



# Facility Strategy

2017-2021

**British**  
**Gymnastics**  
More than a sport

## Contents

- **Executive Summary**
- **Background Information**
- **British Gymnastics Investment into Facility Development**
- **Goals**
  1. Support increased capacity within gymnastics through clubs, leisure providers and other delivery partners.
  2. Guide funding investment through the United Kingdom; from British Gymnastics, home country sports councils, local authorities and other potential funders.
  3. Maintain and improve the quality of facilities and equipment within existing delivery partners.
  4. Develop insight, understanding and direction of how facility developments can contribute towards other British Gymnastics strategic priorities, including:
    - a. Support high performance and the competition pathway
    - b. Explore how facility development can support the wider delivery of gymnastics
- **Conclusion**

## Executive Summary

British Gymnastics will continue to drive participation growth by increasing capacity within the sport, while retaining participants for longer. The development of more, sustainable, dedicated gymnastics facilities by clubs, local authorities, leisure providers and other partners is a core part of this strategy and provides the largest opportunity for participation membership growth.

Facility development supports all three of the DCMS Sports Strategy Outcomes – Engagement in Sport & Physical Activity, Sporting Success and a Strong and Resilient Sports Sector.



It also aligns closely with Sport England's strategy for delivering More People Regularly Taking Part in Sport and Physical Activity and A More Productive, Sustainable and Responsible Sport Sector; directly contributing to the following KPI's – increase percentage taking part at least 2 x per month, increase in number of volunteers 2 x per year, employment in grassroots sport, increased non-public investment into sport and the percentage publicly owned facilities with under-utilised capacity.

An increase in dedicated gymnastics facilities will continue to transform the existing gymnastics club customer base from small, community run clubs hiring space, towards a majority of professionally managed sport providing organisations that manage their own facility, offering a wide range of activity delivery and opportunities.

Gymnastics clubs are most successful at delivering mass participation programmes when they are based in a dedicated facility. A wide ranging, successful business model requires access to fixed equipment along with appropriate time slots, to run a variety of activities for different demographic groups. There is also a variety of other dedicated and non-dedicated facility types that can be highly effective to deliver for specific segments of the gymnastics market.



British Gymnastics' Whole Sport Plan Facility Funding 2013-17 was very successful at supporting more clubs moving into their own dedicated facilities. On average there were five funded projects per year delivering an average membership increase of 200 per project each year over their first two years. This funding assisted towards an ongoing increase in the total number of completed facility projects since 2013 (**Appendix A**).

The high demand for gymnastics from a young age is consistent across the country and each geographic area can support many clubs, based in a mix of dedicated and non-dedicated facilities, offering a variety of different disciplines and activities. British Gymnastics will select annually a number of specific Core Cities and Focus Areas in which to concentrate resources, in order to realise the best outcomes. A holistic approach will be taken, including working with a range of different partners, to enable a complete gymnastics delivery programme within an area.

We will achieve an increase in the number of gymnastics facilities by having a strategy that focuses on four goals:

1. Support increased capacity for participation within gymnastics through clubs, leisure providers and other delivery partners.
2. Guide funding investment through the United Kingdom; from British Gymnastics, home country sports councils, local authorities and other potential funders.
3. Maintain and improve the quality of facilities and equipment within existing delivery partners.
4. Develop insight, understanding and direction of how facility development can support and contribute towards other strategic priorities, including:
  - Support high performance and the competition pathway.
  - Explore how facility development can support the wider delivery of gymnastics.

## Background

The demand to take part in gymnastics activities remains high with demand outstripping supply. The Sports & Recreation Alliance 2013 Sports Club Survey showed most gymnastics clubs have a waiting list of up to 100, with many clubs anecdotally reporting waiting lists into several hundreds. Access to better facilities is a key challenge with 61% of clubs highlighting a requirement to improve their facilities.

In order to help relieve this demand a core part of British Gymnastics' Participation Strategy is to support clubs to develop more dedicated facilities. A dedicated gymnastics facility will

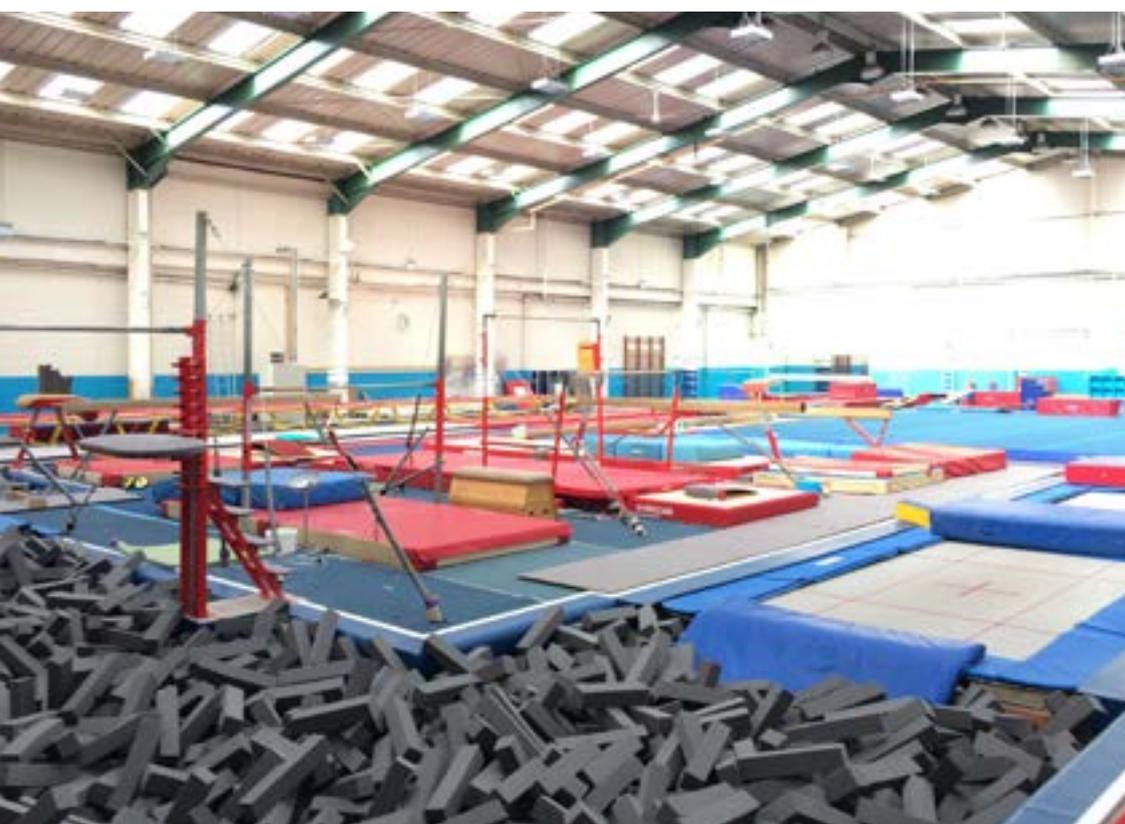
allow the club to substantially increase the delivery of their core offer to children, along with diversifying their business to include a wider range of gymnastics activities for other users.

A British Gymnastics clubs facility audit in 2014 indicated that 31% of all clubs operated out of their own dedicated facilities, with 55% of these based in converted industrial units. This has risen rapidly from 17% in 2010 (33% of these in industrial units) and British Gymnastics expects the trend to continue and accelerate across 2017-21. Currently approximately 1/3 of clubs currently operate from their own facility, 1/3 in non-dedicated school venues and 1/3 from non-dedicated leisure centres ([Appendix B](#)).

While there are regional differences in the types of spaces that can be accessed by gymnastics clubs ([Appendix C](#)), the demand to create dedicated spaces remains constant across the country ([Appendix D](#)). There are 264 ongoing facility projects in England along with 42 in Scotland and another 10 in Wales. By the end of 2021 British Gymnastics' goal is for 600 registered clubs (approx. 50%) to be operating out of their own dedicated spaces.

A key part of the good operation of a club is the ability to retain its members over a long period of time. It is generally acknowledged to cost between 4-10 times as much to replace a lost customer against retaining them. These retained people can then feed back into the club and become coaches and volunteers, making the organisation sustainable. By considering the needs of the individual clubs can provide the facilities and opportunities required to engage with people at varying stages of their life, offering both sport and wider physical activity.





By working with local authorities in the early stages of assessing their sports facility strategy requirements, British Gymnastics will advise on locations where clubs have ongoing facility projects and promote the demand and benefits of these to the local council. Integrating gymnastics facility requirements into the long-term sports facility planning process is the most effective way to ensure gymnastics is highlighted when leisure facility plans are being considered.

Due to the fact that demand for classes still outstrips supply even the largest of dedicated gymnastics facilities will reach capacity relatively quickly. Therefore, it is important to consider the longer-term requirements of the club. Some well-established gymnastics clubs are already working across two dedicated gymnastics sites with several others looking into this concept. British Gymnastics expects this trend to continue and develop into the possibility of some large gymnastics delivery organisations in areas.

There is a fundamentally sound, well understood business model that, within certain parameters, allows gymnastics clubs to operate from their own dedicated facilities. Finding an appropriate building/space and achieving the required planning permission can take some time, with local agendas often dictating outcomes. Accessing the required setting up or build costs is also a challenge and a flexible, multi-partner approach is often required to find the necessary finance and funding. Sport England funding and clubs own finance are currently the most commonly used partners for financing gymnastics facility projects during 2013-17 (**Appendix E**).

There is a wide selection of different possible facility projects to give additional space. Each provides individual benefits and challenges to working in a specific range of delivery. Case studies for a wide selection of projects are available on the British Gymnastics website. Please visit the [facilities page](#) (which can be found under Clubs).

- **Dedicated facility (industrial unit conversion)**  
Most achievable for the majority of clubs. Can provide solutions for both participation and competition focused clubs.
- **Multi-venue, dedicated facilities**  
large club based organisations looking to further expand participation and performance opportunities.
- **Dedicated facility as part of a multi-sport venue (leisure centre)**  
sometimes run by clubs but most likely to be leisure providers or local authority based projects.
- **New build dedicated facility**  
financially the most challenging to deliver but can include opportunities for both participation and performance programmes along with competitions/ events.
- **Non-dedicated space as part of leisure centre or school**  
ideal for developing club delivery and mass participation activities. Can also be suitable for performance programmes in some disciplines.
- **Satellite venues**  
opportunity for clubs to scale up their programmes and increase activity options.
- **Non-dedicated spaces in leisure centre operated by local authority or leisure providers**  
ideal for introductory level, mass participation gymnastics programmes.

Using the Sport England Economic Benefits model, a dedicated gymnastics facility project can give a total benefit to the local economy in excess of £1 million. This includes GVA (Gross Value Added) and wider benefits such as volunteering and health. Combined with the large increased user numbers, customer demographic and potential for all day use, this makes a dedicated gymnastics space an attractive offer to local authorities.

British Gymnastics estimates that the average annual turnover for a dedicated gymnastics facility is around £250,000. Taking into consideration the numbers of dedicated and non-dedicated facilities, this gives gymnastics a market sector value of around £100 million. By increasing the quantity of clubs operating as professionally run sports businesses, the value of this sector will be increased rapidly.

Clubs and other partners should evaluate whether planned new facilities can be suitable for county/regional level gymnastics competitions and events. As well as appropriate gymnastics equipment, consideration should be given to car parking, tiered seating for 100-200 spectators, changing areas and refreshment provision, to ensure participants and customers have an enjoyable experience.

While there are some financial benefits that can be had from hosting events/competitions, the core focus of any gymnastics facility should be as a venue for activity delivery. Too much emphasis on providing an events venue will negatively impact on potential business plans and mass participation.

## British Gymnastics investment into facilities

There are many direct and indirect additional benefits to facility development projects that make them an integral part of several of British Gymnastics' strategic priorities.

- Extra capacity for clubs' to increase their British Gymnastics membership
- More space to allow for extra/different gymnastics equipment
- Additional time to allow for diversification of gymnastics activities offered
- Providing a driver for clubs to improve their governance and operation



- Opportunities for more gymnastics related employment/careers (coaching, club management, apprenticeships, etc.). On average each project can support one additional full-time position per year
- Potential for more club focus on performance pathways
- Professionalising the delivery of the sport
- More venues to host low level events and competitions
- Increased profile locally for clubs (with LA, CSP, local press, etc.)
- Long-term sustainability of the sport

British Gymnastics' commitment will consist of providing a facility development team to support partners with planning and delivery of their projects. It is unlikely that the organisation will be able to directly financially support any individual club based facility project, but will provide support and direction in sourcing appropriate funding streams.

## Goals

### 1. Support increased capacity within gymnastics through clubs, leisure providers and other delivery partners.

A new or improved gymnastics facility of any type will not create any increased participation outcomes on its own. British Gymnastics' Facility Strategy 2017-21 takes into account the December 2015 DCMS Sports Strategy (Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation) and Sport England's 2016-21 Strategy (Towards An Active Nation) when considering how to deliver new dedicated gymnastics facilities. British Gymnastics will support clubs and partners to increase participation by providing support with:-

- Business advice for clubs and partners through individual support and an online toolkit of information
- Increasing capacity through support around operating systems, processes, facility design, equipment layout and timetabling
- Working with local authorities to assess and develop their sports facility requirements (Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide)
- Provision of gymnastics through other partners (local authority & leisure providers) as part of the holistic approach towards the delivery system
- Advice around facility layout and requirements to ensure this is aligned to participation competition strategies and discipline plans

Assessing the investment into gymnastics equipment in leisure centres pilot programme and further implement this approach if it proves to be effective.

### 2. Guide Funding Investment through the United Kingdom; from British Gymnastics, home country sports councils, local authorities and other potential funders.

Funding investment by Sport England and other partners should be primarily directed towards creating the maximum increase in participation. This is generally through the creation of new/additional training venues as opposed to improving existing facilities. Our membership data shows the largest increases came from clubs moving into a dedicated space. As a guide, a new facility should be looking to create approx. 200 new members per year, until capacity is reached after 2-3 years.

British Gymnastics will prioritise funding and investment through the following factors:-

- New spaces rather than facility improvement, extensions or relocations
- Geographic areas - British Gymnastics designated Core Cities and Focus Areas
- Club status - there will be a minimum level of operating standard in terms of membership numbers, operational organisation, etc. Required to enable the club to deliver the maximum benefits from any potential facility project. British Gymnastics will use its understanding of clubs segmentation within these parameters to prioritise and advise on the use of funding
- Return on investment - priority will be given to projects that deliver the largest British Gymnastics participation increases

### 3. Maintain and improve the quality of facilities and equipment within existing delivery partners.

The quality of gymnastics facilities and equipment will have a direct influence on the customer experience and their retention. While the equipment quality is linked to safety and the delivery of activity, clubs should also ensure that they constantly look to improve other aspects of the building, e.g. reception and waiting areas, changing facilities, etc. to improve the customer experience. Consideration should be given to ensure that facilities meet the needs of the Equality Act 2010.

Third party funding is becoming increasingly difficult to access due to the financial climate, with less funders and increased demand for what is available. Most funders will also not consider replacement of equipment as a viable project. A responsible club should ensure it is financially sustainable, with maintenance and improvement projects self-funded wherever possible. In the knowledge that equipment



wears out within a normal timescale window, a business model should ensure that sufficient finance is regularly set aside in order to be able to cover high expense items as required. Reliance on other funding options brings a high risk of not being able to access them when they are needed.

Substantial facility improvement projects that are more expensive should be planned for well in advance, in order to allow time to raise the required finance.

High performance clubs should ensure that their equipment remains appropriate for the level of performance being delivered. FIG accredited competition equipment should be used if competitive gymnastics is a required outcome.

- British Gymnastics will provide support and experience around viable business models and appropriate funding streams for particular projects.

#### **4. Develop insight, understanding and direction of how facility development can contribute towards other strategic priorities.**

##### **A. Support competitive pathways and high performance environments.**

Both competitive and high performance clubs are identified across many different criteria and are not solely based on the building or facility. While all types of clubs have different requirements and specific challenges, the fundamental emphasis is on making the overall business model self-sufficient to avoid reliance on external funding. Without regular maintenance and equipment replacement, a high performance venue will slowly degrade until the equipment no longer meets the required standards and becomes unfit for purpose. Appropriate venues for performance training and competition align with the DCMS and Sport England outcomes around individual development.

Provision of appropriate facilities for regional level competitions is challenging due to the everyday needs of clubs and their venues. British Gymnastics intends to substantially expand the quantity of participation events and non-performance pathway competitions over the next few years. This will require an increased number of venues capable of hosting club level events in aerobics, teamgym, floor & vault, GymChallenge and schools gymnastics events.

- British Gymnastics will work with regional technical committees to identify and support facility projects that will provide solutions to competitive and participation events.
- Lilleshall Gymnastics Centre will remain the core venue for training and delivery of British Gymnastics' High Performance Programme. The funding to maintain and further develop this building will be provided from UK Sport.



##### **b. Explore how facility development can support the wider delivery of gymnastics.**

British Gymnastics will evaluate the broader use of facility development projects to support the delivery and provision of gymnastics throughout the country. Potential options to assess further include using buildings as an asset/investment and whether creating education and training centres or area service hubs would be of benefit to the organisation. A long-term view of investing into capital may provide opportunities to expand the British Gymnastics delivery network, at the same time as delivering a competitive financial return. There may be occasional strategic instances when a relatively small amount of funding may be made available for a project as part of a wider partnership.

- British Gymnastics will create a new Education, HR and eLearning Training Centre at Lilleshall.
- The new administration building at Lilleshall is expected to provide sufficient space for the central British Gymnastics staff over 2017-21.



## Conclusion

British Gymnastics' support towards facility development will consist of provision of a facilities team and a standard level of individual support to all registered clubs and partners. Increased support in terms of resources may be given to specifically British Gymnastics identified geographic areas – Core Cities and Focus Areas.

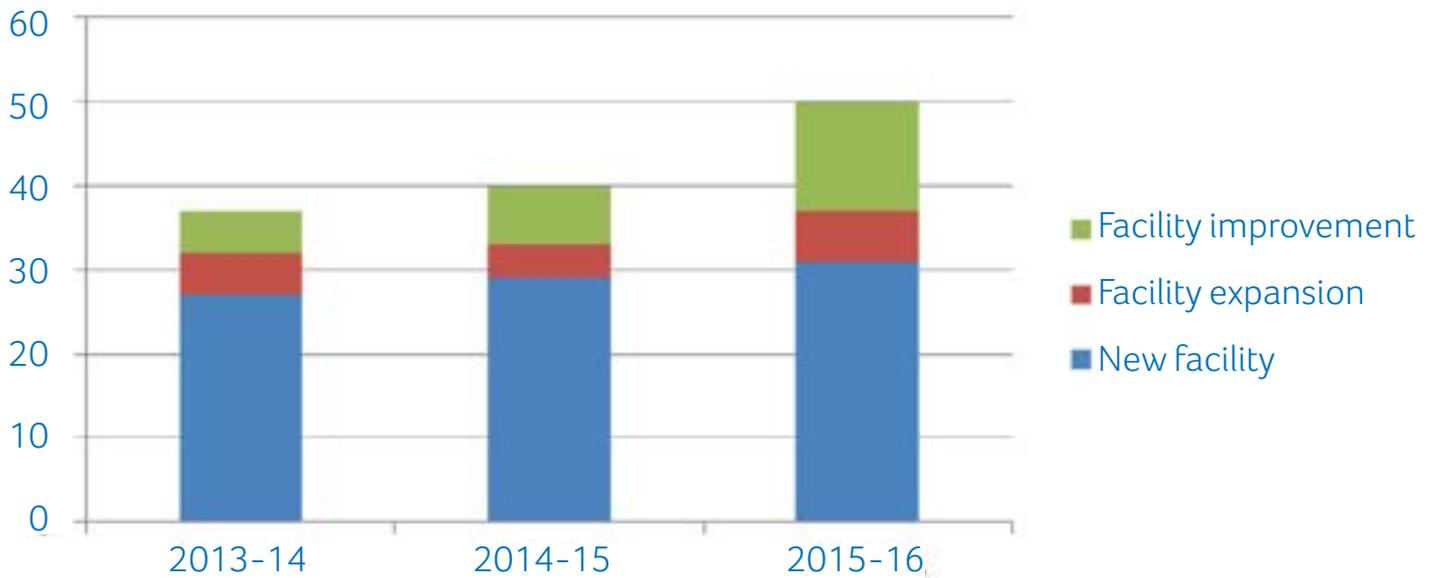
Visit the British Gymnastics website, facilities page for case studies and project support documentation [facilities page](#) (which can be found under Clubs).

For more information please contact:  
[participation@british-gymnastics.org](mailto:participation@british-gymnastics.org)

# Appendices

## Appendix A

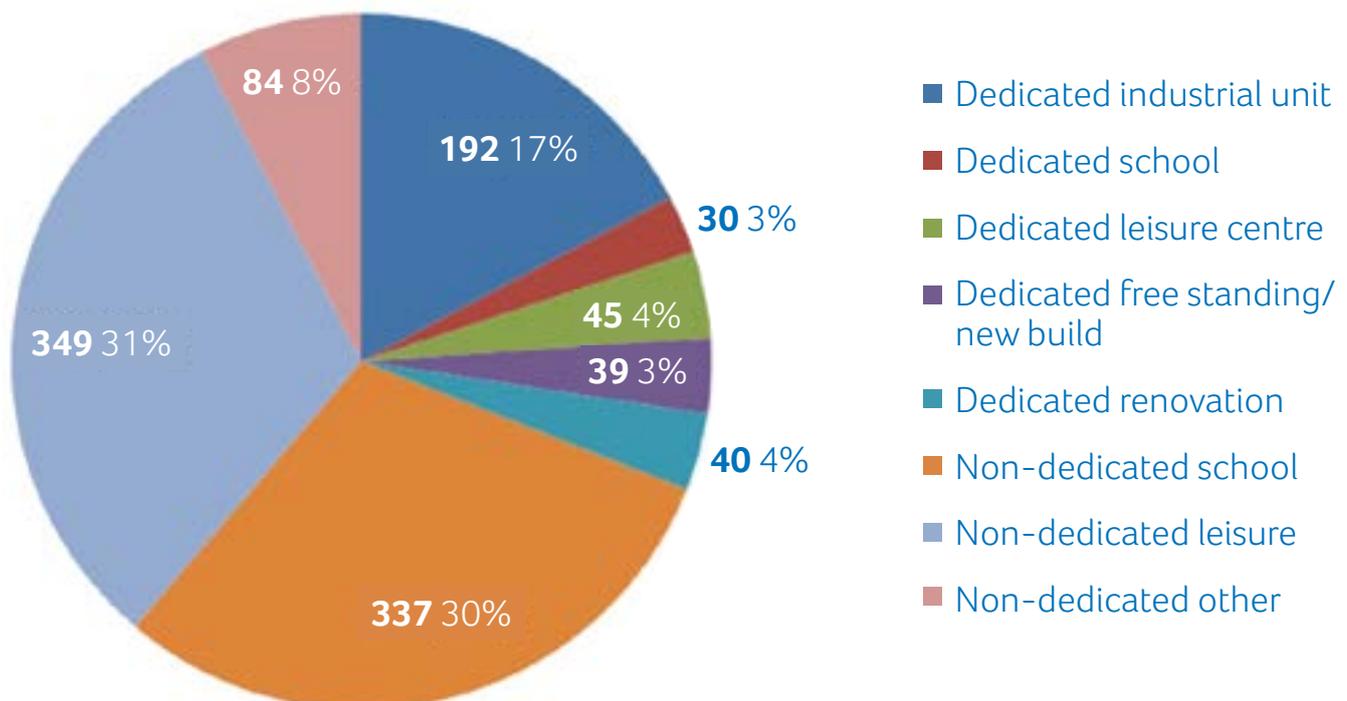
Number of completed facility projects



## Appendix B

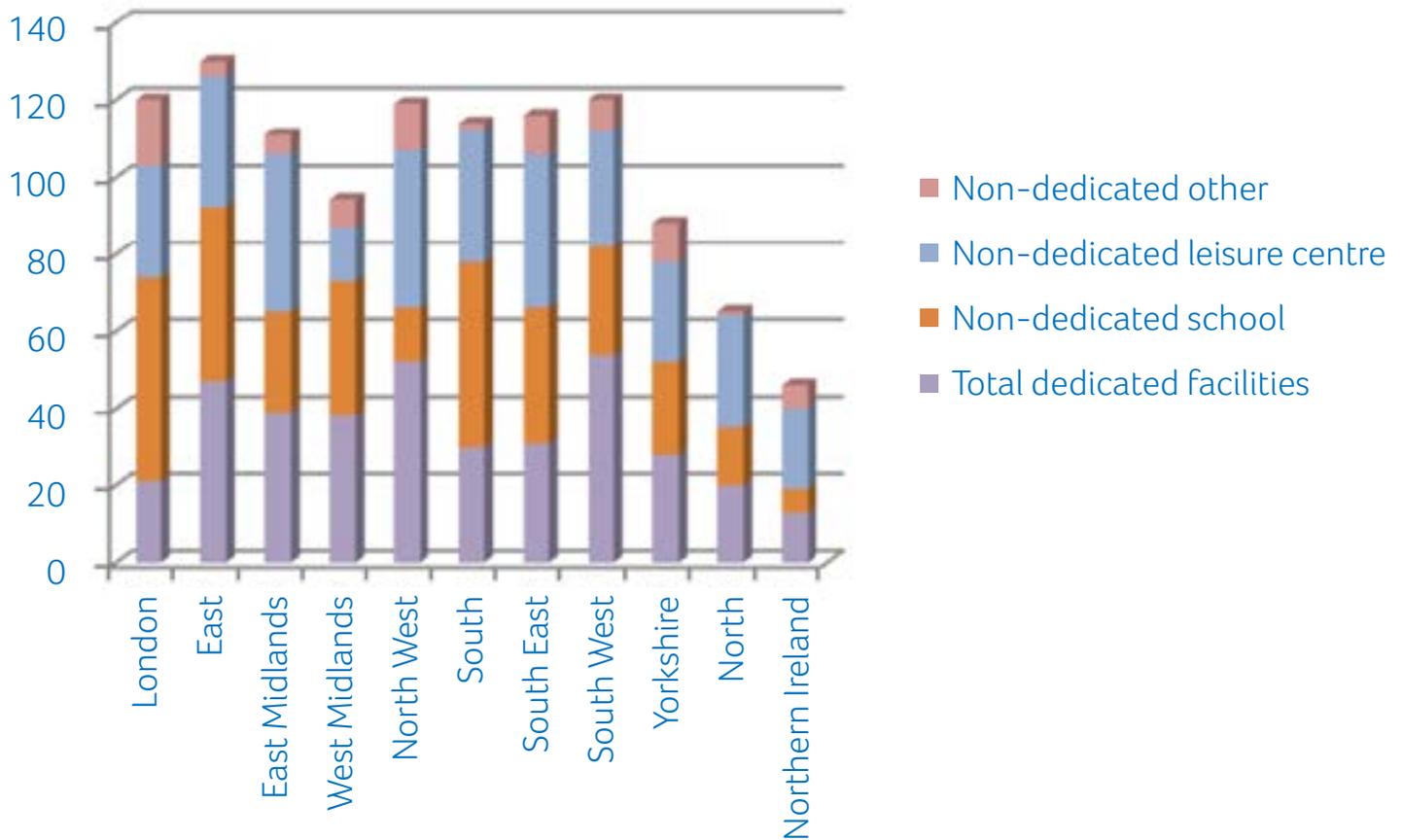
Club facility types (number, percentage)

2014 club facility audit



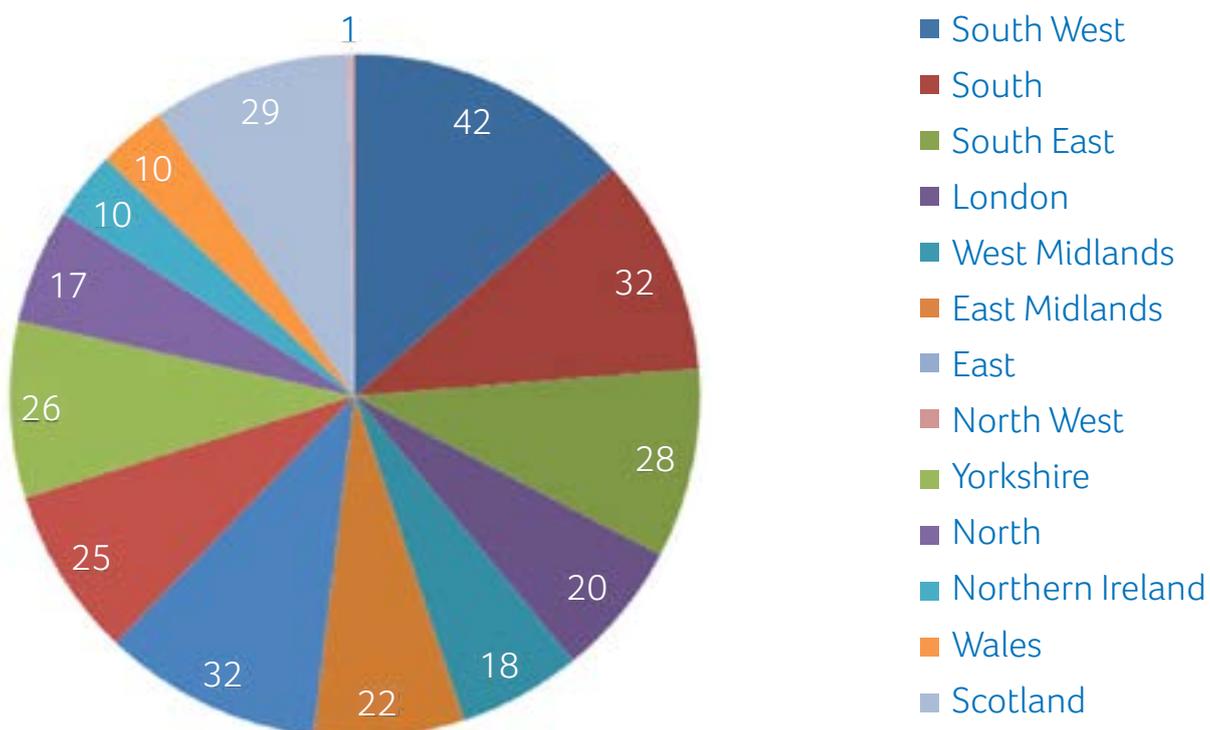
## Appendix C

Gymnastics venue type by region



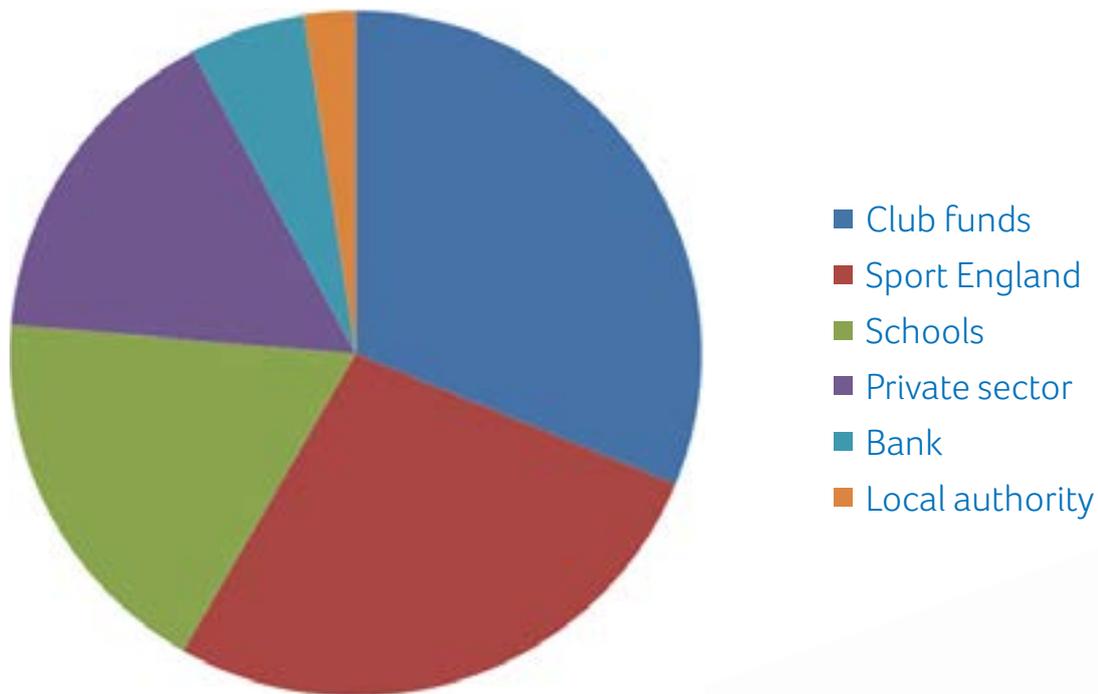
## Appendix D

Facility projects demand by region



## Appendix E

Gymnastics facility funding partners WSP 2013-17  
Partnership funding



British  
Gymnastics  
More than a sport