

Quest  
Assessment Improvement Report

**Plymouth City Council Sports Development Team**

Operated by  
Plymouth City Council





## 1. Introduction

This report results from a Quest On-site Assessment carried out on 24 and 25 November 2011 by Julie Gibson. Louise Kelley, Sports Development Manager, hosted the Assessment.

The Assessments are based on the best practice principles in the Quest Manager's Guidance Pack (Issue 3) – SD framework.

## 2. Scope of Assessment

The Assessment covers all of the activities and processes involved in the delivery of the services at Plymouth City Council Sports Development Team. The services include:

- school club development
- club coach development
- community development
- increasing participation activities
- diversionary programmes.

## 3. Sample

The Assessment cannot, in the time available, confirm every activity affecting service delivery. Every effort has been made to identify a realistic picture of the organisation through the method and format of the Assessment. However, by sampling, the report and findings cannot be taken as unequivocal endorsement of safe and effective operation.

## 4. Result

The overall score for **Plymouth City Council Sports Development Team is 91%**.

**Congratulations - Plymouth City Council Sports Development Team** will be registered under the UK Quality Scheme for Sport & Leisure within the Category

**Excellent.**

The Registration is subject to the Team subscribing to the Scheme Maintenance Requirements.

## 5. Executive Summary

The Assessor appreciates the co-operation and assistance provided during the Assessment and has summarised the results of the process below. The Assessor has scored each of the 92 Best Practice Principles on a 1-4 basis, judging evidence on the basis of Poor, Fair, Good or Excellent respectively. To add further value, the Assessor has made suggestions, which could be considered by the Team to help it improve further.

This is the Team's fourth Quest Assessment. It has been working with the Quest Principles for over eight years and has improved significantly over this period. The Team has shown considerable improvements since its previous assessment; there appears to have been a specific and targeted strategy for improvement. This improvement is highlighted within the key performance indicators of the Team. The overall percentage score has improved by an impressive 15%.

It is worth stating that Plymouth City Council is currently going through a period of restructuring and redundancies as a result of deficit reduction requirements. This process has investigated which services need to be reduced and by how much. The Sports Development Team has been part of this investigation however the reductions have not yet directly affected the Team. No reductions are planned until year three of a three year plan. This is as a result of high profile activities, value for money and effective management and delivery. The report is completed based on this restructuring and any further impending change.

During the Assessment process the Assessor identified, along with others in this report, the following key strengths and examples of good practice:

- The Team demonstrated a clear strategic direction; there were many links made by the Team to other plans including the vision for Plymouth, the Corporate Plan, and the Culture, Sport and Leisure Business Plan
- The range of services provided by the Team was extensive covering all elements of the sports development continuum to a high standard
- The leadership and management of the Team is strong; Staff felt valued and able to offer ideas as well being encouraged to be creative and innovative
- All of the Team came across very professionally, demonstrating excellent knowledge of both their individual work areas as well as that of the Team
- The Team has excellent understanding of the locality and the needs of the community; this includes excellent product knowledge and also the ability to analyse this information collectively and then offer solutions
- Comparability and trend analysis are also areas of strength. This could be a trend in terms of health and safety or a trend in terms of performance in comparison with others locally, regionally and nationally
- Performance management is excellent; the use of targeted and closely monitored key performance indicators is superb.

There are also areas which could be considered for improvement. Some key suggestions, along with others identified in the report, include:

- The website that the Team populate is bland and uninspiring. Given one of the target groups is young people this is a major communication link that could be improved to reflect the vitality of both the Team and the products on offer. This is also true of using social media; this is now an essential form of communication particularly useful for attracting non users and hard to reach groups
- There were a number of examples of corporate processes that are not consistently beneficial for the Team; the Team are succeeding despite the systems not necessarily because of them. It would be useful to increase the influence of the Team on corporate systems to minimise this
- It may be useful to consider the development of specific improvement groups. These could be based on hot topics such as marketing or specific projects related to neighbourhoods for example. This may offer some planned and coordinated developments
- It may be useful to introduce quality unannounced spot checks to monitor operational performance. This again could offer ideas for further development.
- Methods of gathering feedback may also be an area for development.

The Team are to be congratulated on their achievement.

## 6. How your Quest Management Issues are scored

Your own Self Assessment score for each Management Issue is recorded in the table below – column C. In column D, the Assessor has also assessed each principle on a 1 – 4 rating and then calculated a total score for that Management Issue. This score is then converted into a score out of 10 for direct comparison between Management Issues.

Management Issues		Your SAQ Score	Assessor's Scoring	
		Col C	Col D	Col E
			Best practice principles	Assessment score (out of 10)
<b>S1</b>	<b>Research and Community Engagement</b>	24	32	10.0
<b>S2</b>	<b>Planning</b>	43	48	10.0
<b>S3</b>	<b>Partnerships</b>	23	26	9.3
<b>S4</b>	<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	29	33	9.2
<b>P1</b>	<b>Management Support and Leadership</b>	40	41	9.3
<b>P2</b>	<b>People Management and Development</b>	40	41	9.3
<b>D1</b>	<b>Delivery Planning and Procedures</b>	33	33	9.2
<b>D2</b>	<b>Health and Safety Management</b>	32	38	9.5
<b>D3</b>	<b>Customer Relations</b>	27	27	8.4
<b>D4</b>	<b>Marketing</b>	39	33	6.9
<b>Total Percentage score</b>				<b>91%</b>

Organisations should aim to score at least 6 out of 10 for each issue, and use the assessment of each Best Practice Principle (both by the Assessor and Self Assessment) as the guide to developing further action plans. Planning how to improve the Best Practice Principles, followed by implementation, and some form of review will facilitate continuous improvement. This process will lead to higher scoring.

## STRATEGY

### S1 Research and Community Engagement

#### Quest Best Practice

- There is a clear understanding of the sporting needs and expectations of targeted customers and the community.
- There is a clearly defined approach to formal and informal research.
- An awareness of National and Regional policies, initiatives and trends is developed to assist in meeting the needs of targeted customers and the community.

#### Strengths and examples of good practice

During the assessment the Team were able to justify without hesitation the reason for projects and the impact these projects were having. Data is automatically collated and analysed closely in order to emphasise value and worth to the residents of Plymouth. Every project had accurate and actioned research and data. This is particularly impressive. There were many examples of this including the use of the information showing the West Crescent of targeted neighbourhoods, the project specific evaluations and trend analysis, the extensive data bases and joined up approach to data and the corporate information held centrally.

The level of detail of usage, performance, feedback and then subsequent change was excellent, comprehensive and relevant. Information gathered from hard to reach groups was also equally as impressive. The use of a range of formats that are easily adapted supported this. This level of detail and access to clear quantifiable information has allowed the Team to access and maintain extensive external funding. Projects including the work with the Social Inclusion Unit, the Criminal Damage and Anti-Social Behaviour Group and the Streetwise Youth Team are excellent examples of this. Furthermore the Team has been able to quantify the value of its work to internal strategic decision makers as well as external partners. This again has led to sustainable provision. The Team understands this and so strives to have as much data as viable to detail value and worth.

The Team work with a range of partners to ensure that research is effective for the locality. This is further supported by the knowledge of the locality by the members of the Team. There is a natural affinity to the area by the Team as a result of the time spent and also the relationships that have developed with individuals and groups. In addition the Team has access to significant up to date data through many partner agencies. For example the multi-agency approach to diversionary activities including the Fire Service, the Police, the Youth Offending Service, higher and further education as well as Plymouth Argyle Football Club. In conclusion the Team use partnership data successfully to inform effective decision making.

The Team benchmark to effective and reliable secondary data on a national, regional and local level. This particularly includes external data gathered by the Active People Survey. The Team were able to explain what the demographics of the locality were and

how Plymouth could be compared to other local, regional and national trends. The Team also ensure its currency through an excellent understanding of the national, regional, local and post code agendas. All members of the Team could confidently detail the locality and how this related to national agendas.

It is worth emphasising that an outstanding quality of the Team is the ability to understand the locality and then provide a solution that meets the needs of Plymouth. There were a number of examples where national agendas were adopted and adapted to ensure that the specific agenda to Plymouth was met. For example, the use of a community approach as opposed to a sport specific approach in some targeted areas. .To do this successfully the Team has used data to support and progress change. This solution driven approach originates from knowing the locality clearly and understanding what would work and what would not. This is also linked to excellent leadership.

Different forms of external funding are major contributors to the Team; the Team attract these high levels of funding as a consequence of the quality of work provided. However many funding sources are continued. In order to do this the Team has to gather relevant and effective research to prove impact and so the worthiness for initial or continued funding. Over £330 000 is attracted through external funding. This demonstrates superb research, data collation and analysis.

It is worth adding that during the assessment there was a significant and probing focus on how to decide what to do given the current economic circumstances. The broader Team were able to respond with ease, with no reference and with accuracy. It is also worth highlighting that the Team has not been directly significantly effected to date by cost reduction schemes (there are some limited plans for year three of a three year plan).This appears to be in some part because the Team has research to prove community engagement and so is regarded as valuable in achieving corporate objectives.

It appears the Team need to maintain this excellent level of service rather than do more research.

In summary this is an area of outstanding practice.

BPP No Score	Best Practice Principles	Assessor's suggested Areas for Improvement
1 Score 4	A current programme of regular, primary research is developed and implemented to identify the needs of users and non users.	
2 Score 4	The Team develops and maintains awareness and understanding of current demographic, cultural and socio-economic factors affecting the provision of its services.	

<b>3</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Appropriate secondary research is used regularly to identify the needs of users and non users.	
<b>4</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Research and community engagement shapes strategic planning and delivery	
<b>5</b> <b>Score 4</b>	An awareness of relevant national, regional, county and local policies, initiatives and trends is developed and maintained.	
<b>6</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Corporate research/consultation is influenced and effectively used by the Team.	
<b>7</b> <b>Score 4</b>	As a result of community engagement, delivery and outcomes have become more effective.	
<b>8</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Examples of quantitative and qualitative research are used to demonstrate the effectiveness of outcomes.	

## S2 Planning

### Quest Best Practice

- There is a clear and documented approach to planning the service
- The planning reflects the needs of the identified community/customers, and agenda at all appropriate levels
- The planning achieves desired outcomes.

#### Strengths and examples of good practice

The Team benefits from having clear strategic planning. This brings together the key stakeholders in the locality to produce a joint vision. The key factors for this are the “healthy, wealthy, safe and wise city”.

This key strategic vision also informs and impacts on a series of strategic corporate, departmental and section documents such as:

The Corporate Plan 2011-14

The Culture Sport and Leisure Business Plan 2011/12

The Sports Development Plan incorporating the “get active, get involved and get inspired” headers

Work Programmes with effective and regular review and performance management

The Aquatics Strategy.

The processes behind all these strategic documents appear to be thorough. Research informs decisions; there appears to be consistent and constant inquisitive nature amongst both the strategic and operational Staff to understand what, when, how and why. This therefore ensures no complacency when planning strategically.

The key members of the Team are aware of the strategy, where they fit in and what they need to do to achieve their outcomes. They also understand how they will be monitored and achievement will be measured against these outcomes.

Equity and social inclusion is a priority through all documents. There is strong planning to balance inequality including health. The statistic that life expectancy can vary by 14 years by neighbourhood in Plymouth is highlighted throughout strategic planning. This sector appears to be a future area of growth.

The Team produce a Sports Development delivery plan; this in turn informs the individual work programmes. There are a series of reviews, many of which are quarterly and there is an annual report. There is a coordinated approach and link between strategic planning and operational targets. The Team has eight key performance indicators that are measured using the corporate E Performance Management system. This information is again analysed and used to develop future strategic direction. Much of the

strategic planning takes place during the planning away days (there have been three in the past year). The Team regard these as vital. These also include partners where useful.

Plans are produced in a number of formats for different audiences. This can range from a lengthy professionally produced document containing significant jargon and heavy narrative for local authority personnel to a summary document in a language appropriate for residents.

In summary strategic documentation is successful and offers:

- a clear rationale for choice
- details of actions and targets
- partnership endorsement
- explanations in a variety of formats for different audiences.

BPP No Score	Best Practice Principles	Assessor's suggested Areas for Improvement
1 Score 4	There is an overall strategy, supported by plans providing clear direction for the service.	
2 Score 4	The strategy and plans have a clear rationale	
3 Score 4	The strategy and plans encompass and promote equity principles.	
4 Score 4	There is a child welfare policy which meets national standards.	
5 Score 4	Continuous improvement is incorporated into the strategy and plans.	
6 Score 4	The strategy and plans complement the corporate aims of the wider organisation.	
7 Score 4	The strategy and plans are linked to national, regional and county priorities.	

<p><b>8</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>Targets within the strategy and plans are informed by local and national policy, past performance and performance of similar teams.</p>	
<p><b>9</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>The strategy and plans have specific, measurable outcomes, designed to ensure development and sustainability.</p>	
<p><b>10</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>The strategy and plans are developed through consultation with relevant stakeholders</p>	
<p><b>11</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>The strategy and plans are effectively communicated to all stakeholders</p>	
<p><b>12</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>The Team can demonstrate it is having a positive impact against its identified strategic outcomes</p>	

## S3 Partnerships

### Quest Best Practice

- The Team actively seek to develop, work with and maintain partnerships with appropriate public, private and voluntary sector bodies.

#### **Strengths and examples of good practice**

The Team realise the importance of effective partnerships to deliver its outcomes, particularly given the diverse demographics of the locality. At all times it appears the Team is keen to recognise and value the work of partners as well as shape their direction. The emphasis that partners are given in both strategic and operational documents as well as in a range of promotional materials demonstrates this. The desire to forge effective partnerships is strong. When asked about the role of partnership working key strategic and operational Staff highlighted the value of this. The Marketing Plan is an excellent example of this as it highlights partners within it.

The Team has a large variety of partners from different sectors and fields. There are strong educational links. For example despite the end of the School Sports Partnership Programme, Plymouth has maintained a city wide partnership to ensure effective coordination to an important target group for Plymouth. There are also strong educational links with partners in a range of further and higher education settings including the University of Plymouth and the University College Plymouth Marjons. The latter is a useful partnership given the teacher training function and the Team's drive for increasing those in the community with leadership qualifications. Work experience opportunities and head hunting opportunities have also been explored.

There are also extensive links with the legal sector through the Police and the Youth Justice Service. These are coordinated in the Criminal Damage and Anti-Social Behaviour Group and the Streetwise Youth Team. These links are excellent as they assist in troubleshooting and identifying hot spots for diversionary activities. Private sector links are also developing with projects including Network Rail, external private leisure providers, Affinity Housing and SLM. The Team has ensured that Sports Development is contractually included in this new initiative currently under development. The professional sector is also represented through working with professional football clubs as is the National Governing Body sector with close links to football, rugby league and swimming. There are various well established internal partnerships through departments including health and safety, the Social Inclusion Unit, and the Central Communication Unit. Many of these partnerships are enhanced by the close working proximity. Furthermore the greater integration of the facilities and Sports Development Team given the new partnership with SLM will also offer further benefits, with positive and closer working partnerships.

An example of excellent partnership working is the development of the Plymouth Sports Academy. There were numerous examples of how the Team had supported one of the regular Coaches to establish this organisation. This was excellent.

The Team is keen to pursue new partnerships too and is always seeking initiatives that will generate these. The Team is also analytical in its approach and keen to explore what could work better and who could provide the most significant impact. The Team works with partners in a positive and proactive manner seeking further improvement at all times. However the Team is keen to develop *effective* partnerships and so will change the way of working or stop working with a partner if it is not successful. This was highlighted during the Assessment.

The Team do take the opportunity to reflect on the service it provides; as part of this partners are invited to contribute and consult in a structure planned manner. In addition the Team appear to have effective detailed and specific partnership/service level agreements in place; these have been increased in rigour in recent times to reflect a more detailed approach. This detail includes health and safety, data protection, equity and child welfare. This is excellent practice. Partners are aware of expectations as well as the Team being clear about its expectations too. This again appears to be a valuable process for all.

With all working practices including partnerships, equity and social inclusion is a priority. This can be evidenced through partnership agreements, strategic documents and through working partnerships such that with the Social Inclusion Unit.

An area of excellent practice is the generic partnership satisfaction survey. This has been carried out now for three years and has an excellent response rate of 85%. A contributory factor of this is the effectiveness of the questions. The information is analysed to produce trends and then improvement plans are developed. The survey focuses on partnerships in the previous year to retain its currency. Further partnership feedback is sought in the project evaluations which are more specific.

When asked during the assessment partners referred to the Team as:

“friendly, supportive, reliable, dedicated, innovative, analytical, on the ground and astute.”

In summary the Team continue to successfully work with partners to:

- facilitate enhanced participation in sport and community development
- offer effective information and guidance to support progression
- shape the strategy, mission, direction and focus of their work
- generate research, ideas and feedback for continuous improvement.

BPP No Score	Best Practice Principles	Assessor's suggested Areas for Improvement
1 Score 4	The Team actively seeks partnerships with relevant formal and informal groups and organisations.	
2 Score 4	The Team works with partners to achieve its strategy and plans.	
3 Score 4	The Team communicates regularly with relevant partners.	
4 Score 4	The Team is committed to resolving any differing agendas with partners	
5 Score 4	The Team regularly participates in networks to exchange information and improve relationships with partners.	
6 Score 3	The Team regularly reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of their partnership working	<p><i>The Team may consider how they further measure the impact of partnership work. It may be useful to consider who partnerships include, why and what the outcome of this is. This may help the Team prioritise their work and manage workloads and capacity more effectively than they already do. It may be useful to consider this before, during and after any partnership projects to then assess if a project may be repeated. This may ensure that the enthusiasm for new initiatives is contained to those projects that have the best outcomes. This is particularly important given the current workloads and the budgetary reviews in the broader Council.</i></p>
7 Score 3	There are documented partner agreements defining roles, responsibilities and outcomes	<p><i>These have recently been extended and a new system has been introduced. It will be useful to regularly review these to ensure they offer a specific measure of expectations for all those involved.</i></p>

## S4 Continuous Improvement

### Quest Best Practice

- The Team shows a commitment to continuous improvement through regular planned system and service reviews.
- The team utilises relevant performance Indicators and performance management to demonstrate improvements to the service.

#### **Strengths and examples of good practice**

The Team has continued to assert its commitment to continuous improvement however this has been particularly re-emphasised in the past year. This appears to be as a result of the continued professionalism of the Team. All Staff emphasised their desire to improve through the assessment by detailing improvements over the past year and expectations for the next year.

There is an underpinning principle of continuous improvement throughout the Team; this is driven from within the Team and the pride and passion the Team has for its jobs. Improvements are expected year on year; this is regarded as the norm. All Team members were keen to demonstrate improvement both through “stories” of success (some of these were displayed as case studies during the assessment) but also through statistics. The Team adopt new ways of working and embrace change and new ideas in order to do this. The enthusiasm, commitment and attention to detail are obvious qualities.

The Team complete regular self assessments and both develop and closely monitor improvement plans. It appears the quality and Quest model underpin the work of the Team and are seen as a working practice. This again is excellent.

The core and wider Teams take part in regular planned and structured away days that consist of reviewing, future planning and team building activities. There have been three of these over the past year. Again the underlying theme at these days is improvement. Partners are integral to this process and so the Team are keen to seek external assistance that will help them improve. These days appear to be invaluable, cost effective and opportune.

Performance is monitored and managed effectively. There are quarterly reviews and targeting setting; key performance indicators are monitored and published corporately. Quest is one of the key performance indicators. The Team are acutely aware of these targets and how important they are in demonstrating value. The Team is also competitive and is keen to surpass expectations and explore reasons for performance. This is again an area of excellent practice.

The Team has a regular and effective meeting programme that allows for excellent and valued communication. This includes ideas for change and improvement. This is two way between the senior Team and the operational Team.

An area of excellent practice is the generic partnership satisfaction survey. This has been carried out now for three years and has an

excellent response rate of 85%. The survey focuses on partnerships in the previous year to retain its currency. Further partnership feedback is sought in the project evaluations which are more specific. The information is analysed to produce trends and then improvement plans are developed

Team members can compare and contrast their performance locally, regionally and nationally. The level of detail demonstrated during the assessment was excellent. This allows for effective trend analysis, comparison and then adaption for improvement, This benchmarking is excellent and reflects the proactive and creative nature of the Team.

An excellent example of the Team's desire for improvement is the recent achievement of the Customer Service Excellence Award. The Team is one of three who have achieved this status in Plymouth but the first stand-alone Sports Development Team in the UK. A number of areas were highlighted as good practice. The achievement of this award and the subsequent improvement planning again demonstrates this commitment to continuous improvement.

BPP No Score	Best Practice Principles	Assessor's suggested Areas for Improvement
1 Score 4	A regular programme of self-assessment against the Quest Best Practice Principles is implemented.	
2 Score 4	Regular reviews are implemented to identify the relevance and effectiveness of strategy and plans.	<i>Given further budgetary considerations it could be useful to be mindful of the impact of this on future planning-regular reviews may assist here. Partners could be involved in this process.</i>
3 Score 4	Regular monitoring of performance indicators is used to improve the Service.	<i>Given further potential budgetary considerations it could be useful to be mindful of the impact of this on future planning-regular reviews may assist here.</i>
4 Score 4	Regular reviews are conducted to assess customer, Staff, stakeholder and partner satisfaction with the standards of service provided.	
5 Score 4	Comparison of quantitative performance indicators is undertaken.	
6 Score 3	Process benchmarking is used to improve the service.	<i>The Team may wish to consider further benchmarking with Teams from outside of sport and leisure; this may offer an insight into new practices that may assist the Team to further improve.</i>

<p><b>7</b> <b>Score 3</b></p>	<p>Improvement Plans are developed and implemented to improve service and processes as a result of the reviews and self-assessment.</p>	<p><i>The Team may consider developing specific improvement groups for areas of work, projects and so on. For example a specific marketing improvement group, a health and safety group or a group linked to a neighbourhood. Those leading these groups may be selected for their knowledge and skills and it may encourage both service and personal development.</i></p>
<p><b>8</b> <b>Score 3</b></p>	<p>Any improvements are communicated throughout the Team, the Organisation and to all stakeholders.</p>	<p><i>The Team may consider how best to communicate with partners. It may be useful to do this in a number of ways and about a number of topics to ensure communications are tailored to the specific partner. This may support future partnership developments. This is currently being considered through the Consultation Action Plan.</i></p>
<p><b>9</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>The Team actively tracks its results and undertakes trend analysis</p>	

## PEOPLE

### P1 Management Support and Leadership

#### Quest Best Practice

- Managers provide support and leadership to team members to meet the needs and objectives of the organisation
- Managers seek to maximise the performance of their Team through empowerment, direction and example
- Managers create a positive culture within the Team.

#### Strengths and examples of good practice

As previously stated Plymouth City Council is progressing through a three year deficit reduction scheme. The Team is not included in any reduction scheme until year three. Throughout this period of change motivation and excellent service delivery have been maintained. This approach to change management by the Head of Service and the Manager appears to have been effective. It appears there was consultation and communication about the subsequent change and this was a contributory factor to Staff stability and retention. In addition the Team members are strong and so appear to have been able to maintain their high levels of service; Management are happy to successfully delegate and empower the Team. To summarise although there have been changes the environment has remained stable and effective-this is as a result of strong leadership and management.

A series of regular meetings contribute to the effective leadership and management of the Team. These include:

weekly Team meetings  
quarterly one to ones including target setting and review  
monthly Management meetings  
individual appraisals held annually  
a series of away days; there have been three so far this financial year.

The Team appear to enjoy its working environment; there also appears to be an open door policy for on the job development. In addition the Senior Management is accessible, with all members of the Team happy to contact their Head of Service and Manager when needed. This includes casual Staff.

Managers have in the past placed a strong emphasis on continuous improvement and offer support in order to achieve this. Creativity is encouraged in the Team as well as allowing for flexibility; new and ground breaking projects such as some of the projects within Love Life are encouraged; the ability to localise a national project for the benefit of Plymouth residents is also actively encouraged such as the Plymouth 2012 Challenge and the Park Series. The link to national agendas is maximised.

The role of partners is critical to the success of the Team; partners are regarded as an integral part of the Team and so Managers consider them at all stages. Managers consult with, empathise and encourage their partners in a variety of informal and formal ways. This is true in reverse too. Partners commended the strong leadership at all levels of the Team.

The Manager of the Team is organised and business focussed; this assists the Team in taking a customer focussed approach and also operating sound business practice principles. The organisation and delivery of the assessment was exemplary.

The Manager ensures that the Team is appropriately resourced, effectively led and planning is short, medium and long term. All are effectively performance managed with each member of the Team understanding targets and performance without need for reference. This is again exemplary.

There is a Team Employee of the Month scheme. This was displayed in the Sports Development office during the assessment. The Team felt this was rewarding and appreciated the achievement. They also stated it help others understand what the Team did and created considerable awareness internally. Annual sickness records are low and staff retention is high-this is an indicator again of strong leadership and management.

During the assessment the management of the Team was scored by asking all Team members to rate their management and to then describe it. Many stated that the management on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being excellent was 10; the highest rating was 9.5. . The Management of the Team was described as “supportive, arms-length, solution-focused, empowering, progressive, wise, knowledgeable, dedicated and cohesive”

In summary management and leadership are strong.

BPP No Score	Best Practice Principles	Assessor's suggested Areas for Improvement
1 Score 4	Managers are positive advocates for the Team's strategy and plans.	
2 Score 4	Managers are committed to developing partnerships with other organisations and individuals involved in delivering the service.	

<b>3</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Managers communicate the strategy and plans effectively to the Team, the wider organisation, partners, customers and the community.	
<b>4</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Managers are committed to customer satisfaction.	
<b>5</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Managers are results and outcomes orientated, are committed to continuous improvement and allocate appropriate resources to implement improvements.	
<b>6</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Managers align the Team's structure and resources to implement the strategy and plans.	<i>It might be useful to be wary of work overload. Given the changes the Team will need to consider how to deliver to the level that is expected whilst managing any reduction in resources.</i>
<b>7</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Managers encourage and empower the Team to identify, plan and initiate service improvements using self-assessment and action planning.	
<b>8</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Managers encourage innovation and creativity in the team	<i>The Team may consider looking further outside of sport for examples of creativity and innovation.</i>
<b>9</b> <b>Score 3</b>	Managers ensure best practice and knowledge is shared.	<i>Further benchmarking both internally and externally may assist this. This benchmarking may be useful from outside of the sport and leisure sector to assess excellent business practice principles.</i>
<b>10</b> <b>Score 3</b>	Managers recognise and reward achievements of individuals and teams within the Team.	<i>How Team members are rewarded for high performance is an area that may be further developed. This is also true of the performance of the Team collectively. This may be a key motivational tool especially given any potential change or review.</i>
<b>11</b> <b>Score 3</b>	Managers effectively contribute to and influence the corporate agenda to ensure the Team's work is understood and recognised.	<i>The Team may consider further influencing the corporate agenda in order to ensure it is fit for purpose for Sports Development.</i>

## P2 People Management and Development

### Quest Best Practice

- Management processes are designed to support the development of Staff in the delivery of the service
- There is a commitment to developing the people involved in the delivery of the service
- Staff are suitably developed, trained and /or qualified
- All employment legislation and statutory regulations are adhered to.

#### **Strengths and examples of good practice**

All Staff take part in an annual appraisal. There is further support offered in quarterly reviews and regular one to ones. These appear to be a motivating tool and one that Staff enjoy. Both Operational and Strategic Staff felt this process was beneficial.

The Team appear to have an effective approach to recruitment and selection. This process supports the established corporate recruitment system which includes on line application. Recruitment and selection processes are carefully thought out to ensure they are effective. The inclusion of partners is key to this as well the Team contributing to partner recruitment. The Staff are excellent in terms of performance and team contribution; performance is both individually and collectively excellent. During discussion effective recruitment, selection and induction was seen to be critical success factor to this. Job analysis also takes place prior to recruitment and selection. This again is exemplary. The current example of this is for the Sport and Leisure Manager.

There is a keen commitment to training and professional development. From a corporate perspective there are significant training opportunities. All Staff at all levels appear to be encouraged to attend training events including those at national level; in addition to this there is a supportive and progressive approach to the day to day development of Staff. All appear happy to help each other and offer ideas and suggestions for improvement. The meeting structure appears to support this also. Training is tailored to the needs of the individual and the needs of the job through the appraisal system. Staff appear to appreciate the training on offer. It is worth adding that given the current financial circumstances training is now more focussed; this appears again to be positively received.

All Staff working with children or vulnerable young people take part in appropriate training to ensure they are equipped to do this. This appears to be checked thoroughly.

Corporate Staff training, much of which is compulsory, includes:

- recruitment and selection
- health and safety
- customer care

- child protection
- equity and social inclusion
- risk assessment.

Over the past two years the Team has developed a comprehensive induction pack to support more remote work. This has been produced with partners and includes checklists, contacts lists and information that could be needed whilst working remotely. This process has improved significantly the support and development offered to Coaches for example. This is an excellent improvement from the previous full Quest assessment.

Staff satisfaction is regularly reviewed; during the assessment Staff were asked to rate their job satisfaction and identify what gave them the most satisfaction in their work. The results demonstrated excellent job satisfaction with intrinsic activities featuring as the reason for this. Some quotes stated: “I love my job”, “I have the opportunity to make a difference” and “working within a team that inspires and motivates me”

BPP No Score	Best Practice Principles	Assessor’s suggested Areas for Improvement
1 Score 3	Key roles, responsibilities and competencies for all staff are documented, and reviewed and updated regularly.	<i>It could be useful to ensure all competencies are reviewed regularly as agendas change-to ensure Staff remain current and have the opportunity to up skill where needed.</i>
2 Score 4	All staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles.	<i>As jobs change it may be helpful if a current Staff Skills Audit is maintained to ensure Staff have the required skills for their new and changing roles.</i>
3 Score 4	A staff development/appraisal scheme is implemented on at least an annual basis.	
4 Score 4	Training needs are identified regularly and are appropriate to the strategy and plans	
5 Score 4	Training is programmed, conducted, reviewed and evaluated.	
6 Score 3	An induction programme is in place for all new staff and volunteers.	<i>It may be useful to continue to develop the volunteer induction programme. The Coach Induction programme is used however it may be useful to make reference or target volunteers more specifically.</i>

<b>7</b> <b>Score 4</b>	All staff working directly with children and young people and vulnerable adults are screened and provided with appropriate training.	
<b>8</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Recruitment is implemented in accordance with equal opportunities policy and employment law.	
<b>9</b> <b>Score 4</b>	The recruitment and selection process is thorough and designed to ensure the right appointment.	
<b>10</b> <b>Score 4</b>	Managers support professional development and lifelong learning amongst all staff.	
<b>11</b> <b>Score 3</b>	Regular reviews are conducted to assess staff satisfaction	<i>It may be useful to complete this on a regular basis especially with changing agendas and increasing workloads.</i>

## DELIVERY

### D1 Delivery planning and procedures

#### Quest Best Practice

- Processes and systems involved in the delivery of the service are identified, planned, implemented, reviewed and improved upon regularly
- Documented and formalised systems are in place to ensure key elements of the service are managed and controlled.

#### Strengths and examples of good practice

There are significant and comprehensive processes and procedures in place that are fully implemented by the Team. Many of these are corporately driven; training is often compulsory so these processes and procedures are well understood. Some of the procedures explored were financial, training records, appraisal records, risk assessments, partnership/service level agreements, partnership evaluations and customer care procedures. Standards are also identified and monitored, either through charters, service indicators or through partnership/service level agreements.

The procedures and practices are maintained and made available to all Staff. Corporately the Team emphasise the use of electronic systems. Any changes to operational procedures are communicated through the regular Team meetings. It appears all changes are disseminated effectively and there is a clear line of communication for doing this.

Financial procedures are audited and monitored closely. Corporately this appears to be a strength and these processes are devolved departmentally as well as to key members of the Team. Again these are electronically based to ensure accountability and security. This is further supported by named members of the Finance Team (both corporately and departmentally) who are accessible and communicate finance to non-financial managers clearly. It does appear these systems are well established and do not hinder decision making or delay processes.

There is an excellent blend of knowledge, skills and abilities in the Team; this appears to be as a result of effective recruitment, selection, induction and then development. It appears Staff have the skills needed to implement delivery processes and planning both as individuals and collectively as a Team.

There are documented partnership/service level agreements that identify expectations of partners and of the Team. These are detailed and offer clarity to both parties. These follow a range of formats from legally binding documents to partnership agreements with clubs. These include aspects such as data, protection, child welfare and health and safety so that responsibilities are clearly identified. This is excellent practice.

Some members of the Team have been in post for a considerable period of time so are very familiar with Council procedures and ways of working. These members of Staff offer administrative advice and guidance to the more new members of the Team.

Administration is centrally controlled by the experienced and respected clerical support. This member of Staff offers a consistent and informative service and is regarded as critical to the stability and efficiency of the Team.

In summary systems appear to support the effective management of the service

BPP No Score	Best Practice Principles	Assessor's suggested Areas for Improvement
1 Score 4	Responsibilities for co-ordinating, monitoring and reviewing delivery of the service are clearly defined at all levels of the Team.	
2 Score 4	All master policies, key processes and procedures are documented, kept up to date and made available to staff.	
3 Score 4	Financial processes are designed and managed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness	
4 Score 4	Administration procedures are effectively implemented.	
5 Score 4	The Team has a documented approach to child welfare which is implemented effectively by all staff	
6 Score 2	Service standards are clearly defined and are effectively implemented.	<p><i>It would be useful to consistently monitor these as standards are reviewed. Performance against these could also be closely monitored to offer suggestions for improvement.</i></p> <p><i>Some of the corporate processes and practices are not always the most effective for the Team. There were examples of this involving procurement, the use of social media and the development of an effective web site for the products of Sports Development. The Team may focus further on influencing corporate procedures to ensure they maximise opportunities for Sports Development.</i></p>

<p><b>7</b> <b>Score 3</b></p>	<p>The Team make effective use of ICT (electronic solutions) for delivery planning and procedures.</p>	<p><i>The use of social media for marketing and other more IT based solutions may be useful.</i></p>
<p><b>8</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>The Team have back up systems for ICT in place</p>	
<p><b>9</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>Appropriate staff are trained in the relevant processes and have developed the necessary skills to implement them.</p>	<p><i>This may need to be regularly reviewed given agendas and then changing roles and responsibilities.</i></p> <p><i>It may be beneficial to complete a Staff skills audit from time to time to highlight areas for development in terms of processes.</i></p>

## D2 Health and Safety Management

### Quest Best Practice

- Health and Safety is well managed and delivered
- Staff/Team members and partners understand their role in management and delivery of health and safety
- Customer and Staff safety is a priority.

#### Strengths and examples of good practice

Corporately and departmentally, there is a Health and Safety Lead. This offers advice, guidance and information to the Team. All members of Staff I spoke to were able to detail who they would go to for advice and how they could access them quickly. In addition, the Team stated how the procedures and practices for health and safety were robust and they were supported by those who were experts in their area. The Team works with the Corporate Team to contextualise processes and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose.

All Staff attend health and safety training as part of their induction and this is further developed by both on and off the job training including the information recently developed in the Coach induction pack.

There are comprehensive Health and Safety policies and procedures in place. Again, it appears that these policies and procedures are working in the field and all members of the Team I discussed this with were able to comment with ease and confidence. Following a number of 'what if' scenarios Staff were clear about what they would do and why. These included accidents, incidents and child protection considerations.

Health and safety documentation includes risk assessments and accident/incident forms. There is clear guidance on how these should be completed. Risk assessments follow an accessible and recognisable format. Again, the purpose and structure of these forms was well understood by all those who were part of the assessment. As far as possible the Team maintains its documentation electronically. Reviews are completed when scheduled.

Given the strong emphasis on partnership working there are documented partnership/service level agreements that identify expectations of both partners and of the Team. These are detailed and offer clarity to both parties. They include health and safety to ensure partners know where responsibility lies. This is excellent. Furthermore where appropriate risk assessments are carried out with partners to avoid duplication. This is again specified in the partnership/service level agreement.

The Team has recently completed an independent health and safety audit; this highlighted key strengths and areas for development. Two areas for development (there were three) were explored during this assessment. They were:

*Not all policies are fully understood by employees-the Staff I spoke to understood the importance of health and safety and how to implement this  
Risk assessment logs could refer more to existing policies and documents; this again appeared to have been actioned.*

<b>BPP No Score</b>	<b>Best Practice Principles</b>	<b>Assessor's suggested Areas for Improvement</b>
<b>1 Score 4</b>	The Team has a current and documented health and safety policy and a planned approach to health & safety management.	
<b>2 Score 4</b>	Responsibilities for health & safety are defined, including the competent person for managing the health & safety programme.	
<b>3 Score 3</b>	Staff are trained to carry out health & safety responsibilities.	<i>Although Staff do receive health and safety training it may be useful to extend this further to specific training for certain groups, such as behavioural management for those working with diversionary groups.</i>
<b>4 Score 4</b>	Formal risk assessments are carried out for all activities, and are regularly reviewed	
<b>5 Score 4</b>	Risk reduction actions have been planned and implemented where appropriate.	
<b>6 Score 4</b>	There is a process for the Team to be updated on new requirements/developments in health and safety.	
<b>7 Score 3</b>	Supervision, instruction levels and work practices are based upon legislation, industry guidelines and facilitate a safe service.	<i>The Team may wish to consider carrying out and further developing spot checks on health and safety to again ensure industry guidelines are followed in the field. This could be extended to wider customer service areas. These could be unannounced.</i>
<b>8 Score 4</b>	Accident and emergency procedures are documented and tested.	
<b>9 Score 4</b>	Independent health & safety audits are conducted.	<i>The Team may consider introducing independent mystery visits to further support the monitoring of effective health and safety.</i>
<b>10 Score 4</b>	The Team regularly review health and safety data and act upon any trends identified	

## D3 Customer Relations

### Quest Best Practice

- Customer satisfaction is a priority
- The Team manages customer relations positively to provide a friendly, professional and informative service
- Feedback is encouraged, collected and used to improve the service.

#### Strengths and examples of good practice

The Team has corporate Customer Service Charter as well as a Sports Development Customer Care Policy. These highlight:

commitment to customers  
customer service standards  
training opportunities  
specific guidance about how to handle certain circumstances.

All Staff displayed excellent customer service skills. All were aware of how to deal with compliments, complaints and comments without hesitation. Staff also appear to know how to use this information to maximise their service delivery. Customer satisfaction is a key focus of all the work of the Team. The term 'customer' applies to participants, volunteers and partners, both internal and external. The Team focuses on how to achieve excellent customer satisfaction at all levels and regularly debriefs to focus on this. The level of understanding of this from casual Staff again demonstrated effective implementation of policy.

The Team understands its customers well. This is through market intelligence. This is readily disseminated during weekly meetings and through the informal discussions that go on within the office environment. During the assessment, the Team was able to refer accurately to the characteristics of the locality. As a consequence, the Team is able to respond to actual customer needs. There were numerous examples of this but particularly including the adult sport programmes and the diversionary activities. Many of these were demonstrated through conversations but also on the promotional case studies.

The Team is passionate about its service, the locality and the customers it provides this service to. This was evident from the meetings during the assessment and from talking to partners and customers. The plethora of partnership initiatives illustrates this repeatedly.

The Team has a professional and attractive uniform, and the Team is known and recognised.

As a consequence of the close proximity of working within the office, Staff are conversant not only with their own roles but those of

their colleagues too. This assists Staff in responding to customers quickly and effectively even when it is not in their remit. Feedback offered during Team meetings also assists this. This appears to be true from the Head of Service to casual Staff.

The Team do gather information and feedback from customers; recently a customer feedback card has been produced to maximise responses. This has been successful and has improved significantly the rate of return. Furthermore the recent customer satisfaction survey showed a 99% satisfaction rating for the Team. All members of the Team, at all levels, appeared rightly proud of this.

Over the past year the Team has worked hard to gather customer information for data bases to aid effective marketing and targeting. This again has been successful. The Team aim to continue to develop this. Prior to this service approach data bases had been driven by individuals and operated in isolation.

In summary the Team offer an excellent service that is value for money with excellent customer care.

BPP No Score	Best Practice Principles	Assessor's suggested Areas for Improvement
1 Score 4	A current customer care policy exists and is effectively implemented.	
2 Score 3	Up to date records of customers are used effectively and meet legislative requirements.	<i>The Team aims to continue to develop the current improved databases over time.</i>
3 Score 3	Staff are trained in customer care skills.	<i>It might be useful to further extend the basic customer service training to include more specific needs-such as dealing with non-users.</i>
4 Score 4	Staff representing the Team present a professional and personable image.	
5 Score 3	Systems are in place to encourage, collect and react to customer feedback.	<p><i>The Team do gather feedback and are encouraged to do so. Some changes to consider could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• improved and adaptable ways of gathering feedback (highlighted in 6 below)</i></li> <li><i>• greater awareness of the importance of verbal feedback and recording this</i></li> <li><i>• adapting the documentation for coaches to record feedback (where relevant) on a session by session approach as opposed to at the end of a programme</i></li> </ul>

<p><b>6</b> <b>Score 2</b></p>	<p>The Team amend their feedback mechanisms accordingly to accommodate the different needs of customers.</p>	<p><i>The Team may consider adapting the methods of customer feedback in order to meet customer needs and maximise responses. This could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>survey monkey questionnaires</i></li> <li>• <i>portable opinion metres</i></li> <li>• <i>observation</i></li> <li>• <i>the collation of verbal feedback</i></li> <li>• <i>the drawing of pictures for early year's children.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>7</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>Staff deal with customer feedback promptly</p>	
<p><b>8</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>Staff have access to relevant and up to date information about the Team's initiatives and programmes, so that customer enquiries can be dealt with effectively</p>	

## D4 Marketing

### Quest Best Practice

- Marketing planning and delivery is used to maximise promotional opportunities of the work done by the Team
- Marketing activity is used positively and to ensure equity of opportunity
- Information is communicated effectively to all relevant parties.

#### Strengths and examples of good practice

The imagery used on marketing materials is impressive including representative photographs that reflect the community. The Team has access to a number of databases of photographs with consent forms collected where relevant.

The Team use the Sport England market segmentation to good effect; there is a good understanding of the number of “Elsies, Arnolds” and “Jamies” in the locality.

Pricing strategies are well thought out. For example, the Team uses a range of strategies including price skimming, some include maximising income and incentivised marketing through targeted discounts.

The Team has some excellent examples of positive press coverage; many local articles are extensive and include photographs.

The Team has a system for quality assurance in marketing; a member of Staff monitors the production process offering suggestions for improvement where necessary. This ensures consistency and inclusion of all the necessary details. It also assists with the implementation of the extensive corporate tool kit.

BPP No Score	Best Practice Principles	Assessor’s suggested Areas for Improvement
1 Score 2	A current plan for marketing the Team’s activities is implemented.	<i>The Team has a basic Marketing Plan; this includes a list of marketing activities. It could be developed further to include a situational analysis, a review of competition and threats (perhaps through a SWOT analysis), inclusion of a pricing strategy, greater coordination of joint marketing opportunities and an evaluation of performance. This is an area to develop in order to maximise potential opportunities.</i>

<p><b>2</b> <b>Score 2</b></p>	<p>Responsibilities for implementation of the plan are clearly defined.</p>	<p><i>Responsibilities in terms of the list of marketing activities are defined by project; however this could be developed to be specific to the particular Team members and to other areas of marketing.</i></p> <p><i>The Team may benefit from a marketing improvement group that can produce a joined up approach to all marketing whilst still allowing the creativity and individuality that is currently available.</i></p> <p><i>Much of the marketing responsibilities are from outside of the Team within corporate departments. This can offer consistency although it appears this does stifle creativity. The Team were buzzing with ideas that have strong justification. When asked to describe the marketing of the Team the responses included (amongst others):</i></p> <p><i>“Reactive, un-engaging and out of touch”</i></p> <p><i>The Team itself is described as: “diverse, innovative, driven, enthusiastic and fun”.</i></p> <p><i>The Team could benefit from the descriptors of marketing being at the same standard as those of the Team itself.</i></p>
<p><b>3</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>Appropriate imagery is used in promotional materials.</p>	
<p><b>4</b> <b>Score 2</b></p>	<p>Accurate, up to date, comprehensive and effective promotional material is produced.</p>	<p><i>The Team may consider further developing its marketing materials, techniques and distribution to be more creative. It is currently very traditional. It could be useful to develop a more dynamic brand. This could be especially useful when attracting reluctant, fringe and non-users.</i></p>

<p><b>5</b> <b>Score 2</b></p>	<p>The Team effectively communicate information through a variety of relevant methods</p>	<p><i>It may be useful to further consider extending the use of technology to attract differing target groups and as a cost effective method of marketing. The Team do this partially currently, (through the development of service data bases) however technology always offers changing opportunities. Social media is now a widely used form of communication; the Team do not do this as yet. When asked to identify areas for improvement the ability to use social media and be creative in terms of marketing was repeatedly stated.</i></p> <p><i>Traditional paper based marketing could be further improved to strengthen the Plymouth City Council and the Team brand.</i></p>
<p><b>6</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>Opportunities for marketing in partnership with other organisations are maximised.</p>	<p><i>The Team may wish to further explore this, particularly as partnerships change.</i></p>
<p><b>7</b> <b>Score 3</b></p>	<p>National, regional and local publicity campaigns are used in conjunction with local programmes, when appropriate.</p>	<p><i>Although the Team do plan closely with local, regional and national events in mind it may be worth exploring these marketing opportunities more closely.</i></p>
<p><b>8</b> <b>Score 4</b></p>	<p>Pricing policies are regularly challenged to ensure equity</p>	<p>.</p>
<p><b>9</b> <b>Score 3</b></p>	<p>The effectiveness of promotional activity is evaluated regularly</p>	<p><i>The Team may consider how to evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of marketing more comprehensively and specifically. Over time these statistics will allow the Team to alter marketing plans to reflect performance.</i></p> <p><i>The Team could measure free coverage in the media in terms of money so this again can be measured and compared. This could be a useful measure of value.</i></p>
<p><b>10</b> <b>Score 2</b></p>	<p>The Team develop, promote and maintain an effective website highlighting the services they provide.</p>	<p><i>Currently the web site is bland; the Team may consider changing this to reflect its market, image and aims. When I searched through the Council website the information was mostly in PDF format or heavy narrative. This does not appear to be the most suitable way to communicate with the specific target markets. It also does not appear to reflect the excellent work of the Team.</i></p>

<p><b>11</b> <b>Score 3</b></p>	<p>The Team's achievements are effectively promoted to raise their profile at all levels</p>	<p><i>The Team may wish to further extend any promotions that highlight good practice and achievement. It would be useful to advertise more the success of the Team so that all key stakeholders are aware of this. It could also be useful to do this creatively, using audio and visual methods such as YouTube and social media.</i></p>
<p><b>12</b> <b>Score 2</b></p>	<p>Communication methods are appropriate to the Team's structure, strategy and plans and customer base.</p>	<p><i>This is an area to consistently review to ensure as new initiatives emerge they are embraced. The Team are not yet using Facebook and Twitter (departmentally) and this is an excellent approach given the specific target groups (especially young people). This is an area to explore with some urgency. The use of audio and visual materials could also be beneficial.</i></p>