measures collectively aim to not only rectify the previous year's deficit but also to position the Arun Area for sustained financial stability and growth. Financial stability allows us to invest more into the services that we offer the wider community.

Team in Arun

Over the course of the year we have seen a turnover in various roles along with the employment market tightening and becoming more competitive. Freedom Leisure have added new roles into the business recognising the growth it has undertaken and the support sites require to perform to the best they can.

In October 2023 Freedom Leisure gave all job roles a 5% pay award increase as another factor in the journey to become an employer of choice in our industry.

Matt Eden – Area Manager of Arun – Matt has worked in the Health and Fitness Industry for over a decade and has worked with providers such as Nuffield Health and The Village. He joined us in July 2023 after running the flagship Fitness First in Baker Street.



Ben Lucas – GM of Arun Leisure Centre – Ben has a background in Leisure having worked at The Arena in Bognor Regis amongst many other projects; Ben joined us in August 2023.



Matt Williams – GM of Littlehampton Wave – Matt was the General Manager of Arun Leisure Centre before taking the helm down the road. He has been in the industry since being a Lifeguard at just 17 years old.

Internal Progression: Trish Causabon-Vincent – Multifunctional Duty Manager – Trish has a wealth of experience and is an expert with Day Camps, Reception, Friday Night Project and many other depts, she has now started to train as a Duty Manager

Kaylee Raynsford: Multifunctional Duty Manager – Kaylee has been with Freedom for roughly 18 months and along with stepping up to be a Duty Manager is also part of the team that liaises between Management and the Lifeguards to increase communication.

Apprenticeships: We are proud to currently be investing in 5 people on different apprenticeships. From Lifeguards and Membership Advisors working towards becoming PT's, to Duty Managers gaining qualifications in their roles. We hope to grow this number of participants in the coming months.

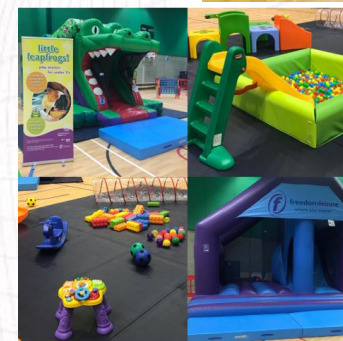


Marketing

Freedom Leisure actively promotes healthy lifestyles across the communities . Ensuring that everyone feels welcome within our centres.

In the recent few years, we have focused more on digital marketing as this leads to more interaction this is supported by traditional methods to ensure we are able to reach our demographic.

Our marketing displays a wide range of activities to ensure that there really is something for everyone and that we offer an all-inclusive service. To match our bespoke offering, we try to personalise our content along with our National campaigns. Our content will always be informative, fun and localised.



Social Media Coverage



Centre	Social media followers as of Nov 23
Arun Leisure Centre	4,504
Littlehampton Wave	9,440
Windmill Entertainment Centre	550
Bersted Park Community Centre	821
Active Communities Arun	376
Six Villages Sports Centre	667



Photo 1- Santas Elves- day camps/ Photo2- walk leaders AGM/ Photo 3- Christmas Zumba. Photo 4- Cardiac

Testimonials



Cardiac Rehab Classes

"Since attending the cardiac rehab sessions I can now do everything that I used to be able to do before my heart attack. I feel more positive and I am happy with the progress that I've made. I enjoy coming to the class because it provides me with extra support and company" - Sue

Testimonial



Swimming Lesson TESTIMONIAL

"Dannii has helped my child so much with her swimming, she is improving so much since having Dannii.

I spoke to Mum and she said that this is the third swimming school she has used and her child has progressed the best with us.



Cardiac Rehab Testimonial

"I feel so much better in myself and have seen a significant improvement in my strength and coordination. I can also see the progress being made by the others in the class"

COLIN



“

Day Camps Testimonial

My daughter attended the children's day camp for the very first time. I never would normally email, but I just wanted to let you now she had an amazing time! From the moment we arrived the staff were brilliant and in particular Gemma, was great with my daughter, very friendly and couldn't do enough. I will definitely be recommending and sending my daughter again!"

”



TESTIMONIALS

"I have the ability to work harder now without the feeling of being breathless and over tired.

I feel more able to do things with confidence now knowing I can work hard without any problems.

I can now push myself harder without the worry"

Elaine



our year in numbers:

The last 18 months have been record breaking for the Arun Contract in many different areas. We have been able to support the community more than we ever have before.

The numbers below reflect just January until September 2023.

126,000+

Learn to swim
attendances in 2023



1,309,064

Centre visits



37

Children on
Talented Athletic Programme



6,781

Over 75 year old swims in 2023



12

New volunteers walkers
trained up in 2023



700

On average per week on
Healthy Walk Sessions in 2023



8,986

Attendees to
Little Leapfrogs sessions since April
2022



291,327

Nearly 300,000 visits
In 2023





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www.freedom-leisure.co.uk

Healthy Communities Arun

“ improving lives
through leisure ”

What is Healthy Communities and what do we do?

We work with a large majority of people of all ages and from all walks of life, to engage them with our leisure service. This is both within our centres but also out in the Arun community.



A majority of the people we work with won't be your average gym and swim users, many of these people have barriers in the way to participating in leisure activities. Barriers include, low income, social isolation, lack of confidence, health conditions ... the list goes on.



The job of the Healthy Communities team is to break down these barriers for people to make activities **ACCESSIBLE, FUN** and **WELCOMING** to help empower people to live healthier lives. This is done through sourcing funding, working with a variety of partners, regularly adapting programmes to meet peoples needs and above all, building an **AMAZING** team of staff, all of whom are passionate about making a positive difference and can deliver on our objectives!



In addition to our Healthy Communities targeted work, we also work on developing and building the Junior Activities provision at both leisure centres. We recognise that a healthy lifestyle needs to start early for everybody and we want to help young children and families create healthy habits that become a lifestyle choice.



For Families and Young People

Active Play 'Out & About' sessions - A record **2,198** attendances this year on our community Active Play 'Out & About' sessions. The team delivered free play provision across 8 green spaces in Arun, all supported by parish and town councils.

Little Leapfrogs – Due to demand, 4 sessions are now running per week. Leapfrogs aims to support parents and families of young children with an affordable play session. **7,640** child attendances during 2023. Leapfrogs sessions will be launched at Arun Leisure Centre in 2024.

Gymnastics & Trampolining- We now have over 160 gymnasts coming through our programme here at Wave each week and 32 at Arun Leisure Centre. As well as our courses, we also offer drop in Gym Tots sessions for under 5's. Supported by an exceptionally dedicated and supportive team of coaches.

Day Camps

Our holiday club runs at both Arun Leisure Centre & Littlehampton Wave. This provides working parents with affordable, wrap around child care Mon-Fri.

Friday Night Project – Up to **90** young people aged 11-16 years were engaging each week with our Friday Night projects at Wave and ALC. Due to reasons out of our control, both projects are currently on hold but we hope to relaunch shortly.



Ageing Well

Forever Active

Forever Active sessions each week at Wave geared towards older adults. These sessions aim to tackle social isolation and bridge the gap between health referral and centre exercise classes. Incredible testimonials coming from these classes of how they are helping customers. 8 customers have already joined our phase 4 cardiac rehab classes as a result of coming to Forever Active. This is exactly what we set out to achieve.

Walking for Health in Arun

36 dedicated volunteer walk leaders leading 7 weekly and 3 monthly walks. Average attendance of **700** walkers per month.

Adult Multi Sports

Now available at Wave for adults with learning disabilities. Sessions funded by Grace Eyre foundation & the Together Fund from Active Sussex.

Exercise Referral Programme

Running in partnership with Active Sussex through the NHS Sussex Personalised Care and Prevention funding. These sessions are to target adults on low incomes and/or with a health condition through physical activity sessions. 26 weeks of funded activity available.

Dementia Friendly Swimming

A dedicated, quiet pool space just for individuals living with age related memory loss.

Affordability & Accessibility

HAF

1,105 attendances at our Day Camps through the WSCC HAF scheme during 2023.

Ukrainian Refugees LTS

In partnership with ADC, we are now offering 12 months worth of swimming lessons to Ukrainian refugees at Arun Leisure Centre and Wave. We currently have 14 children enrolled. In addition, ADC are also supporting supplying each child with swimwear, goggles, a bag and a towel.

Community Memberships

Free yearly community memberships for community groups and service users to access our facilities. 70 live memberships at the end of September 2023. Groups include Mind, Social Prescribers and Carers Support.

Free swimming to over 75's

Over 21,000 swims have been swam over the last 18 months.

Free Swimming for Under 4's and to all those enrolled on our LTS programme



Investment

Equipment

Littlehampton Wave

- 7.5k new roll out Gymnastics matting
- 8.5k replacement Little Leapfrogs/multi purpose matting
- New two modular Inflatazone castle purchased by Arun District Council. This has had an **incredible** impact on the centre and has been extremely well received by our customers of all ages!

Arun Leisure Centre

- 15k junior equipment investment, including a large 10k two modular castle and 5k's worth of pre-school equipment. This will enable us to launch the following:
 - A re-vitalised and fresh party programme, including a brand new sports hall party offering with parties available for those 0-16 years on both Saturday and Sunday.
 - A new weekend junior activity programme, including Little Leapfrogs and Junior Sports Club.
 - Grow and raise the profile of our Day Camp provision.

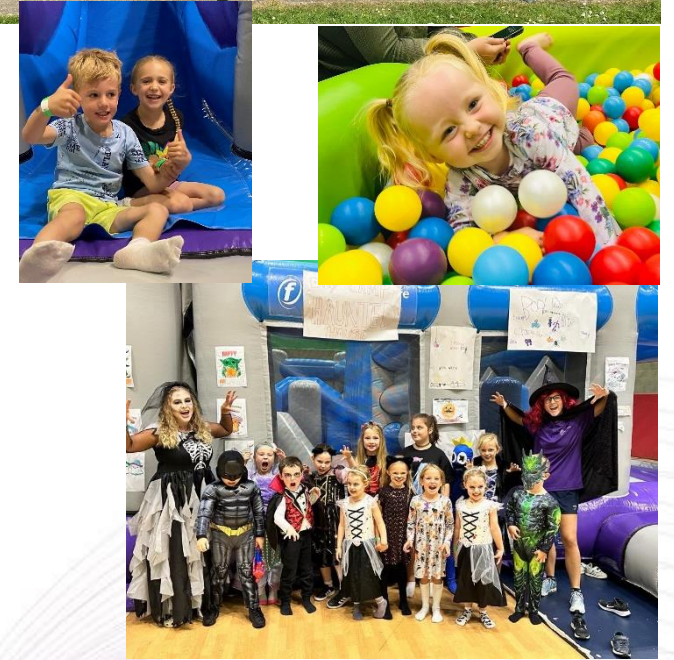
Staff

Funded by Freedom Leisure, we have upskilled staff in the following areas:

- Provided Dementia Friends Training for staff teams in partnership with Zachary Merton.
- 2 x staff trained and passed their a Level 1 Boccia Course
- 2x staff trained and passed their Level 2 Gymnastics Coaching



Healthy Communities in pictures!



Together
Everyone
Achieves
More!



Testimonials & Engagement



"The team are so friendly and attentive. I hope this will continue for as long as possible as it makes the children & adults very happy!" - Ferring parent

"The best activity team ever! They are very friendly and super kind with all the kids. A HUGE thank you to all" – Wick parent

"My boys have had an amazing summer holiday thanks to the activity team, well done all" – Wick parent

"Great to have these free sessions on our doorstep, loved having more sessions at different locations too, please do them again next year!" – Angmering parent

"We love these sessions as they are great fun and also help with health and confidence in my child due to the friendly staff" – Rustington parent

"My children have really enjoyed this, the team get so involved with the kids and make it such a fun experience!" Yapton parent

"Staff really lovely, it's been great to be able to go somewhere this summer that doesn't cost the earth" – Bersted parent

"My Grandad was very anxious but the staff made him feel so comfortable! He did some exercise and played board games, it was so lovely to see him laughing, smiling and telling jokes like the good old times – thank you Littlehampton Wave!" – Forever Active Customer

I attend Leapfrogs every week with my toddler and baby. Every week Abi gives 100%, playing with them both, being aware of their needs and reacting when I have to help one of them independently. She is a lifesaver and has made our lives easier, happier and more wonderful whenever we attend leapfrogs" – Leapfrogs Customer

My daughter was very nervous attending Day Camp for the first time but the staff made her feel at ease immediately. She absolutely loved the range of activities and especially the themed days. You can see the staff work so hard to engage the children and I am very grateful for this provision so I can go to work in the knowledge she is happy. Thank you Littlehampton Wave team! – Day Camp Customer

Positive Engagement



Case Studies

active communities

Date Completed: December 23

Case Study: Exercise Referral Classes

Programme Code: ARUN/ER

Overview:

In August 2023 we were awarded 26 weeks' worth of funding through Active Sussex from the NHS Sussex Personalised Care and Prevention, to target adults with a diagnosed health condition through physical activity sessions. The funding is also linked to the current NHS agenda around increasing referrals to their Digital Weight Management Programme.

We launched our Exercise Referral classes in September 23. Our classes are delivered by our Level 3 instructors, one of whom has extensive knowledge and training in a range of exercise specialties, including Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab, Long Term Neurological Conditions, Obesity, Diabetes, and Chronic Lower Back Pain and can provide individuals with an incredibly high level of support. Individuals can be referred to classes by an exercise professional or can self-refer. Initially, our instructors did a fantastic job of getting an understanding of a new group of people and the multiple and complex health conditions that they have. Understandably, this took up a lot of extra time and effort outside of the sessions. Indeed, it is not easy to recruit and sustain activity with people living with a range of conditions who were not previously active. All participants (12 in total to this date) self-referred themselves into the activity sessions which was fantastic, however, this brought significant challenges. After conducting a detailed PARQ, there were a number of participants who were more at risk than others due to their complex health conditions. For our instructors to be able to continue delivering the sessions safely and appropriately to all participants then Freedom required some of these patients to be signed off by a GP that they could exercise.

This then immediately put a barrier in the way for these self-referring individuals, as it is not easy to see a GP quickly for something that might not be considered a priority. The team at Freedom are passionate about not turning service users away and leaving them without support. Particularly as many of these individuals have made the first step back to addressing their health and wellbeing. One participant in particular struggled a lot with their anxiety and the instructor was concerned about asking them not to attend until a GP can sign them off as there was a high chance the individual would lose their confidence.

We raised this issue promptly with Active Sussex and with their support, we took our concerns to the ARUN PCN and local GP/Clinical Director. After discussions over the matter at PCN meetings the following plan has now been put in place by the Clinical Director moving forwards:

- Member of public 'self refers' to our exercise referral classes
- They fill in a PARQ supplied by Freedom Leisure.
- Freedom Leisure send PARQ over to the PCN email address
- PARQ is reviewed and individual is approved to attend our classes or referred for further review from Clinical staff rather than Freedom staff.
- Member of public has not had to book an appointment with a GP, potentially experience a long wait for this appointment and then potentially lost interest/confidence in their cause, to then be back to square one.

This partnership working at its best and is a HUGE step forward for Arun and Freedom Leisure. This breakthrough will make such a huge difference not only to our service users accessing services quickly but it will allow us to move closer into the community of more vulnerable adults in a safe way.

Feedback:

"The class has made such a difference to my life in just a few months. Having suffered with ongoing age-related conditions over the last 10 years I was extremely apprehensive about attending this class but knew I needed to take the step for my health and wellbeing. My balance in particular has improved incredibly. I have managed to stop myself falling recently which I would never have been able to do before" Class Attendee

Outcomes:

- New partnership with the Arun PCN agreed.
- Individuals PARQ will now be reviewed by a medical professional on receipt from Freedom Leisure, as opposed to the individual having to book an appointment (and in some cases pay) for a GP sign off to exercise.
- Extremely positive joined up approach with Freedom & the PCN to make the individual feel supported on their journey to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Class attendance can take place much sooner for these individuals and instruction given will help contribute to the prevention of further medical issues.
- Retention of participants.



Themes of activity completed (tick appropriate box):

☐ ☐ ☒ ☒ ☐ ☐

active communities

Date Completed: December 23

Case Study: Healthy Walks in Arun

Programme Code: ARUN/WFH

Overview:

Healthy Walks in Arun is a Freedom Leisure scheme. The programme consists of 8 different walks, led by 36 volunteer walk leaders across the district, with some months seeing over 700 attendances. The walks are designed to combat social isolation, encourage sedentary people to move more, build confidence, make friends and improve an individual's health and wellbeing. All walks are free of charge and do not need to be pre-booked.

Our walking scheme strives to be inclusive. We have shorter and longer routes to help participants progress. Within the Littlehampton Walk, a wheelchair friendly route is incorporated.

Although a great way to improve physical and mental health, many people also come along for the social aspect. Many additional events have been organised by the leaders off the back of the walks, including meals out, quiz nights to raise money for charity and regular trips to the theatre. The walks offer people so much and play a vital part in their livelihood.

Pre-Covid, our walking programme was recognised on a county level. We are incredibly proud of our Healthy Walks in Arun volunteer walk leader Sian Fletcher, who won the Active Champion award at the Active Sussex Sports Awards. Sian has been volunteering with us for 10 years and has made a phenomenal impact on the community, not only running the Ferring walk each week with attendances that reach over 60 people but constantly going above and beyond, organising new walks for her groups, arranging walking holidays and raising copious amounts of money for charity. Sian is a true pillar of the Arun Community!

Although we are lucky enough in Arun to have a Walk Coordinator to manage the programme itself, the delivery is carried out solely by volunteers. They do the most incredible job. An example of their dedication is as follows. We started one of our walks in Rustington 7 years ago, at the beginning we had between 10-15 walkers each week. This has now grown to 40-50 with a record number of 56 participants attending in July. Much of this is down to the six leader's hard work of building up a fantastic rapport and maintaining relationships with current walkers, keeping them coming back week after week but also being a huge driving force behind continuously promoting the walk and welcoming new participants.

Feedback:

"I joined the walking programme when my husband passed away. I had become very lonely and needed something to help me find my confidence again." Current Walker

"The walks have given me a new lease of life. I love the walking, the fantastic friends I have made and the extra social events. I don't know where I would be without my walks. The leaders are absolutely fantastic and a credit to Freedom Leisure and Healthy Walks in Arun" - Current Walker

Outcomes:

- 7 weekly walks
- 3 monthly walks
- 2 inclusive walks (wheelchair and buggy friendly)
- Specialised organised walks with the South Downs Rangers
- 36 volunteer walk leaders
- 700+ attendances per month



Themes of activity completed (tick appropriate box):

☐ ☐ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☐

Case Study: Exercise Referral Classes

Programme Code: ARUN/ER

Overview:

In August 2023 we were awarded 26 weeks' worth of funding through Active Sussex from the NHS Sussex Personalised Care and Prevention, to target adults with a diagnosed health condition through physical activity sessions. The funding is also linked to the current NHS agenda around increasing referrals to their Digital Weight Management Programme.

We launched our Exercise Referral classes in September 23. Our classes are delivered by our Level 3 instructors, one of whom has extensive knowledge and training in a range of exercise specialties, including Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab, Long Term Neurological Conditions, Obesity, Diabetes, and Chronic Lower Back Pain and can provide individuals with an incredibly high level of support. Individuals can be referred to classes by an exercise professional or can self-refer. Initially, our instructors did a fantastic job of getting an understanding of a new group of people as well as the multiple and complex health conditions that they have. Understandably, this took up lot of extra time and effort outside of the sessions. Indeed, it is not easy to recruit and sustain activity with people living with a range of conditions who were not previously active. All participants (12 in total to this date) self-referred themselves into the activity sessions which was fantastic, however, this brought significant challenges. After conducting a detailed pre-exercise questionnaire called a PARQ, there were a number of participants who were more at risk than others due to their complex health conditions. For our instructors to be able to continue delivering the sessions safely and appropriately to all participants then Freedom required some of these patients to be signed off by a GP that they could exercise.

This then immediately put a barrier in the way for these self-referring individuals, as it is not easy to see a GP quickly for something that might not be considered a priority. The team at Freedom are passionate about not turning service users away and leaving them without support. Particularly as many of these individuals have made the **incredibly important** first step back to addressing their health and wellbeing. One participant in particular struggled a lot with their anxiety and the instructor was concerned about asking them not to attend until a GP can sign them off as there was a high chance the individual would lose their confidence.

We raised this issue promptly with Active Sussex and with their support, we took our concerns to the ARUN PCN and local GP/Clinical Director. After discussions over the matter at PCN meetings, the following plan has now been put in place by the Clinical Director moving forwards:

- Member of public 'self refers' to our exercise referral classes
- They fill in a ParQ supplied by Freedom Leisure.
- Freedom Leisure send ParQ over to the PCN email address
- ParQ is reviewed and individual is approved to attend our classes or referred for further review from Clinical staff rather than Freedom staff.
- Member of public has not had to book an appointment with a GP, potentially experience a long wait for this appointment and then potentially lose interest/confidence in their cause, to then be back to square one.

This is partnership working at its best and is a HUGE step forward for Arun and Freedom Leisure. This breakthrough will make such a **huge** difference not only to our service users accessing services quickly but it will allow us to move closer into the community of more vulnerable adults in a safe way,

Feedback:

"The class has made such a difference to my life in just a few months. Having suffered with ongoing age-related conditions over the last 10 years I was extremely apprehensive about attending this class but knew I needed to take the step for my health and wellbeing. My balance in particular has improved incredibly. I have managed to stop myself falling recently which I would never have been able to do before" Class Attendee

Outcomes:

- New partnership with the Arun PCN agreed.
- Individuals PARQ will now be reviewed by a medical professional on receipt from Freedom Leisure, as opposed to the individual having to book an appointment (and in some cases pay) for a GP sign off to exercise.
- Extremely positive joined up approach with Freedom & the PCN to make the individual feel supported on their journey to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Class attendance can take place much sooner for these individuals and instruction given will help contribute to the prevention of further medical issues.
- Retention of participants.



Themes of activity completed (tick appropriate box):

☐

Active Sport

☐

Active Young People

☒

Active Ageing

☒

Active Communities

☐

Active Health

☐

Active Workforce

Email:

Charlotte.simpson@freedom-leisure.co.uk

Case Study: Healthy Walks in Arun

Programme Code: ARUN/WFH

Overview:

Healthy Walks in Arun is a Freedom Leisure scheme. The programme consists of 8 different walks, led by 36 volunteer walk leaders across the district, with some months seeing over 700 attendances. The walks are designed to combat social isolation, encourage sedentary people to move more, build confidence, make friends and improve an individual's health and wellbeing. All walks are free of charge and do not need to be pre-booked.

Our walking scheme strives to be inclusive. We have shorter and longer routes to help participants progress. Within the Littlehampton Walk, a wheelchair friendly route is incorporated.

Although a great way to improve physical and mental health, many people also come along for the social aspect. Many additional events have been organised by the leaders off the back of the walks, including meals out, quiz nights to raise money for charity and regular trips to the theatre. The walks offer people so much and play a vital part in their livelihood.

Pre-Covid, our walking programme was recognised on a county level. We are incredibly proud of our Healthy Walks in Arun volunteer walk leader Sian Fletcher, who won the Active Champion award at the Active Sussex Sports Awards. Sian has been volunteering with us for 10 years and has made a phenomenal impact on the community, not only running the Ferring walk each week with attendances that reach over 60 people but constantly going above and beyond, organising new walks for her groups, arranging walking holidays and raising copious amounts of money for charity. Sian is a true pillar of the Arun Community!

Within Arun, we have a Walk Coordinator to manage the programme itself but the delivery is carried out solely by volunteers. They do the most incredible job. An example of their dedication is as follows. We started one of our walks in Rustington 7 years ago, at the beginning we had between 10-15 walkers each week. This has now grown to 40-50 with a record number of 56 participants attending in July. Much of this is down to the six leader's hard work of building up a fantastic rapport and maintaining relationships with current walkers, keeping them coming back week after week but also being a huge driving force behind continuously promoting the walk and welcoming new participants.

Feedback:

"I joined the walking programme when my husband passed away. I had become very lonely and needed something to help me find my confidence again." Current Walker

"The walks have given me a new lease of life, I love the walking, the fantastic friends I have made and the extra social events. I don't know where I would be without my walks. The leaders are absolutely fantastic and a credit to Freedom Leisure and Healthy Walks in Arun" - Current Walker

Outcomes:

- 7 weekly walks
- 3 monthly walks
- 2 inclusive walks (wheelchair and buggy friendly)
- Specially organised walks with the South Downs Rangers
- 36 volunteer walk leaders
- 700+ attendances per month



Themes of activity completed (tick appropriate box):

☐
Active Sport☐
Active Young People☒
Active Ageing☒
Active Communities☒
Active Health☐
Active Workforce

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