Local authority sports provision for the unemployed

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Local Authority Sports Provision for the Unemployed

by

Caroline Pack

A Master's Thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of

Master of Philosophy

of the Loughborough University of Technology
February, 1988

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Abstract

With unemployment levels in the U.K. likely to remain high for the foreseeable future, the extent to which leisure in general, and sport in particular, can provide a substitute for paid employment is the subject of much debate. With the rise of unemployment in the 1970s, and the increasing community orientation of public sector leisure services, many local authorities now cater for the unemployed in their sports provision.

This thesis examines the extent and nature of local authority sports provision for the unemployed in the U.K., from the perspective of both providers and participants. Over 70% of local authorities are running recreation schemes aimed at the unemployed, and five main types of scheme are identified. Comparison with research in 1982 shows that there has been a shift towards more complex types of provision, such as sports leadership and concession card schemes. The operation of schemes and their evaluation by providers is considered under key themes; many schemes are ill researched, with insufficient monitoring, poor publicity, and a lack of commitment from the local authorities. Sports leadership schemes compare favourably on many points, but the use of staff on one year Community Programme contracts is a major source of problems.

The thesis also examines usage of sports schemes for the unemployed in seven case study authorities. All the schemes attract a hard core of regular unemployed users for whom the opportunities provided are very important. Overall, however, numbers are relatively low, and dominated by young unemployed men. Schemes with a wide range of activities and of "delivery styles" are more successful in attracting a range of users.

Conclusions are addressed to some of the key issues facing providers, including both theoretical issues and in particular the practical implications of the research for those seeking to run successful schemes. Many providers are unrealistic, expecting mass participation from the unemployed on the basis of minimal effort, and becoming disheartened with low numbers, rather than recognising the obvious benefits for those who do become committed users.
Chapter 1

Unemployment, sport and leisure: a review of the literature

1.1 Introduction

The growth in the provision of sports schemes for the unemployed must be viewed in the context of changes in national policy towards sport. In the 1960s and early 1970s the emphasis was on facility provision; access to recreational facilities was viewed as a fundamental right of citizenship, and the basis of policy was reaction to demand. However, in the 1970s official policy shifted to take a more positive, directive role in the promotion of sport, due to a recognition of the benefits of participation both for the individual and society:

"The launching of the Sport for All campaign by the Sports Council...... in 1972 began to change the aim of official policy from satisfying wants to influencing the climate of opinion about the value of sport in society, increasing participation in sport and physical recreation, and promoting sport as a desirable social concept" (McIntosh and Charlton, 1985, p.14)

The twin themes of "recreational welfare" - removing the obstacles to participation so that no-one would be denied the benefits and enjoyment of sport - and "recreation as welfare" - sport as an instrument of social policy to help overcome the problems of deprived areas, became increasingly entwined (Coalter et al., 1986). In particular the importance of sport as a social control mechanism increased with the urban unrest of the early 1980s, because:

"the non-participating citizen was not only 'recreationally deprived' but also a potential threat" (Coalter et al., op.cit., p.17)

As sports policy shifted from satisfying wants to meeting (assumed) needs, provision became increasingly community oriented. It was realised that many groups were put off by conventional formal facilities, and local authorities were increasingly encouraged to build small, local forms of provision. At the same time the concept of "target groups" was introduced - the exercise of positive discrimination in order to encourage low
participant groups into sport. Increasing emphasis was also placed on leadership and "outreach" techniques in increasing participation.

These changes are reflected in the Sports Council's strategy document "Sport In the Community. The Next Ten Years", which in 1982 recognised that

"the sports franchise has been greatly extended but the suffrage is far from universal." (Sports Council,1982,p.7)

The strategy named school leavers and the pre-retirement age group as priority target groups, and highlighted the need to concentrate resources on recreationally deprived areas and on community based facilities; it was accompanied by a substantial shift in the allocation of Sports Council money from elitism towards community provision.

The unemployed have achieved increasing attention in the 1980s both from the Sports Council and from local authority providers. They were among the target groups of two national campaigns; "50 Plus - All To Play For", and "Ever Thought of Sport?" aimed at the 13-24 age group. The Action Sport scheme is targetted at the unemployed among others, and the unemployed were the subject of three experimental sports leadership schemes launched by the Sports Council in 1981.

However, it is the local authorities who are the key providers of sports opportunities in the community, and this thesis aims to examine their contribution to increasing participation by the unemployed. Many local authorities now cater specifically for the unemployed in their leisure provision, but little detailed research has been done concerning the success of different types of scheme and the opinions of users. This project examines the extent and nature of local authority sports provision for the unemployed in the U.K., both from the point of view of the providers and the users. This present chapter reviews relevant literature on the extent and nature of unemployment, the place of leisure and sport in the lifestyles of the unemployed, and the nature of sports provision for the unemployed to date. This sets the context for Chapter 2, which considers the aims and methodology of the research. Chapter 3 examines the
extent of local authority provision for the unemployed in the U.K. and the rationale behind it. A detailed consideration of the operation of schemes from the perspective of providers is carried out in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 examines provision from the perspective of the users in seven case study schemes, and Chapter 7 draws out the main issues and conclusions arising from the research.

1.2 Unemployment

1.2.1 The extent of unemployment

Unemployment has become a major political issue since the last decade saw unemployment reach levels greater than those of the inter-war years. In September 1982 registered unemployment in the U.K. reached 3 million (Department of Employment, 1984), and in January 1987 the unemployment rate peaked at 14.1% of the workforce. Unemployment has subsequently declined slightly, dropping below 3 million for the first time in nearly five years in May 1987 (Department of Employment, 1987).

To put the current rates in historical context, registered unemployment in the first twenty years after the war averaged only 350,000, and the unemployment rate only rarely exceeded 2% (Hawkins, 1984); full employment was the status quo. However, unemployment began to rise in the mid 1960s, with sharp increases in the recessions of 1970-2 and 1975-8 (See Figure 1). Registered unemployment more than doubled in two years, from September 1979 to September 1981, and continued to rise until 1986, when the increase flattened out. By September 1987 the seasonally adjusted figure had fallen for 15 consecutive months to its current level of 2.78 million (The Times, 16 October, 1987).

'However, some of this apparent drop is due to changes in the way in which unemployment is measured, as considered in section 1.2.2
Figure 1. Unemployment in the UK, 1973-1987

Unemployed excluding school leavers

Three-month moving average: seasonally adjusted

Source: Department of Employment, 1987
A detailed examination of the reasons for this dramatic increase in unemployment is beyond the scope of this study, but a comparison with European figures suggests that it is not solely the result of worldwide recession. For example, in August 1987 Japan, Sweden and Norway all had unemployment rates of 3% or less (Department of Employment, 1987, op.cit.). Commentators on the British situation, while differing on many points, are agreed that the root of the problem lies with the relative and absolute decline of the manufacturing sector, and, since the mid 1970s, the inability of the service sector to make up the shortfall of jobs. Some, for example Hawkins (op.cit.), concentrate on the poor productivity of British industry discouraging investment and for the consequent loss of competitiveness with other countries. Others focus on the effects of government policy, contending that anti-inflationary measures have been pursued at the expense of unemployment (Allen et al., 1981). Jenkins and Sherman (1979, 1981), among others, concentrate on the impact of the "new technology".

The effect of these factors has been compounded by demographic trends (see Figure 2), in particular the baby booms of the late 1950s and early 1960s which resulted in a sharp rise in the numbers entering the labour market. Recently, however, there has been a fall in the numbers in the younger age groups, and hence in the increase in the working age population. However, the labour force has also been swelled by the increasing number of women seeking employment as a result of changes in the family life cycle, whereby family size has decreased and families have been completed earlier in married life, or couples have no children at all.

One dominant feature of unemployment in the 1980s is the marked growth in the number of long term unemployed people (out of work for more than a year). The proportion of the registered unemployed experiencing long term unemployment increased from just over a quarter in October 1979, to a record 42.6% in July 1987. Nearly two thirds of unemployed men are now on the register for 6 months or more (Department of Employment, 1984, 1987, op.cit.). There has been a particular increase recently in the number of people registered unemployed for five years or more. The numbers in this
Figure 2. Working population and employed labour force: Great Britain

Source: Department of Employment, 1987
category increased by 23% from April 1986-7 (Manpower Services Commission, hereafter MSC, 1987).

1.2.2 Defining and measuring unemployment

The Department of Employment defines unemployment as

"the number of people claiming benefit (Unemployment or Supplementary Benefit, or National insurance credits), at Unemployment Benefit Offices on the day of the monthly count, who on that day are unemployed and able and willing to do any suitable work."

(Department of Employment, 1987, op.cit., p.5.63)

Full-time students on vacation are excluded. The unemployment rate is calculated as a percentage of the latest available mid year estimate of the working population (employees in employment, the unemployed, the self-employed, and HM Forces). Much doubt has, however, been expressed concerning the validity of these statistics. It has been estimated that since the 1979 recession there have been 19 changes in the way unemployment is calculated (The Guardian, 20 March 1987). The main changes, in October 1982, April and June 1983, and March 1986, removed about 402,000 from the unemployment count (Department of Employment, 1986b). Furthermore, the basis on which the unemployment rate is calculated has changed. In July 1986 the definition of the "working population" was broadened to include the self employed and the armed forces, with the effect of reducing the unemployment rate for Spring 1985, for example, from 13.0% to 11.6% (ibid.)

The official statistics may also underestimate the true level of unemployment since they only include those registered and claiming benefit. In October 1982, 190,000 unemployed people registered at Job Centres but not claiming benefits were removed from the count, and changes in benefit entitlement in 1983 removed a further 162,000 unemployed men aged 60 plus. The largest group excluded from the unemployment count are married women, who often do not register because they are ineligible for benefits. The Labour Force Survey estimated that in Spring 1985 there were 580,000 women not claiming benefit but seeking work (MSC, 1986). Finally, the statistics
exclude those on short term training and job creation schemes who would otherwise be unemployed - a total of 570,000 in April 1985 (MSC, 1985).

A few commentators take the opposite view, that the official statistics actually overestimate the level of unemployment, by including certain groups who are not truly unemployed. Wood (1975), for example, suggests that unemployment is exaggerated 3 to 4 fold and that school leavers, adult students, all women, and occupational pensioners should be removed from the count, thus reducing unemployment from 1.03 million to 116,000. Wood considers that more than half of male unemployment can be accounted for by the "unemployables", the workshy or the fraudulently registered. However, few individuals (the DHSS cohort study in 1978 suggested 6%) are likely to be better off unemployed (Davies et al., 1982) and this proportion has probably been reduced. The increase in youth unemployment and in women entering the labour force also makes it unreasonable to exclude such groups from the count.

Finally, the "snapshot" nature of the statistics has been criticised for implying that the unemployed are a "stagnant pool". For most people unemployment is a hiatus rather than a permanent condition (Daniel, 1981, p.497) and Pimlott prefers to describe unemployment as a "transit camp" through which many more people pass than are at any one time in it". (Pimlott, 1981, p.57)

The flow statistics of the numbers entering or leaving the count give a clearer indication of the duration of unemployment, highlighting both the rapid growth of long term unemployment and the large numbers of people who experience short spells of unemployment; in 1986 400,000 people on average entered or left the register each month (Department of Employment, 1986a).

In statistical terms, then, unemployment is hard to define but as Harold Wilson said, whatever the statistics,

"for each individual who is unemployed, unemployment is 100%." (Quoted in Jenkins and Sherman, 1981, op.cit., p.50)
1.2.3 Who are the Unemployed?

The national unemployment statistics tend to suggest that "the unemployed" are a homogenous group, somehow distinct from the rest of society. However, a wide cross section of people are affected, and it has been said that

"Recession is no longer a respecter of power and position"

Despite this, certain sectors of the population are still more vulnerable both to becoming unemployed and to staying on the register long term. Firstly, age is an important factor, with the oldest and youngest sections of the labour force being most at risk. In mass "shake outs" of labour it is the older worker, especially the older unskilled, who is most liable to redundancy on the grounds of poor health and lower productivity. Older workers are also the most vulnerable to long term unemployment, since they are viewed by prospective employers as a poor investment. As Rapoport comments:

"Once people become unemployed, age is the strongest single influence in the time taken to find employment again."  (Rapoport, 1982, p. 6)

In July 1987, 58.6% of unemployed people aged 55 and over had been unemployed for more than a year; this compared with only 40% of those aged under 55 (Department of Employment, 1987, op. cit.).

Youth unemployment has risen dramatically in the 1980s. In 1986, the unemployment rate among young people aged 16-19 was 20%, compared to 7% for those aged 34-60 (MSC, 1987, op. cit.). However, youth unemployment relative to unemployment generally is now falling; in July 1987, 12.5% of the unemployed were aged under 20, compared with 22% in July 1982 (Department of Employment, 1984, 1987, op. cit.). This fall is due to the decrease in the number of school leavers due to demographic factors, and also the increased numbers on Youth Training Schemes. The proportion of 16 year olds on YTS schemes increased from 19% in January 1983 to 27% by January 1987 (MSC, 1987, op. cit.), and in 1986-7, 360,000 people entered YTS.
Youth unemployment, however, is still a problem. The relative costs to the employer of a young person— in terms of experience and maturity—are high, and young people suffer from the "first in—first out" principle. Most youth unemployment is, however, short term— in 1987 over half of the unemployed aged under 25 had been out of work for less than six months, compared with 39% of the unemployed generally (Department of Employment, 1987, op. cit.). Much of this is due to the natural tendency at the start of working life to explore different avenues of work, but some commentators suggest that some young people actually prefer periods of unemployment to steady, and often low paid, jobs. Roberts et al. (1982), for example, found that two thirds of job changes among young people were voluntary, and that some preferred the independence and flexibility of periodic unemployment. Sugden and Bleakeley (1985) also found that although aspiring to steady jobs and traditional values, young unemployed men preferred to "opt out" rather than work at any cost. This contrasts with the findings of other research. Banks and Ullah (1986), for example, found that less qualified urban youth attached high importance to paid employment and over half were willing to "take anything".

Turning now to gender differences, although the unemployment rate among women remains lower than that among men— 7.9% compared to 12.0% in August 1987 (Department of Employment, 1987, op. cit.)— the number of registered unemployed women increased seven fold between 1970 and 1980, while male unemployment only doubled (Sinfield, op. cit.). This is due to two factors; firstly, and most importantly, an increase in female activity rates. This results from changes in the family life cycle noted earlier, from the increasing number of part-time jobs in the service sector attracting women back into the job market, and from the economic necessity in many families for the woman to look for work. Secondly, more women now register as unemployed due to the phasing out of the option to pay reduced National Insurance contributions. Female unemployment has therefore become more visible, but as stated earlier, a large proportion of women still fail to register.

Unskilled and unqualified workers are also more likely to become unemployed. In 1986, only 4% of the unemployed had degrees, whereas 45% had
no qualifications at all (MSC, 1987, *op. cit.*). Low skill levels go hand in hand with low income; a survey in 1978 showed that 50% of the registered unemployed previously had incomes in the bottom fifth of the earnings distribution (Moylan and Davies, 1980). With the overall decline of the manufacturing sector, and with new technology rendering many routine jobs redundant, the unskilled are particularly vulnerable to long term unemployment, as they do not have the same opportunity to "downgrade" as the more skilled. A survey of the long term unemployed in 1979 found that 77% had no formal qualifications (Colledge and Bartholomew, 1980).

The incidence of unemployment also varies *regionally* (see Table 1.1) despite the attempts of central government to steer industry to depressed areas. Structural factors - namely concentrations of declining industries such as textiles, shipbuilding and engineering - are largely to blame for pockets of persistent unemployment and Pimlott comments that in these areas unemployment is viewed as nothing new:

"in Newcastle and Middlesbrough there is a battening down of the hatches with the weary sense of the return of a familiar adversary."  
(Pimlott, *op. cit.*, p. 51)

Regional unemployment statistics, however, conceal great local variations, in particular the plight of the inner cities caught in the well-documented downward spiral of an exodus of industry and skilled workers, a declining rates base and a decline in the physical infrastructure. The inner cities also contain higher proportions of those most vulnerable to unemployment - especially the ethnic minorities and the unskilled, low income groups.

Those most likely to become unemployed, especially older, unskilled workers, are also most likely to remain unemployed longest. Paradoxically, since these groups are in many respects the most disadvantaged in society they are the least likely to have the resources (financial, social and psychological) to cope with the effects of long term joblessness. Those in poor health are also particularly vulnerable to long term unemployment; one survey found that nearly one third of a sample of long term unemployed had some form of handicap or illness, compared with 9% of the population as a
### Table 1.1 Unemployment in the UK - August 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Regions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and Humberside</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater London</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East (including Greater London)</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Employment, October 1987.
whole (Colledge and Bartholomew, op. cit.). However, the incidence of long term unemployment cannot be explained solely in terms of personal characteristics. Once a person has been out of work for a period, the situation becomes self-reinforcing as the duration of unemployment itself deters potential employers and as apathy, lack of self-esteem, and the experience of rejection combine to lessen enthusiasm for the job-search.

1.2.4 The experience of unemployment

The statistics paint a stark picture of the extent of unemployment but do little to convey what unemployment means to the individual. To understand the problems of the unemployed many commentators have begun by examining the role of work in our society, defining unemployment in negative terms as the experience of the loss of work. For example, Hayes and Nutman describe unemployment as

"a state of worklessness experienced by people who see themselves, or who are viewed by others, as potential members of the workforce."

(Hayes and Nutman, 1981, p.50)

It is undisputed that work carries a whole range of benefits, financial and psychological, but analysts differ as to whether these are a function of work per se, or have merely been conferred on it in industrial society. Jenkins and Sherman (op. cit.) take the latter view, viewing the work ethic not as natural, but as imposed, and the symptoms of unemployment as a conditional response, reinforced by the establishment. They conclude:

"We do not believe that work per se is necessary to human survival or self-esteem."

(Jenkins and Sherman, 1979, op. cit., p.141)

Sherman (1987) also comments that society suffers not from a work ethic but an employment ethic, which is not satisfied by informal work, performed outside paid employment.

Kelvin (1981,1982) and with Dewberry and Morley-Bunker (1984) also questions the importance of work, suggesting that the Protestant Work Ethic only touched a minority of people, and that for the majority it was not,
strictly speaking, an ethic, in that most people worked hard out of economic necessity, rather than from freedom of choice. Kelvin accepts the need for committed, structured activity meeting external obligations, and stresses that in our society work fulfils this need by structuring life so that it becomes more predictable, and structuring social relations to confer status - hence the importance of the question "what do you do?". The significance of unemployment is that it invalidates many of the expectations that people have of themselves, and that are held by others. As Kelvin comments:

"To be unemployed carries stigma in a world of work, not so much because it is bad, but because it is different." (Kelvin, 1982, op.cit., p.19)

Jahoda (1979) admits that people have always been ambivalent to work, but suggests that the dislike is not of work itself but rather of its organisation and of the conditions of employment. She considers that work has both "manifest" (financial) and "latent" (psychological) benefits - the latter being a structure to time, social contacts, status and identity, the experience of social purposes and goals, and regular, enforced activity. No other social institution combines all these benefits and a substantial psychological effort is required to create them regularly through self-motivation (as in unemployment).

Parker (1983) considers the meaning of work through responses to surveys asking what aspect of work makes it satisfying. The themes which emerge are similar to the benefits cited by Jahoda; creating something, the use of skill, using one's initiative, having responsibility and mixing with people.

It is important to stress these functions of work since so much of the experience of unemployment in industrial society is concerned with their loss. However, the loss of the benefits of work is compounded in the lives of many unemployed people by poverty. As Walker comments;

"one of the enduring myths about unemployment is that its link with poverty has been broken" (Walker, 1981, p.84)
Sinfield (op.cit.) also criticises the psychological literature on unemployment for ignoring the effects of poverty, and even for fostering the belief that the unemployed settle down to a "not too intolerable" life on the dole. The evidence suggests, however, that for the majority this is not the case. Walker (op.cit.) comments that 84% of those unemployed for more than three months have incomes less than 10% above the poverty line, compared with only 4% of those in work. The DHSS cohort study also found that one third of the sample halved their total family income when they became unemployed (Davies et al., op.cit.). Since many of the unemployed come from the less skilled sectors of the workforce they are unlikely to receive generous redundancy payments or to have savings to boost their income from state benefits. In addition, the wives of unemployed men are much less likely to work than those whose husbands are in employment, because of the effect on benefit entitlement.

The effects of poverty are exacerbated by society, and especially the media, "bombarding people with materialist values". The unemployed therefore "experience a form of disenfranchisement" (Corrigan, 1982), facing the problem of

"living in a society where I am in receipt of an income that is too low to allow me to enjoy life like everyone else".

(Clarke, 1982, p.192)

Poverty compounds other problems experienced by the unemployed, in particular social isolation. The unemployed not only lose regular contact with work colleagues, but in addition any out of home social life costing money is likely to be among the first things to be given up. Many unemployed also feel ostracised by the stigma attached to their status and therefore withdraw further from employed society. Seabrook quotes an unemployed man on Tyneside:

"You go to a pub, people look at you critically. They say "How can you afford to drink ale in your position?""

(Seabrook, 1983, p.126)

In areas where many jobs are found informally over a drink, this social withdrawal also lessens the chance of finding employment. Furthermore,
although unemployment may be the circumstance under which people meet, it is unlikely to be the basis for forming continuing friendships, because, as Kelvin and Jarrett (1985) remark, there is no positive bond among the unemployed — instead they are defined by what they are not. As a result the unemployed person spends more time at home, which can significantly increase the level of tension in the family.

The loss of the time structure provided by work means that many unemployed people experience boredom and apathy, and lose their sense of time as Jahoda (1979, op.cit.) found in her pioneering work in Marienthal in the 1930s. Evidence suggests that efforts at keeping busy and active early in unemployment tend to fade as self-motivation declines, and are replaced by a sense of pointlessness:

"No matter how disciplined you are, you have the problem of time; how to fill time. You don't realise just how much your life has been parcelled out to fit the needs of the company you worked for. You're not used to constructing it for yourself."

(Unemployed man, Sunderland, quoted in Seabrook, op.cit., p.114)

Similarly, Kelvin and Jarrett comment on the nature of autobiographical studies of unemployment:

"Much of the dominant theme is an almost obsessive preoccupation with time - with the extent of it, with the inability to make use of it, with the sense that one is therefore merely killing it."

(Kelvin and Jarrett, op.cit., p.67)

Much of the psychological literature on unemployment has concentrated on the "stages" through which a person passes on becoming unemployed. Many authors draw similar conclusions to Hill (1977) who identified three stages. Firstly an initial response of shock and anger, or a denial of unemployment, by taking a holiday for example. During this stage the unemployed person is motivated to remain busy, but gradually experiences inertia and depression, exacerbated by rejections for job applications which reduce efforts to find work. The final stage is described as "settling down to unemployment" — implying no hope of work and an acceptance, and even tolerance, of the situation. Clarke (op.cit.) likens
job loss to bereavement, and Kelvin and Jarrett (op.cit.) agree that long term unemployment leads to apathy and resignation, but point out that there are a variety of routes by which a person arrives there.

In summary, the weight of research paints an essentially negative picture of unemployment; most unemployed people say they prefer work, and suffer through the loss of it. The experience of the unemployed, both financial and psychological, is compounded by central government policy responses to unemployment. The government's concern has primarily been with job creation and training schemes, manifest currently in the Youth Training Scheme, Enterprise Allowance scheme, and the Restart programme for the long term unemployed. Very little has been done to make life more bearable for those who, despite these schemes, will inevitably face long periods of joblessness. This is reflected in the failure of benefit levels to keep pace with inflation. Moon and Richardson (1985) estimate that if social security spending had continued at the same real rates as in 1979, central government expenditure in 1984 would have been £6.5 billion higher than it was. In addition the National Insurance system is inappropriate in today's economic climate because it

"was constructed on the assumption that unemployment was some kind of socio-economic accident which might on rare occasions be fleetingly encountered during one's full working span."

(Clarke, op.cit., p.66)

The justification for low levels of benefit is to encourage the unemployed to look for work and to prevent "scroungers", but as Kelvin and Jarrett (op.cit.) point out, it is well understood that for the majority, such work simply does not exist. As they express it, a preoccupation with the scrounging few has resulted in an inappropriate level of provision for the majority.
1.2.5 The future of unemployment

Attempts to predict the future course of unemployment are fraught with difficulty, but most commentators agree that, in the short term at least, high unemployment is here to stay, since it will take a considerable amount of time to get the currently unemployed back to work, whatever future job losses are like. Analysts differ in opinion, however, on the effects of "new technology". Most agree that should we not adopt it in large measure, then Britain will become less competitive, economic growth will slow down, and creating new jobs and supporting those without will become even harder. Jenklns and Sherman (op.cit.) consider that job losses are an inevitable byproduct of new technology:

"whichever road we take, work will collapse"
(Jenkins and Sherman, 1979, op.cit., p113)

Others are more optimistic about the effects of new technology, believing that it will cause a shift in the type, not the quantity, of employment. Rapoport (op.cit.) and Jahoda (1981) both comment on the emergence of the informal economy, and stress that it will increasingly need to be recognised as a valid alternative to formal employment. However, even the most optimistic analysts expect unemployment to remain high in the short term; whichever view is adopted, the problems of unemployment will be with us for the immediate future.

1.3 The role of leisure

Having considered the nature and extent of unemployment and its effects on the individual, we turn now to examine the extent to which "leisure" has any relevance in the lives of the unemployed, and therefore, by implication, the extent to which they can be expected to participate in, and derive satisfaction from, local authority leisure provision. This section examines the definitions of leisure and its relation to work; the meaning of leisure for the unemployed; and participation by the unemployed in leisure activities in general and in sport in particular.
1.3.1 The extent and meaning of leisure

We live in a society with undoubtedly more leisure time than that of our forebears of 50 or 100 years ago, although the precise extent to which that leisure time has increased and is likely to increase further is open to debate. Some commentators suggest that

"We are moving inexorably from an era of the leisured classes, when only a select few enjoyed a wide range of leisure pursuits, to the era of the leisured society, in which the vast majority of the population have time to engage in an increasingly diverse range of leisure activities". (Darton, 1986, p.7)

By contrast, Linder (1970) dismisses the concept of a leisured society, stressing that since time is a fixed resource that cannot be stockpiled, it has remained limited in relation to income. As a result

"The average wage-earner in a rich country lives nonetheless under the pressure of time. He is a member of the harried leisure class." (ibid., p.12)

Similarly Godbey states that leisure is not increasing, but that

"our institutions of leisure have been dominated by our institutions of work" (Godbey, 1975, p.52)

and that aspects of work such as efficiency, competition and materialism have pervaded leisure with the result that a less enjoyable "anti-leisure" has emerged. Nonetheless, it is beyond dispute that for most people in employment leisure time has increased since the early 1950s. Firstly, the working life has been shortened through early retirement and a greater tendency to remain at school longer or engage in training. Secondly, the working year has decreased; Gratton and Taylor (1987) estimate that the average annual holiday entitlement for manual workers more than doubled between 1951 and 1985, from less than 2 weeks, to 4-5 weeks. Thirdly, and less importantly, there has been a slight reduction in the working week; Gratton and Taylor estimate that the male working week has decreased by 4 hours in the last 35 years.
The net effect of these changes is that, on average, an individual's leisure time increased by nearly five hours a week between 1961 and 1974/5 (Gershuny and Thomas, 1982). The 1960s and early 1970s also witnessed a great increase in leisure spending. Leisure spending as a percentage of consumer spending increased from 12.5% in 1957 to 14.5% in 1977 (Martin and Mason, 1980). With the recession in the late 1970s leisure spending grew less rapidly, but it is now recovering and in 1985 represented 22.9% of consumer spending (Leisure Consultants, 1986).

Describing leisure trends is difficult, however, as there is no universally accepted definition of "leisure". As Patmore states:

"Leisure is more readily experienced than defined". (Patmore, 1983, p.5)

Numerous commentators have attempted to define leisure, most of them basing their definitions on the relationship between leisure and work. In ancient Greece, leisure was a way of life, an ideal to be aspired to, and throughout pre-industrial times life preserved a wholeness in which work and leisure were inseparable. However, as Roberts (1981) suggests, since the industrial revolution leisure and work have both become part of life, and in our culture, therefore, leisure can only be understood in relation to work.

Three main constructs are used to define leisure. Firstly, there are "residual" definitions of leisure, which distinguish leisure from other spheres of life in terms of time, for example:

"time uncommitted to obligations of a work, family or personal nature" (Sports Council, Social Science Research Council, 1978, p.2)

Dumazedier considers that

"In and of itself, leisure means little" (Dumazedier, 1967, p.14).

since it is definable only in opposition to the obligations of work, family, domestic and personal life. Secondly, leisure can be defined in
terms of activity, with "play" as a central concept, suggesting a separation from "ordinary life". Thirdly, leisure may be defined in terms of experience - in that it is intrinsically rewarding and consumptive. The quality of the experience is therefore important, and the same activity could be work for one person and leisure for another, or even both work and leisure for the same person at different times.

Several authors, however, stress that the concept of choice is an essential element of leisure. On this basis, Parker defines leisure as

"non-work time free from constraint" (Parker, op. cit., p. 52)

thus excluding physiological needs and personal care. Similarly Roberts (1978) considers leisure as being only that part of non-work time that is "relatively self-determined". Kelvin (1982, op. cit.) also states that the critical factor in defining leisure is the condition under which it is carried out; leisure is activity freely chosen, and, just as importantly, it can be equally freely abandoned.

Much of the literature concerns the precise inter-relationship between work and leisure, either presuming an interaction between leisure and work (the "holistic" viewpoint), or allowing no relationship between them (the sectorial approach) (Parker, op. cit.; Aubrey et al., 1986). Holistic approaches include the "spillover" hypothesis, suggesting that the nature of, and attitude to, work affects the attitude to and experience of leisure, and the "compensatory" hypothesis, suggesting that leisure activities are chosen to compensate for experiences at work. The sectorial approach views the choice of leisure activity as unrelated to experiences at work.

Both Parker and Roberts agree that in practice leisure is

"neither subservient or domineering" (Roberts, 1981, op. cit., p. 56)

and that the exact relationship between work and leisure depends on an individual's income and occupation. Roberts believes income to be the overriding factor in determining leisure behaviour, since for low income
groups, overtime working may be necessary to provide for domestic essentials, leaving neither time nor money for leisure pursuits. Professional and managerial workers, even with heavy time commitments, consistently show a higher rate of participation in leisure activities. Roberts concludes that whatever the precise relationship between work and leisure

"all the evidence indicates that leisure activity enhances the individual's sense of well-being." (ibid., p.122)

1.3.2 Leisure and the Unemployed

To what extent then do the unemployed, with so much free time, experience this time as leisure, and derive the associated benefits? The sections above have shown the central place work occupies in our lives, and the psychological and financial problems experienced when it is lost. Moreover, leisure is commonly defined in relation to work, and high levels of satisfaction in work and leisure tend to be correlated. The key issues are therefore whether, in our society, leisure can exist without work, and whether "leisure" for the unemployed can replace any of the meaning of work. The little detailed research that has been conducted on what the unemployed actually do with their time suggests that, for the majority, free time does not equal leisure.

Several authors comment on the centrality of work in providing meaningful leisure. There is still a feeling that leisure must be earned;

"(leisure is)... time free from, but earned by (present author's emphasis), obligatory work, during which individuals can enjoy the fruit of their labour" (Roberts, 1985, p.1.1.18)

As Roberts says, this concept is inapplicable to the unemployed. Other authors also comment that the freedom and discretion in leisure only have value if needs for structure and commitment are fulfilled elsewhere:

"Involuntary unemployment differs from general leisure in that the latter assumes a work-base providing a financial, psychological and social springboard" (Rapoport, op.cit., p.15)
Similarly, Jahoda comments:

"Leisure activities, from TV to sports to self-improvement, are fine in themselves as a complement to employment, but they are not functional alternatives to work since they lack its compelling manifest function."

(Jahoda, 1981, op. cit., p. 189)

Parker (op. cit.) considers four main reasons why the unemployed do not experience leisure - the fact that leisure is still only thought of in relation to work, the sense of disintegration of time, stress in personal/social life, and the characterisation of unemployment as a "deviant" status. Kelvin also doubts that leisure can provide an alternative to work and warns

"against the recurrent but much oversimplified assumption that a life without work will burgeon with satisfaction as it becomes a life of leisure"

(Kelvin, 1982, op. cit., p. 21)

A key characteristic of leisure is that it is autonomous, self-determined activity. However, as Kelvin and Jarrett (op. cit.) comment, unemployment creates a situation largely out of the control of the individual, which is in direct contrast to the conditions of leisure. The unemployed experience many constraints limiting their choice of how to spend their time, thus denying leisure activities their essential nature. Research by Kelvin et al (op. cit.) examined these constraints and considered whether the "leisure" activities of the unemployed did provide alternatives to the psychological satisfactions of work. They found that lack of structure was the central feature in the lifestyles of their sample; a major problem was finding the internal resources to organise the day. The activities which had increased since unemployment were either cheap, or good at filling time, for example housework, watching television, walking, and reading. Many of these were not done through positive motivation but rather as an acceptable way of passing time (a point echoed by Haworth and Evans (1987) whose research also revealed that many unemployed people do activities for negative reasons, to avoid doing nothing). Watching television took up almost one third of "in home" leisure time and was the activity that had increased most since becoming unemployed; it was cheap, required little self-
motivation, and also fulfilled the need to be kept in touch with the outside world.

Social life (including having friends round for a meal at home) and "going out" had both decreased markedly with the onset of unemployment. Significantly there was no increase in participation in "committed activities" such as civic or voluntary work or enthusiast sports, which are generally identified as the activities most able to offer an alternative to work. For most, these "committed activities" occupied negligible amounts of time.

Overall, the evidence suggests that the unemployed did not experience their free time as leisure and that they viewed their activities as mere palliatives, not alternatives to work. Underlying many of the constraints experienced by the unemployed was a lack of money, and Kelvin et al (op.cit.) conclude that although more money would not solve the psychological constraints to leisure participation, it would solve most of the practical ones:

"Money is not a sufficient condition for the constructive use of "leisure", but in the real world it is both directly and indirectly a necessary condition" (ibid.)

Roberts (1986), in a study of the leisure lifestyles of a sample of young unemployed, aged 17-18, found that the short-term unemployed were simply doing less of most things than those in employment. However, approximately one quarter of the long term unemployed had dropped virtually all normal teenage leisure activities such as going to pubs, clubs and discos. Some of the long term unemployed men were adapting to unemployment by going out frequently with each other, but not to any places of entertainment costing money.

Research by Green et al (1987) gives some insight into the leisure activities of unemployed women. They found that although unemployed women
participated almost as much as those in employment in indoor activities, they took part considerably less in outdoor activities. They conclude that

"Paid employment .... seems to operate as a facilitating rather than constraining effect upon women's leisure" (Ibid., p.249)

since the negative consequences of lack of time and tiredness are compensated for by personal income, social contact, and a feeling of "being entitled" to leisure.

In summary, theory and evidence agree that the unemployed do not experience leisure in the conventional sense, since unemployment is essentially a state of constraint, not choice. Work provides a number of benefits which are essential to meaningful leisure, and which it is hard for leisure activities of themselves to generate. Currently, leisure activities are more likely to be palliatives than alternatives to work, and this has implications for the amount that leisure schemes for the unemployed can achieve. The unemployed are constrained both financially and psychologically in their participation in "leisure" activities; poverty compounds the problems of lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem and social isolation. The unemployed live increasingly home centred lives, engaging in many home based activities simply to fill time, and taking part in less out-of-home leisure. The provision of cheap leisure activities may at least remove one of the barriers to participation, although to be successful providers will also have to recognise the many psychological and social barriers facing the unemployed.

1.3.3 Sport and the unemployed

The most rapid increase in sports participation occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, prompted and encouraged by the concurrent growth in facility provision and car ownership. The proportion of adults playing sport in any one week increased from 8% to 13% from 1961 to 1974/5 (Gershuny and Thomas, op.cit.) and the number of people taking part in indoor sport at least once a year increased from 8.9 million to 21.4 million between 1973 and 1977 (Sports Council, 1982, op.cit.).
The rate of growth has now slowed down but participation in sport is still increasing. The participation rate in outdoor sport (at least one sport in a four week period) increased from 28% to 31% from 1977-1983; the increase for indoor sports over the same period was from 21% to 25% (OPCS, 1985). In 1984 an estimated 30 million adults took part in sport at least once in a four week period in the most popular quarter (Martin and Mason, 1984).

However, it is important to emphasise that sport as a regular leisure pursuit remains a minority activity. In 1983 only seven individual sports had participation rates over 2%, and only one (walking) over 10% (OPCS, op. cit.). Gershuny and Thomas (op. cit.) estimated that in 1974/5, averaged over the whole population, only 4 minutes a day per person were spent playing sport, compared with 133 minutes watching television.

Participation in sport varies markedly between different groups in society, and it is useful to consider these variations since the unemployed tend to comprise precisely those sectors of the population who are least active. Firstly, age is an important determinant (Table 1.2); in 1983 the participation rate in indoor sports was 51% for 16-19 year olds, but only 16% for those aged 45-59 (OPCS, op. cit.). In comparison with other European countries Britain is particularly poor at sustaining participation into middle age (Rodgers, 1977). Part of the decline is obviously due to physical deterioration, but a large proportion of elderly people are "sports illiterate", having never been socialised into sport at school or subsequently.

Secondly, participation varies with social class and occupation, to the extent that in Britain it becomes

"almost a secondary social characteristic" (Rodgers, op. cit., p. 4)

Table 1.3 shows participation rates in outdoor and indoor sports by selected socio-economic groups in 1983. Whereas over half the professional group took part in outdoor sport, only one fifth of unskilled manual workers participated. Similarly, only 15% of unskilled manual workers took
Table 1.2  Participation in Sport by age, 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>16-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-44</th>
<th>45-59</th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Sport excl. walking</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Sport</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : GHS, 1983

Table 1.3  Participation in Sport by Socio-economic group, 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-economic group</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Skilled Manual</th>
<th>Unskilled</th>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Sport excl. walking</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incl. walking</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Sport</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : GHS, 1983
Participation in indoor sport, compared to over a third of professional workers (OPCS, op.cit.).

Participation in sport also varies with sex, with women much less likely to participate than men. Table 1.4 compares male and female participation rates in indoor and outdoor activities in 1983, and shows that men are nearly twice as likely to participate in indoor sport (OPCS, op.cit.).

Although factors such as age, sex and socio-economic group define the probability of participation, Rodgers (op.cit.) defined filters that determine whether or not an individual participates. These include sports illiteracy, skill, motivation, sports contact, awareness of opportunities, the social image of sport, access to facilities, free time and cost. Many of these factors prove almost insurmountable barriers to the unemployed.

Building on Rodgers' work, Boothby et al (1981) studied participation rates in sport in two areas of Cleveland with very distinct socio-economic characteristics. Using the variables of age and sex alone they were able statistically to predict 72% of participants. Most of the adult non-participants - the "sports illiterates" - were older women, who played little sport at school, had no family background in sport, and were subsequently lacking in social contacts encouraging participation. This group also reported little involvement in other leisure activities. Informal social networks were very important both in introducing people to sport, and, if such networks weakened, in influencing "drop out" rates.

Given these variations, it is not surprising that the unemployed exhibit low participation rates in sport. Kelvin et al (op.cit.) found that among their sample of unemployed people, sport took up the least time of all the major out of home "non-social" activities - an average of 5 minutes per day, compared with 1 hour 20 minutes for shopping. Furthermore, as participation is strongly related to age, for the majority of the sample the time spent on sport was much less - only 1 minute per day for the over 20's. The study on women's leisure in Sheffield (Green et al., op.cit.) found that 29% of those in full time employment took part in sport, compared to only 12% of the unemployed. Participation was also related to
### Table 1.4 Participation in Sport by sex, 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males 16+</th>
<th>Females 16+</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Sport</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- excl. walking</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- incl. walking</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indoor Sport</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage participating in 4 weeks before interview

Source: GHS, 1983
the husbands' employment status; 24% of those whose husbands worked played sport, compared to only 5% who had unemployed husbands. Data from the 1980 General Household Survey (Collins, 1984) shows that in the most popular quarter the national participation rate in outdoor sport was 38%, whereas among the unemployed it was only 33%. Similarly for indoor sport the national participation rate was 23%, but only 21% among the unemployed.

The first reason, then, for the low level of participation in sport among the unemployed is that to a large extent they comprise the low participant groups in society (the older, the unskilled, the less well educated and, to an increasing extent, women). Secondly, as examined earlier, the unemployed experience constraints in their leisure participation generally, and several of Rodgers' "filters" in terms of sport in particular. A lack of motivation, little awareness of opportunities, the middle class image of sport (and hence the problem of stigma), access, in terms of transport, and the cost of participating all discourage the unemployed person from taking part. The work by Boothby et al (op.cit.) showed how important social contacts were in encouraging participation; the social isolation experienced by the unemployed is therefore a particularly important factor. The low level of participation by the unemployed represents a considerable challenge for local authority leisure providers seeking to encourage all sectors of the community to participate.

1.4 Sports provision for the unemployed

This section considers the rationale for providing sports schemes for the unemployed, and examines the Sports Council's contribution to encouraging participation. The results of research into local authority provision for the unemployed in 1982 are then considered, as a context for this present thesis and as a baseline from which to assess more recent changes in the extent and nature of provision.
1.4.1 The rationale for provision

In the introduction to this chapter changes in official policy concerning sport were considered. The rationale for providing for the unemployed can be viewed in terms of this shift in emphasis away from facility provision, towards a more positive role in encouraging participation among target groups. However, there are particular reasons why encouraging participation among the unemployed has been viewed as important.

Firstly, sport can be viewed as one way of replacing the satisfactions derived from work. In common with many other leisure activities it can provide social contact, a sense of achievement, the chance to use and develop skills, and opportunities to get out of the house. Some commentators believe that in the face of continuing high unemployment there will have to be a widespread re-education of people's attitudes such that sport, along with other leisure activities, is elevated from being a poor relation to work, to being an equally valid part of the lifestyle of those without paid employment (Jenkins and Sherman, 1981, op. cit.). Others go less far but warn, however, against the danger of over-emphasising what sport can do for the unemployed if they remain financially disadvantaged and if sport and leisure services are based on the proviso that people are fulfilled in the rest of their lives.

Secondly, it has been shown that the unemployed face particular constraints or filters which discourage participation; hence low participation does not necessarily imply a lack of demand. As Glyptis (1984) points out, the opportunities may be there and the person choose not to participate but

"There is evidence that a considerable share of current non-participation results from deprivation, rather than preference."

(ibid., p.185)

To the extent that non-participation is the result of deprivation, it is therefore important to provide for the unemployed so that they can enjoy the same benefits from sport as society at large.
Another recurring theme in the provision of sports opportunities for the unemployed is the contribution sport can make towards the welfare of the community and as a deterrent against anti-social behaviour. There is no evidence to prove this assertion, but it has been put forward both by central government:

"By reducing boredom and urban frustration, participation in active recreation contributes to the reduction of hooliganism and delinquency among young people" (Dept. of the Environment, 1975, p.3)

and, more recently, by the Sports Council:

"...vandalism and disruptive behaviour have sometimes become their way to express their frustration and to combat their new-found boredom. We all have a duty to help our young people and assist in directing their energies into areas which would help them to cope with this very different and changing society." (Sports Council, 1984, p.2)

However, there has been a reaction against the policy of encouraging participation in sport as a means to an end rather than as an end in its own right. Cherry (1981) commented in this context that sport and recreation are important simply because they are fun; a basic personal freedom and right. In assessing the impact of "Sport for All" policy, McIntosh and Charlton also conclude that

"Sport for All has travelled too far along this continuum towards social machinery... if sport is promoted and pursued as an end in itself it may bring social benefits which will elude the grasp of policy makers if they treat it as little more than a clinical, social or political instrument to fashion those very benefits."

(McIntosh and Charlton, op. cit., p.193)

1.4.2 Sports Council provision for the unemployed

Although it is the local authorities who are the main providers of sport in the community, the Sports Council have, through Regional Participation Grants, national demonstration projects, grants towards local facilities and the national mass participation campaigns, both indirectly and directly encouraged participation among target groups including the unemployed. The
Sports Council have also made two main direct initiatives for the unemployed, the first of which was the launch in 1981 of three pilot schemes aiming

"to provide sports and recreation opportunities for the jobless and their families" (Glyptis, Kay and Donkin, 1986a, p.1)

The schemes were based in Handsworth (Birmingham), Leicester and Derwentside, all areas of high unemployment, and were to run for three years initially, funded by the Sports Council in conjunction with local authorities and voluntary agencies. All the schemes targeted the "unattached" unemployed – those not on work experience schemes or connected to other organisations for the unemployed – and none asked for proof of unemployment. The schemes provided a wide range of sports activities, transport and equipment. In Leicester and Birmingham activities were provided free, whereas in Derwentside a nominal charge was levied. In each scheme additional staff were recruited through the Community Programme, to act as sports leaders.

The Leicester "Sports Training and Recreation Scheme" (STARS) and the Derwentside Recreation Scheme (DRS) were run in partnership with the respective local authorities, using a wide range of local facilities. The Birmingham scheme, by contrast, was site-based at an existing adventure playground and community centre run by a voluntary group on a disused canal basin. All three schemes were monitored in detail to evaluate their success or failure in reaching the unemployed, and to distil lessons for other providers.

The schemes all succeeded in reaching their target groups despite not asking for any proof of unemployment. Ninety-eight per cent of STARS users were unemployed, and more than half had been out of work for over a year. Nearly two-thirds of the attendances at the DRS were made by the registered unemployed. The overall level of attendance at the schemes was also impressive; at Derwentside 4000 users generated more than 50,000 attendances over the three years, and attendances at STARS averaged 10,000 per year (Glyptis, Kay and Donkin, 1986b).
However, it proved more difficult to attract regular attenders. Three quarters of STARS users attended less than five times, and more than a third only attended once. The Derwentside figures were more encouraging - nearly a half of the users attended more than five times, but in general

"The drop-in rate was very high; so too was the rate of dropping out." (ibid., p. 7)

Relatively few people became committed users, although nearly one tenth of DRS users did attend more than 30 times. The most successful activities in attracting committed usage were those organised on a fairly structured basis, especially leagues.

The users of the STARS scheme reflected the age/sex bias in participation noted earlier, usage being dominated by the young, male unemployed. However, nearly as many women as men used the DRS, and 40% of the users of the scheme were over 30 (at STARS, by contrast, 84% of users were under 25).

The STARS scheme was successful, however, in reaching non-participants - 40% of those surveyed had never previously taken part in the activities they did at STARS. The scheme also reached those unattracted to conventional sports provision - participation in STARS was the only current sports activity for over two thirds of users. Most users commented favourably on the scheme and the benefits they derived from participation:

"At the beginning I did it to pass the time, now I do it because I really enjoy it" (Glyptis, Kay and Donkin, 1986a, op. cit., p.132)

"The STARS scheme is an excellent idea for the unemployed. It has given me something to look forward to each week and introduced me to a sport which I would never have tried ordinarily" (ibid., p.133)

The few negative comments related to the level of coaching provided, the publicity, and the whole concept of schemes for the unemployed:

"I feel that the STARS scheme is an insult to a person's identity.... (it) is a bit like going on an outing for under-privileged kids..."
being unemployed is bad enough without new stigmas being created"  
(1bid., p.135)

A survey of unemployed non-users of the STARS scheme showed that poor publicity was a major factor preventing participation. Over three quarters of the non-users had never heard of the scheme despite living in the targetted area. Only six of the unemployed non-users gave specific reasons putting them off the scheme. Social contacts were found to be vital, both in encouraging attendance (69% of STARS users heard of the scheme through friends or families), and in causing drop-out - many users ceased attending because of not having anyone to come with or the fear of meeting new people.

All three schemes experienced some common problems. Firstly, contacting the unemployed initially; the unemployed are a diverse and changing target group and are hard to contact. Written publicity material was of little value. Secondly, it was difficult to sustain the interest of users, for many of whom "leisure" was an alien concept. Thirdly, there were problems with the one-year MSC contracts, especially a lack of continuity and of staff motivation. Furthermore there was only limited success in handing over activities to users trained as leaders.

In summary, the schemes demonstrated that the unemployed could be encouraged to take part in sport, and that they found the provision valuable and beneficial. The ability of the schemes to attract new participants to sport, by removing the "filters" to participation was also encouraging. However, although the schemes widened the choices available for the unemployed, and provided occasional, enjoyable activity for the majority, for only a small minority did they provide a regular commitment and social life which could in any substantial way compensate for the loss of work.

The other main Sports Council initiative for the unemployed is the Action Sport Programme, which began in 1982. The initial three year programme was established in 15 local authorities in London and the West Midlands, with a
financial input of around £3 million from the Sports Council. The aim of the programme was to

"demonstrate the value of sports leadership in increasing participation in sport and recreation by those who live in the Inner City" (Rigg, 1986, p.1)

The programme was targeted at the unemployed and other groups such as the disabled, ethnic minorities, women and those aged 50 plus. Twenty six teams of sports leaders were employed in the local authorities using Sports Council and Community Programme funding.

Like the three experimental schemes, Action Sport was successful in attracting the unemployed. In a survey of users, 72% of men and 61% of women were unemployed or unwaged, although not all were actually seeking work. However, the programme was not so successful in attracting new participants; 72% of men and 55% of women were already playing sport when they joined the scheme. Action Sport proved to be

"far more successful in moving people up from the lower rungs of participation than it was in helping people onto the ladder in the first place" (Rigg, 1986, op.cit., p.5)

For most users the scheme extended the range of participation and heightened the quality of involvement, and in his evaluation Rigg questions whether indeed the aim of such schemes should be to create better opportunities for those who already participate, rather than to attempt to attract the non-participant.

The reactions of users to Action Sport were similar to those of users of the experimental schemes; a small minority "enthused wildly", but the majority "found it valuable but limited in what it offered". The scheme also experienced problems in "handing over" activities to the community, mainly because of the inherent instability in any group of unemployed people, and also because of an understandable reluctance to take responsibility for running activities voluntarily when the sports leaders were paid to do it. Rigg also stressed the need for schemes such as Action
Sport to have a community focus, with a permanent base in the target area with which participants could identify and feel at home in.

Although critical of several aspects of Action Sport, especially the haste with which the programme was set up, Rigg was positive about the contribution sports leadership could make to increasing participation in the inner cities:

"Outreach workers or leaders, given the appropriate support and focus, can provide substantive opportunities for participation in sport and leisure activities for those who are disadvantaged. (Rigg, 1986, op.cit., p.2)

The partnership local authorities have also been convinced of the value of the scheme – nearly all of the 15 continued with the programme after the initial three year phase. Furthermore, in the light of the evaluation of the first phase of Action Sport, the Sports Council decided in 1986 to extend the programme to include, ultimately, 70 authorities throughout the U.K., using the MSC to employ more than 1100 sports leaders (Sports Council, 1986).

1.4.3 Local authority sports provision for the unemployed

By far the greatest proportion of public expenditure on sport is directed through local authorities. Total local authority net expenditure on leisure in 1986/7 was estimated at £1.1 billion, 64% of which was on sport and recreation, a total of nearly £696 million (CIPFA,1987) .

The duties and powers of local authorities in respect to leisure provision have increased piecemeal since the nineteenth century, as a result of a series of mainly unconnected pieces of legislation. It was only in the mid-1960s that

"a few local authorities began to view their leisure services as a whole, rather than as a series of unconnected separate services." (Travis, 1979, p.2)

During the 1970s therefore, and aided by local government reorganisation,
local authorities began to establish integrated "leisure services" departments. Before 1974 there were "at least 22" such departments (Travis and Hudson, 1978) but by 1977 30% of authorities demonstrated a "comprehensive leisure services approach" (Travis, op.cit., p.32). At the same time many local authorities undertook large programmes of facility construction, helped by Sports Council grants, and as a result sport as a proportion of all local authority leisure expenditure increased rapidly.

However, except in Northern Ireland, provision of sports facilities by local authorities is not a statutory duty. The permissive nature of the legislation allows for a high degree of local autonomy and a wide variation in what is provided. Other factors contribute to this variation, such as the nature of facilities inherited by the authority, and

"the absence of firmly established national, party-political leisure policies." (Coalter et al., op.cit., p.119)

This is compounded by

"a lack of a strong leisure profession which .... could seek to establish a systematic and coherent leisure policy." (Ibid., p.119)

However, local authorities, at least until recently, have been less constrained in their provision by economic viability than the voluntary and commercial sectors. Therefore, despite their local autonomy, the Sports Council regards them as being uniquely fitted to pursue the commitment to leisure, and hence sport, for all (Chairmen's Policy Group, 1983). The public sector alone has a responsibility to provide for the quality of life of all citizens, and therefore the Sports Council views local authority provision for sport and leisure as

"part of the social services, especially for those whose choice is limited by genetics, environment, handicap or circumstances." (Ibid., p.74)
Local authorities therefore have special responsibility to provide for low participant and disadvantaged groups. With the shift towards community oriented sports provision generally, and the rise in unemployment rates in particular, more and more have attempted to cater specifically for the unemployed.

The extent of this local authority provision for the unemployed was first reviewed in 1982 by Glyptis and Riddington (1983). They undertook a postal survey of all local authorities in England and Wales in order to establish how many were running schemes for the unemployed. A questionnaire was sent to all authorities making some form of provision and four schemes were examined in more detail as case studies.

Forty per cent of respondents to the initial postal enquiry were making no special sports provision for the unemployed. Most of these were in areas with relatively low unemployment rates, or had no facilities to offer. Some also felt it unfair to discriminate in favour of the unemployed. However, most authorities (189) were making some sort of provision; four distinct types of scheme were identified. Firstly, 7% of authorities offered reduced off-peak rates for all users, benefitting all groups available in the daytime. In these authorities increasing off-peak usage was often as important as helping the unemployed. This type of provision was found to be easy to administer, and also avoided any stigma of unemployed users.

The most common type of scheme, operated by 42% of authorities, was a price concession specifically for the unemployed, usually only available at off peak times. Proof of unemployment (UB40 card) was usually required on each attendance. Although these schemes were easy to administer, they were liable to abuse by the transfer of UB40 cards among friends, and could result in users feeling stigmatised.

Thirdly, 5% of authorities ran some form of concession card or leisure pass, often available to other disadvantaged groups as well. Cards were usually free, and offered reduced rates and (sometimes) preferential booking. The card usually bore a photograph of the holder as a safeguard against abuse, and although more administrative effort was involved to run
these schemes, it was felt that they conveyed a sense of belonging and also reduced the problem of stigma.

Finally, 5% of authorities operated sports leadership schemes, employing sports leaders or motivators specifically to work with the unemployed. In common with the Sports Council experimental schemes, staff were usually recruited through the Community Programme. This type of scheme proved in many ways to have the most advantages, in that a greater range of activities could be provided, designed specifically for the unemployed; facility usage was increased at little extra cost to the authority; those recruited as sport leaders gained work experience and temporary employment; the users benefitted from the coaching and encouragement provided by the leaders; and the structured activity of such schemes provided new social contacts and raised the morale of users.

Emphasis throughout the study was placed on management guidelines and implications for future providers, of which the following were of key importance. Firstly, there was a need for authorities to define their aims, objectives and target groups clearly. Secondly, the authors stressed the role of motivators

"both as "enablers" and "leaders"; the first adopting the "outreach" approach of community work to put people into contact with opportunities, the second involved directly in the provision of courses and events."

(Glyptis and Riddington, op.cit., p.5)

Thirdly, it was important for authorities to consider carefully details of the scheme's operation, such as pricing strategy, proof of unemployment needed, the timing of the scheme, contact with other local agencies, and sponsorship. The need for good, sustained publicity was stressed, especially the importance of word of mouth and well-designed written material appropriate to the target groups. Authorities were also encouraged to monitor their provision and to carry out surveys of users' interests. The authors comment on the need for authorities to be flexible and to be prepared to experiment, and they warn against "excessive ambitions",
concluding that schemes

"should not be expected to solve all the problems which unemployment brings for individuals or society in general." (ibid., p.9)

1.4.4 Summary

In 1982 Glyptis commented:

"Enhancing the lives of the unemployed is a field of social policy based on a wealth of supposition and a dearth of practical experience."

(Glyptis, 1982, p.75)

Five years on, as far as local authorities are concerned, there still remains a lack of research and exchange of information. The Sports Council's experimental schemes and the Action Sport programme were monitored in great detail and provided valuable lessons. However, these schemes were atypical in the amount of external funding committed to them; their scale and achievements are beyond the more modest means of most local authorities. The research by Glyptis and Riddington in 1982 provided an overall picture of the different types of provision and drew up basic management guidelines. However, due to resource constraints, the review did not examine schemes in depth, and evaluated their success only from the point of view of providers, with no consideration of users. The review was widely disseminated and used as a guide to good practice but there still remained a lack of understanding of the ingredients of successful schemes and of the motivations and opinions of users.

This research therefore aims to provide a more detailed examination of local authority sports provision for the unemployed than was possible in 1982. It extends the geographical coverage of the earlier review, and examines individual schemes in more detail, to identify the characteristics of successful provision. The research aims to examine users' opinions of the different types of scheme, and to provide some insights into the role which sport can play in "enhancing the lives of the unemployed".
Chapter 2  Aims and methodology

2.1  Background and aims

Since the 1982 review of local authority sports provision for the unemployed, unemployment has increased and become firmly established on the political agenda. Local authorities have become increasingly concerned to provide for the unemployed; the 1982 review showed that many were planning to set up sports scheme for them. However, little was known of the characteristics of these new schemes or the progress of older ones. The Sports Council therefore sought to update and extend the earlier study, and in 1985 commissioned, in conjunction with the Scottish Sports Council, the Sports Council for Northern Ireland and the Sports Council for Wales, the research from which this thesis developed. The project had two aims. Firstly, to update the information base on local authority sports provision for the unemployed, extending coverage to the whole of the U.K. and identifying the main types of scheme operating. Secondly, to examine certain aspects of schemes in more detail, in particular the following:

"a) The choice of policy focus, activity programme, and the degree of consultation with the target group in doing this.
b) Resources allocated, and the perceived effectiveness of provisions and marketing methods in reaching the unemployed.
c) Providers' evaluations of schemes to date, including detailed examination of results of any monitoring undertaken, especially as they relate to numbers and types of unemployed people regularly participating.
d) Characteristics of scheme users, their mechanisms of entry into the scheme, the satisfactions they derive, and their evaluation of what is provided, including any suggestions for improvement."

(Glyptis and Pack, 1987, p. 1.2)
2.2 **Methodology.**

To gain an accurate picture of the extent of provision it was necessary to conduct a complete census of local authorities. However, the project also examined selected schemes in more detail in order to fulfill the second objective. A three stage approach was adopted.

1) A postal questionnaire survey of all local authorities in the UK, in order to compile a factual base, and to establish a typology of sports schemes for the unemployed.

2) More detailed examination, by semi-structured interviews with local authority officers, of selected schemes chosen to illustrate the various types of provision, in order to gain further information on their operation.

3) Detailed fieldwork in a small number of case studies chosen from stage 2), in order to establish usage patterns, the characteristics of users and their views of the schemes.

2.3 **The postal questionnaire survey**

2.3.1 **Choice of method**

In order to compile a comprehensive data base on provision it was felt necessary to contact all local authorities rather than only a sample. Given the dispersed nature of the population and the constraints both of money and staff resources, a postal questionnaire was felt to be the most appropriate method of data collection. As Davidson comments

"where the samples required are large and geographically dispersed, interviewing will be ruled out on questions of staff and expense".

(Davidson, 1970, p.20)

In such situations, postal questionnaires yield a high number of potential respondents per fieldworker (Dixon and Leach, 1979). The technique is particularly effective when the groups being surveyed have a specific interest in the topic of the survey, and hence generate a higher response.
As a result, postal questionnaires have become "the almost universal method" of surveying firms and similar organisations (Moser and Kalton, 1971, p. 256). Their value is further enhanced when, as in this project, it is possible to supplement the questionnaire returns with interviews. Furthermore, postal surveys allow more than one person to answer the questions; this was important for the present research, given the wide range of information needed.

Postal questionnaire surveys, however, do potentially have several disadvantages (see Moser and Kalton, op.cit., pp 260-269) which must be minimised at the design stage. In particular it can be difficult to secure an adequate response; there are many reports of mail surveys with response rates of only 20-30%. However, much can be done through careful design and the use of reminders to ensure a higher response rate.

2.3.2 Scope

In order to provide a complete census of provision, all local authorities throughout the U.K. with any responsibility for recreation provision (whether statutory or permissive) were included. The precise responsibility of the different tiers of local government varies between country. In England and Wales the District Councils and London Boroughs, with permissive powers for recreation provision, are the main public sector providers of sport. These constituted the bulk of the survey, but the six Metropolitan County Councils and the Greater London Council were also included because they had greater involvement in recreation provision than the non-metropolitan County Councils. In Scotland responsibility for recreation is shared between the District and Regional Authorities, and therefore both levels of government were included in the survey, as well as the three Islands Authorities which combine District and Regional Council functions. In Northern Ireland, responsibility for sport and recreation is again shared between the District Councils, which have a statutory responsibility for recreation, and the five area Education and Library Boards which are responsible for sport and recreation in the context of the Youth Service and education generally. Table 2.1 summarises the authorities
Table 2.1  Local Authorities Included in Questionnaire Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Type of Authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>England</strong></td>
<td>371</td>
<td>296 Non-Metropolitan District Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36 Metropolitan District Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32 London Boroughs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Metropolitan County Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Greater London Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wales</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37 Non-Metropolitan District Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scotland</strong></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>53 District Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 Regional Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Island Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26 District Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Education and Library Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>504</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Included in the postal questionnaire survey; in total 504 questionnaires were distributed.

2.3.3 Data

The questionnaire survey aimed to elicit information on a wide range of topics concerning authorities' provision for the unemployed:

"a) Details of current (and recently abandoned) objectives, policies and schemes regarding sport and the unemployed.
b) Planning and development of schemes, length of time in operation and consultations undertaken.
c) Evaluation of schemes to date, with an indication of available data.
d) Funding
e) Staffing f) Marketing
g) Pricing h) Collaboration with other agencies"

(Glyptis and Pack, op.cit., p.1.3)

It was decided that the questionnaire should comprise open rather than closed questions, and that computer analysis of the data would not be used because the survey aimed to collect primarily qualitative data on the nature of schemes. Quantitative data and hypothesis testing were not required except on a very limited amount of data.

The questionnaire (Appendix I) comprised questions grouped together under broad headings; the planning and development of schemes; details of scheme management, including staffing, funding, involvement with other agencies; details of provision; and the monitoring and evaluation of schemes. Care was taken to avoid leading questions, ambiguities and jargon, and to ensure that the questionnaire was well presented with clear instructions. One of the problems of postal questionnaires is that there is no guarantee that the respondent will be the person to whom the questionnaire is sent. For that reason, and to assist with the follow up for the second stage of the project, the respondent's name, address and job designation were requested.
Due to the fact that the survey was to be a census rather than a sample, it was not possible to conduct a pilot survey to establish any weaknesses in questionnaire design. However, the responses to the questionnaire used by Glyptis and Riddington in 1982 were examined, and any shortcomings or problems of wording avoided. In order to establish the number of authorities not making any form of sports provision for the unemployed, and any reasons for this, a reply slip was also enclosed with the questionnaire for those authorities not running schemes (Appendix 1).

2.3.4 Administration of the survey

Because of the involvement of the four Sports Councils in the project, the arrangements for questionnaire distribution varied slightly by country according to the wishes of the sponsors. However, in practice this made little difference to the response, as telephone follow up was used where necessary, and the overall response was consistently high; the few statistical tests that were performed on the data were not therefore invalidated. An introductory letter from the relevant Sports Council accompanied the questionnaire in England, Scotland and Wales, to establish the authenticity and value of the work, and the importance of the authority's reply. In Northern Ireland this letter came from the researchers at Loughborough.

In addition all authorities were sent a covering letter from the researchers to encourage response, even from those who were not running schemes or whose schemes had lapsed. It was also stressed that the survey was concerned to include schemes which were not directly targeted at the unemployed, but from which the unemployed might nevertheless benefit. Stamped addressed envelopes were included with the questionnaires, which were sent to the heads of recreation departments, or other departments responsible for recreation, as detailed in the Municipal Yearbook (Municipal Publications, 1985).

The mailing took place in late June/early July 1985. The closing date for initial returns was four weeks later. In order to increase the response rate authorities were sent up to two reminders. The first was simply a
letter; the second enclosed a further questionnaire, reply slip, and stamped addressed envelope. The final closing date for all returns was 13 September 1985, although in practice replies were accepted after that date.

2.3.5 Response to the survey

A total of 454 authorities made usable replies to the survey, a response rate of 90%. This is a very high rate of return and indicates the interest of local authorities in provision for the unemployed, and perhaps a feeling that for "political" reasons they ought to be seen to be cooperating in a survey on the issue. Table 2.2 shows the response rate and number of replies per country, and per region in England. Response was consistently high throughout, varying from 82% in the Yorkshire and Humberside region to 97% in the South. Sixty per cent of the total response was achieved from the initial mailing.

Predictably, the quality of response varied widely. Most authorities completed the questionnaire, and some enclosed publicity material, minutes of council meetings and other relevant documents. However, some filled in the "no provision" slip with only brief details of the scheme, instead of completing the questionnaire, or simply described their scheme in a letter. The timing of the mailing may have had a detrimental effect on the quality of replies received because where the addressee was on leave a more junior person completed the questionnaire. It was also recognised that replies might reflect the views of the officer completing the questionnaire, rather than those of the elected members of the council. However, in order to minimise the number of poor quality replies telephone follow up was used in all cases where the respondent provided inadequate information.

Postal questionnaire surveys are liable to bias because of the likelihood that non-respondents will differ significantly from respondents. In this case it might be expected that authorities not making provision for the unemployed would be less likely to respond, and that the survey would therefore overestimate the extent of provision. It is impossible to substantiate this, but it seems unlikely, given that such high response rates were achieved overall, even from regions with low unemployment. It is
Table 2.2 Response Rates to Questionnaire Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No. of authorities responding</th>
<th>Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Regions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and Humberside</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater London</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages are of small numbers.
therefore felt that the survey presents an accurate picture of the extent and nature of provision.

2.4 The interviews with local authority officers

2.4.1 Aims and choice of technique

The second stage of the research aimed to examine in more detail certain aspects of each type of scheme, especially from the management perspective. The most appropriate method of doing this was to visit selected authorities and conduct semi-structured interviews with relevant officers and scheme staff.

The semi-structured interview falls midway along a continuum between the formal interview schedule, and a totally "non directive" interview in which mainly the respondent guides the course of the interview. In the semi-structured interview the interviewer has a checklist of topics to be covered in all interviews, but the precise wording and order in which topics are introduced are tailored to the individual situation. The interviewer is also free to push for further details pertinent to the particular interview. The interviewer, therefore

"whilst allowing the respondent a good deal of freedom, aims to cover a given set of topics in a more or less systematic way "
(Moser and Kalton, op.cit., p.298)

This approach gives the opportunity for the respondent to reply at length, and is therefore particularly appropriate when complex topics or questions of opinion are being addressed. It is also useful when the characteristics of respondents and their replies are expected to vary so much that designing a formal interview schedule to cover all eventualities is difficult. It was therefore decided that the semi-structured interview was the technique most suited to cover the wide range of schemes in operation, lending the flexibility to probe deeply into certain aspects of provision, and ensuring coverage of a wide range of topics. It was also felt to be
Important to visit the providing authorities, to gauge more accurately the actual nature of the schemes.

2.4.2 Limitations of the method

The very flexibility of the semi-structured interview can cause problems. Firstly, much more is demanded of the interviewer in terms of skill, alertness and understanding of the topic than in a formal interview. The interviewer has to lead and direct the conversation, and be alert to take up any passing comments which could lead to new information. Because of the important role the interviewer plays, the semi-structured interview is therefore much more liable to interviewer bias than the formal interview. The quality of information gained is strongly related to the interviewer's ability to sustain the interest of the respondent and to probe sensitively for more detail. In addition there is more scope for the interviewer to "lead" the respondent, by the words used or the manner in which the questions are asked.

Secondly, the data collected from semi-structured interviews may be hard to summarise and analyse. The flexibility of the method means that material from different interviews is not wholly comparable, and therefore any statistical analysis on the aggregate of the material will be invalid. However, the seriousness of this problem depends on the purpose for which the material is gathered. If, as was the case in this research, the intention is not to quantify or draw formal comparisons, but rather to gain insights and illustrate themes using the wealth of detail obtained, then analysis is not impeded.

2.4.3 Scope and choice of schemes

Resource constraints dictated a limit on the number of schemes to be visited. The initial research brief suggested 20 schemes, but given the high response rate to the questionnaire survey and the wide range of schemes operating, it was felt that more authorities should be included. Thirty authorities were therefore selected, of which 28 agreed to participate (Appendix 2).
Several criteria were used in the choice of schemes. Firstly, there had to be sufficient detail in the survey return for the basic characteristics of the scheme to be known. Secondly, the chosen schemes were to illustrate the whole range of provision in the U.K., and thus include each of the main types of scheme identified from the postal survey. Thirdly, schemes were to be imaginative, and to demonstrate success in attracting the unemployed. Finally, because of the involvement of the four Sports Councils, schemes had to be selected from each of the countries in the U.K.

It was difficult to select just 30 schemes from the 323 authorities making some form of provision. In cases where two schemes appeared to be equally good examples of their type, and fitted all the criteria for selection, it was hard to avoid an arbitrary decision over which to include. The need to comply with the sponsors and have extensive geographical coverage resulted in the inclusion of a few schemes which, on their merits alone and in a U.K. context, would not have been selected. In addition, some schemes which appeared worthy of inclusion on paper turned out to be less imaginative and successful in practice. Conversely, it is likely that some successful schemes were missed because the initial return did not give enough information.

2.4.4 Data

The interviews aimed to gain detailed information on the origins, development, nature and evaluation of the selected schemes. Using the questionnaire as a guide, a checklist of core topics and questions for inclusion in the interviews was devised (Appendix 2). Any particular issues arising from the authority's questionnaire reply were also included, as were some questions which had been excluded from the original survey. The checklist covered aims and objectives, planning and development, management, marketing and publicity, staff, and the content of the scheme itself. Considerable attention was also paid to establishing the nature and extent of any monitoring carried out by the authority. The interviews also aimed to establish the success of schemes, as evaluated by the providers and as illustrated by any attendance records available.
2.4.5 Administration of the interviews

In each of the selected local authorities the head of the relevant department, or the person who had completed the questionnaire where different, was contacted by letter to seek an interview. Only two authorities declined to take part - one did not respond and the other felt that their scheme did not warrant further examination. Prior to each interview the interviewee was informed of the topics to be covered and encouraged to have available any statistics, monitoring reports or other relevant material. Where relevant, interviews were secured both with a senior local authority officer and the member of staff responsible for the day to day running of the scheme. This enabled information to be gained both on policies and planning, and the practicalities and problems of running the scheme on the ground. The interviews took place during December 1985 and January 1986.

Care was taken throughout the interviews to remain unbiased and not to "lead" respondents in any way. Most respondents were very cooperative and some included a tour of facilities or a chance to see their scheme in operation. Most interviews lasted for 1-2 hours and there were few problems in acquiring sufficient information, except in a few cases where the interviewee had allocated insufficient time. More commonly the interviewer had the opposite problem of bringing an enthusiastic respondent back to the point!

The interviews were tape recorded with the prior permission of the interviewee; this had the advantage of leaving the interviewer free to concentrate on guiding the conversation, although as a precaution against the tape recorder malfunctioning, and to assist in subsequent transcribing, notes of the key points were also taken. There was no evidence that this restricted the frankness of respondents - most talked openly about any sensitive or political issues and about any problems with their schemes.
2.5 The detailed case studies

The first two stages of the research thus concentrated primarily on the management of schemes, with little emphasis on users. The final stage aimed therefore to concentrate mainly on usage and user characteristics and opinions, an area not covered by the earlier Glyptis and Riddington review. Secondary aims were to collect any further available data about scheme management, and also observe schemes in action to gain a clearer idea of their operation. These objectives could best be achieved by selecting a limited number of case studies, each illustrative of its type, for detailed fieldwork.

2.5.1 Scope and choice of case studies

The initial research contract stated that a maximum of 7 case studies should be undertaken, with one to two weeks being spent by the researcher at each. These were chosen from among the 28 authorities visited for interview. Some of the 28 were immediately discarded as being unsuitable, for case study work because they were less successful and innovative on the ground than on paper. Selection of the case studies from the remainder was based on three criteria. Firstly, schemes were to be viewed by their providers as successful in attracting the unemployed. If possible they were also to be innovative examples of their type, and to be illustrative of that type of provision; given the wide range of schemes the aim was not to obtain a representative selection. It was intended, however, to cover the whole range of types of provision. The schemes were also to be well established, so that usage patterns would have stabilised. Secondly, providers should already be carrying out some form of monitoring and, if possible, have past records available. If current monitoring was limited then the authority was to be willing and able to institute additional monitoring over a short period. Finally, the involvement of the four Sports Councils in the project made it politically expedient to choose at least one case study in each country.

In practice it was not possible to fulfil every criterion. The need to include schemes from each country meant that, as with stage 2 of the
research, some schemes were selected which were not among the best in a U.K. context. It was also impossible to include all types of scheme, because in both Wales and Northern Ireland there was only one worthwhile case study scheme regardless of type. Furthermore, the final choice reflects the fact that in England the most successful, innovative, and best monitored schemes were undoubtedly the sports leadership schemes. Table 2.3 shows the schemes finally chosen.

2.5.2 Data collection

The case study fieldwork aimed to collect quantitative and qualitative data about scheme users. Quantitative data was required on attendances and usage of the schemes, and on user characteristics. Qualitative information was required on users' opinions of schemes, suggestions for improvement, their sports participation, entry into schemes, and the importance of the schemes in their lives if unemployed.

To collect this information, a range of research tools was needed. Given the variety of schemes selected, and the differences in existing monitoring, the same techniques were not appropriate for all. Research tools were therefore tailored to fit each individual case study. The lack of standardisation was not a disadvantage because it was not intended to draw numerical comparisons between schemes. The following methods were therefore employed - some in all case studies, some only in particular ones - and with the precise design and use of each technique varying between schemes.

Analysis of existing records

All case study authorities maintained some records of scheme usage. Their quality varied greatly - some just recorded attendances or sales of cards, whereas others recorded user characteristics or the activities attended. In some authorities the records were not continuous, and in most had only been started some time after the scheme began. These existing records were analysed in detail to give basic information on scheme usage and trends
Table 2.3 Schemes selected as case studies

Scotland
1. Kirkcaldy District Council - Leisure Leaders Project
   Sports Leadership Scheme, serving predominantly rural community.

Northern Ireland
2. Belfast City Council - Concessionary Membership Scheme
   Free membership card for the unemployed, entitling them to
   concessionary use of facilities.

Wales
3. Delyn Borough Council - Fair Play Card
   Weekly card offering free off peak usage of facilities,
   available to all users.

England
4. Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council - Type 1 Scheme
   Concessionary rates at off peak times for all users.
5. Middlesbrough Borough Council - Sports Motivation Project
   Sports Leadership Scheme, offering wide range of activities to all
   free during the day.
   Largest sports leadership scheme in the country.
7. Nottingham City Council - Sport for the unemployed
   Leadership scheme, with particular emphasis on women's sport and
   creche provision.
over time. Some authorities had carried out user surveys, and these were also studied together with any monitoring reports.

**Additional attendance monitoring**

In three case studies a more detailed form of attendance monitoring was introduced to be maintained over a defined period. Few authorities had records of frequency of attendance and could say, for example, whether 10 attendances represented one keen user or 10 sporadic ones. The monitoring was specifically designed, therefore, to provide information on frequency of use by individuals, by recording either names or concession card numbers at each attendance, as well as the activity undertaken, sex, and in two cases, age group and employment status. This monitoring was undertaken by scheme staff or receptionists, after detailed instructions from the researcher. The accuracy of the data depended on the commitment and diligence of individual staff, and the feasibility of maintaining full and accurate records at busy periods; in some schemes the records therefore considerably underestimate total usage.

**Questionnaire surveys of users**

User surveys were employed in most of the case studies, to collect more detailed information on patterns of individual usage and user characteristics. The design of the questionnaires varied but in general included activity attended, frequency of attendance, length of time using the scheme, place of residence, how users heard of the scheme, sex, age, employment status, and general comments about the scheme (Appendix 3). Closed questions were used, where possible precoded for computer analysis. In some authorities all users or card holders were included, and in others a sample. In most cases the survey ran for two weeks. Questionnaires were distributed by receptionists or scheme staff, either at the point of ticket or card purchase, or at the start or finish of activity sessions. Again, the quality of the response depended upon the diligence of staff in handing out the questionnaires and encouraging users to complete them. This last point is important, since the easiest time to identify the users was as they arrived; once they were on their way to play sport, for which they
might have a timed booking, it was obviously difficult to detain them. The user surveys were computer analysed.

**Informal Interviews with Users**

Informal interviews provided qualitative information on users' opinions of provision and were conducted in all the case studies. A checklist of topics to be covered was drawn up for each case study, including questions on user characteristics, motivations for attending, benefits derived, participation in sport and any changes in participation since becoming unemployed, opinions of staff, publicity, facilities and the activities offered, problems with the scheme, and suggestions for improvement.

As with the questionnaire surveys, it was not easy to find appropriate times to interview users. Some interviews were conducted on arrival, in which case they had to be brief. Longer interviews were possible in the cafeteria, after activity sessions, while travelling to out of centre sessions with users, and during sessions themselves if users had to "sit out" (squash for example) or if conversation was possible while taking part (walking).

It was thought that the unemployed might be reticent about talking to a stranger;

"Clipboards and interviewers are never unobtrusive, least of all among people who may feel alienated, suspicious or merely uninterested" (Glyptis, Kay and Donkin, 1986a, op.cit., p.20)

The interviews were therefore very informal - the checklist was for use between, not during, interviews - and notes were not taken until after the interview to avoid arousing suspicion in respondents. The researcher often joined in activity sessions to gain more acceptance from users and more opportunities for informal conversation. However, unemployed users were mostly very willing to talk; indeed some were pleased that an interest was being taken in them. The only exceptions were some groups of young unemployed men.
Other

General observations were made of the atmosphere at all schemes, the, relations between staff and users, the facilities used, the quality of publicity, and the attitudes of the users. Where possible informal conversations were held with staff and centre receptionists to obtain their views of schemes and any problems involved in running them. Local authority officers were also interviewed for further information where necessary.

2.5.3 Administration of the fieldwork

Having selected the seven case studies, meetings were arranged with senior officers and scheme staff to discuss the nature of existing records, decide upon appropriate forms of monitoring and the timing of fieldwork. The timing of the work over the summer was unavoidable to meet the contract deadlines, but it caused some problems. Firstly, fieldwork had to be timed to avoid "holiday fortnights" when many users were away. In some schemes it was crucial to carry out fieldwork before the school holidays because then the nature of provision changed. In the schemes which had to be monitored in the school holidays, user characteristics were expected to be different from normal, with fewer housewives and more older children. In Belfast some centres ran summer playschemes throughout the fieldwork period, which depressed adult usage, and most authorities stated that July and August were their slackest months. Finally in the Scottish case study it was necessary to avoid the World Cup period, as this was expected to draw most of the users away from the scheme! For all these reasons the data collected probably underestimate "normal" usage.

Fieldwork in each case study took place in a 1-2 week period between June and mid August, 1986. Interviewing in five authorities was carried out by students on the MSc Recreation Management course at Loughborough University. The students were thoroughly briefed on all aspects of the fieldwork, were closely supervised by the researcher, and produced data of consistently high quality from each authority.
Chapter 3  The extent, nature, and aims of local authority provision for the unemployed

This chapter and the next examine the extent and nature of local authority sports provision for the unemployed in the U.K. The present chapter focusses on the extent of provision and identifies the basic types of schemes in operation, compares them with the results of the 1982 review, and considers the rationales behind providing or not providing for the unemployed.

Two sources of data were used. The questionnaire survey provided the basic quantitative data from which the typology of schemes was constructed. The interviews with selected authorities provided further illustrative examples and deeper insights into the key issues identified.

3.1 The extent of provision

The questionnaire survey revealed that 323 local authorities in the U.K. (71% of respondents) were running some form of sports scheme from which the unemployed could benefit. There were, however, substantial regional variations in the incidence of provision (Table 3.1), ranging from over 80% of authorities in Scotland, Greater London and the North West of England, to less than 60% in Northern Ireland and South West England.

To identify some of the factors underlying these regional variations, the relationship between the extent of provision and certain political, economic and demographic variables was examined. It should be stated that these variables are not independent; in particular there is a close relationship between the unemployment rate in an area and its political composition. It is not possible, therefore, conclusively to isolate causes, but rather to identify the relationships that exist.

The first variable selected was unemployment rate, since a priori a strong relationship might be expected between the unemployment rate and the likelihood of an authority making provision. However, as Table 3.2 shows,
Table 3.1  The extent of provision throughout the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No. of authorities making provision</th>
<th>% of responding authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**English Regions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No. of authorities making provision</th>
<th>% of responding authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and Humberside</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater London</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some percentages are of small numbers.
at a regional and national level no such relationship existed. Northern Ireland had the highest unemployment rate in the U.K. but the second lowest rate of provision; in Greater London provision was extensive and unemployment low. Furthermore the coefficient of correlation between the two variables was not statistically significant.

The relationship between unemployment and provision was also considered at local authority level. Unemployment in each authority was defined as "high", "medium", or "low", according to the national average unemployment rate, which was 13% at the time of the survey (Department of Employment, 1985). An area of medium unemployment was defined as one where the unemployment rate lay within 15% of the national average unemployment rate, namely between 11% and 15%. Areas of high and low unemployment were identified where the local unemployment rate was above 15% or below 11% respectively.

Table 3.3 shows the relationship between provision and unemployment at local authority level; although this relationship was stronger than at regional scale, it was still not statistically significant. Indeed, provision was less extensive in "medium" unemployment areas than in those with low unemployment. This suggests that other factors tended to influence the distribution of provision and override the influence of the local unemployment rate.

The political composition of local councils was the second factor to be related to the incidence of provision. Each local authority was classified according to which, if either, of the two major political parties had an overall majority of seats on the council, as listed in the Municipal Year Book (Municipal Publications, 1986). There was a statistically significant relationship between provision for the unemployed and the political composition of an authority, and as Table 3.4 shows, a marked contrast between Conservative and Labour controlled areas in terms of the number of authorities running schemes. Sixty eight per cent of Conservative controlled councils made some form of provision for the unemployed, compared with nearly 90% of Labour controlled councils.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Unemployment rate (%)</th>
<th>% of responding authorities making provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Regions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and Humberside</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater London</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\rho = 0.078$, not significant at 95% confidence level.

Note: Significance in all statistical tests is based on the 95% confidence level.

\(^1\)At time of survey.

Table 3.3  Extent of provision by unemployment rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployment rate in local authority</th>
<th>No. of authorities making provision</th>
<th>% making provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2 = 1.4, \) 2 degrees of freedom. Not significant.

Note: Excludes London Boroughs, Regional Authorities in Scotland, and Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland, as no comparable unemployment statistics available.

1Source: Department of Employment, July 1985.

Table 3.4  Extent of provision by political composition of local authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party with overall majority on Council</th>
<th>No. of authorities making provision</th>
<th>% making provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2 = 4.24, \) 1 degree of freedom. Significant

Note: Excludes authorities in Northern Ireland.

1Source: Municipal Year Book, 1986.
Provision in both Conservative and Labour authorities was then further subdivided according to unemployment rate to control for the relationship between unemployment rate and political composition (only 11% of Conservative authorities had high unemployment rates, compared with 61% of Labour controlled authorities). Table 3.5 shows that Conservative controlled councils were consistently less likely to provide for the unemployed, even where unemployment was high, whereas nearly all Labour authorities ran schemes regardless of the unemployment rate. Political composition therefore appeared to affect the propensity of a council to make provision to a greater degree than the unemployment rate alone.

Finally, variations in the extent of provision with the population density and total population of an area were examined. A classification of population density was devised using the statistics for local authority areas from the 1981 Census (OPCS, 1984). Taking into account the skewed distribution of authorities around the mean population density for the U.K., "low density" areas were defined as areas with a population density less than the national average; "medium density" areas up to five times the national average, and "high density" areas where population density was more than five times the national average. Districts were also classified according to their total populations (Municipal Publications, 1987) into "low" population areas (under 75,000), "medium" areas (75,000-125,000) and "high" areas (over 125,000); of necessity these divisions were arbitrary.

Both measures of population distribution were strongly related to the extent of provision for the unemployed (see Table 3.6) and both relationships were statistically significant. In areas with a high population density and high total populations 90% of authorities were making some form of provision for the unemployed compared to just over half in their more rural counterparts.

Therefore, although nationally 71% of authorities were running schemes for the unemployed, this figure conceals substantial variations, with provision especially concentrated in Labour controlled authorities and urban areas. Perhaps surprisingly, the unemployment rate of an area was not by itself as strongly related to the incidence of provision as the other factors
Table 3.5  Extent of provision by political composition and unemployment rate of local authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployment rate in district</th>
<th>Party with overall majority on Council²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes London Boroughs, authorities in Northern Ireland, and Regional Authorities in Scotland.

Source: ¹Department of Employment, July 1985.
²Municipal Yearbook, 1986.
Table 3.6  Extent of provision, by population of local authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Density</th>
<th>No. of authorities making provision</th>
<th>% making provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 11.0$, 2 degrees of freedom. Significant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>No. of authorities making provision</th>
<th>% making provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 10.96$, 2 degrees of freedom. Significant

Note: Excludes Education and Library Boards, Regional Authorities in Scotland, and (for total population), Metropolitan County Councils.

Source: ^1OPCS/Registrar General Scotland (1984)
^2Municipal Year Book, 1986.
considered, with provision in areas of high unemployment only slightly more extensive than the national average. Other enabling factors were needed to reinforce the stimulus of high local unemployment, such as a favourable local political climate and a sufficient concentration of population. This suggestion is endorsed by examining those authorities not making any provision for the unemployed.

3.2 The non-providers

Authorities who were not currently making any sports provision for the unemployed were asked in the questionnaire survey to give their reasons for this (if any). Table 3.7 summarises the main reasons given by the 111 authorities who had not at any time made provision and who had no definite plans for future schemes. As many as 42% had (or gave) no particular reason for their lack of provision, suggesting that the matter may not have been given much consideration:

"It is not the case that schemes for the unemployed have been proposed and rejected, but that they have not been considered, probably due to lack of time and staff resources and other projects taking priority."

A further 6 authorities simply stated that it was a policy decision by the council not to provide, but with implied disagreement from local authority officers. This was particularly the case in Conservative boroughs; political motivations also seemed to underlie many of the other reasons given.

The most common reason for not providing, mentioned by nearly a fifth of authorities, was a low local unemployment rate (whether real or perceived) or a lack of expressed demand. Many also implied that they would only set up a scheme in response to a specific request, rather than take the initiative themselves:

"We never had any demand from the local unemployed so we never had a reason to start a scheme."
Table 3.7 Reasons for not running schemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of authorities</th>
<th>% of non-providers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No particular reason</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low unemployment and/or lack of demand</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of facilities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy not to single out unemployed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial constraints</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No integrated Leisure Department</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural area</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of staff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A lack of available facilities was the second most commonly cited reason for making no provision; this applied particularly to authorities in more rural areas, which may be one reason why provision was so strongly related to population totals and density. A surprising number of authorities stated that facilities in their area were either owned privately or were under dual use arrangements; concessions were therefore not viable because of the need to maximise revenue at the limited times of public use, which were already fully booked:

"All sporting facilities are joint use with schools so are not available during the day. Evening and weekend use is already well booked by the public and clubs."

Six authorities had a deliberate policy not to single out the unemployed for specific treatment. Either they felt that there was no rationale for giving the unemployed priority treatment over other "disadvantaged groups" in society, or were concerned that the unemployed should not feel stigmatised in any way:

"...Council decided against making a special case for provision for the unemployed of the area on the grounds that in their view many schemes for the unemployed are unsuccessful because they stigmatise and highlight the unemployed to detrimental effect."

Five authorities mentioned financial constraints, such as potential revenue loss, staff costs, and tight spending controls which meant that schemes of this nature could not be considered. A further five mentioned the lack of an integrated leisure and recreation department, which effectively prevented policy formulation. The other main reasons given were a lack of staff, either to set up or to run schemes, and also the problems of rural areas with scattered populations and inadequate public transport:

"As this is a rural area and a high percentage of the unemployed reside some distance outside the main centres, the poor and expensive public transport would be rather restrictive."
3.3 The nature of provision

3.3.1 A typology of schemes

The schemes run by the 454 providing authorities varied greatly in their scale and content, but certain distinct types existed. In order to aid comparison between provision in 1982 and 1985 it was hoped that a similar system of classification could be used, although it was recognised that a new typology should be constructed if necessary. The questionnaire returns were therefore examined according to the key factors of scale of operation of scheme, resources committed (financial and human), target group(s), identification required, timing, activities provided and the balance between group activities and casual use. As a result it was clear that the Glyptis and Riddington typology was still appropriate for the 1985 returns, except that one new category should be added. The main types of scheme in 1985 were:

**Type 1** Off peak price concessions for all users

**Type 2** Price concessions for the unemployed (sometimes included other "disadvantaged" groups)

**Type 3** Organised sessions, basically on a low key, small scale basis.

**Type 4** Concession card or Leisure Pass schemes.

**Type 5** Sports Leadership schemes

**Other**

Although each of the types was fairly distinct, classifying provision in this manner did have some drawbacks. Firstly, there was an inevitable loss of detail. The schemes were so diverse that variation within types is nearly as great as that between different types of scheme and this should be borne in mind throughout the results. Secondly, some schemes were hard to classify, as they combined elements of more than one type of provision. In addition several authorities were running more than one scheme; price concessions or concession cards were often run in conjunction with leadership schemes or organised sessions. Where this was the case the authority was classified according to the most complex of its schemes, or the one involving the greatest resources and commitment from the local
authority. Hence, an authority operating both a price concession and a leadership scheme would be included under the latter. The following section highlights the main characteristics of each of the types of scheme identified.

The first type of scheme, off peak price concessions for all users, often benefitted the unemployed indirectly rather than being specifically targetted at them. The schemes consisted of price concessions, or in some cases, free use, for all users, at specified off peak hours, with no proof of unemployment being required. In over 50% of schemes the concessionary rate was a half or a third of the normal price; in only 3 was totally free use given. In 5 authorities the concession was restricted or stopped altogether during school holidays, and in several cases the authorities running these schemes had few facilities and the concession was therefore limited to one or two sports, in particular swimming.

The second type of scheme, price concessions for the unemployed, were made available either specifically for the unemployed or to users in a wider range of "disadvantaged" or low income groups. In about 10% of schemes the concession extended to dependants of unemployed users. To obtain the concession, proof of unemployment (the UB40 card) had to be shown, although some centres were flexible about requiring proof if a user was known to them. The concessions varied greatly in terms of price, timing and the activities available. Most commonly the rate was half price or junior rate, but in 18% of schemes unemployed users were entitled to totally free usage. In nearly half the schemes the concession only applied at specified off peak times, but in a quarter it was available at all times. As with price concessions for all users, the concession often only included swimming, or included "dry" activities at a higher rate. Some authorities had devised elaborate systems of pricing, dependent on the activity and time of day. Equipment hire was included free or at a concessionary rate by several schemes.

The third type of scheme, organised sessions, was the hardest to define. It was also the only new category to be added since the earlier review. In over half these authorities a Type 2 price concession was also offered. In
general, this category included authorities running a regular activity session at which a range of activities and equipment were available, often with supervision or coaching. In just over half the schemes the session was specifically for the unemployed, and proof of unemployment was often required; in the remainder the session was available to other groups as well. The frequency of sessions varied from once a week or every weekday afternoon, through to occasional mid week "summer breaks". The commitment and expenditure from the local authorities therefore varied greatly. Many used centre staff or MSC workers already employed by the authority; few brought in new staff apart from volunteers.

These schemes were good value for the user - in over a third no charge was made for the session, and at the rest only a nominal rate of between 20-55p. Sessions lasted on average two hours. In most cases the session was centre-based and included access to "all the centre's facilities" or to a "wide range of activities", but in few cases activities were included away from the centre as well; for example, Stirling District Sports Council's mid-week breaks were based around camping and outdoor pursuits.

In the fourth type, concession card schemes, concessionary or free use of facilities was made available to all users holding a special card or pass designed by the authority, rather than on production of a UB40 card. Proof of unemployment was therefore only required on obtaining the card initially. In over two thirds of schemes groups other than the unemployed were also included in the concession, often with the same card being used for all. In a quarter of the schemes dependants of the unemployed were included, a significantly greater proportion than with Type 2 price concessions. In six authorities the card was simply made available to all borough residents.

Many authorities did not state whether they charged for the card; those that did charged anything between £1.00 for life and £2.00 a week, depending on the concession offered with the card. Just over 40% of schemes offered free usage of facilities to cardholders, usually at specified off peak hours. A concessionary rate of 50% or 25% was common in the remainder. As with Type 2 price concessions, the system of charging was often complex,
varying with the time of day and the activity. Over half the schemes also provided equipment, mostly free of charge.

**Sports leadership schemes** were the most "sophisticated" type of provision, requiring the greatest commitment from the providing authority. Their distinguishing feature was that they employed staff specifically to work on the scheme, as motivators, outreach workers and coaches. Generally staff were funded through the MSC, although a few schemes had posts funded by the local authority itself. The number employed ranged from 2 to 60, with the average around 15.

Very few of these schemes were targetted exclusively at the unemployed. Most included all of the Sports Council's major target groups - women, ethnic minorities and 50 plus - as well as the unemployed. Many concentrated in particular on the young unemployed. In some cases the authority was simply concerned to reach "the whole community". Consequently proof of unemployment was rarely required, although some did have a "membership card", available free or for a nominal payment. Half the schemes made no charge at all for their activities; the remainder made a nominal charge such as 10p per session, or only charged for certain high cost activities. All the authorities that specified provided free equipment, and 19 had their own transport.

The range of activities provided by leadership schemes was significantly greater than that offered by other types of scheme, although this varied with the facilities available. Overall the most common activities to be provided were swimming, weight training, popmobility or keep fit, table tennis, badminton and football. Other common sporting activities were squash, tennis, bowls, golf, pitch and putt, cricket, volleyball and netball. Several schemes also offered a wide range of outdoor pursuits and water sports, and common to many schemes were leagues and competitions, particularly in football. A few authorities had intentionally broadened their remit beyond sport and included activities such as board games, cards, sewing, health and beauty sessions, arts and crafts and computing.
A small number of schemes did not fit into any of the above categories; these were classified as "other". These included authorities in Wales where the only form of provision was the "Operation Sport" programme being run jointly by the Sports Council for Wales and the MSC, and also the Scottish Regional Councils whose provision was of a different nature from that made by local authorities.

Table 3.8 shows how provision was distributed between the different types of scheme. By far the most common were the Type 2 price concessions, accounting for a third of all authorities, and nearly half of all schemes. Concession cards were the second most popular type of provision, and organised sessions the least common. By country there was no great divergence from the overall pattern; price concessions were the most common form of provision in all four countries. However, regionally within England, there were more marked variations. In the Northern region Type 1 price concessions were the most common form of provision, whereas in the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, and West Midlands regions, concession cards accounted for the highest number of schemes. Leadership schemes were particularly well represented in the north generally and in London, whereas Type 2 schemes assumed virtual dominance in the south and east, with no leadership schemes at all being provided in these areas.

The possible factors underlying this regional variation were examined by comparing type of provision in individual authorities with the measures of political composition, unemployment and population distribution considered earlier. Table 3.9 considers the distribution of scheme type by unemployment rate. The relationship between the type of provision made and the unemployment rate of a district was statistically significant; the unemployment rate was therefore more strongly related to the type of provision than to the incidence of provision examined earlier. Whereas Type 1 or 2 schemes were provided by half the authorities in areas of low unemployment, they were only provided in one third of high unemployment districts. Conversely, authorities with high unemployment were much more likely to run the more complex concession card and leadership schemes. Nearly a third of authorities with high unemployment ran these schemes compared to only 13% in low unemployment areas.
Table 3.8  Types of provision for the unemployed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of scheme</th>
<th>No. of authorities</th>
<th>% of all authorities</th>
<th>% of all schemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Price concessions for all</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Price concessions for unemployed</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Organised sessions</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Concession cards</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sports Leadership Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No provision</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>454</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.9  Type of provision, by unemployment rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployment rate in Local Authority District</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of authorities running schemes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 27.5$, 8 degrees of freedom. Significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All chi square tests by type of scheme exclude the "other" category, and were calculated from absolute figures although these are not given in the text. Excludes London Boroughs, Scottish Regional Authorities, and Education and Library Boards.


Table 3.10  Type of provision, by political composition of local authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party with overall majority on Council</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of authorities running schemes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 35.96$, 4 degrees of freedom. Significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes authorities in Northern Ireland.

Variations in the type of provision with the political composition of local councils were also marked (see Table 3.10); again the relationship was statistically significant. Over 40% of Labour controlled authorities ran Type 4 or 5 schemes, compared with only 14% of Conservative dominated authorities. This difference was still marked even when differences in the unemployment rate were taken into account, with Labour councils being just as likely to run more complex schemes in areas of low as well as high unemployment, and provision in Conservative authorities being dominated by price concessions whatever the unemployment rate.

There was also a statistically significant relationship between scheme type and the population density and total population of a district (Table 3.11). Only 9% of authorities in low density areas were running Type 4 or 5 schemes, compared with nearly 40% in areas with a high population density. The variation in scheme type with total population was very similar.

In summary the factors which were related to the incidence of provision for the unemployed were also related to the type of provision made, and again, political composition, total population and population density appeared to be more influential than the unemployment rate per se. However, the unemployment rate had more effect on the type of provision made than on the initial decision to provide.

3.3.2 Comparison with 1982

Table 3.12 compares the results for 1985 with those for 1982 and shows that provision for the unemployed has both become more widespread, and changed in emphasis over the three year period. In 1982, 60% of responding authorities were running a scheme, compared with 71% in 1985. Although the types of scheme identified were fundamentally the same in both years, there has been a shift away from simple price concessions towards organised sessions, leadership schemes and concession cards. Type 2 price concessions were the most common form of provision in both years but they accounted for a smaller proportion of schemes in 1985 than in 1982 (a third compared to 42%). By contrast, Type 3, 4 and 5 schemes which only accounted for 10% of all schemes in 1982, accounted for 28% in 1985.
Table 3.11 Type of provision by population

a) Population Density

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Density</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\chi^2 = 19.49, 8\) degrees of freedom. Significant

b) Total Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\chi^2 = 20.67, 8\) degrees of freedom. Significant

Note: Excludes Education and Library Boards, authorities in Scotland, and Metropolitan County Councils.

Table 3.12  The extent and nature of Provision: 1982 and 1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Provision</th>
<th>No. of authorities making provision</th>
<th>% of responding authorities making provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1982 ¹</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Provision</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total making provision</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1982 data includes England and Wales only.
¹ Source: Glyptis and Riddington (1983).

Table 3.13  Starting date by type of scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schemes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of all schemes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This shift in the nature of provision over time is further substantiated by examining the starting dates of authorities' current schemes (Table 3.13). Only a fifth of authorities said that their current schemes had begun prior to 1982, which suggests that many of the authorities known to have been running schemes in 1982 had changed to another type of provision. If the starting dates are compared with the type of scheme, it can be seen that Type 1 and 2 price concession schemes were the most likely to have been started prior to 1982. Conversely over 40% of Type 3 and 4 schemes were started after 1983, compared to only a fifth of the price concessions, suggesting that many authorities "progress" from price concessions to concession cards, organised sessions or leadership schemes. Compared with the other types of provision, concession card schemes were still on the increase. Over a quarter of all concession card schemes were begun in 1985 alone and several more authorities were considering introducing them. However, there has been a decline since 1983 in the number of new sports leadership schemes being started.

3.3.3 Lapsed and planned schemes

Eleven authorities were not currently making any sports provision for the unemployed, but had done so in the past. This excludes the many authorities whose schemes had lapsed, but had been replaced by another type of provision; only 7 of these authorities gave details about their past schemes as well as their current provision.

The most common type of scheme to have lapsed were organised sessions, accounting for 7 of the 18 lapsed schemes. Four Type 2 price concession schemes had lapsed, 3 sports leadership schemes, one concession card and one "other". By far the most common reason for stopping schemes, stated by two thirds of the authorities, was insufficient usage by the unemployed. One of the Type 2 schemes had failed because of the problem of stigma, and another because of insufficient publicity. Two authorities had had difficulty identifying users by the UB40 - one also mentioned the pressure to extend the concession to other groups, and one experienced abuse of their scheme.
Reasons for the failure of the Sports Leadership schemes included a lack of facilities and of supervisory time from Leisure and Recreation departments, and also some doubt as to the value of free use:

"The attitude of the unemployed to "free" provision is that it is a handout. A small charge maybe? Also I believe that we made a mistake with the scheme title 'Freesport'."

This debate between free use versus a charge for provision is one of the recurrent themes to emerge from the survey.

Both providers of Type 1 price concessions found that usage had not increased with reduced prices; one said that existing users merely switched their time of attendance to off peak hours, thereby causing a loss of revenue to the authority.

Twelve of the authorities who were not currently making provision for the unemployed did, however, have definite plans to introduce schemes. This excludes the future plans of authorities currently providing, some of whom planned to change the nature of their provision; these will be considered later. Four authorities did not specify the type of scheme they were planning to introduce. The remaining 8 were spread evenly across all types of provision, with two authorities planning to introduce each of Type 2, Type 4 and Type 5 schemes.

3.4 The rationale for provision

The aims of local authorities in introducing their schemes were wide-ranging and varied considerably in terms of how well thought out they were. Few authorities had precise, written aims and objectives, and in many cases the aims of schemes were couched in very vague terms. Several aims were common to all scheme types but the weight given to particular aims varied between types.
The most common reason given by authorities for introducing Type 1 price concessions was to increase off-peak facility usage; over half stated that this was one of their aims. In 6 cases this was the sole rationale for provision, and any benefit to the unemployed was incidental rather than intended.

Over a third of authorities running Type 1 schemes introduced their schemes specifically to help all disadvantaged groups participate. Some felt that there was no case for providing for the unemployed alone, as they were no more disadvantaged than many other groups:

"To make an adequate level of sports services available to as wide a community as possible on a non-discriminatory basis and without cost of using them being a deterrent."

Some felt that a concession for all users was the best way to avoid segregating the unemployed:

"There is evidence that the unemployed do not want to be singled out for special treatment as a group, even though the purpose may be benevolent ....also thought wrong to ask people to undergo the indignity of producing evidence of their unemployment in order to qualify for the cheaper rate"

Six authorities introduced their schemes specifically to avoid any of the stigma attached to schemes which ask for proof of unemployment; some had previously run Type 2 schemes but had widened the concession to all users. The remaining Type 1 authorities aimed to encourage the unemployed to participate, especially by removing financial barriers.

Reducing the financial barrier to participation was the most common aim of authorities running Type 2 concessions, cited by over a third. Many felt that high charges were the main factor hindering access by the unemployed and that reduced charges would be sufficient to increase participation:

"Based upon the assumption that the need was not for additional facilities specially to cater for the unemployed, but that the existing facilities were sufficient but of little value whilst they remain beyond the price range of the unemployed"
"To ensure that admission prices were not a barrier to participation by the unemployed"

A further 29 authorities stated that their schemes aimed to "encourage the unemployed to use the facilities" without stating specifically how this was to be done.

As with Type 1 schemes, the motives of authorities running Type 2 schemes were not entirely altruistic. Nearly a fifth (24) stated that their aim was to increase usage at slack times; for 6 authorities this was the sole motivation. Many others stated that the concessionary scheme was only acceptable if revenue did not suffer:

"Provision to be made free of charge and therefore to be concentrated on periods when facilities were being underused."

"Making facilities available to the unemployed but at no detriment to the council's income"

Sixteen Type 2 authorities stated that their schemes aimed to "provide recreational opportunities" for the unemployed, and a further 12 intended to "meet the needs" or "help" the unemployed, again in an unspecified manner. However, in contrast to Type 1 schemes, some Type 2 providers had considered, and hoped to alleviate, the psychological effects of unemployment. Ten authorities aimed to fill the spare time of the unemployed and help prevent boredom, and a small number aimed to give them a new interest in sport. Some authorities had wider social aims, often stated implicitly, in particular to prevent the unemployed feeling alienated from the community, and so to reduce any problems associated with this feeling of alienation:

"To help relieve boredom for the unemployed, and attract the younger unemployed from cafes and "street corners" etc."

"...some evidence that the right facilities decreases the effects of criminal damage and vandalism"
Finally, six concession schemes were started in response to requests from the unemployed themselves, and seven as either "a token gesture" or in response to political pressure:

"The council offered free use to the unemployed as a political gesture"

"Bit of a token gesture, council wanted to be seen doing something"

Again, reducing the costs of participation was the primary aim of authorities running Type 3 schemes, mentioned by a third. Other main aims were to increase opportunities for the unemployed and encourage them to participate. There was more concern among these authorities to provide a range or package of sporting activities for the users, and only 2 were concerned with increasing revenue. The social function of organised sessions was also seen as important in providing a meeting place for the unemployed and generating a club type atmosphere:

"The main aim of introducing the scheme was to allow local people ... to use the facilities as part of a "club" as it was felt that the unemployed were not using the facilities even with the premise of free usage"

This was reflected in the names given by authorities to their sessions, such as "2-4 Club", "Selecta Sport" or "Friday Sports Club".

Removing the financial barrier to participation was the main aim of providers of concession card schemes, mentioned by 40% of these authorities. However, several were also concerned to avoid stigmatising the unemployed and felt that a concession card was the most appropriate way of doing this, as proof of unemployment did not have to be shown on every occasion. Several authorities introduced concession cards in response to problems they had encountered in running Type 2 schemes, especially the problem of stigma, and abuse of the concession.

"Firstly it was to act as proof of identity to allow concessionary rates, thus reducing the incidence of abuse, through use of a photograph. Secondly the Leisure Pass minimises any stigma associated with the requiring of proof of identity for entry."
"To provide free access to sports facilities for low income and low participant groups but without the stigma attached to the ubiquitous 'free use for the unemployed'.'

Others wanted to simplify their charging systems or to integrate all concessionary groups under one banner:

"To enable unemployed and their dependants to take advantage of a comprehensive membership scheme by making one category specially relevant"

Rather more providers of Type 4 schemes were concerned to minimise the psychological effects of unemployment, in particular boredom, stress, lack of confidence, and apathy.

"To help the relieve the psychological and social stresses of unemployment and to encourage the unemployed through individual and group activity to develop personal, sporting and social skills which may help in gaining confidence and self-esteem".

Authorities running leadership schemes placed much more emphasis on the community as a target group rather than the unemployed. Most specifically mentioned the unemployed in their aims but involved other financially or recreationally disadvantaged groups as well:

"The target groups are....the unmotivated, the sports-shy, the 'it looks too much like hard work' types, specifically among the unemployed, part time workers, housewives and young mothers, the disabled, the retired, students and shift workers: in fact anyone over the age of 16 not in full time, regular employment."

Most of these authorities realised that reducing costs was not necessarily the key to encouraging participation - only 2 specifically stated the provision of low cost recreation as an aim. Instead most realised that there were other, harder, social and psychological barriers to overcome and that a more positive approach to provision was therefore necessary. For example, the aim of Halton Borough Council's Daylight Leisure scheme was:

"activating and releasing latent demand"
"alienated by past experiences of sport at school, intimidated by forever changing procedures within recreation centres, huge impersonal sports centres and hostile management attitudes".

Underlying several authorities' provision was the philosophy of "taking sport to the community", rather than expecting the community to come to the sports centres. Many aimed to provide a much greater range of activities than under conventional facility programmes, with the benefits of coaching and supervision being another important stimulus.

The relief of the social and psychological problems associated with unemployment was another important aim of leadership schemes. It was felt that schemes could help reduce social problems both at the family level

"the prime aim is to alleviate the social effects of unemployment...to help reduce stress in the family"

and in the wider community

"it needed Brixton to make it a real and immediate issue in the councillors' minds...the short term aim was to take people off the streets and occupy them so they don't beat up old ladies and throw bricks."

The quote above comes from an interview with South Yorkshire County Council, whose scheme was introduced in response to the Brixton riots in 1981 and the subsequent 'copycat' rioting further north. However, as the immediate threat of rioting lessened, the aims changed to become more akin to those of several leadership schemes, namely simply to

"put something in these kids' lives that they would otherwise have got from a job".

Significantly, increasing facility usage was only mentioned as an aim by 3 authorities operating leadership schemes, suggesting that the commitment
and motivation needed to run such schemes precluded the self-interested motives of some authorities operating price concessions.

3.5 The Intended benefits of provision

Some authorities simply replied that the unemployed would benefit from their provision by being encouraged to participate. However, the majority did consider in more depth in what ways the unemployed would benefit from their schemes. Their responses indicate the variation in the level of understanding of the predicament of the unemployed, and in the extent to which authorities expected sport to offer the satisfactions traditionally derived from work.

Over half of the providers of price concessions (Type 1 and Type 2) stated that the main benefit to the unemployed would be financial, in enabling them to use facilities:

"The main benefit is seen to be in terms of access to facilities which may otherwise be denied to these disadvantaged groups on the grounds of financial hardship".

The second most commonly cited benefit of price concessions, mentioned by a quarter of authorities, was occupying the free time of the unemployed. Boredom was recognised as a major effect of unemployment, and many authorities felt that

"Reduced rates would encourage them to make more use of the facilities, thereby reducing boredom and giving them the opportunity to make more constructive use of their time.

The third main benefit of price concessions, identified by 13 authorities, was simply the advantage of health and fitness gained by participation in sport, which were seen as particularly important in the context of an unemployed person experiencing apathy and stagnation. Some providers felt that the unemployed would benefit socially and psychologically from their
provision, but these benefits were much more widely identified by providers of other schemes.

Among providers of organised sessions for the unemployed, the intended social benefits to users were central, being stated by half the providers. In particular, the benefits were:

"The opportunity to use the facilities during a period set aside specifically for the unemployed. Opportunity therefore to mix and participate with individuals facing similar problems"

and the chance to gain

"Companionship and a sense of belonging."

Finance was seen as a secondary benefit of these schemes, as was occupying free time. Instead, more benefits were attributed to the essential characteristics of organised sessions, especially the availability of partners and equipment, the ease of booking and the range of activities provided.

Although recognising the social and psychological benefits of their schemes, providers of concession cards again focused mainly on the financial benefits of their provision, mentioned by over half the authorities. As one authority put it, unemployed users would benefit

"simply by the fact that a Fair Play ticket would suit their pockets."

Providers of concession cards also hoped that their schemes would help in the development of new leisure interests, and in the relief of boredom. As with organised sessions, some expected benefits stemmed from the essential nature of this type of provision, namely priority booking, the inclusion in the scheme of dependants and of the unemployed without UB40 cards, and the avoidance of the problem of stigma. One further benefit was a better awareness and knowledge of facilities such that the unemployed would feel
able to continue to use them, even when not participating in the scheme itself.

Providers of leadership schemes saw the benefits as primarily psychological; as with the aims of these schemes, finance was not a major issue. Over half the leadership schemes were intended to benefit the users psychologically in some way, in particular by improving the "quality of life" generally, as well as providing more specific benefits:

"By participation, fighting apathy and being given a sense of achievement and well being"

"To be introduced to new interests, new skills from which they might improve self-image and confidence, and derive status when prospects of a traditional job are bleak"

A further 10 authorities hoped their leadership schemes would relieve boredom, and provide social benefits for the unemployed. Employment for the sports leaders taken on through the MSC was not seen as important; interestingly only 4 authorities stated this as a benefit of their schemes.

One other theme which ran through many of the responses and was common to all types of scheme, was the contribution sport could make to the community, especially in the context of reducing violence. Although this was not always stated explicitly, it was apparent that many authorities saw sport as the "healthy" alternative to some of the less socially desirable consequences of unemployment:

"The channelling of their energies into 'healthy recreation' was probably also reckoned to be a benefit (to them and to the community)."

Some authorities were more explicit:

"...it would give them something constructive to do, it would reduce vandalism".

Linked with this was the feeling that the unemployed should not be isolated
from the rest of the community:

"...therapeutic value in encouraging the unemployed to make use of community resources, thereby reinforcing and reaffirming their community membership"

3.6 Summary of chapter

Nearly three quarters of local authorities in the U.K. were making some form of sports provision for the unemployed. Five main types of provision were identified, only one of which, organised sessions, had not been identified in the 1982 review. Price concessions for the unemployed were still the most common type, but in comparison with 1982, concession card schemes and those involving organised sessions or leadership accounted for a much greater proportion of provision. Provision overall has become more widespread since 1982.

Both the extent and nature of provision varied regionally, and with political complexion, unemployment rates, population density and total population of local authority districts. However, the unemployment rate of an area had less bearing on the incidence and type of provision than the other factors. Reasons given for not providing further suggest that the political bias of a council and a scattered rural population with an associated lack of facilities can hinder a response to the local unemployment problem.

The main aim behind most provision was to increase participation in sport by the unemployed, in particular (except for leadership schemes) by removing the financial barrier to participation. Authorities running the more complex schemes, especially leadership schemes, were more likely to have identified other barriers to participation, and aimed to overcome them by providing motivation, social contacts and more attractive activities, thus alleviating the social and psychological stresses of unemployment.

Among providers of price concessions altruism often gave way to pragmatism, with many authorities introducing schemes specifically to reduce revenue
losses incurred by empty facilities. As a result some had aims which were in direct conflict with each other, since maximising revenue did not always coincide with the best interests of the unemployed. As will be seen later, this obviously limited the extent to which these schemes were successful.

Providers of price concessions saw the benefits of their schemes as primarily financial, whereas providers of organised activities and leadership schemes were more concerned with psychological, physical and social benefits, in particular filling the spare time of the unemployed. Many identified benefits which are traditionally assigned to work - a structure to the day, a sense of purpose, self-esteem, social contacts, and the ability to learn and develop new skills. Authorities varied in the extent to which they felt that the benefits obtained from sport could in any way substitute for those gained from work. Some approached their schemes with boundless optimism:

"This scheme gives a person the opportunity to be involved, and consequently a meaning to their existence"

Others, however, expressed a weary cynicism as to what sports schemes could actually achieve:

"The usual social clichés of meaningful recreation to compensate for no job."

Stirling District Council were perhaps among the more realistic in assessing the contribution their scheme could make:

"We know these activities will never substitute for work...but they're really to get away from the day to day drudgery of the situation they're in...a way of trying to break through and give them some sort of active interest."

The ways in which authorities operated their schemes in order to achieve these aims, and the extent to which the unemployed gained the benefits intended, will be examined in the following two chapters.
Chapter 4  The operation of local authority sports schemes for the unemployed

This chapter examines the operation of local authority sports schemes for the unemployed under the following themes: planning, funding, contact with other agencies, publicity, staffing, monitoring, and future plans. The chapter also considers how successful authorities feel their provision has been in achieving their stated aims. Material is drawn both from the questionnaire returns and from the Stage 2 interviews. Where questionnaire material is used to provide quantitative data not all authorities were able to supply the information required; therefore, unless otherwise stated, all percentages are of authorities replying, rather than of the sample as a whole.

4.1 Planning of schemes

Authorities were asked in the questionnaire survey whether they had consulted other agencies or looked to other schemes for guidance in planning their own provision. Just over a third stated that they had not done so. However, this figure varied with scheme type, with authorities running the more "sophisticated" schemes much more inclined to seek outside help. For example, only half the authorities running price concessions had done any prior research, compared to all but one of those running leadership schemes. Many of those who had not carried out any consultations at the planning stage had themselves run schemes previously, and therefore drew upon their own experience.

The nature of prior research undertaken also varied according to type of scheme. Overall, the most common source of guidance, mentioned by 29% of respondents, was the examination of schemes run by other local authorities. In most cases this involved only neighbouring authorities' schemes, but a few had made more extensive investigations. Looking at other schemes was the only form of research mentioned by providers of Type 1 price concessions and was dominant among those running Type 2 concessions.
The second most common source of guidance, used by 10% of authorities and nearly half of those running leadership schemes, was the Sports Council, at either regional or national level. Eight authorities specifically cited Action Sport and the three Sports Council experimental schemes.

No other single agency or source was quoted by a sizeable percentage of authorities. Providers of leadership and concession card schemes consulted a range of local agencies such as job centres, unemployed centres, the MSC, Youth and Community Services, Education Departments and Colleges, the DHSS, Probation Service, Careers Service and local sports centres. The response of these bodies to the authorities' plans to set up schemes was variable, and on the whole muted. Many gave passive support rather than active help and advice and in some cases the reaction was more negative. Halton Borough Council found that some local bodies were resentful of their planned scheme, perhaps because it implied criticism of their provision.

Finally, a small number of authorities had researched the subject from published reports, in particular the 1982 survey of local authority provision (Glyptis and Riddington, op.cit.), ILAM materials and various leisure related magazines.

Authorities were also asked whether they had tried to find out the interests of the local unemployed before setting up their schemes; just over half stated that they had not done so. Authorities planning Type 2 and Type 4 schemes were the least likely to have contacted the unemployed, whereas all but 5 of those running leadership schemes had asked the unemployed their views. To some extent this variation simply reflects the nature of the schemes, in that price concessions and concession card schemes generally made use of existing facilities, rather than providing extra activities in accordance with demand from the target group. However, these findings do suggest that, with the exception of leadership schemes, many authorities were running schemes with no clear idea of what the target group wanted.

Some authorities planning leadership schemes spent 2-3 months attempting to identify the interests of the local unemployed but many found it far from
straightforward. The methods used ranged from the formal and systematic, such as questionnaire surveys and public meetings, to

"random questioning of the unemployed."

Nineteen authorities, most running leadership schemes, had conducted surveys, but in practice the value of the results was ambiguous. Antrim Borough Council conducted a borough-wide survey of 500 unemployed people, interviewing them at clubs, benefit offices and on the street. However, as the officer responsible remarked, the survey was inaccurate in assessing interest:

"People know they want something, but not what.....they can tick interest in activities but in practice they aren't.....people tell you what they want to tell you, or what they think you want to hear."

The Coordinator of Halton Borough Council's scheme also carried out a questionnaire survey and he agreed that

"people are liable just to tick anything."

For him the survey was:

"not a research document but an excuse to talk - questionnaires should be used purely as a vehicle and excuse"

Other authorities agreed that sessions planned according to the interests of the unemployed as expressed in surveys attracted little response on the day.

Rather than use formal research tools several authorities had attempted to talk informally with the unemployed at job centres, benefit offices and centres for the unemployed. Informal discussions, sometimes combined with a questionnaire, were the most successful method of identifying the interests of the unemployed. Corby District Council, when planning their PRISM scheme, combined a leaflet drop inviting comments, with meetings and
informal chats in pubs and clubs. As a result several potential users telephoned or visited the council offices to express their views.

In general, formal research tools were not successful in gaining an indication of the interests of potential users. Questionnaire surveys often had more value for publicity than for research, and it is questionable whether people can be expected to identify the activities they wish to take part in if they have little experience of sport upon which to base their opinion. The view of Halton Borough Council that questionnaires should be used purely as an excuse for more informal chats with potential users was substantiated by the experience of others. However, although informal contacts did provide useful background information, the real desires of users were often not known until they already had experience of the scheme upon which to base their views.

4.2 Funding and involvement with other agencies

This section considers the cost of schemes to local authorities, and the assistance, financial and non-financial, they received from other agencies.

4.2.1 The cost of schemes and financial assistance

Over a quarter of authorities (60) did not know or could not calculate the approximate annual cost of their provision. Clearly there was no established basis for estimating the cost of schemes, and the figures that were provided were based on varying assumptions. Some authorities included only direct costs, such as printing and publicity, whereas others attempted to put a figure on increased maintenance costs and wear and tear of equipment. The greatest variation was due to the inclusion by some authorities of opportunity costs, namely the loss of revenue caused by offering concessionary or free usage. However, revenue loss was hard to estimate, because as one authority expressed it:

"It should be remembered that if the normal rate was charged then a substantial majority of the unemployed users would not take part. Also the unemployed do use off peak time only and are virtually never taking
up court space which another paying customer would utilise .... it is highly likely that the vast majority of facilities which the unemployed use would simply be lying idle if the scheme did not exist."

Furthermore the spin-off effects of increased usage by the unemployed, such as greater income from cafeterias and amusement machines, were hard to calculate. In general then the figures which authorities quoted should be treated cautiously, and perhaps as more of an indication of how expensive authorities perceive their schemes to be, rather than the actual cost of provision.

Bearing this in mind, Table 4.1 shows the estimated costs per annum to the providing authorities of their schemes. Nearly a quarter said that their scheme did not cost them anything, and a further 10 said that the cost was "negligible" or "very small". In total, provision was being made at little or no cost by 28% of authorities, and a further six stated that their schemes operated at a surplus. Type 1 and Type 3 schemes were the least likely to incur costs; a third of Type 3 schemes cost the authority nothing. Substantially fewer leadership schemes (only a fifth) were run at no cost.

Overall, 40% of authorities gave a figure for the cost of their schemes per annum. They were fairly evenly divided between those costing under £1,000 (24 authorities), £1,000-£10,000 (29 authorities), and over £10,000 (28 authorities). However, there were variations with scheme type. Types 1, 2 and 3 schemes were the cheapest to run, with very few costing over £10,000 per annum. By contrast, nearly a third of all leadership schemes cost the providing authority over £10,000, and 6 over £20,000, despite considerable financial assistance from outside bodies.

The vast majority (80%) of authorities received no form of financial assistance from either national or local agencies (see Table 4.2). Again this varied with scheme type. No authorities running Type 1 or Type 2 schemes received assistance, whereas all those running leadership schemes had financial help; two thirds of all schemes receiving assistance were leadership schemes. The public sector was the main source of assistance, in
Table 4.1  Cost of provision (per annum) to local authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost per annum</th>
<th>No. of authorities</th>
<th>% of responding authorities (n=212)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very small</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under £1,000</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1,000 - £9,999</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10,000 plus</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost unknown</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2  Financial assistance received by local authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of financial help</th>
<th>No. of authorities</th>
<th>% of responding authorities (n=200)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No financial help</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Council</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manpower Services Commission</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Environment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking sponsorship from voluntary/private bodies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Authorities could mention more than one source.
particular the Sports Council, through providing grants for equipment, transport or staff. The MSC was the second most common source of finance, primarily through funding staff for leadership schemes. Six authorities also received central government funding through the Urban Programme. Very few received financial assistance from private or voluntary agencies; the few sources that were mentioned included local radio, professional clubs, regional arts associations, the local TUC and the Community Education Department. A few authorities stated that they were actively seeking sponsorship from private and voluntary sector bodies.

Some authorities commented on the controversy which funding schemes for the unemployed could evoke, both among council members and officers, and among local ratepayers. As New Forest District Council explained:

"... it is probably fair to say that whatever policy is adopted there will be discontent in some quarter, as it is seen as 'insensitive and bureaucratic' or 'wasteful double subsidy' at either extreme."

Many authorities had to overcome the initial suspicions of councillors by 'proving' themselves before being assured of continuing financial support. Others felt the need to defend themselves against a potentially hostile public:

"There is no direct cost to Halton ratepayers for a locally based initiative, something that is commonly misunderstood as 'a waste of the ratepayers money' is not a cliché that can be applied to the Daylight Leisure scheme."

One authority at least faced open criticism of their spending on the unemployed by local press and public. South Yorkshire County Council faced a hostile press in the first year of their Urban Action Programme, receiving comments such as

"You have to be a criminal to take advantage of this profligate county council's programmes"
and

"It pays to be a vandal."

The "computer fun days" incorporating a van visiting each town in the area were labelled as

"Star Wars on the rates."

However, in several other authorities loss of income was seen as an accepted and even expected result of providing for disadvantaged groups:

"We see ourselves operating a social service - we are not out to make a profit as far as provision goes."

Expenditure on local authority sports provision for the unemployed was therefore generally low key, with few authorities committing substantial resources and over half either not knowing the cost of their schemes, or estimating it to be zero. It was clear that leadership schemes involved the greatest expenditure, both by the providing authorities and other agencies.

4.2.2 Non-financial assistance

Authorities were much more likely to receive non-financial help from other agencies than financial assistance; 55% said that they received some such help compared to only 20% who received financial aid. However, many stated that they had expected more cooperation from local bodies, who were more inclined to be passively supportive than actively involved. In general, providers of Type 3, 4 and 5 schemes were the most likely to receive non-financial assistance. Only 2 authorities running leadership schemes had no help from other agencies, compared to over 60% of those running Type 2 price concessions.

The majority of agencies giving assistance were local bodies, the one exception being the Sports Council which was cited as a source of
information, training or advice by over a fifth of authorities, and nearly half of those running leadership schemes.

Local agencies assisted most commonly with publicity, by allowing authorities to display posters, distribute leaflets or man displays on their premises. Job Centres and DHSS offices were the most frequently cited in this context, although it often took time to achieve the desired level of assistance and even then, cooperation could be limited because of conflicting objectives:

"The DHSS is aiming to get people jobs, not to encourage them to play golf!"

However, one authority, by contrast, stated that the local Benefit Office was even prepared to allow claimants to change the day on which they signed on so that they could attend trips organised by their scheme.

Nearly a third of authorities operating concession cards worked with local centres or groups for the unemployed. In most cases the centre for the unemployed actually administered the scheme, issuing cards on behalf of the authority. The DHSS also assisted with many schemes by validating applications for cards.

Some authorities collaborated with other groups in running sessions. The police were involved in organising a wide-ranging programme of activities for the young unemployed as part of South Yorkshire County Council's Urban Action scheme. Local groups sometimes provided transport, for example the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Antrim, and NACRO in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Many of the leadership schemes ran sessions specifically for other groups such as YTS, probation service, unemployed centres and NACRO. This was generally very successful and often led to more requests than a scheme could fulfil. Indeed there was a danger that successful sports leadership schemes could become a "babysitting service" (Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council) in the sense of other groups using them to absolve some of their
responsibility for their clients. Halton Borough Council, for example, found that their Daylight Leisure scheme was so successful that it "became seen as a resource to prop up someone else's initiatives".

The provision of facilities was another important role fulfilled by local agencies - in particular youth and community services and education departments. Although these bodies could be very cooperative in allowing free facility usage, several authorities found that they were not given any preferential treatment, and were frustrated at having to pay the full rate for facilities owned by other council departments. As Thamesdown Borough Council put it:

"We have to knock on the door like anyone else."

Some authorities found that:

"community centre management committees can be deliberately unhelpful if they know it's for the unemployed".

This reluctance of community centres to allow schemes access to their facilities was caused by a basic mistrust of the unemployed:

"an attitude that if you're unemployed you're a vandal."

"the unemployed are looked at as second class citizens - people say the place will be wrecked if they are allowed in."

The same attitude was found in some private sports clubs, although it should be noted that some authorities were very successful in gaining access to privately run facilities. Gillingham Borough Council, for example, successfully sold the idea of their Passport to Sport scheme to private facilities on the grounds that extra daytime usage would contribute to fixed costs.
Few authorities had steering groups or regular formal meetings with outside agencies, except in the early stages of their schemes. Some viewed this lack of formal contact as wholly desirable since it allowed more informal and beneficial contacts with key supportive personnel. Others, however, were frustrated at the lack of cooperation between different groups and statutory agencies

"all with a different set of tools, working on the same machine."

Although some authorities felt the need for a local or national strategy to overcome this problem, some officers felt the potential for more cooperation to be limited in practice, since the various agencies were

"all hamstrung in their own bureaucracy."

In general, then, coordination with outside agencies was ad hoc, and some providers were frustrated at the lack of active support for their schemes. However, it was often not clear how actively authorities had sought cooperation, and few had suggestions as to how to improve the situation. There were, however several examples of close and productive cooperation between authorities and other local bodies involved with similar target groups. One of the most impressive examples of what could be achieved was the work of South Yorkshire police, mentioned above. The following extract from the Chief Constable’s annual report illustrates the potential of cooperative ventures:

"As a result of the Urban Action Programme projects, many thousands of young people have been brought together with police officers and statutory and voluntary agencies, and many of the barriers which existed have been broken down...real and lasting friendships are being formed with the police officers whom they now see as ordinary people."
4.3 Publicity

The questionnaire survey asked authorities to specify the ways in which their schemes were publicised, and the means of publicity, if any, which were most successful. Table 4.3 summarises the main types of publicity used. Only 13 authorities, all running Type 2 price concessions, said that they did not publicise their schemes at all or had only done so initially.

The most common forms of publicity across all types of scheme were features or advertisements in the local press, mentioned by nearly a quarter of respondents. Posters, leaflets or handouts were the next most common form of advertising, mainly at sports facilities and job centres. Benefit offices and libraries were the other main venues used. Some authorities used a wide range of outlets for publicity materials, such as betting shops, schools and colleges, shopping centres, health centres and dentists' surgeries, factories, buses, and public houses.

Word of mouth was the fourth most frequently mentioned means of publicity, but was cited by substantially fewer authorities than the first three. Included in this category were all attempts at direct personal contact with the target group, such as visiting organised groups for the unemployed, as well as "street contact". Advertising on local radio was the only other form of publicity used by more than 10% of authorities.

Both the amount of publicity and the range of methods used increased with the "sophistication" of schemes. On average, authorities operating Type 1 and 2 schemes only used one or two methods of publicity, and commonly the concessions were only advertised in normal facility publicity, not separately promoted in their own right. Where separate leaflets or posters were designed these were frequently unimaginative and "official" in character. This was particularly the case with Type 2 schemes, where the list of forms of identification needed to obtain the concession often read like a set of regulations rather than an invitation to participate in sport, and could be offputting to an unemployed person feeling alienated and unmotivated. Two authorities running price concessions deliberately
Table 4.3  Types of publicity used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Publicity</th>
<th>Number of authorities</th>
<th>% of all responding authorities (n = 253)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Press</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflets/Handouts</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth/ personal contact</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Centre publicity</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Authorities could give more than one method.

Table 4.4  Most effective methods of publicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Publicity</th>
<th>Number of authorities</th>
<th>% of all responding authorities (n = 187)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth/ personal contact</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local press</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflets</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Authorities could give more than one method.
limited their publicity, because of a potential income loss or a harmful effect on paying custom:

"We were frightened of being swamped"

"...a danger of misuse of the scheme if given too much publicity"

The low priority given to publicising price concessions reflects the underlying aims and rationales of these schemes. Where schemes were introduced under political pressure and were run on a "take it or leave it" basis, there was little incentive to promote extensively, as this comment from Bolton Borough Council illustrates:

"The publicity of the scheme really depends on how the borough visualises the development of the scheme. If the intention is simply to carry on as we are at the moment and provide a "token gesture" to the unemployed to use the facilities if they wish, then little needs to be done."

Authorities operating Type 3, 4 and 5 schemes were much more concerned with promotion. On average, each used at least four different methods of publicity including television, shopping centre displays, videos, bus adverts and promotional items such as T-shirts and key fobs. Type 4 and 5 schemes were also much more likely to be promoted by local radio and by word of mouth. Some leadership schemes had staff specifically appointed to manage promotion - for example Nottingham's "Sport for the Unemployed" scheme had a liaison team with 3 staff employed solely on publicity work.

Several authorities did not name any publicity tool as being the most effective, either because they had not evaluated the success of their publicity or did not feel any methods were particularly outstanding. A further 25% stated that they did not know which type was most successful. Only a small number made deliberate attempts to evaluate the success of their publicity, through talking to users or conducting surveys.

Word of mouth or personal contact with the target group was by far the most effective method of publicising schemes (see Table 4.4). Sixty six
authorities found it the most successful method, although only half that number actually set out to use word of mouth as a publicity tool. This suggests that users themselves were active in spreading the word on behalf of authorities. Only a fifth of those who used posters, and a sixth of those who used leaflets, found them to be particularly effective. Only 1 in 8 of the 180 authorities who used the local press stated that it was the most successful publicity tool.

The success of personal contact in publicising schemes was further substantiated by comments made during the Stage 2 interviews. Most authorities agreed that other forms of publicity had proved less effective than expected:

"The sort of numbers anticipated, after press adverts, posters and handbills, in fact all mainstream publicity media, did not materialise, and the need for face-to-face, street corner contact work, became apparent."

One reason for this was given by Halton Borough Council:

"The marketing philosophy began with the assumption that recreationally disadvantaged people would not respond to adverts, leaflets or posters that merely advertise sports activities."

Methods such as posters, therefore, were useful but only as a secondary publicity element, to provide added credibility to the scheme for those already interested and receptive to information. Personal contact was essential in generating that initial interest and providing reassurance and encouragement. Without it, conventional publicity was dismissed by the potential user as irrelevant, as Stirling District Sports Council found:

"Many people did see the posters and perhaps even the newspaper article, but that was not enough for them to become convinced of the personal potential (author's emphasis) of what they had read."

Although conventional publicity tools were not generally found to be useful in gaining initial interest in a scheme, there were exceptions. For example, a steady flow of 8 or 9 people a week were attracted to
Gillingham's Passport to Sport scheme simply through one poster at the Unemployment Benefit Office. Posters, however, quickly became out of date, especially for leadership schemes where the activities changed frequently. Some authorities overcame this problem by publishing regular newsletters or programmes which were sent to all scheme members and relevant agencies.

"High profile" methods proved very effective for the few authorities which used them. These included performing stunts, operating manned publicity displays in shopping centres, "come and try it" events, and special offers. These were particularly successful where backed up with personal contact and handouts providing further information and contact details.

Many authorities admitted that since the initial launch they had only publicised their schemes intermittently. Many could not give a higher priority to publicity because of staffing and financial constraints. Apart from leadership schemes, most staff were only involved in provision for the unemployed as part of their job, and therefore had little time for publicity, especially the more time-consuming personal contact methods. Even on leadership schemes, if staff were few, their time was often fully committed to organising and leading sessions. Here the bigger leadership schemes fared better as face-to-face work could be built into the programme; the aim of Newcastle-under-Lyme's scheme was for all part-time sports leaders to spend half their time on "street contact" work.

Many authorities only had small publicity budgets. The coordinator of Corby District Council's PRISM scheme expressed frustration at trying to publicise the scheme effectively with an annual publicity budget of only £500, when for example a single newspaper advert could cost as much as £150. Another authority said:

"The scheme was under-resourced at the start and has therefore not been as actively promoted as it could have been. Consequently its success by any reasonable yardstick has been low."
Since the unemployed were identified by many authorities as the hardest of all the target groups to reach, effective publicity could be crucial to the outcome of provision:

"It is felt that the way the scheme was marketed has been the prime reason for its failure, with very little publicity.”

Therefore, although most authorities made some attempt to promote their schemes, publicity was often half-hearted and unimaginative, and the vast majority of authorities spent their limited resources on inefficient methods. This was especially the case with the local press, which was used by nearly 75% of authorities but which very few reported as being successful. Providers of concession card and leadership schemes used a much greater range of publicity tools, which were on the whole designed to be more appropriate to the target group. However, word of mouth was unanimously declared to be most effective in reaching people who were uninterested in sport. Written publicity material was more useful as a back-up to sustain interest and information among users. Given the social isolation of many unemployed, it is not surprising that those authorities who did spend time making personal contact with the unemployed found that:

"The strongest marketing element was the ability to offer a cup of tea or coffee, and someone with the time and inclination to sit and chat."

4.4 Staff

This section examines, firstly, the role of staff working specifically on schemes, together with any problems arising. By definition it will be concerned mainly with sports leadership schemes, and to a lesser extent Type 3 organised sessions. The second part of the section examines briefly the implications of schemes for "mainstream" facility staff, and their reactions to provision for the unemployed.
4.4.1 The staffing of schemes

Very few authorities operating price concessions or concession cards employed staff specifically for their schemes. Concession card schemes were usually administered by existing clerical and administrative staff. The administration of such schemes could, however, take up a large proportion of time for those involved, especially when the majority of cards were due for annual renewal at the same time. In these cases, extra clerical assistance was sometimes taken on.

Organised sessions involved greater staff input, although the precise details varied greatly. Many relied on existing staff to run sessions as part of their broader responsibilities; some used facility staff, others staff already employed through the MSC. However, several authorities running organised sessions did take on extra staff specifically for the scheme. Some used volunteers, or paid coaches on a sessional basis, and others used local centres for the unemployed to provide session leaders. A few employed staff themselves; for example Antrim Forum's "2-4 Club" employed four workers through "ACE", the Northern Ireland equivalent of the Community Programme.

The distinguishing feature of leadership schemes was that they all employed staff specifically to encourage participation. Two thirds of these schemes employed less than 15 staff (with 2 the minimum), and most of the remainder between 15 and 30. The two largest schemes, Newcastle-under-Lyme's Recreation Project and Nottingham City Council's Sport for the Unemployed, employed 60 and 51 staff. The great majority of staff were funded via the Community Programme, but many were only part time because of MSC regulations governing average wages. Other sources of funding for staff were the Urban Programme, and Sports Council grants. Only a few schemes had establishment posts funded on a permanent basis, although several scheme coordinators expressed the hope that their jobs would become council funded when outside funding ceased. Some leadership schemes supplemented their staff with volunteers or paid coaches for certain activities.
Sports leaders were generally given a wide range of duties, as shown by the following extract from a report on Thamesdown District Council's scheme:

"The staff have a variety of duties including staffing a 'drop in' office base, distribution of promotional material, making contacts with groups and individuals in the community, looking for sponsorship, organising leagues and competitions, organising activities, negotiating use of facilities and transporting of groups to and from sessions."

The precise role which sports leaders played varied according to the philosophy underpinning the schemes or adhered to by their coordinators; the qualities looked for in potential staff varied correspondingly. In some schemes (the minority), the emphasis was very much on coaching and in helping users become proficient in particular sports. Consequently, staff were required to have coaching qualifications, and one authority specifically recruited unemployed PE teachers. A few authorities experienced problems in recruiting qualified staff, especially if they were required to have particular personal qualities as well.

More commonly schemes aimed not to produce first class athletes, but rather to ensure the enjoyment of the users and to perform a social role. Because of this, personal qualities were generally seen as more important than sporting prowess, especially given the nature of the target group. The experience of Halton Borough Council was that

"The best qualified and most personally proficient coaches were the most disastrous staff"

because:

"coaches with elitist aspirations failed to come to terms with the needs of absolute beginners, and reluctant ones at that."

In one incident

"A coach actually told a keen, if rather uncoordinated, would-be badminton player that she was too bad to be included in the group and should therefore not bother turning up to sessions."
As a result the coordinator of the scheme was wary of employing those with sporting qualifications.

Several authorities recognised that working with the unemployed meant coping with many of the social and psychological problems associated with unemployment; one leader described his scheme as:

"Social work in tracksuits."

Qualities such as self-confidence, tolerance, energy, initiative and a proven interest in working with other people were therefore seen as important. The ability to get on with a wide range of people was essential, and one authority looked for

"Nice people, a bit rough round the edges for street cred."

It was also important that staff should be persistent and not become disheartened at the often slow progress of working with the unemployed:

"Enthusiasm is the big red tick for getting a job."

In addition many schemes placed a high value on local staff who would know the area and the target group, and would be more able than outsiders to establish rapport with potential users.

Some authorities had few problems in attracting suitable staff. Once the name of a scheme became established in an area unemployed youngsters were often keen to work on it, and many posts would be filled by users. Stirling District Sports Council even said that

"If we advertised we'd be inundated."

Others, however, consistently experienced difficulty in getting staff, partly because of the low average wages on MSC funded schemes. Recruiting women to take an "active" role in schemes (as sports leaders rather than
office workers) was a recurrent problem; most leadership teams were male dominated.

Staff training was an important ingredient in most of the larger leadership schemes. For some this began with familiarising staff with the workings of a local authority. Most encouraged their leaders to take coaching awards in appropriate sports, and in some schemes leaders took the Community Sports Leadership Award. Gaining life-saving awards and attending basic first aid courses were also encouraged. One authority realised that formal courses were inappropriate for some of their staff, and had set up a weekly informal course in youth and community skills, specifically designed to help staff in face to face contact work.

Most of the larger leadership schemes had an overall coordinator, with a small number of supervisors or area organisers, each in charge of a team of mainly part time sports leaders. The overall coordinator often had considerable autonomy, with ultimate responsibility for most aspects of provision, but generally had frequent contact with, and support from, a senior officer in the Recreation department. This was stressed as being vital, both to bring credibility to schemes so that they were viewed as an integral part of the department, and also to assist in gaining access to resources. Most authorities had given some thought to the appropriate management style for their staff and they usually ran a well-defined system of regular meetings, with open channels of communication at all levels. Scheme coordinators generally felt it better to work on a principle of trust rather than be heavy handed or, as one put it, to "wield the managerial big stick" with staff employed on a contractual basis. The extent to which staff "played the system" under such circumstances was open to debate. One authority said that staff quickly overcame the feeling that they could get away with not turning up, whereas another found that few staff turned up punctually to morning sessions.

The key theme underpinning authorities' comments on staffing was the limitation of employing staff through the MSC; as one put it:

"The MSC bandwagon is the weakness in the mechanism."
Places on Community Programme schemes were limited to those who had been unemployed for at least 6 months; these were often the very people lacking the qualities of drive and self-confidence required of a sports motivator:

"All the jobs within the Daylight Leisure scheme are demanding in terms of emotional maturity and self-confidence. These are not attributes commonly found amongst people who have been unemployed recently for long periods of time."

This was especially true for leaders involved in outreach work among an uninterested, if not hostile, target group, and operating

"without the confidence of bricks and mortar."

As a result, schemes were often severely limited in the amount of cold-contact work which they could achieve. In addition, training and motivating MSC staff was often difficult and time consuming. One authority described their MSC staff as

"A volatile mass of energy with its ups and downs."

As a result, Thamesdown District Council found that

"If the leader is "X" effective, she is only "X" times 3 effective with 12 MSC staff."

However, despite these limitations, many authorities felt that the overall quality of their staff was good, and there were several instances where staff had become so committed to schemes as to work considerable overtime, even though overtime payment was not possible. The part time outdoor pursuits staff on Newcastle-under-Lyme's Recreation project had been known to work a 58 hour week:

"They overwork because they make no distinction between work and leisure - they enjoy it so much."
This voluntary overtime and strong commitment by some staff often overcame any deficiencies caused by a lack of motivation among others.

A second major limitation of MSC funded schemes was the short term nature of employment; in all but a few key posts staff were employed on one year contracts only. This had implications for staff motivation and effectiveness; for a year's contract only six months' effective work might be achieved. The first three months were generally spent in training leaders and gaining their enthusiasm for the scheme. During the next six months they would work hard, but then during the final three months motivation would drop as they realised that unemployment loomed, and time was spent in job hunting. This lack of motivation and a feeling that the scheme had in some way "conned" them was often contagious, lowering morale throughout the scheme.

One year staff contracts were also damaging to the continuity of the schemes themselves, especially where all staff contracts ended at the same time. Many authorities found the interviewing and administration time-consuming, and there could be a gap of months between one set of staff leaving and the next starting, especially if the council had to reapply to the MSC each year for funding for the whole scheme. This gap was obviously detrimental for users and it was also difficult for them to adjust to a completely new set of staff. Much of the success of leadership schemes was built on the relationships that developed between users and leaders, and individual personalities were vital. When a popular leader left it could take several months to regain the same level of trust and enthusiasm from users.

Furthermore, some schemes operated for much of the time without a full complement of staff, and as a result had to plan their sessions around the staff team as it was likely to be in practice and not in theory. Partly this was due to the problems of initial recruiting, but more commonly it was caused by staff not staying the full term, and exacerbated by the
stipulations made by the MSC. This is illustrated by Thamesdown District Council:

"In practice we rarely have a full team working for us at any one time. This is due mainly to the inflexibility of MSC rules and regulations concerning eligible personnel, and obviously affects the amount of groundwork and types and quality of sessions that we are able to provide."

In particular, it was usually the best staff who left, often to get better paid and permanent jobs elsewhere within the local authority, leaving those who were less able. Paradoxically, the more successful a scheme in giving staff wide-ranging experience in a short period of time, the more likely that leaders would quickly obtain permanent employment. However, some authorities specifically stated that most staff stayed the full year, either because employment prospects in the area were so bleak; or because the scheme offered so much in terms of experience and training that they were keen to make the most of it. Staff who had been employed on sports leadership schemes generally found subsequent employment or college places, and many authorities viewed this as one of the more successful aspects of their schemes. However, for those who failed to get employment, the value of their experience could be questioned:

"It is a poignant irony of the scheme that long term unemployed people are appointed to deal with the problems created by the circumstances they've recently experienced, and after 12 months are returned to that same condition but with a heightened awareness and sensitivity due to the experiences of working on the scheme".

Funding staff through the MSC therefore had several limitations. As a result those schemes which were most successful in generating and sustaining interest were those where waivers had been negotiated with the MSC on key personnel, or more importantly, where at least one post was funded by the local council on a permanent basis. Few councils had committed themselves to this, but where they had, schemes were guaranteed continuity, and forward planning was possible, with obvious implications for staff motivation. In addition, council funded posts often carried with them much more generous budgets (for transport, equipment and publicity)
than did MSC funded equivalents. As Thamesdown District Council expressed it:

"Permanent paid leadership supporting the concept of sports outreach is the greatest factor in success for this type of activity"

4.4.2 Relations with establishment staff

All schemes, whether employing additional staff or not, had implications for existing local authority staff, especially facility staff and managers. The way in which relations with these staff was managed was crucial to the success of schemes. The support of centre staff was found to be essential, and many authorities stated that they had achieved wholehearted cooperation both from receptionists and managers. This was especially so where centre staff realised the necessity of provision for the unemployed. Other crucial factors in gaining the support of staff were, for concession schemes, clear instructions regarding eligibility, and for leadership schemes, sports leaders who did not put up barriers between themselves and facility staff.

However, some problems were experienced, particularly with centre managers but also among receptionists and attendants. Some receptionists were reported to be "stand-offish" and even resentful to the young unemployed, who were perceived as taking the place of paying customers and increasing wear and tear of premises. Imprecise regulations regarding eligibility for concessions also caused confusion. Some authorities mentioned animosity of centre staff to sports leaders, particularly if the latter were paid at a higher rate to compensate for no overtime payments.

Most of the reservations of centre staff were overcome as schemes became established and with good management, the exceptions being cases where users abused the provision or were unruly. The reservations of some facility managers, however, proved more deep seated. This was because of a fundamental conflict between the aims of many facility managers and of schemes seeking to increase participation by the unemployed. As the
motivator at Waveney District Council expressed it:

"Facility managers are working under a dictate to maximise revenue - this completely contradicts and conflicts with providing sessions for a target group."

Many managers were therefore suspicious of price concessions because they saw their income being threatened. Linked with this was the fact that managers often viewed the unemployed, especially the young unemployed, as undesirable clientele, because of their perceived unruliness and effect on paying customers:

"No facility manager can be expected to co-operate wholeheartedly with a scheme that seeks to attract the very people he is attempting to keep away!"

Some facility managers felt threatened by the presence of sports leaders, viewing them as a criticism of the way they operated. The coordinator of one leadership scheme said that he was seen as

"A bit of a conscience to the managers - niggling away that they're not as successful in some ways as they might seem"

The whole concept of sports outreach and the need for face to face contact was alien to many traditional recreation managers, and where the roles of both managers and sports leaders was not clearly defined misunderstandings frequently arose. These problems represent a fundamental difference in rationale and *modus operandi* between the "traditional" recreation manager, more concerned with *facility* management, and the sports motivator, concerned more with *people*. This is symptomatic of the much broader shift in emphasis towards community sports provision.

### 4.5 Monitoring and record keeping

Many authorities did not carry out any form of monitoring beyond basic numerical record keeping. Most, however, kept some record of users or attendances; only 18% kept none at all. This varied by type of scheme; only
one authority running a leadership scheme kept no records, but as many as a quarter of those operating Type 2 price concessions.

The records kept at price concession schemes generally consisted only of numbers of attendances or users; relatively few attempted to ascertain user characteristics. Most commonly authorities simply recorded daily numbers of attendances, then collated them on a weekly or monthly basis. Where a concession applied to various user groups it was often unclear whether the authority could identify the unemployed separately - some recorded all concessionary users together. The extent to which numbers attending a particular activity could be identified also varied.

Many authorities running concession card schemes held sizeable data banks on the characteristics of card holders, obtained from application forms, which often asked for details of employment status, age, place of residence and sometimes sporting interests. In some of the larger schemes this information was computerised, mainly to assist with mailings.

Providers of Type 3 and Type 5 schemes were the most likely to record more detailed information on user characteristics, such as age, sex, employment status and place of residence; several of these schemes kept fairly detailed attendance registers at each session. However, few made any attempt to identify the frequency with which individuals used the scheme or which types of user attended most.

Authorities made only limited use of questionnaire surveys to find out the usage patterns of individuals and their opinions of provision. However, many attempted to obtain feedback from users, either through "response sheets" or by meeting informally with them. To many this was vitally important:

"We run on feedback - you've got to"

Even so, over 40% of authorities said they received no feedback on their provision, and some admitted that they had not actively sought any.
In general, authorities made only limited use of the numerical information collected. Several admitted that they did not use their records for monitoring purposes at all, or regarded them merely as interesting information. Others, particularly providers of Type 2 price concessions, were unsystematic in their use of the material:

"activities are analysed in a random manner"

"Monitoring and evaluation seldom if ever take place - the numbers game is checked up on from time to time - fluctuations are seen."

The most common use of records was to provide information for committee reports. Several officers had to report back monthly, and found that providing hard facts was essential, either to demonstrate the success of a scheme to ensure further support, or because councillors were genuinely interested.

However, few authorities, apart from those running leadership schemes, had any formal monitoring structure besides committee reports. Although some compared usage figures with those of the previous year, in only a few cases did this materially affect the course of schemes. One even felt that their records existed only

"to substantiate what we already expected."

The exceptions were some of the leadership schemes, where staff did respond to the information collected by adapting the provision accordingly. Some schemes produced regular monitoring reports for their own purposes. Halton's Daylight Leisure scheme was monitored by quarterly reports, combining figures and honest comment on the scheme's progress with targets to be aimed at during the next quarter. In Newcastle-under-Lyme the coordinator discussed attendance records with area supervisors, so that they could adapt their activity programmes if necessary.

Some authorities gave reasons for their lack of monitoring or for not using the records collected, the most common being lack of staff time. Several
commented that any record keeping beyond basic numerical data was time-consuming, and that other priorities precluded it. As one explained:

"The enormity of recording detailed information on a daily basis was under-estimated .... time spent on accurate monitoring could equally well be spent in making contact with people and actively encouraging the sort of participation levels so eagerly sought after."

Some authorities also felt that keeping attendance records might deter users, especially the unemployed who might be suspicious and question why the information was wanted. Others simply saw no point in detailed records, either because all the users were well known anyway, or because user characteristics were seen as irrelevant:

"This kind of information is not for the scheme I'm running - I'm concerned with numbers - putting bums on seats."

In summary, few schemes were monitored in any detail, with records usually confined to basic attendance data. Even where detailed information was collected, few authorities used it in developing their provision. Sports leadership schemes were the best monitored and in some the monitoring process was an important ingredient in the successful development of the scheme. The main constraint on data collection and analysis was lack of staff time, which is itself symptomatic of the low priority accorded to monitoring.

4.6 Evaluation of provision by scheme managers

This section considers the evaluation of provision by scheme managers, and the problems and successes they experienced. The opinions of users are examined in Chapter 5.

The questionnaire survey asked authorities to give details of any ways in which their schemes had proved particularly successful. The ways in which providers defined success needs some consideration, since very few had measurable targets by which to evaluate progress, or explicitly considered
their success in terms of defined aims and objectives. It was obvious, however, that most viewed success in terms of numbers. However, low usage did not inevitably imply failure, since the size of the target group depended on the unemployment rate in the area concerned:

"Success is not determined by numbers. Crawley has an unusually low level of unemployment. Therefore there is not a great number of people who will be able to take advantage (of the scheme). However, feedback tells us that those who do, enjoy and appreciate the opportunities."

For some the definition of success changed over time; Halton Borough Council considered that

"The yardstick by which success is measured needs to subtly alter as the scheme progresses"

as the scheme's emphasis changed from attracting users to ensuring the continuity of self-supporting clubs. Finally, one authority defined success purely in terms of avoiding expected problems:

"Centre is virtually vandal-free."

Table 4.5 summarises the ways in which providers felt their schemes were most successful. Increased usage of facilities was mentioned by the greatest proportion - 37% overall. Leadership schemes were most successful in this respect - over half resulted in increased usage, as did 40% of concession card schemes. Some authorities quoted figures to substantiate this:

"60-70% of the unemployed in the area use it"

"estimated 20,000 admissions in 1985/6"

"In the first year the scheme achieved 14,462 visits; more than any other comparable scheme achieved in its first year."
Table 4.5  Ways in which schemes proved successful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of authorities</th>
<th>% of those responding (n = 200)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No success/less than expected</td>
<td>50 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased use (of facilities or by target groups)</td>
<td>75 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific activities</td>
<td>58 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(includes swimming leagues/competitions)</td>
<td>27 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits for the unemployed</td>
<td>27 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increased usage was viewed as a success in two ways. Firstly, many authorities were genuinely satisfied that they had helped the unemployed to participate; several said they had attracted those not usually associated with sports centres:

"It is felt that since the introduction of the scheme those persons who were unemployed and would not normally have used the facilities have been attracted to do just that. More and more unemployed persons are using the facilities on a regular basis at off peak times."

However, four providers of Type 1 price concessions said that no new unemployed users had been attracted; rather increased usage resulted from existing users altering the time they attended to take advantage of the concessions:

"There is a strong impression that the main beneficiaries are the people who are already regular users, rather than the target groups such as the unemployed."

Other authorities were less concerned with increased usage from the users' point of view, but rather saw it as a bonus for the authority in that extra income accrued through the usage of otherwise empty facilities:

"The scheme has been most successful in dramatically improving the usage of facilities in daytime hours, Monday to Friday."

Secondly, 29% of respondents mentioned specific activities which were successful in attracting target groups. By far the most common was swimming, cited by 27 authorities, of whom half said that it was the only activity attracting sizeable numbers, especially those providing Type 2 price concessions. Other popular activities included weights, and leagues and competitions, especially in football:

"The biggest stimulus is organised competitions - the competitive element is the most crucial part of the whole thing."

"The interest of the local paper proved very successful in promoting the leagues. At the end of each session each team was sent a copy of the results and a current league table. Great interest was shown."
No other single activity was mentioned in the questionnaire returns as being particularly successful by more than 3 authorities. However, comments from the stage 2 interviews showed that aerobics, popmobility and netball were very popular for women. Where it had been tried, self defence for women was also popular, and among young unemployed men football was a universal success, even to the despair of one or two authorities who were attempting to wean them off their staple diet:

"A programme of football night and day would be used - all the other activities are disappointing."

Thirdly, 13% of authorities said that they had been successful in terms of providing a range of social, financial and psychological benefits for the unemployed, or simply in providing a scheme which they enjoyed. Stirling District Sports Council's outdoor pursuits trips

"seemed to charge up their batteries and get them motivated ... they came back almost transformed."

and the coordinator of Newcastle-under-Lyme's Recreation Project said of the scheme:

"We've certainly helped a lot of individuals at a crucial point in their life .... it's brought people together, people who would have been isolated. The main thing is, people enjoy it."

Organised sessions were particularly successful at establishing a group identity among a regular group of core users, and Birmingham City Council's concession card had a similar effect:

"One advantage of the Passport scheme is that it has helped to develop a sense of belonging or club atmosphere with improved social and psychological benefits."

Authorities running leadership schemes identified other successful aspects of provision, such as the employment provided for sports leaders (and for users who subsequently became leaders themselves), and enhanced job prospects for users who took coaching or community sports leader awards. A
number of leadership schemes were also successful in handing over the running of sessions and leagues to the unemployed:

"We feel that the scheme has been particularly successful in assisting in the creation and development of clubs and associations within the area, and developing groups which have eventually become self-sufficient."

However, despite the many examples of successful aspects of provision, a quarter of responding authorities said that there were no ways in which their schemes were successful, or that they had been much less successful than expected. This proportion varied between 35% of authorities running concession card schemes to only 2 out of 28 running leadership schemes. Typical comments included:

"Can't claim any success."

"Only one user last week."

"The scheme is not successful. eg. 4000 unemployed, anticipated take-up 1000, actual take-up 50."

Several authorities were obviously disappointed at what their provision had achieved, but this in itself depended on the targets which were set for evaluating performance, and whether expectations were realistic in the first place.

Some providers gave reasons for their limited success. In some cases it was attributed to poor marketing and publicity, often because they were accorded low priority:

"Schemes cannot claim to be successful as they have not been comprehensively developed and marketed. Opportunist development only."

For many, the apathy of the unemployed resulted in poor uptake and some
questioned whether the unemployed were interested in sport:

"I would say the scheme has not been particularly successful due to apathy by the unemployed."

"The response has been disappointing. It seems that people who are unemployed choose to spend their money on other things, their priorities are not sport."

Stigma was another reason for lack of success:

"Only a few regular users - unemployment here is low and remains a stigma."

The questionnaire survey also asked authorities what problems they had encountered in running their schemes. Over a third stated that they faced no problems at all, but the remaining 65% did encounter difficulties, as summarised in Table 4.6. Apathy on the part of the unemployed was the most common problem, mentioned by 16% of authorities. This resulted in low levels of usage, or usage which fluctuated for no apparent reason, making forward planning difficult:

"Difficulty involving group usage - general apathy of unemployed persons - tend to use the facilities in ones or twos on irregular occasions."

"Despite repeated attempts to increase numbers a common core use the facilities for both casual and organised use ... apathy."

Apathy was a problem common to all types of scheme but was remarked upon most by providers of leadership schemes, possibly because the closer contact with users and the planning of organised sessions made usage patterns more obvious. Several authorities felt that the unemployed were the hardest of all target groups to reach, especially certain sub-groups of the unemployed such as young women:

"(The unemployed are) a difficult group to motivate. Only a few become committed and it is difficult to reach this target group's needs."
Table 4.6 Problems which authorities encountered in running their schemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of authorities</th>
<th>% of those responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathy or irregular use by unemployed</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain groups being excluded</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff problems</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline or rowdyness</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of cards/UB40's</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to facilities</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second most common problem was the exclusion of certain groups from provision. With one exception this was a problem solely for authorities operating Type 2 price concessions or concession cards, and was mentioned by a quarter of the latter. Problems arose when groups such as the families of the unemployed, other disadvantaged groups, unemployed people without UB40 cards, and most commonly, people not resident in the local authority area, were not allowed the concessions. Many authorities had problems deciding "how far down the line" to go in terms of eligibility for their concessions, and in balancing the dual objectives of removing the barriers to participation in an equitable and yet practicable way, and maintaining a reasonable income. A survey conducted by Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council of users of their price concession found that:

"One of the main problems of the scheme is that a number of groups are excluded. The most obvious one is the families of the unemployed people .... this appears to be a major drawback of the system and one for which a simple solution is hard to find. I think that socially it is right that un-earning families of unemployed people should be allowed free access but major problems of identification occur."

Ten per cent of responding authorities, mostly those running leadership schemes, experienced problems relating to staffing. These mainly concerned the shortcomings of one year MSC contracts, and problems with existing facility staff examined in section 4.4 above.

A further 10% of authorities faced problems of "rowdyness" or discipline, including misuse of equipment and facilities, and abuse of staff. In some cases this had a detrimental effect on paying custom:

"Free swimming resulted in the loss of regular clientele because of the boisterous attitude, bad language and the 'weekly bath' of certain unemployed."

There was some evidence that free use, as opposed to levying a small charge, increased the likelihood of trouble:

"Initially some abuse of equipment, facilities and staff by a proportion of the unemployed who, because it was free, placed little or no value on the service."
Many authorities who experienced discipline problems pointed out that only a minority of users caused trouble and the problems could usually be overcome:

"We therefore had to exercise greater control of those using the facilities and place a ban on certain individuals. This resulted in a return by some regulars and most of the unemployed have been welcomed back as they changed their attitude to the scheme."

Seven per cent of authorities also had problems with users abusing entrance regulations; this applied only to providers of Type 2 and Type 4 schemes where entrance was restricted to those with UB40s or concession cards:

"The UB40 cards are not returnable once a person returns to work, therefore we had problems with a) changing of names/initials on cards and b) people still using them when they became employed."

"Some misuse of cards ie. passing to friends in busy pay-box queue."

Some unemployed people rose to heights of ingenuity which even impressed the local authority concerned, by devising a scheme whereby cardholders inside the sports centre dropped their cards from a first floor window to waiting but ineligible friends below!

The problem of transport was common to all scheme types. Where fares for the unemployed were not subsidised, transport costs could be high enough to prohibit use of a scheme, even if access to facilities was offered free. Transport was a particular problem in more rural authorities, or where facilities were few and inaccessible by public transport. Some authorities also commented on the reluctance of the unemployed to travel, for example:

"The recreationally disadvantaged will not travel to events ... the quality of the facility is usually overridden by its proximity to potential participants."

For leadership schemes, transport of staff and equipment between sessions was also a problem.
Gaining access to suitable facilities was another difficulty encountered by many authorities running leadership schemes, as considered in section 4.2.2 above. Several scheme managers were resentful at being treated by facility managers as "second cousins", and not being given, or being able to afford to buy, access to facilities at the times most desired.

A variety of other problems were mentioned, such as finance, gaining initial contact with target groups, the time-consuming nature of administration, and the stigma felt by unemployed users, but none of these was cited by more than 10 authorities. The problem of stigma among users of Type 2 schemes was generally less extensive than might have been expected, although the reaction of users to having to show a UB40 card varied enormously. Carrickfergus Borough Council

"experienced in practice all the theory you read about"

whereas by contrast Warrington District Council commented

"We have no evidence to suggest that stigma has prevented use of the scheme, or that users are sensitive to it."

The survey of users of Bolton's price concession scheme found that only 1 out of 70 respondents objected to showing their UB40, although obviously this does not take account of any potential users who were deterred from using the scheme altogether because of the stigma involved. It is also worth noting that many authorities who had changed from Type 2 to Type 1 or 4 schemes, had done so because of problems of stigma.

Finally authorities were asked what, if any, feedback they had received from unemployed users. Nearly half had received no feedback at all, and of those who had, nearly two thirds simply said that it had been "good" or "appreciative". Only a small number had received comments or criticisms on particular issues, the main ones being the need to include families in Type 2 concessions, and a general dissatisfaction with the off peak restriction
In many schemes. The survey in Bolton found that:

"The overwhelming majority of respondents who expressed a dislike of the scheme were dissatisfied with the restricted hours they were able to take part in activities."

In summary, over a third of authorities viewed their schemes as successful in increasing usage, although in some cases this reflected greater use by existing users rather than by target groups. Schemes were also perceived as successful in providing popular activities, and in helping reduce the psychological stresses, and especially the social isolation, of unemployment. However, a quarter of authorities were disappointed with their achievements, and two thirds experienced problems with their provision. The most common problem was the apathy of the unemployed. For leadership schemes, the other major problem was staffing, and for Type 2 and Type 4 schemes, the exclusion of certain groups and abuse of entry regulations. Few providers were totally satisfied with their schemes or felt that they had all the answers, and even the leaders of the most apparently successful schemes had a realistic attitude about their achievements:

"We never feel we've achieved it (success) - however good the figures. Overall there's been a lot of plusses, but there's so much more to be done."

4.7 Future plans for provision

An examination of the ways in which authorities perceived their provision for the unemployed developing in the future shows that in the short term very little is likely to change. Nearly a third of those responding had no definite plans for the future, and a quarter intended simply to continue their provision in its present form. A further 10% said their schemes were under review and four said that lack of finance prevented them from developing their provision.

Seventeen per cent of authorities intended to expand their present schemes.
In some way, generally by extending the times of operation, increasing the number of facilities used and the range of activities provided, and allowing more groups to become eligible. Five authorities, four offering Type 2 schemes, intended to place much greater emphasis on promotion and publicity.

Very few authorities planned fundamental changes in provision. Only 16 had definite plans to introduce new types of scheme, to replace or supplement existing provision. Three-quarters of these were currently operating Type 2 price concessions, suggesting a low level of satisfaction with this type of scheme. Six authorities planned to introduce concession cards to overcome the problems of stigma and defining eligibility, and seven planned to introduce organised sessions. The decline in the number of Type 2 price concessions and the increase in organised sessions and concession card schemes supports the evidence cited in Chapter 3 which showed a similar pattern emerging from the data on scheme starting dates.

4.8 Summary of Chapter

In many authorities, especially those running price concessions, there was a somewhat uncommitted or "take it or leave it" attitude to provision, reflected in a lack of research before starting schemes, ignorance regarding the cost of provision, the use of inappropriate publicity tools, and a lack of stringent monitoring. This lack of commitment often reflected the initial reasons for starting schemes, as a political or token gesture or to benefit the authority rather than the unemployed. Many authorities were frustrated at the apathy with which their schemes were greeted by the unemployed, and yet had signally failed to establish what their target group really wanted, and held unrealistic expectations of what could be achieved with such a modicum of effort.

The sports leadership schemes stood out as different in many respects. Because they demanded a greater commitment from the providing authorities in terms of financial and human resources, they were generally better researched, publicised and monitored, and their leaders more perceptive in
viewing success other than in purely numerical terms. Leadership schemes had their share of problems, notably concerned with using the Community Programme to employ staff, but in general they were underpinned both by more realism and more enthusiasm than the other types of provision.
Chapter 5  The case studies

This chapter examines the seven case study schemes with particular reference to usage patterns, user characteristics and users' opinions of provision. The key issues emerging from each study are considered.

5.1 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council - Off peak price concession for all users. (Type 1)

5.1.1 Background to the scheme and monitoring.

The Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley has a population of 169,000, and unemployment is a severe problem. At the time of the survey the local unemployment rate was 24.2%, compared to the national average of 13.7%; in some parts of the borough it reached 27.8%.

The Leisure Services Department of Knowsley Borough Council controls four leisure centres and two swimming pools. Provision for the unemployed began in 1981 when the council introduced a Type 2 price concession scheme, whereby on production of a UB40 all activities were available at off peak times for 20p. However, there was strong pressure from the general public to extend the scheme to include the families of the unemployed and also other disadvantaged groups, especially given the widespread deprivation throughout the borough. Therefore in 1984 the council introduced the current concession scheme which is available to all off peak users, with no proof of identity being required. The scheme operates between 9am-12pm and 2-4pm on weekdays during school term time, when all activities are available at a flat rate of 25p per person for the allotted time span. In the school holidays some centres continue the scheme; others operate it on a restricted basis or abandon it altogether.

The scheme is publicised by leaflets and posters in sports facilities, libraries, information centres and the council offices. However, little evidence of any publicity material was seen during the fieldwork period.
The scheme has two aims. First and foremost it aims to increase the opportunities for disadvantaged groups to participate in sport, especially those

"with plenty of time on their hands who don't generally have much money floating about"

and in particular the unemployed. The second objective is to increase facility usage at off peak times.

The scheme was monitored for this project in the following ways. Firstly a self-completion questionnaire survey was conducted for a week at all the facilities (Appendix 3). It was intended that the receptionists would hand out questionnaires to all off peak users, but in practice the number of questionnaires distributed varied with the enthusiasm of individual receptionists. Of the 1155 handed out, 682 (59%) were returned, a sample of approximately 16% of all off peak users. Secondly, informal interviews were conducted with off peak users in all facilities, in particular with unemployed users. Facility managers and local authority officers with responsibility for the operation and promotion of the scheme were also interviewed. Finally, numerical records of off peak usage already kept by centres were examined, and the centres were also observed for their general atmosphere and amount of activity during daytime hours.

5.1.2 Usage of the scheme

Table 5.1 shows the annual off peak usage of each centre since the current scheme began. Clearly usage has increased steadily since the start, and figures for the first three months of the financial year 1986/7 indicated that this trend would continue. Average off peak attendances per month throughout the borough increased from 11,968 in 1984/5, to 15,437 in 1985/6, and stood at 23,394 over the first three months of 1986/7. By comparison, only 2,524 users per month attended the original UB40 scheme in its first five months of operation. The scheme has therefore successfully achieved its secondary aim.
### Table 5.1 Knowsley: off peak usage of sports facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure Centres</th>
<th>1984/5 1</th>
<th>1985/6</th>
<th>1986/7 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgefield Forum</td>
<td>9,555</td>
<td>21,778</td>
<td>4,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huyton</td>
<td>10,096</td>
<td>26,618</td>
<td>15,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby</td>
<td>16,980</td>
<td>24,304</td>
<td>5,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescot</td>
<td>48,579</td>
<td>74,688</td>
<td>30,705</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pools</th>
<th>1984/5 1</th>
<th>1985/6</th>
<th>1986/7 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby</td>
<td>7,623</td>
<td>17,089</td>
<td>5,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotchbarn</td>
<td>14,882</td>
<td>20,767</td>
<td>7,510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total           | 107,715 | 185,244 | 70,182 |

1 Figures for 1984/5 are for 9 months (July–March) only.

2 Figures for 1986/7 are for 3 months (April–June) only.

### Table 5.2 Knowsley: Employment status of off peak users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centres</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Non-employed</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgefield (n=94)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huyton (n=216)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby (n=86)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescot (n=57)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pools</th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby (n=116)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotchbarn (n=113)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, it is important to establish the proportion of users who were unemployed and thus the extent to which the scheme fulfilled its primary aim. Unemployed users as a proportion of all users varied greatly between centres, from only 18% at Bridgefield Forum to 45% at Kirkby Sports Centre, but it is significant that at all but one of the facilities, those in employment constituted a much greater proportion of total usage than the unemployed (Table 5.2). For example at Scotchbarn Pool, 44% of off peak users were in employment, but only 19% unemployed. Thus, although generating impressive usage levels overall, the scheme has not greatly benefitted the unemployed, except at Kirkby Sports Centre.

By combining off peak usage figures for the week prior to the survey with the proportion of users who were unemployed, an estimate was also made of the number of unemployed off peak users per week. Approximately 1,160 unemployed people a week used the centres, representing only 5.8% of the registered unemployed in the borough. Furthermore, the other target groups have not been attracted in large numbers; in all but one of the centres housewives accounted for less than 25% of users, and at all facilities usage by the retired and those on government training schemes was minimal.

However, off peak users generally, and the unemployed in particular, were regular users of the scheme. In all centres at least three quarters of those responding to the questionnaire had used the scheme in the previous four weeks, and at five centres over half the users had attended twice or more (Table 5.3). At Kirkby Sports Centre, 45% of users had attended five or more times in the previous four weeks. In addition, the majority of daytime users only attended at off peak times (Table 5.4); at all centres less than half attended in the evening as well, this proportion varying from 14% to 44%. The unemployed were as likely as all other users to attend in the evening, but they were much less likely to do so on a regular basis.

Swimming was by far the most popular activity; even at the centres offering "dry" sports as well nearly two thirds of users swam. Where swimming was not available weights was most popular, followed by badminton and squash.
Table 5.3  Knowsley: Off peak users - frequency of attendance

% of sample at each centre  
Number of times users had attended centre at daytime rate during 4 weeks prior to the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>2-4 times</th>
<th>5 or more times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgefield (n=94)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huyton (n=216)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby (n=86)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescot (n=57)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby Pool (n=116)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotchbarn Pool (n=113)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4  Knowsley: Off peak users - attendance after 5pm

% of sample at each centre  
Number of times users had attended centre after 5pm during 4 weeks prior to the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>2-4 times</th>
<th>5 or more times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgefield (n=94)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huyton (n=216)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby (n=86)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescot (n=57)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby Pool (n=116)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotchbarn Pool (n=113)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Official publicity was ineffective in attracting new users to the scheme. When asked how they had first heard of the scheme, no more than 6% of users reported that they had found out by official promotion (Table 5.5); at Kirkby Pool no one had heard by this means. In all but one centre over 70% of users first found out either by word of mouth (through friends, colleagues or family), or by chance when they arrived at the centre. At all centres some users said they had never heard of the scheme (despite using it!) or that they had only found out on the day of the survey. At most centres the unemployed were even less likely to have heard via official publicity.

Finally, the survey gave information on the age and sex of users. At three facilities men outnumbered women, but at the facilities with pools women were more dominant, reflecting the number of housewives and part time workers among the clientele. Unemployed users, however, were predominantly male; in four centres over 70% of unemployed users were male. Users in general were most commonly aged 20-24 or 30-44, but unemployed users were younger, with nearly all in the age range 16-29. There were very few unemployed users over 30.

5.1.3 Reactions of users to the scheme.

The vast majority of users were generally satisfied with the scheme:

"The set-up for the unemployed is very good; cheap and great all round."

For many the scheme was obviously important in removing the financial barrier to participation:

"We couldn't afford to come at 75p"

"I realized if I came off peak it would save me 45p as I come swimming nearly every day. This was quite a saving being unemployed."

Most felt that the 25p charge was very good value. Hardly any felt that provision should be free, except for a small number of unemployed users.
Table 5.5  Knowsley: How off peak users heard of the scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Word of mouth</th>
<th>Chance</th>
<th>Official promotion</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Never heard</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgefield (n=94)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huyton (n=216)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby (n=86)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescot (n=57)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkby Pool (n=116)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotchbern Pool (n=113)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only a minority of users simply switched their time of attendance to take advantage of the off peak rates; most found that the off peak rates allowed them to participate more frequently, thus increasing their usage of facilities:

"We came once a week, now we come 5 times a week."

"The off peak charges do encourage you to use it more often."

It was also apparent that the off peak rate had attracted many new users; many were previously unenthusiastic about sport, but had become keen participants:

"I used to hate it (swimming) and never thought of it until my friend suggested it - now there's no looking back."

"I used to play sport at school but never really liked it, now I come quite often to do weights and play five-a-side - it's very sociable."

Other unemployed people used the cheap rates not because of a positive wish to play sport, but simply as something to occupy time:

"Good value, something to do, the only way of entertaining myself unless watching TV"

"We come regularly to play football - a whole pile of us - it helps to pass the time - there's nothing else to do."

The scheme also gave those who were keen on sport a chance to maintain their fitness and training throughout unemployment:

"I appreciate being really fit. Being unemployed gives me loads of time to train. I come nearly every day to do weights, run and maybe play squash - I've been training all my life."

For some therefore, and especially the unemployed, the scheme was very important, helping to reduce the monotony and lack of purpose associated
with unemployment. As one unemployed lad expressed it:

"We seem to spend our life here when we're not working."

However although users were generally satisfied, there were some issues which raised criticism. First and foremost was the poor promotion of the scheme. Comments from users reaffirmed the questionnaire findings that many people only found out about the scheme by chance:

"Came in one day .... and tendered 70p only to be told it was 25p before noon. It was quite by accident."

"Have used the leisure centre for years but only found out by trial and error."

Both the location and design of publicity were criticised. Promotion outside the facilities was felt to be particularly poor, with many users only finding out about the scheme once they were in the centres:

"Unless they actually come into the centres they won't know about it - nothing whatsoever is promoted outside."

The publicity within centres was also felt to be inadequate, in that it did not explain clearly the times when the scheme operated; as a result many users were confused:

"Surprised today to find 50p extra charges between 12 and 2pm"

"When we come to pay at the cash desk sometimes its 70p, sometimes 25p"

Others criticised the design of the "Dive" and "Shoot" leaflets, as being uninspiring, dull and outdated:

"Quite frankly the advertising is pathetic. What inspiration have you to go to a centre from some of these posters they put up?"
"It's pathetic promotion ... it's not surprising people are so ignorant ... look at it - no encouragement, bland coloured... it just merges in"

This was echoed by one facility manager who referring to the "shoot" leaflets commented:

"These things are basically used for turning over and writing on the back"

The second aspect of the scheme which some users criticised was the exclusion of lunchtimes and school holidays. Several felt the scheme should be extended:

"I would like to see off peak hours extended during school holidays"

"I think the facilities should be available at the price 25p for all day long to unemployed people"

The third area of criticism related to the inaccessibility of Bridgefield Forum. Situated away from the centre of the town, and with a walk down a wooded path from the nearest bus stop, its location deterred many users, especially women and the unemployed without their own transport:

"It is far too out of the way for frequent use"

"Most people do have to have transport to get here, therefore we do tend to attract the middle aged working person or wife thereof."

5.1.4 Summary of Key Issues

Usage of scheme

There is no doubt that the scheme was successful in achieving its secondary aim of increasing facility use at off peak times. Daytime usage of all facilities has shown a steady increase, without any loss in peak time usage. The council stress that running the scheme has cost them nothing, since the increased usage and the spin-off effects on income from vending
machines, catering and bars have compensated for the lower prices. Usage has increased both by new users being attracted and by existing users coming more frequently, and the scheme has generated a number of committed users who were generally satisfied with the provision.

Attraction the target group.

However, the scheme was much less successful in achieving its primary aim of increasing participation from recreationally disadvantaged groups, and in particular the unemployed. Although some centres attracted a reasonable number of unemployed users, target group usage was far exceeded by those in employment. However, unemployed users were more committed to the scheme than users generally, and it was obvious that for those who did attend, it fulfilled an important role, whether allowing an interest in sport to be maintained or developed, or simply providing a reason to get out of the house.

Publicity

Any success, however, has been achieved in spite of, rather than because of, the efforts of Knowsley Borough Council to promote their provision. Poor promotion was the main reason why the scheme did not attract more unemployed users; as so few users had heard about it through formal publicity there seems little chance that non-users have heard of it. The council failed to use appropriate outlets for their publicity, and their promotional material was poorly designed, and, by their own admission, not targeted at the unemployed or other disadvantaged groups. The scheme only received a small slice of the department's promotions budget, and facility managers criticised the laissez-faire attitude of the council towards promotion.
Operation of the scheme

A key benefit of the scheme was its simplicity, especially compared to its predecessor. As one of the officers commented:

"It's a very, very simple scheme and you need a simple scheme both from the operators' and the customers' point of view - you don't want cumbersome, complicated things."

Unfortunately, due to poor publicity some of this innate simplicity was lost, and some users were confused over the times the scheme operated. If the scheme were extended to include lunch hours this would help overcome the problem.

The council made a definite decision to levy a charge, rather than offer free usage. This was for psychological rather than financial reasons, because it was felt that users would appreciate the facilities more if they paid for them. A nominal charge was also felt to be a form of control to prevent "people wandering in and out". In both these respects the charge was successful, in that there was no reported abuse of the scheme or of facilities, and users did place a definite value on the concession.

5.2 Belfast City Council - Concessionary membership scheme (Type 4)

5.2.1 Background to the scheme

Northern Ireland has long experienced high levels of unemployment, and with the recent collapse of the man-made fibre and petrochemical industries the problem has become more acute and more widespread. At the time of this research 18.6% of the workforce in the Province were unemployed, of whom 30,762 (25%) lived in Belfast. Long term unemployment is a particular problem; in May 1986, 74% of unemployed men in Belfast had been out of work for 6 months or more and nearly half for at least a year.
The Leisure Services Department of Belfast City Council owns an impressive range of sports facilities, graded in tiers according to size and activities available. There are four Tier 1 major Leisure Centres, four smaller Tier 2 Leisure Centres, and six Tier 3 neighbourhood Recreation Centres. In addition there are four separate swimming pools.

All the facilities operate membership schemes, and concessionary membership for the unemployed was first introduced in 1982. The scheme aims to increase awareness of the facilities available to the unemployed and to encourage them to make greater use of these facilities, especially at off peak times. The council was concerned that cost should not be a barrier to participation, and that provision should be made without the stigma of showing a UB40 card on each attendance. As a result a special category of membership was introduced for the unemployed. Membership cards, valid for 3 months, are available free on production of a UB40 card and photograph. The card is valid only at the issuing centre but an individual can hold more than one centre membership. The benefits of this free membership for the unemployed are summarised in Table 5.6. Promotion of the scheme is mainly the responsibility of the individual centres, although the Leisure Services Department has produced leaflets, and funded television adverts to give the scheme an occasional extra boost.

5.2.2 Monitoring

It was impossible, given resource constraints, to monitor the scheme at all facilities. Three centres were therefore selected for detailed monitoring, one from each tier of provision, in consultation with the City Council: Shankill (Tier 1), Whiterock (Tier 2), and Stadium (Tier 3). All are in areas of high unemployment in West Belfast; Shankill and Stadium in a Protestant area and Whiterock in a Catholic district. It should be stressed that because the benefits of membership vary so much between centres the results should not be interpreted as representative of the whole scheme.

The scheme was monitored in the following ways. Firstly, in order to identify usage patterns of individual cardholders, detailed records were kept of all attendances by unemployed concessionary members over a 4 week
Table 5.6 Belfast: Details of concessionary membership scheme

| Membership | Free to the unemployed (compared to £5.60 for standard adult membership). |
| Entitles card holder to: |
| Entry | Free entry to centre (charges for non-members of 15-40p). |
| Sessions | 1) Free or low-cost daytime sessions for the unemployed.  
2) 50% reduction at 'special activity sessions' for all users, held at most centres at peak and off peak times. Often include coaching. |
| Booking | Advance telephone booking of facilities. |
| Hire | Free equipment hire. |

Availability of organised sessions varies between centres.
All centres also operate a cheap off peak rate (usually 1/2 price) between 9am-12pm and 2-4pm, Monday to Friday, for all users.
period. Secondly, a self-completion questionnaire survey of all daytime users was conducted at each centre for a week (see Appendix 3). As in Knowsley, coverage in practice was incomplete, but in total 490 questionnaires were returned. Thirdly, informal interviews were held with unemployed users at the three centres. Finally, membership records held by the City Council for all centres in Belfast were examined, and discussions held with officers of the Leisure Services Department and staff at the centres.

Due to the unavoidable timing of the fieldwork in the summer, the monitoring gave less information than was hoped. In addition to the usual decline in usage over the summer all organised sessions for the unemployed had also ceased. Summer playschemes at Whiterock and Shankill centres further deterred unemployed users, and political tensions also limited the amount of fieldwork which could be carried out.

5.2.3 Usage of the scheme

To place the three centres in context Table 5.7 shows total and concessionary membership of all centres in Belfast at the time of the survey. Both total and unemployed membership varied greatly between centres. In total there were 1,821 unemployed concessionary memberships in June 1986, but even if these were held by separate individuals this only represents 6% of the registered unemployed in the city. Thus, although the scheme was fairly widely publicised, only a small proportion of the city's unemployed used it. Moreover, although unemployed membership throughout the city increased from 1984/5 to 1985/6, there was a decline in the first few months of 1986; in June 1986 there were actually fewer unemployed members than in June 1985 (1,821 compared to 2,017).

Data from the three case study centres further illustrates this. The scheme was well publicised at all centres by posters and newspaper adverts; in addition at both Shankill and Whiterock staff handed out literature and had informal discussions with the unemployed at Benefit Offices. However, despite this, only an estimated 1% of the unemployed in the catchment area
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>No. of unemployed concessionary members</th>
<th>Total centre membership</th>
<th>Unemployed membership as a % of total membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andersonstown</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoniel</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maysfield</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shankhill</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1393</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballysillan</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beachmount</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiterock</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tier 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymacarett</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grosvenor</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughside</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ormeau</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaftesbury</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadium</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No figures available for Andersonstown.
of Whiterock Leisure Centre, and 5% in that of Stadium, had taken out concessionary membership.

Underusage of the scheme is partly attributable to lax admission procedures which reduced the incentive for the unemployed to become members. At Whiterock concessions were allowed on production of a UB40 card and at the Stadium, until January 1986, entrance charges were not made because of the centre's location in a poor working class area. The unemployed were also allowed the benefits of advance booking even if not members. The management subsequently tightened up on membership requirements and as a result unemployed membership of the centre increased from 25 in June 1985 to 170 in June 1986.

The questionnaire returns also showed that there were several unemployed users at each centre who were not members. At Whiterock only 6 out of the 31 unemployed respondents were members and at Shankill 14 out of 33. However, unemployed users, whether members or not, were the largest category of questionnaire respondents at both Stadium and Whiterock, accounting for 26% and 29% of respondents respectively; to use concessionary membership as an indication of the overall usage of facilities by the unemployed is therefore misleading and underestimates the true situation.

Turning now to frequency of usage, unemployed users, whether members or not, attended the centres fairly regularly. On average most cardholders attended weekly or fortnightly (Tables 5.8 and 5.9). However, at both Stadium and Shankill there was a small group of committed users who attended more than once a week. More than a fifth of unemployed users at Shankill and a quarter at Stadium attended 5 or more times over the four weeks; at Stadium nine users came more than twice a week on average. Those who did take out membership at the Stadium centre made good use of it; over 80% of the centre's unemployed membership attended over the monitoring period. At Whiterock and Shankill a much lower proportion of the total unemployed membership attended (55% and 10% respectively). The monitoring only recorded usage by unemployed members who showed their cards; usage by those not showing cards went unrecorded. However, the questionnaire returns
Table 5.8  Belfast: Usage of facilities by unemployed concessionary members

Results over 4 week monitoring period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of unemployed members attending</th>
<th>No. of visits made</th>
<th>Average No. of visits per user</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shankill</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadium</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>c.500</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiterock</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9  Belfast: Unemployed users - frequency of attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of unemployed users (from questionnaire survey)</th>
<th>frequency of attendance over previous 4 weeks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shankill</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiterock</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
showed that all unemployed individuals who had membership cards used them, suggesting that there is no problem of stigma.

Most of the committed, regular users participated in the same activities at the same time each day. At Shankill there was a core group who came regularly to use the weights facilities and the sauna; swimming was also popular. At Whiterock swimming was by far the most popular activity, with a smaller number of unemployed users playing football. Stadium offered a much more limited range of activities, and most users came to play snooker, followed by pool and five a side football.

5.2.4 User characteristics and opinions of the scheme.

The scheme only attracted one sub-group of the unemployed, namely the young, male unemployed. At both Shankill and Stadium over 90% of the cardholders attending were male. The questionnaire returns gave similar findings; male unemployed users outnumbered female at all centres. Unemployed users were also younger than users generally—at both Stadium and Shankill nearly two thirds were between 16 and 24.

Because of the different activities available at the three centres, and their varying locations, each tended to attract slightly different groups of the unemployed, with different motivations. The data which follow are from Stadium and Shankill, as it was only possible to interview a few users at Whiterock. At Shankill all the unemployed users interviewed were male, in their teens and early 20's, and mainly long term unemployed. Most were committed to sport prior to becoming unemployed and took their training seriously, often attending early in the morning for a two hour "work-out". For most the main benefit of the scheme was that it enabled them to maintain their interest in sport and to keep fit while unemployed. It also provided something to do and a reason to get out of the house.

At Stadium only half those interviewed held concessionary membership; some of the remainder gave reasons for not becoming members. Some had never heard of the scheme, but there were several who had heard of it but who still used the centre without taking out membership, mainly because the
scheme did not offer enough benefits to members to make worthwhile the necessary form-filling and providing a photograph and UB40. Apathy was a further deterrent.

Users at Stadium were less likely to be dedicated sportsmen than at Shankill, reflecting the range of activities available. For most, the centre primarily fulfilled a very important social function, with formal sporting activity playing a minor role. Usage was much less structured, with users drifting in and out to play pool, snooker or simply meet with unemployed friends. The importance of the centre as an informal and cheap meeting place is reflected in the fact that, of the three centres, Stadium recorded by far the greatest number of attendances by unemployed people (approximately 500) over the monitoring period.

5.2.5 Issues and conclusions

A very small proportion of the unemployed in Belfast took advantage of the Council's concessionary membership scheme, and as one centre manager expressed it:

"For most practical purposes the unemployed remain a market segment that has only been penetrated to a limited extent."

The monitoring of the scheme suggests various reasons for this. Firstly, as one officer pointed out, sport is an alien activity to many of the unemployed from working class areas in West Belfast, and the sports centre is not part of their culture:

"Their idea of leisure in my opinion is to go to the nearest local and have a pint, or even a bet in the bookies."

Centre managers also commented on the almost universal apathy which greeted their attempts to run organised sessions for the unemployed, suggesting that they disliked structured activities. Many sessions had ceased due to low numbers, and managers concluded that the unemployed preferred to organise their own, for example five-a-side teams.
A second reason for poor take up was that entry regulations were often not enforced, and the unemployed given many of the advantages of membership without joining the scheme. Thirdly, many unemployed users stated that the scheme did not offer enough in the way of concessions or activities to make it attractive and worth their while joining. Linked to this was the fact that the scheme was complicated, with conditions and benefits varying from centre to centre. Several users also complained at the fact that a separate card was needed for each centre.

However, although concessionary membership overall was low, those who had become members did use their cards, without any stigma, and many became regular users of the facilities. In addition, unemployed concessionary membership was a poor indicator of total centre usage by the unemployed, as it was apparent that many unemployed people used the centres regularly without becoming members. However, if unemployed centre users did not bother to take out membership it seems unlikely that the scheme will attract many new unemployed users.

The variation between centres in terms of the activities available makes it hard to generalise about the characteristics of unemployed users. However, the three case study centres only attracted one sub-group - young unemployed men. However, even two centres very close together, Shankill and Stadium, performed very different functions for their unemployed users. Shankill, with an extensive range of modern facilities, tended to attract those who were keen on sport or fitness training per se. Stadium, by contrast, had the oldest and least extensive facilities, but the greatest number of unemployed users, primarily through providing them with an accessible, cheap venue for informal sporting activity and a social meeting place.
5.3 Delyn Borough Council - Fair Play scheme (Type 4)

5.3.1 Background and operation of the scheme

The Borough of Delyn, on the west bank of the Dee estuary, has a population of 65,700, most of whom live in Flint, Mold and Holywell. The Borough comprises both rural areas and heavy industry. It is a low income area generally, with a high proportion of shift workers as well as unemployed people. In March 1986 there were 4,557 registered unemployed people in Delyn, and the unemployment rate for the Travel to Work Area (which includes part of Alyn and Deeside and Rhuddlan boroughs) was 19.9%.

There are three major sports facilities in the Borough: Flint Leisure Centre with both wet and dry facilities; Mold Sports Centre, a dual use centre available to the public at evenings and weekends (except for the squash courts); and Holywell Swimming Pool (which was closed for refurbishment from October 1985 to June 1986) with two pools, a flume, an extensive health suite and solarium.

The current Fair Play scheme was preceded by a scheme entitled "Passport to Play", which consisted of a weekly card offering free off peak usage of a limited range of "dry" activities. However, it was little used, mainly because the facilities included (halls and badminton courts), were inappropriate for casual users attending on their own. In response to this, and facilitated by the creation in 1983 of a Leisure Services Department with a new marketing orientation, "Fair Play" was introduced in October 1984. The scheme intended to improve on "Passport" by including activities which casual users could do on their own. The scheme aimed to increase daytime usage of facilities and to attract additional, regular participants from groups under-represented at sports centres. It was not targeted specifically at the unemployed, since the Chief Leisure Services Officer believed that there was no justification for singling out the unemployed for special treatment in an area with many people on low incomes. A
positive decision was also made to charge for the card, because it was felt that:

"It's important to attach enough value to the ticket for it to have a psychological impact of worth ... "free" usage is the biggest mistake of our profession .. it won't attract participants who'll ultimately benefit, and it isn't free."

The Fair Play card costs £2.00 a week and entitles holders to free use of all the Borough's sports facilities (except the solarium at Flint and the solarium and flume at Holywell) between 10am and 5pm, Monday to Saturday. The card is available to all users, and bears cardholders' names, but no photograph or other proof of identity is needed. Admission to organised sessions, run by the centres or by Operation Sport, is also free, but there is no reduction on the cost of equipment hire. Cardholders can only book facilities 15 minutes in advance, but they are entitled to do as many activities and spend as long in the centres as they wish.

The scheme was extensively promoted at its launch but subsequently only sporadically; leaflets were handed out in the market on one occasion, and adverts have sometimes been placed in the local paper and on local radio. There was little evidence of supposedly continual publicity in the facilities, and the scheme was not mentioned in the publicity for the reopening of Holywell Pool.

5.3.2 Monitoring

The scheme was monitored primarily at Flint Leisure Centre and to a lesser extent at Holywell which only reopened at the time of the fieldwork. Mold was excluded because the facilities were mainly only available outside the times at which Fair Play operated. The monitoring took the following forms. Firstly, existing records of the number of Fair Play cards sold per week, and of the number of attendances by cardholders, were examined. For the month prior to the fieldwork, attendances at Flint by cardholders were also analysed in more detail by activity and by individual cardnumber per week. These records probably underestimate total usage as some cardholders failed to get a ticket from reception for every activity. Secondly, a self
completion questionnaire survey was conducted over a four week period at Flint and Holywell (see Appendix 3). Questionnaires were handed to all users buying Fair Play cards, and in total 141 were returned. Finally, informal interviews with cardholders were carried out at Flint Leisure Centre, and the operation of the scheme and the general atmosphere of the centre were also observed.

5.3.3 Sales of Fair Play cards

From its inception Fair Play sold many more cards than the previous Passport scheme (see Table 5.10). In the first six months of operation, sales of Fair Play cards at Flint increased by 25% over Passport sales; and in the second six months by 66%. Monthly sales of cards peaked at 424 in April 1986, but subsequently declined, with only 49 cards per week being sold in May. At Holywell in the first three weeks following reopening, sales averaged 56 per week, some no doubt due to the novelty value of the pool.

The questionnaire survey showed that most people buying Fair Play cards were very committed to the scheme and bought cards regularly. Ninety five per cent of respondents at Flint had had Fair Play cards before, and nearly two thirds of these had bought one every week in the previous four weeks. Unemployed users were even more committed - all of them had bought cards before, and over two thirds had bought one every week. The informal interviews with cardholders at Flint also showed that users were committed. Over half of those interviewed bought a card every week, while several others did so as often as other commitments (such as education or shift work) allowed. About a quarter had been buying Fair Play cards for over a year.

5.3.4 Usage of Fair Play cards

Having looked at the sales of Fair Play cards, this section examines the number of attendances made by cardholders, and their preferred activities. Table 5.11 shows the total number of attendances made by Passport and Fair Play cardholders at Flint since April 1984. During the first six months of
Table 5.10  Delyn: Sales of Fair Play cards at Flint Leisure Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Passport</th>
<th>Fair Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of cards sold</td>
<td>1122</td>
<td>1416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly sales</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weekly sales</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.11  Delyn: Attendances by Fair Play cardholders at Flint Leisure Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Passport</th>
<th>Fair Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of attendances</td>
<td>3426</td>
<td>7752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly attendance</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>1292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weekly attendance</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fair Play attendances doubled, but have since remained constant at about 300 per week, although there was a decline in May/June 1986 reflecting the drop in card sales.

Just as most cardholders bought cards regularly, most also made good use of their cards throughout the week. The questionnaire returns for Flint showed that over 90% of those who had had cards before used them 3 or more days a week, with a fifth coming to the centre every day. Unemployed users attended even more regularly, with more than a quarter using their cards daily.

These findings are substantiated by the detailed attendance records at Flint Leisure Centre for the four week period 12 May to 8 June 1986. Cardholders made an average of four attendances per week over the period, but nearly a third attended 5 or more times per week, and 15% attended more than daily (Table 5.12). General observation of the centre also showed that cardholders made good use of the facilities, with several coming every day, and many of the unemployed basing their day around the centre and doing 2 or 3 activities in the course of a visit.

Turning now to the activities undertaken, the vast majority of cardholders at Holywell used the pool and the health suite, but nearly half also used Flint pool, and over a third the sauna and weights room at Flint. The attendance records at Flint showed that over the four week period swimming accounted for the greatest proportion of attendances followed by the sauna and weights (Table 5.13). In terms of the percentage of cardholders taking part in each activity, however, the sauna accounted for the greatest number of users, suggesting that, as might be expected, the sauna was used by a large number of cardholders less frequently, whereas a smaller group took part in weights and swimming but more regularly. The questionnaire survey showed that among unemployed cardholders, however, weights was the most popular, with 22 of the 23 unemployed respondents taking part. Users on average did as many as 3 different activities with their last card; unemployed users did four.
### Table 5.12 Delyn: Fair Play cardholders - frequency of attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendances over 4 weeks</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5.13 Delyn: Activities done by Fair Play cardholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of total attendances</th>
<th>% of cardholders doing activity (n=197)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauna</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weights</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised sessions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.5 User characteristics and their opinions of the scheme

The scheme succeeded in attracting its target groups. The unemployed accounted for the largest proportion of cardholders at both Flint and Holywell; at Flint as many as 41% were unemployed (Table 5.14). At Holywell a substantial number of shiftworkers and housewives also used the scheme. Men slightly outnumbered women, accounting for about 59% of cardholders at both centres, but as in Knowsley and Belfast, around three quarters of unemployed users were men. At both centres unemployed users were younger than users generally, about half being under 20, and virtually all under 30. Unemployed users at both centres were more local than users generally.

The informal interviews with cardholders at Flint gave information concerning their motivations for using the scheme and their opinions of the provision. Among the unemployed a major reason for using the scheme was for something to do:

"Sport is better than sitting around in the house all day"

"Otherwise I'd just be at home with the kids"

This was especially apparent in the case of a group of young unemployed girls who spent most of each day in the centre's cafeteria. Some had Fair Play cards and were quite active participants, but most were not interested in sport: they valued the centre as somewhere to go and as a cheap, informal meeting place—the equivalent of a coffee bar—and it played an important social role which nowhere else in the town fulfilled.

Among the male Fair Play cardholders, however, were several committed sportsmen, who used the scheme to maintain their fitness and interest in sport. Many of them came regularly each morning and based their whole day around the centre, in particular the weights room. Many were members of clubs and also participated in sport in the evenings. At both centres over half the questionnaire respondents used the facilities at the normal admission price as well as with their cards.
Table 5.14  Delyn: Employment status of Fair Play cardholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Flint (n=56)</th>
<th>Holywell (n=85)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time employment</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time employment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift worker</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time education</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Virtually all cardholders were very positive about the scheme and about the facilities in general, finding them friendly and informal. Most felt that the Fair Play scheme was good value:

"You can't lose at £2.00"

"Worth buying when unemployed and enjoy sport"

Most stated some way in which they benefitted from the scheme. Some of the unemployed who had used the centre prior to Fair Play commented that they would have used the facilities anyway but the card saved them money:

"Before Fair Play I spent £11-14 a week on the centre - most of my dole money"

Others found that the card enabled them to use the facilities more often, or had encouraged them to use the centres in the first place:

"I wouldn't use the facilities otherwise"

"Without it I would only be able to participate 2 or 3 times a week"

Because the card offered free and unlimited facility usage it was also important in encouraging users to do a wider range of activities:

"Without the ticket I would concentrate on swimming but with it I can do weights and squash as well."

Finally, some users who had previously only used the centre in the evenings stated that with the Fair Play card they could afford to come in the daytime as well, and at least three users simply said:

"It's the best thing that ever happened here"

There were few negative comments about the scheme. Some users felt that, although the card was excellent value, the price should not be increased
further. Most negative comments however were unrelated to Fair Play itself, and concerned the general standard of equipment and facilities. Some cardholders, however, did comment about the poor publicity of the scheme. Many users only heard of Fair Play from centre receptionists, and many of those who had only recently started buying cards had used the facilities at full price for a long time before finding out about Fair Play. Few had seen any publicity material:

"I've never seen it advertised"

"There's only the odd poster around and they still have £1.50 on (the old price)"

The only other criticisms concerned school bookings preventing access by Fair Play cardholders, and the fact that the card could not be used in the evenings. Indeed, the only suggested improvement was that the scheme be extended to include evening use.

5.3.6 Evaluation of the scheme

The results of the monitoring and general observation at the centres showed that there were several successful aspects of the Fair Play scheme, in particular the following:

Usage

The Fair Play scheme succeeded in achieving both its aims, of increasing daytime facility usage and usage among low participant groups, especially the unemployed who comprised the largest category of users at both centres. The scheme was well-liked by users, and most were very committed to it, buying cards regularly and making good use of them. The scheme had encouraged users to participate in a wider range of activities than they would otherwise have considered and to use the centres more frequently. The card had no adverse effects on centre income; no users had switched from daytime to evening usage.
Pricing and control

The evidence suggests that the Borough Council accurately gauged a suitable price for Fair Play cards, making them cheap enough not to deter people but not so cheap as to be devalued. Virtually all users felt that the cards were good value. This may have contributed to the fact that there was little abuse of the scheme. Although users could in theory hand cards around and use some of the dryside facilities without reporting to reception for a ticket, it was felt important to maintain the informality of the scheme, and in addition the colour of the cards was changed every week, which prevented any long term abuse. As one user commented:

"It's good for the unemployed - I thought they'd abuse the scheme and the equipment but they seem to take care of it"

There was no evidence of any stigma attached to the card because it was not seen as something specifically for the unemployed. The scheme was also straightforward to operate, both for users and staff.

Flexibility

An undoubted key to the success of the scheme was its inherent flexibility, allowing cardholders to do as many activities and stay as long as they liked. This suited the needs of a wide range of people - from the unemployed who were often in and out of the centre all day, to those in employment who came to swim at lunchtimes. The atmosphere in the centres was informal and the staff were friendly to all users and often knew the young unemployed personally.

Benefits to users

The scheme benefitted both committed sportsmen and those without any real interest in sport. The centres also played an important role as a social focus for young unemployed girls with no alternative inexpensive meeting places in the vicinity. This has important implications for providers struggling to attract unemployed girls, in that sports facilities can help
meet their needs without necessarily generating their attendance in activities.

There were few problems with the Fair Play scheme, apart from poor publicity and promotion. Many users only heard about the scheme from centre reception, and there was no publicity in evidence during the fieldwork period. Although the council realised that the scheme needed a publicity boost, the opportunity to do so with the reopening of Holywell was lost.

Poor publicity was probably largely to blame for the fact that, despite the satisfaction of users with Fair Play, in absolute terms usage was very low, and even declined in May and June 1986. Staff felt that the recent price increase might have contributed to this, and also the subdued presence of Operation Sport due to the annual staff changeover. Several users expressed surprise that more people did not use the scheme:

"With an excellent opportunity to participate in a variety of sport and at such reasonable rates it's a pity more of the young unemployed in the community are not taking part."

5.4 Kirkcaldy District Council - Leisure Leaders scheme (Type 5)

5.4.1 Background to the scheme and monitoring

Kirkcaldy District, on the North shore of the Firth of Forth, has a population of 150,300, and three main settlements - Kirkcaldy, Methil and Buckhaven, and Glenrothes. The area has suffered decline of its traditional industries, and the oil related industries provided only a temporary respite. In February 1986 there were 11,764 registered unemployed people in the District, and the unemployment rate was 18%, well above the average for Scotland (15.6%), and rising to 24.4% in one ward.

Sports provision for the unemployed in Kirkcaldy began in 1980, when the Council introduced off peak price concessions at recreation facilities. The
scheme, however, was very low key, and was used by very few of those attending the Leisure Leaders scheme.

The Leisure Leaders scheme was introduced in 1981 by the Leisure and Recreation Department of the District Council, who ran it until 1983 when it transferred to the local Community Programme Unit (C.P.U), the managing agency for all MSC funded projects in the district. The main objective of the scheme was to provide leisure activities within local communities, and to encourage participation in local centres. The scheme was initially aimed at the unemployed, but subsequently broadened to include other groups such as mums and toddlers, the retired and young people. A secondary and longer term objective was to encourage "self-help" in the community and the formation of independent, self-sufficient clubs.

The scheme is staffed by ten "Leisure Leaders" - one senior Leisure Leader, three full-time and six part-time workers - all employed through the Community Programme. The MSC pays staff wages, and the Council provided initial funding for equipment, and access to facilities.

The scheme aims to provide "a total package of leisure - both active and passive" and its remit is therefore much broader than sport, although in practice, sporting activities form the mainstay of the programme. At the request of both local councillors and community centre management committees the scheme has gradually expanded and in August 1986 it operated in seven local community centres, in Kirkcaldy, Cardenden, Methil and Buckhaven and Glenrothes. Some centres are open full time; at others the leaders come in only to run specific activity sessions.

Neither the Council nor the C.P.U. kept any attendance records, and therefore Leisure Leaders were asked to keep simple monitoring sheets of attendances and user characteristics at all sessions over a four week period from mid June to mid July 1986 (see Appendix 3). The scheme was also monitored by informal interviews with users, Leisure Leaders and selected supervisory staff at the C.P.U. In addition the scheme was observed in action at each of the centres.
5.4.2 Activities and programming

Table 5.15 summarises the activities provided by the Leisure Leaders scheme at each of the 7 community centres. As noted above, sporting activities dominated the programme, particularly football, badminton, pool and table tennis. The main non-sporting activities were sewing, mothers and toddlers groups, board games, and hairdressing visits. The scheme has also included discussion groups and visiting speakers.

In addition to these regular activities there were also occasional camping, canoeing, sea-fishing and skiing trips. In June 1986 the scheme organised an inter-centre five-a-side football tournament, which was popular both with users, many of whom requested further tournaments incorporating a wider range of activities, and with the leaders who recognised the value of such events in increasing inter-centre contact, and providing a change of environment for users. All the activities provided, except some of the trips, were free, and no proof of identity was required.

The scheme has a flexible approach to the programming of activities. At four of the seven centres users were free to choose what activities they participated in and when, with no timetabled sessions. The other centres timetabled their keep fit sessions, mothers and toddlers and sewing groups, and visits to major sports facilities for swimming. This flexibility was valuable in attracting the young unemployed, as it required no commitment to attend at specific times. Furthermore, the informality was felt to be beneficial in helping users learn new skills because

"they have an institutionalised hate of learning, formal situations at schools have failed them."

However, this approach also had its drawbacks. The free choice of activities led in practice to a narrowing of the range of activities undertaken, with some users becoming "stuck in a rut" rather than trying new activities. For example at one centre football was played virtually continuously each day, and other sports equipment such as unihoc and
Table 5.15  **Kirkcaldy: Leisure leaders scheme programme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Times scheme operates</th>
<th>Activities available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raith Youth House, Kirkcaldy</td>
<td>Tuesday and Thursday afternoons</td>
<td>Football, badminton, volleyball, indoor bowls, pool, tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open sessions</td>
<td>Keep fit, mothers and toddlers, football, badminton, darts, table tennis, pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel Centre, Kirkcaldy</td>
<td>Wednesday afternoons</td>
<td>Badminton, carpet bowls, table tennis, unihoc, volleyball, board games, hairdressing, swimming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thursday and Friday - all day Specific sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowhill Mining Institute, Cardenden</td>
<td>All day, Monday-Friday</td>
<td>Play group, keep fit, sewing, table tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open sessions except for 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundonald Mining Institute, Cardenden</td>
<td>Tuesday afternoons</td>
<td>Football, pool, badminton volleyball, table tennis, unihoc, darts, cards, canoeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday and Thursday - all day Specific sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Gardeners Hall, Buckhaven</td>
<td>All day, Monday - Friday</td>
<td>Pool, table tennis, badminton, darts, board games, cards, snooker, football, swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methil Community Centre, Methil</td>
<td>Monday-Friday afternoons</td>
<td>Badminton, keep fit, table tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenton Jubilee Centre, Glenrothes</td>
<td>Monday afternoon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuesday morning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday and Thursday afternoons Specific sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
volleyball was rarely brought out. Where the programme became dominated by
one activity it also limited the range of people attracted.

5.4.3 Usage of the scheme and users' opinions

Usage of the Leisure Leaders scheme varied greatly between centres,
according to the activities available and the frequency of operation. The
four weeks of detailed monitoring showed that there was a clear distinction
in terms of usage between those centres which opened every day, for
unstructured programmes, and those which opened less frequently for
organised sessions.

The three centres which opened every day for unstructured activities were
used mainly by the unemployed. Seventy nine per cent of users at Bowhill
and all those at Methil were unemployed. Most unemployed users were male
and under 25, and where usage was dominated by the young male unemployed
this probably deterred other user groups:

"Two women came in one day to see what went on, but never came back."

Average attendance per week varied from 45 at Methil to 110 at Bowhill, and
the number of users attending over the four weeks from 34 at Methil to 121
at Bowhill. On average each person came four or five times over the four
week period, but usage fell between the two extremes of those who came only
once (40% of those at Bowhill) to those who came several times a week (11
users at Bowhill came 15 or more times). In other words, there was a hard
core of regulars at each centre and a sizeable "floating" population.

By contrast, usage of the centres with organised sessions was more balanced
in terms of the employment status and sex of users. At both the centres for
which records were kept the nature of the facilities available restricted
certain sporting activities, and the main sessions - play groups, sewing
groups and keep fit - were attractive to women. These activities attracted
housewives, as well as unemployed women and those working part time, but at
both centres attempts to broaden the range of user groups met with
difficulty.
The catchment area of all of the centres was very small, except for some of the organised sessions. Users generally saw "their area" as being very localised and did not travel to other centres, reflecting the close-knit, self-contained nature of the ex-mining communities.

The extent to which users were introduced to new activities through the scheme varied. Where football and pool were the dominant activities most users had participated in them regularly prior to joining the Leisure Leaders scheme. However, a significant number of new players had been introduced to badminton, carpet bowls and table tennis. Apart from football, very few users did any sport outside the scheme.

Most users commented favourably on the scheme, and for many it formed a significant part of their lives. For some of the unemployed the scheme operated as something of a lifeline. One 40 year old unemployed man who had become very depressed through 18 months of unemployment, had been coming to the scheme every day for 6 months, and commented:

"If this place wasn't here, I don't know what I'd do"

Some of the young unemployed felt that the scheme was probably keeping them from "hanging around" or from petty crime:

"I'd probably just be getting into trouble"

and one young man said that since attending the scheme he had managed to stay out of trouble with the police, despite previous brushes with the law. The scheme also performed an important social function and got people out of the house; one woman who only worked two evenings a week said:

"It's the only 'getting out' thing I do, apart from work"

In general, for the regular attenders, sport had become an important way of filling time and, where centres were open all day every day, many of the young unemployed would spend most of their week at the facilities. One
young unemployed lad commented:

"My mum never sees me now, I just go home for meals"

and another:

"I wouldn't miss it for the world"

Users were mostly content with what was provided, and few suggested new activities they would like introduced. The only exceptions were some of the young people, who were bored with always doing the same activity, which was often the result at the centres where the programme was "unstructured". Some of the women in the 25 plus age range also commented on the need for a creche, to enable them to get full enjoyment of the scheme.

5.4.4 Facilities

The scheme deliberately used small, informal facilities since it was felt that the unemployed were not attracted to large, formal centres because of the similarity to school and because they felt out of place. This was illustrated in the attitude to the recent refurbishment of one hall:

"We've done up the hall, and deliberately made it nice but rough... we made a hall where they could explode"

However, facility access was a problem for the scheme. During the fieldwork period there were two examples of caretakers at community centres being unnecessarily restrictive over the use of their facilities. The table tennis table at one centre was withdrawn by the caretaker after two successful sessions, partly because he objected to it being used by the young unemployed, the very group that the Leisure Leaders were seeking to attract. Some leaders also felt they were being used by the centres in a "caretaking" role to extend their opening hours. There was a real need for greater coordination between centre management committees and the management of the Leisure Leaders scheme, to ensure understanding of the purposes of the scheme, and maximum community access to facilities.
5.4.5 The Leisure Leaders

The main criticism voiced by the leaders was the short-term nature of their employment, which affected staff morale:

"There's nothing to spur you on if you know the job ends within the year."

Many leaders found themselves back on the dole at the end of their contracts, attending sessions that they had once run themselves. Because of the poor employment prospects, most stayed with the scheme for the full year. The disruption caused by the departure of staff at the end of their contracts was exacerbated because staff were assigned to one centre and not moved around. The users therefore became accustomed to individual leaders and loth to see them depart. In one case users even organised a petition to try and keep a popular leader on.

The Leisure Leaders commented on various other difficulties they faced; underlying many of them was a lack of training. Eight of the ten leaders had received no training, and on starting with the scheme had had to assume immediate responsibility for leading sessions, without any guidance at all. The lack of training was compounded by the way in which the scheme operated in isolation at each centre, with little communication between leaders and no standardisation across the district.

5.4.6 Publicity and promotion

At its launch the Leisure Leaders scheme was extensively publicised but subsequently publicity was curtailed, with only occasional notices in the centres, and the press notified only of major events. Publicity was given low priority because of the good word of mouth communication networks in the local communities. Most members of the community were thought to be aware of the scheme and under these circumstances the C.P.U. did not feel
it to be cost-effective to

"have an advertising splurge, if you're only going to get, say, two extra people in each centre"

Consequently the scheme had no publicity budget.

Most users had initially heard of the scheme through friends and relatives, and the success of word of mouth as a publicity tool was evident from the fact that seventeen individuals attended two new table tennis sessions held at Dundonald Institute, without any formal publicity at all. However, relying exclusively on word of mouth may debar those new to the area and outside the communication networks of the close communities. Furthermore, word of mouth was found to be inadequate when Leisure Leaders were trying to start up activities in a new centre.

5.4.7 Self help

The secondary and long term aim of the scheme was to encourage the formation of independent clubs and groups in the community. At the time of the fieldwork two such groups had formed - a mother and toddlers group, and a carpet bowls club. It was apparent that these had only been successful in becoming independent because of the presence of key individuals who had experience of committee procedures and the structure and workings of clubs. It is unlikely that this experience would be found among the young unemployed, and therefore that they could form independent groups without considerable guidance and support from the Leisure Leaders. However, the leaders themselves were not given any guidance on how to achieve the objective of self help.

5.4.8 Summary

The Leisure Leaders scheme had successfully achieved its aim of bringing activities into local communities, and although the overall numbers attending were low there were many regular users for whom the scheme was very important. Most users were from target groups which the scheme hoped
to attract - the unemployed, young mothers and housewives. The flexible, unstructured approach to provision was undoubtedly valuable in attracting the young unemployed.

However, unstructured sessions often resulted in one activity dominating the programme, which became boring for users and led to certain centres being dominated by particular sub-groups of the community. A balance between organised sessions and unstructured activity at each centre would result in each venue attracting a much broader cross section of the community. The scheme has also suffered because of the lack of staff training, and the assignment of staff to individual centres for the duration of their contracts. Better communication with centre management committees, and a more positive and integrated approach to planning, training and the operation of sessions would be beneficial.

5.5 Middlesbrough Borough Council - Sports Motivation Project (SMP)
(Type 5)

5.5.1 Background and development of the scheme

Middlesbrough has a population of 150,000, and due to the decline of its traditional heavy industries suffers from an unemployment rate among the highest in Britain - 28.9% in April 1986. In five wards the male unemployment rate exceeds 40%, and over half the claimants in the town have been unemployed for more than a year. The town is an Inner Area Programme (IAP) authority.

The Sports Motivation Project (SMP) began in 1981. It started as a price concession scheme, but the council realised that motivation was also needed to increase participation. Initially the scheme aimed to promote sport and increase participation generally, but the emphasis was soon placed more on alleviating the problems of the unemployed. In June 1986 the main priorities of the SMP were:

1) To increase leisure opportunities during the day, particularly for the unemployed
ii) To make initial contact with the unemployed to assess their leisure needs and to match needs to resources available at off peak times and at low cost.

iii) To encourage the public to make full use of the resources available in pursuit of their leisure interests.

iv) By providing initial motivation to encourage the public to provide for their own needs by forming independent groups or by joining established clubs.

The scheme is targetted primarily at the unemployed but is open to all who are free during the day; the scheme's publicity makes no mention of the unemployed.

The SMP was originally funded by the MSC, who paid the wages of three staff under the Community Programme, with some input from the council. Subsequently the council obtained IAP funding for three years; the IAP covered 75% of the costs and the Borough the remainder. On the termination of IAP funding in March 1986 the Borough Council agreed to fund the whole scheme, including the wages of three full time permanent staff. Ten Community Programme funded staff were also appointed in April 1986. The SMP's budget from the council was £31,520 in 1986/7, plus £40,000 from the MSC, mostly for wages. The scheme also had access to a further £10,000 from the Borough Department's "Recreational Events" budget.

The staff in the three establishment posts are based in the central SMP office within the Recreation and Amenities Department, operating as an integral part of the department. They work as a team (although one is the overall coordinator), combining administration with leading sessions. The ten MSC funded staff comprise one full-time Organising Assistant (based in the central office), and nine staff who provide activities in three "area bases" situated in high unemployment districts in the town. Each base has an Area Supervisor, and two part time fieldworkers or coaches. The scheme also employs qualified coaches on a sessional basis for certain activities, and uses three other MSC teams in Middlesbrough who promote table tennis, first aid and basketball.
5.5.2 The activities provided and monitoring of the scheme

The range of activities provided by the MSC has greatly increased since the inception of the scheme. The activity programme can be subdivided into four main categories - coaching courses, leagues, weekly activities (mainly popmobility) and activities at the MSC area bases. The details of these activities are shown in Table 5.16. The scheme also organises occasional tournaments and "one-off" events. Tournaments are arranged for both the 5-a-side and indoor games leagues, and the SMP also organised a regional 7-a-side tournament, and entered the national unemployed 5-a-side competition at Swindon. "One-off" events have included an Outdoor Pursuits Week in the Lake District, skiing and golfing trips, pony trekking, trips for YTS groups and various talks at schools and colleges.

The vast majority of activities are provided free to users, the only exceptions being entry charges and match fees for the leagues, entry fees to some of the community centres, and a six week pony trekking course to which users had to contribute £5.00. The scheme's publicity emphasises the free use, for example SMP tee shirts bear the slogan "I've done it free with SMP". No proof of identity is required to take part in the scheme.

The SMP uses a wide range of council facilities, to which it has free access, and where necessary hires facilities (and coaches) from private clubs. Use of County Council facilities is limited because the County Council demands a payment. Transport is provided to all activities out of Middlesbrough and also to any within the town which are inaccessible. Transport is also provided for teams and equipment in the indoor games league. The scheme has virtually sole use of a council minibus and driver, and in 1986 received an IAP grant for its own minibus.

The scheme employs a range of publicity tools. The main thrust and the most "high profile" method is a large, eye-catching display board which is manned in shopping centres by SMP staff handing out leaflets with further information. At the start of each season leaflets, posters and programmes are sent to a wide range of agencies and facilities and all users who have
Table 5.16  Middlesbrough: SMP activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities provided</th>
<th>Nature of session and staffing</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching Courses</strong></td>
<td>Coaching provided by SMP staff or 'outside' coaches. Sessions are informal, cater for all standards, and amount of coaching is geared to the requirements of the individual.</td>
<td>Courses are 6-8 weeks duration and organised in seasonal programmes. Entry is by application forms on &quot;first come-first served&quot; basis. Unsuccessful applicants are given priority on the next course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 1986 - tennis, golf, canoeing, squash, badminton, weights, rambling, orienteering, swimming. Other courses have included pony trekking, windsurfing, short tennis, basketball, 1st aid, rounders, C.S.L.A., personal survival.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leagues</strong></td>
<td>Matches in Indoor Games League played on home and away basis; each team must provide a venue, and are therefore usually based in community centres. Football League based at Middlesbrough Town Football Club.</td>
<td>Leagues operate more or less continuously. Football league has 2 divisions of 10 teams each. Indoor Games League has 11-13 teams of 7 players. Both leagues are organised by SMP staff, with occasional input from a committee of team members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main leagues are 5-a-side football league, and Indoor Games league including darts, snooker/pool, dominoes, carpet bowls and table tennis.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly Activities</strong></td>
<td>Popmobility held at venues throughout Middlesbrough; in Summer 1986 there were 8 sessions per week. Coached by SMP staff or 'outside' leader, with an informal emphasis.</td>
<td>Y.T.S. groups book in advance for weekly activity morning at Football Club. For popmobility, users just turn up on the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popmobility. Also an activities morning for Y.T.S. groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities at MSC area bases</strong></td>
<td>Very informal sessions, no emphasis on coaching. Only certain activities are timetabled. Led by MSC staff.</td>
<td>Activities are available either all day or half the day at the centres, most days of the week. Started in 1986 with appointment of MSC staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined by facilities used but include weights, table tennis, carpet bowls, badminton, short tennis, snooker, tennis and jogging.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
previously applied for an SMP course are automatically sent programmes. The scheme also uses posters, leaflet drops and newspaper articles.

Since January 1985 records have been kept of the number of attendances at all sessions. However, they considerably underestimate the true level of usage as some sessions, particularly the leagues, have not been recorded. SMP have also conducted two small-scale user surveys. As well as examining these existing records further monitoring of the SMP was carried out for this present research (see Appendix 3). Detailed monitoring sheets, recording name, address, age range, sex and employment status of users were kept at as many sessions as possible for 11 weeks from the end of April 1986. A self-completion questionnaire survey of users on the coaching courses was also conducted; 64 questionnaires were returned from five courses. Informal interviews were conducted with users at the whole range of activities, and with the scheme staff, and the scheme was observed in action.

5.5.3 Usage of the SMP

14,073 attendances were recorded at the SMP over the 18 months from January 1985 to June 1986 (Table 5.17), although this underestimates the total by at least 2,000 and excludes attendances at the MSC bases. The greatest number of attendances in any one month was 1,794. Football and indoor games leagues generated by far the most attendances, accounting for nearly half the total attendance at the scheme together with tournaments and competitions. Of the other activities, popmobility generated most attendances, and among the coaching courses canoeing, followed by swimming and golf.

Throughout the 18 months a total of 793 sessions (excluding league fixtures) were held by the SMP, an average of 44 per month. Popmobility alone accounted for 30% of these sessions. Average attendance per session was 10, ranging from 24 at the Looking Good course, to 5 for orienteering and a beginners' swimming class. Throughout the period January 1985 to June 1986 the number of sessions provided, the number of different activities available per month and the total number of attendances all increased.
Table 5.17 Middlesbrough: Attendances at S.M.P., January 1985-June 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Total No. of attendances</th>
<th>Total No. of sessions</th>
<th>Average No. attendances/session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football league</td>
<td>3673*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor games</td>
<td>1360*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popmobility</td>
<td>1719*</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>1021</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.T.S. groups</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitions/tournaments</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to swim</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket league</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA drop-in</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pony trekking</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short tennis</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Looking Good' course</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weights</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.S.L.A/Advanced C.S.L.A.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orienteering</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rambling</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table tennis</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsurfing</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchro swim</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginners swim</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal survival</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 14073

TOTAL excluding leagues and competitions. 7565 793 10
Participants in the SMP can be grouped into four main categories according to the type of activity undertaken. There is little overlap between the categories - each "limb" of the project attracted a distinct client group.

a) Leagues

The football and indoor games leagues were used almost entirely by young unemployed men. Participants in the football were mostly aged 18-30; the indoor games league also attracted some older men. Most took the leagues very seriously, but few did any other SMP activities, except for golf and some involvement at the MSC bases. Sporting involvement outside the SMP was restricted to football, and darts and dominoes in local clubs.

b) Activities at MSC bases

Most users at the bases were unemployed school leavers. Although men dominated, some women participated as well. Each base had a core group of lads, many of them keen on sport, who spent most days in the centre, doing a range of activities. The proximity of the bases was very important to the users, who displayed a strong sense of territoriality and were reluctant to travel out of the immediate area. Some indoor games league teams from the bases were unwilling to travel to away matches, although transport was provided. Because of this and the cost of transport, few were involved in central SMP courses.

c) Popmobility

The popmobility sessions were attended exclusively by women, from a very wide age range, and including the unemployed, housewives and those working part time. The vast majority did not attend any other SMP courses but several did other sport outside the SMP.

d) Central coaching courses

These attracted the widest range of users and were very effective in reaching the target group. As Table 5.18 shows, 47% of users were
unemployed; over half had been on the dole for 2 or more years, and many lived in the high unemployment wards of central and eastern Middlesbrough. The unemployed accounted for over 45% of users at all sessions except swimming, rambling and short tennis, and comprised over two thirds of the attendances at typically "middle class" sports such as tennis and golf.

The courses attracted even proportions of men and women, 53% and 45% of users respectively, and a wide range of age groups. Nearly half the users were aged 25-40, and over a quarter aged 40 or more. Unemployed users were on average slightly younger with few over 40, but the commonest age range was still 25-40.

Over a third of users came only once during the 11 week monitoring period, and over half only once or twice (Table 5.19). The unemployed were slightly more frequent attenders, accounting for 57% of all attendances but only 47% of users. More than a third attended 3-5 times over the period. Over half of those users interviewed were currently doing more than one SMP course.

For most users the SMP was the only place they did the activities offered through the courses. Only a third of questionnaire respondents took part in the activities they did on SMP courses outside the scheme as well. More than two thirds did some sport outside SMP, usually the more passive indoor sports such as darts and pool.

Just over half the questionnaire respondents, and slightly more of those interviewed, heard about the scheme by word of mouth. However, the shopping centre display board was very effective for a formal publicity tool - over a quarter of users had heard through the display or the accompanying leaflets. Word of mouth worked effectively in conjunction with the display board; staff deliberately gave leaflets to people who were not potential users themselves, but who told their friends or relatives about the SMP. The programmes sent to people who had registered for SMP courses were also very important in sustaining interest and providing detailed information.
Table 5.18  Middlesbrough: Employment status of users of S.M.P. coaching courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Number of Users</th>
<th>% of Users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time employed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time employed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community programme</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift worker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>190</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.19  Middlesbrough: Users of S.M.P. coaching courses - frequency of attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of attendances over 11 week monitoring period</th>
<th>Unemployed users</th>
<th>All users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5.4 Users' opinions of the SMP

Users expressed a variety of reasons for attending activities organised by the SMP. For those attending the central coaching courses the tuition was very important; many came to improve their standard of play or to learn a new sport:

"I've come to squash to improve and to get out of all my bad habits"

"I've been looking around for the last few months to try and join a beginners' tennis course but with no success ... this course is ideal for all standards of players especially beginners like myself."

For some SMP provided the basic experience necessary to join a club:

"We couldn't have joined a club in any of these sports without knowing how to play"

Many users, especially those at popmobility sessions and at the MSC bases, came for health and fitness reasons or to lose weight. For many of the unemployed the scheme simply provided something to do:

"I come along to get out of the house, otherwise I'd be in the bookies or down the pub spending me dole money....it keeps you off the street."

Others attended for the social contact, and the scheme also encouraged participation among those reluctant to visit sports centres on their own:

"It was something I could come to on my own without knowing people."

The vast majority of users were satisfied with the SMP and grateful for the benefits they received from it. Among the successful aspects of the scheme the coaching was particularly appreciated. The tuition was found to be excellent, and appropriate for all standards:

"It's nice to get professional help ... the standard's very good, beyond the basics"
"The tuition is very important in giving confidence at the start"

Free use was important in enabling users to take part in activities they would not otherwise have been able to afford, and some users found it hard to believe that no charge was made:

"I know from past experience on the dole that I couldn't play my favourite sport (outside SMP) because of lack of money.

"It's good that it's free ... we brought money along with us as we thought there must be a charge even though none had been mentioned."

The scheme helped many users to meet new people, and several of the unemployed stated that it helped fill their time and relieved some of the stresses of unemployment:

"It's something to look forward to in the week"

"This course was a great help in getting me out of the depressed state I was in."

However, as one user commented:

"It fills up one day but the other six are still a problem."

Very few users criticised the SMP. Some suggested activities that they would like included in the programme, such as outdoor pursuits, martial arts, indoor games (apart from the league), watersports and an improvers' swimming course. Some were dissatisfied with the level of coaching; given the range of standards catered for it was not possible to please everybody and a few users felt that courses should be tiered according to ability. The only other criticism concerned publicity, in that the terms of the scheme were unclear:

"I thought at first SMP was just for the unemployed"

"I didn't know you could do more than one course."
5.5.5 Evaluation of the SMP

The scheme has successfully attracted a wide range of users, especially its target group of the unemployed. Both school leavers and the older unemployed used the scheme, and most were very grateful for the opportunities provided. Certain aspects of the scheme in particular have contributed to its success:

Diversity of activities

A key strength of the SMP is the wide range of activities and "delivery styles" provided, which result in a diverse group of users. Each limb of the project served a different group, and hence the scheme had a wider appeal than many. The development of the MSC area bases was very important in reaching local people who were reluctant to travel to other SMP activities. It was notable that typically middle class sports such as golf and tennis attracted many unemployed users.

Staff

Having three staff in establishment posts was vital in giving the SMP continuity and a sense of permanence. This is denied to schemes run solely with MSC staff. The involvement of these staff "on the ground" as well as in administration enabled them to plan effectively, knowing their customers' needs. The scheme was fortunate in having committed staff who related well to users and who were identified by users as "the project".

Coaching

The emphasis on coaching is unusual among leadership schemes, and arose mainly because of the lack of suitable venues for informal "multisport" sessions. However, the coaching was much appreciated and was undoubtedly an important factor in attracting many users. The sessions had an informal and unthreatening atmosphere; many beginners found them the ideal environment in which to learn. The informal and flexible nature of sessions at the MSC bases, with no coaching, was also appropriate for their particular users.
Council commitment

The commitment of the Borough Council, especially in funding the three establishment posts, was vital in creating high morale throughout the scheme and in facilitating such a varied activity programme. The funding attached to the permanent posts was vital in subsidising the MSC scheme and enabling that arm of provision to be successful. The council's support was also important in gaining access to facilities, and in giving the SMP credibility and establishing it in the mainstream of the Department's provision.

Publicity and transport

For a formal publicity method the shopping centre display was very successful, mainly because it was eye-catching and it was manned by staff handing out leaflets to people who then passed on the information by word of mouth.

Transport was initially a problem, but access to a council minibus enabled the scheme to carry out a range of out of town activities, and was vital in transporting users without private transport to some of the more inaccessible venues in town. Use of the minibus also contributed noticeably to the success of the indoor games league.

Very few users mentioned any problems with the scheme, and the leaders also felt there were no major problems. There were some difficulties in predicting attendance at the coaching courses; even if a course was full on the basis of application forms, there was no guarantee that the users would turn up on the day. This caused difficulties if a sessional coach or an "outside" body was involved, and if more people turned up than expected, it could cause transport problems.

The problem of access to suitable facilities had been overcome by the use of private facilities, although the SMP have been criticised for not having their own base. Users were unable to "drop in" to the current office within
the Recreation and Amenities Department, and because the staff were often out coaching, contact by telephone was also difficult.

Finally, the staff stressed that it was vital that they always turned up for sessions and did not alter the times. It was felt that because the scheme was free, users placed less value on it and were less committed than if they had paid, and were therefore more easily put off. On at least two occasions a member of staff failed to turn up or had rescheduled a session at short notice, and the numbers attending that session dropped thereafter.

5.6 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council - Newcastle Recreation Project (Type 5)

5.6.1 Background and development of the scheme

The Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme has a population of 120,000, more than half of whom live in the town of Newcastle itself. In June 1986 the unemployment rate in the Borough was 10.2%, less than the national average and 2% below the average for Staffordshire. However, this figure conceals rates of up to 15.2% in certain wards and estates. In January 1987 there were 5,556 registered unemployed people in the Borough.

Before the Newcastle Recreation Project (NRP) started in 1982 the only sports provision for the unemployed was an off peak price concession for all users at indoor facilities. However, the Recreation and Amenities Department of the Borough Council realised that their provision was unsuccessful in attracting participants from disadvantaged groups, and that other agencies working with such groups experienced similar problems. A meeting was therefore called with representatives from groups including the Police, the Probation Service, Youth and Community Services, and the local Volunteer Bureau; these subsequently formed a steering group for the project's first year.

The Borough Council realised that the main need was for staff, free from other responsibilities, who could work in the local community providing
recreational opportunities. The MSC was therefore approached and agreed to pay the wages of 19 Community Programme staff from autumn 1983. The Borough Council offered £10,000 towards equipment, facility hire and transport, and the Youth and Community Service contributed free facility use. In the second year the Sports Council gave a £10,000 grant for a minibus and trailer. Subsequently the scheme expanded to employ 60 staff (an extension to 70 was due in autumn 1986), with a total budget for 1986/7 of £263,000 from the MSC and £15,000 from the council. The NRP is now the largest sports leadership scheme for the unemployed in the U.K.

5.6.2 Details of the scheme

The aim of the NRP is to:

"Provide sporting and recreational opportunities for the unwaged sector of the local community."

The main target group has always been the young unemployed, but the scheme is open to all unwaged groups in order to avoid any stigma and to attract users from other low participant groups such as the elderly and housewives. Membership of the NRP costs 25p per annum; thereafter all activities (including equipment) are free with a membership card.

The NRP aims to provide activities locally. Three initial locations were chosen with high unemployment rates, concentrations of the lower socio-economic groups and a lack of recreation provision. The scheme subsequently incorporated further areas, and now has bases in Kidsgrove, Bradwell (also serving Chesterton and Crackley) and Knutton (also serving Clayton and Silverdale), providing activities primarily in local facilities. The NRP also has a "rural unit" covering the more rural wards to the west of the town.

Although the emphasis of the scheme has always been on sporting activities, it was never intended to be solely a sports scheme, and the programme covers a range of other activities such as board games, guitar lessons, bingo, cookery, art and craft, beauty sessions and film appreciation.
Indoor sports include weights, aerobics, badminton, swimming, self defence, volleyball, bowls and unihoc. Tennis, netball, rugby, cricket, football and jogging are among the outdoor activities run by the scheme. On average between 16 and 25 different activities per week are available in each of the three areas, and on most days there is a full programme. The NRP also has an Outdoor Pursuits Unit, with its own minibus, which runs courses and trips outside the Borough; the other scheme minibus is used to provide transport to swimming at the central baths, football matches and certain other activities. The scheme also runs "taster sessions" and one-off trips for other agencies.

At senior level the NRP is managed by officers of the Recreation and Amenities Department, who have considerable day to day contact with the scheme. The scheme's senior staff are all based at the NRP's own central office. The remainder of the staff are organised on an area basis; each area has a supervisor, with one or two full time and up to ten part time staff. The supervisors have considerable autonomy in planning activities, and in recruiting their staff to ensure that the team is well balanced and includes a number of local people. Many staff are former users of the scheme. With a large staff the senior management recognises the importance of good communications. There are regular staff meetings at all levels, and occasional activities for the entire staff.

Staff training is given high priority. All staff take first aid and life-saving awards, and the scheme has also developed its own training course in youth and community skills. Most staff tend to stay until the end of their contracts, and 68% go straight into full time employment. Staff on the project wear a uniform, in order to make them feel part of a team, to promote the NRP, and to enable users to identify them easily.

The NRP employs a full time publicity officer, and the scheme is widely publicised, both on an area basis and centrally. Activity programmes for each area are produced every six weeks and 1,000 copies of each distributed. A quarterly NRP newsletter is sent to all relevant local agencies and publicity outlets and full use is made of posters and local newspapers. The scheme also has a promotional video, and has advertised on
local radio and television. However, word of mouth has been by far the most effective method of "selling" the scheme and a considerable amount of staff time is spent on making contact with the target groups; part time staff spend up to 50% of their time on "street work".

5.6.3 Monitoring and usage of the scheme

Regular monitoring carried out by the NRP provided much of the quantitative data for this research. The application forms for membership gave information on employment status, age, sex, and place of residence of members. (This information, however, is not necessarily representative of the regular users of the scheme since many members drop out). The NRP's own attendance monitoring records the total number of male and female attendances at all sessions. (These records were patchy prior to January 1986). In June 1986 the NRP also conducted a questionnaire survey of unemployed users; 113 questionnaires were returned. Finally, informal interviews were conducted with users and staff, and a wide range of activity sessions were observed in action.

Both membership and the number of attendances have increased since the inception of the scheme. The number of members increased from 1100 when the card was first introduced in 1985, to nearly 1600 in September 1986. In 1984/5 there were approximately 10,000 attendances at the NRP; by 1985/6 this had increased to 42,000. Attendances increased particularly rapidly during the first few months of 1986, when average weekly attendance totalled about 1,000. During the preceding two years average monthly attendance was the same amount.

However, these figures conceal significant weekly variations. As Figure 3 shows, weekly attendance in the first six months of 1986 varied by a factor of three, from 350 to approximately 1400. Whereas some of this variation occurred for identifiable reasons such as holiday periods, much was unpredictable. As one member of staff commented:

"One week they're here and the next they're not"
Figure 3. Attendances at Newcastle Recreation Project, 1986
Although attendances at the scheme generally have been patchy and unpredictable, some consistency has been achieved in certain activities. Football, weight training and outdoor pursuits have all proved popular with young unemployed men. Other activities popular with the men were snooker and board games. Aerobics, keep fit and indoor bowls have been successful in attracting female users, and self defence has proved particularly popular with young unemployed women. One group of housewives requested an assault course and this was also very successful.

Just over a third (36%) of the scheme's members were unemployed, 42% were housewives and 22% senior citizens. The staff agreed unanimously that the unemployed were the hardest target group to attract, especially women and older unemployed men. Most of the unemployed people using the scheme were men aged between 18 and 27; 75% of the unemployed members surveyed were under 24. Two thirds of NRP members were women, and in 1986 attendances by women ranged from 300-750 per week, compared to only 200-500 for men. However, the vast majority of these women were, or described themselves as, housewives. Only 21% of the unemployed users interviewed were female, and observation of the scheme confirmed that unemployed women were an under-represented group. It was obvious from comments made by some of the younger women that the lack of childcare facilities prevented them making more use of the scheme.

Each of the three main areas in which the scheme operated had a different membership profile, partly reflecting the structure of the local community and the nature of existing users of community facilities. However, areas in which the NRP was successful in attracting the unemployed were also characterised by good facilities, with which the community were familiar and which enabled a wide range of activities to be provided. The location of facilities was vital, both in affecting awareness of the scheme, and because users were reluctant to travel. In one area the main facility used by the NRP was at the extreme edge of the district and many users perceived it as being in the neighbouring community and hence too far away. In certain areas the high proportion of unemployed members also owed a lot to good recruiting by the staff, who were obviously popular with, and well
known by, the users:

"Half my mates are on the staff"

"We all get on really well" (staff and members)

The scheme was also successful in areas where the staff provided a reliable service. Cancelling a session just once was found to jeopardise the continuation of an activity.

Both the membership records and the questionnaire survey showed the effect of distance on participation; most NRP users were very local. Half of all members lived within a mile of some activity provided by the NRP, and only 5% of the younger users (under 25 and mostly unemployed), lived more than 2 miles from an NRP activity. Two thirds of the unemployed users surveyed travelled less than half a mile to the activity they were doing and more than two thirds came on foot. Only 17% had access to a car or motorcycle. Comments made by the users themselves also showed that the time, effort and cost involved prevented them from travelling to activities out of the immediate area:

"I can't be bothered to go down to Bradwell Lodge - it's a mile and a half away"

"OK, it's a free swim, but with the bus fares, its 70p before you even start"

5.6.4 Response of users to the scheme

The attendance records gave no indication of the frequency with which individual users attended the scheme but the fieldwork showed that the majority of the attendances were generated by a hard core of regular users who came to the sessions as a group and associated with each other outside the NRP. For many the NRP was a major interest in life:

"I wouldn't have time to do anything else"
Users expressed a range of reasons for participating in the scheme. As with the other case studies, occupying time was an important motivation. Others came specifically to learn new activities or simply to get fit, and many users also saw the NRP as something of a social focus; as one user put it:

"You know that a few of the lads will be here".

The benefits derived from the scheme again focus around the social function of the NRP. Eighty one per cent of respondents to the unemployed users survey said that "relaxation and enjoyment" was a "very important" reason for participating, and 78% said that "social recreation - meet friends/join teams" was important. Many users found the social contact with staff very valuable.

Several users commented that the NRP had introduced them to new activities or encouraged them to participate more frequently. The fact that the scheme offered free usage was an important incentive:

"What else can you do that don't cost you?"

"I wouldn't be able to do all these things without the NRP"

The Outdoor Pursuits Section was particularly successful in introducing people to completely new activities, which they would otherwise have been unable to do. For a minority a lasting interest in outdoor pursuits was sparked off, but for most the benefit lay in the excitement of the activities provided and the chance to get into a different environment. As one user said after a caving trip:

"It was really good, but you wouldn't get me doing that again."

Many users attended only one activity. In some cases this was because they were unaware that other sessions were offered. However, more commonly, there was a misconception that the NRP only provided sporting activities; consequently the less active users felt that there was little to attract them to other sessions.
5.6.5 Summary

Although the unemployed made up a third of the membership of the NRP, they represented a much lower percentage of those who regularly used the scheme. Staff found the unemployed the hardest group to attract, and commented on their lack of commitment and unpredictable attendance. Few unemployed women and older unemployed men used the scheme.

However, for the core group of unemployed users, the scheme played an important social role and the management felt that it was successful compared to previous provision in the area. The good relations between staff and users were vital in contributing to this success but the negative side to this was the disruption caused when staff left at the end of their one year contracts. The scheme management regarded this as one of their major problems, and this was echoed by users as well:

"They get rid of some really good blokes"

The experience of the NRP highlights the importance of providing activities within local communities. Few of the unemployed users had access to transport of their own and most were not prepared to travel to activities. Where an activity could not be provided locally the NRP minibus was invaluable in transporting users to central facilities, and enabling people to participate who would otherwise not have had the chance. As one council officer said

"Transport is fundamental to the success of the scheme"

The main emphasis of the NRP lies on sporting activities, and the scheme's publicity has reaffirmed this to the extent that many users were unaware of the other activities offered. To attract the older unemployed and unemployed women there is a need for a wider range of activities to be provided and well publicised in all locations.
5.7 Nottingham City Council - Sport for the Unemployed (Type 5)

5.7.1 Background and development

The City of Nottingham has a population of 277,200, and in June 1986 there were 23,500 registered unemployed people in the city, representing 13.8% of the workforce. The Sport for the Unemployed scheme began in 1983, with the aim of providing supervised recreational activities for the unwaged throughout the city of Nottingham."

The scheme also aims to enhance the physical and mental well-being of participants, and to provide relief from boredom, a sense of self-discipline and a chance to find companionship. It is targeted at the "unemployed" in the broadest sense, to include all those who are not employed such as housewives and the retired, and special emphasis is placed on encouraging women to participate, a focus which distinguishes Sport for the Unemployed from many other leadership schemes for the unemployed. The scheme is funded by the MSC, who pay the wages of the 51 staff working on the project. The City Council contributes free off peak usage of facilities.

Sport for the Unemployed has three main "limbs" to its provision, as reflected in the staff structure (see Figure 4). Firstly, there is the women's sport section. Initially there were no separate activities for women, but with the development of women's only sessions, a women's sports supervisor was appointed in 1985. Much of the recent expansion of the scheme into more peripheral areas of the city has been based around keep fit sessions for women. The women's sport section also has its own publicity material.

The development of women's activities has gone hand in hand with the development of the creche service to enable women with children under five to take part. Again there is a supervisor specifically to organise childcare provision and supervise the 20 staff employed as creche workers.
Figure 4. Nottingham: Staff Structure of Sport for the Unemployed

CO-ORDINATOR

SUPERVISOR

SPORT

AREA ORGANISER

AREA ORGANISER

AREA ORGANISER

LIAISON OFFICER

FOOTBALL ADMINISTRATOR

COMMUNITY SPORTS INSTRUCTOR

SPORTS LEADERS

SPORTS LEADERS

SPORTS LEADERS

LIAISON LEADERS

SPORTS INSTRUCTOR

2 CLERICAL ASSISTANTS

SUPERVISOR

WOMENS SPORT

INSTRUCTOR - KEEP-FIT COMMUNITY SPORT

2 SPORTS INSTRUCTORS

SUPERVISOR

CRECHE

DEVELOPMENT WORKER

AREA ORGANISER

P/T AREA ORGANISER

CRECHE ASSISTANTS
As women's sessions have grown so the creche has been provided at more venues. Currently a creche is provided at 25 sessions a week and is used by 800-1000 children a month.

The third supervisor is in charge of the sports section, which provides (and publicises) activities in a range of venues throughout Nottingham. The staff are organised on an area basis, with area organisers each having 6 sports leaders working for them. Staff are encouraged to undertake training courses, and all sports leaders take a Community Sports Leader's course.

In summer 1986, approximately 50 sessions a week took place in 24 venues ranging from major sports centres (such as the Victoria Centre where the scheme has its base) to small community centres in peripheral areas. The range of activities provided is determined to some extent by the facilities being used; in June 1986 indoor activities available included badminton, popmobility, keep fit, squash, racquetball, circuit training, indoor bowls, volleyball, short tennis, tenpin bowling, table tennis, cricket nets and self defence. Outdoor activities included football, bowls, cycling, tennis, canoeing and netball. The scheme also has an 11-a-side football team in the local league, and organises the regional 5-a-side league, but is limited in terms of the more adventurous or outdoor pursuit activities it can provide because of lack of finance, transport and appropriate council run facilities.

Entrance to sessions costs 25p (to give some value to the provision), and no proof of identity is required. Many sessions are specifically for women, and some for the 50+ age group, and although some just provide one activity such as keep fit, most sessions in the larger centres offer a range of activities which users are free to join in as they wish. Sessions are informal, with coaching provided at the request of users. Equipment is provided free but the scheme has no transport.

Publicity is given high priority and the scheme employs one full time and two part time liaison officers. Methods of promotion include Public Service Announcements on Central Television, local radio, posters, door-to-door leafletting and advertising on bus tickets. Contacts have also been made
with local schools, and a slide show and talk given to school leavers. A mobile exhibition has also been taken to various venues around the city.

5.7.2 Monitoring and usage of the scheme

The monitoring of Sport for the Unemployed took place during July 1986. Attendance records already kept by the scheme were examined, as were various monitoring reports. In order to provide information on user characteristics a questionnaire survey of users was conducted over a two week period (see Appendix 3). It was intended to include all sessions but due to difficulties ensuring that all staff received and distributed questionnaires some sessions were excluded. However, a total of 155 completed questionnaires were returned. Informal interviews were conducted with users and with scheme staff, and a range of sessions observed in action.

From June 1985 to June 1986 22,307 attendances were recorded, an average of 1860 per month and 413 per week. However, there were considerable weekly variations in attendance, from as many as 618 a week to only 180.

Sport for the Unemployed is distinct from most other schemes examined in the extent to which its usage is dominated by women. Eighty one per cent of questionnaire respondents were female. The project was also more successful in attracting older users than other schemes; as Table 5.20 shows nearly half the users were aged 30 or over, and 79% were over 24. The scheme has had less success in reaching the younger unemployed; only 3% of users were under 20.

The employment status of users is shown in Table 5.21. Housewives form the greatest proportion of users, accounting for 41% (or 46% if those who also said they were unemployed are included). The unemployed were the second largest group, accounting for a quarter of all users and for two thirds of the male users. Only 15% of women said they were unemployed, but many of the remainder were looking for work or had unemployed husbands.
Table 5.20  
**Nottingham: Age of "sport for the unemployed" users**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of users</th>
<th>% of users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>155</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.21  
**Nottingham: Employment status of "sport for the unemployed" users**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Number of users</th>
<th>% of users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed housewife</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time employment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time education</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time employment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government training scheme</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>155</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.22  
**Nottingham: "Sport for the unemployed" users - frequency of attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times attended scheme in 4 weeks prior to survey</th>
<th>Number of users</th>
<th>% of users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 times</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7 times</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 or more times</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>155</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The typical user of the scheme was therefore female, aged 25-44, and a housewife. Nearly a third of users came from outside the city of Nottingham, often from relatively affluent areas. Very few users, except for the unemployed, came from the more deprived inner city areas.

Most users attended the scheme regularly (Table 5.22). In total 83% had used the scheme more than once in the four weeks prior to the survey, with nearly one third attending more than once a week on average. The unemployed were even more committed; nearly a quarter attended 8 or more times. Most users came to do only one activity; badminton and keep fit were the most common, being the most widely available throughout the scheme.

5.7.3 Users' opinions of the scheme

Most comments made by scheme users related to five main topics. Firstly, many commented favourably on the staff, finding them to be helpful and friendly. Typical comments included:

"Really good, easy to get on with"

"All the staff are very nice and helpful"

However, some users felt that the role of the leaders should be clarified, and that they should take a more positive role in organising sessions:

"Sports leaders could organise a lot better rota system and place people on court, ensure that everyone gets a game and could also keep the score."

In some of the peripheral and less well attended centres staff were criticised for being poorly motivated and on occasion even failing to turn up.

The second main area of comment concerned coaching. Many users indicated that they wanted more coaching in sessions, which they said that the sports
leaders were not providing:

"I want to be shown how to play squash"

"You have to ask for instruction which is essential when you first start"

The sports leaders' response was that coaching was there for those who wanted it but in order to maintain an informal and relaxed atmosphere it was not offered to everyone as a matter of course.

Comments from users showed how crucial the creche provision was in encouraging a high rate of usage among women. Many women commented on the high standard of the facility and said that they would be unable to participate without it:

"I couldn't play sport without the creche"

"The creche - absolutely marvellous, couldn't be better"

Several users said that they would like to see the creche service extended to cover more sessions. The only criticism of the service related to the lack of childcare provision for the over fives, which prevented many women from participating during school holidays:

"In the summer I will not be able to come along because they don't take over fives"

The informal interviews asked users what benefits they derived from participating in the scheme. Keeping fit was the main benefit mentioned, but among women the social side of the scheme was also very important. Many came along to meet their friends:

"Company, the people here are the same age as me - I enjoy the atmosphere"
"It's sociable - I get to know people"

As with the other case study schemes, Sport for the Unemployed also provided a chance to get out of the house, and once again, there was a small group of unemployed people for whom it was their central interest:

"Base my life around the scheme really. I suppose it keeps me out of the boozer. I live alone and this scheme is important to me for company."

Sport for the Unemployed was also successful in introducing people to sport for the first time - many of the female users had not played any sport before taking part in the scheme. The scheme provided a relaxed atmosphere, where users could join in without needing all the right equipment and clothing. Some women who initially came just to do one activity later diversified and tried other sports.

Finally, users gave their general opinions of the activities provided and their suggestions for improvement. The vast majority were satisfied with the scheme and the range of sports offered, but some indicated other activities they would like to try. In particular there was a demand for outdoor pursuits, but these would be difficult to provide given financial constraints and the lack of transport. Many users simply wanted more of the same, especially those attending centres where sessions were infrequent.

5.7.4 Summary

Sport for the Unemployed is unusual among the schemes examined in terms of its commitment to encouraging participation by women. The scheme was very successful in ensuring that barriers such as lack of money and obligations to children did not prevent participation, as witnessed by the fact that women comprised over 80% of the users. However, the scheme was less successful in reaching the young unemployed, and especially young unemployed men. The attraction of so many housewives from affluent areas outside the city may have given the scheme something of a "middle class" image, and to redress the balance more emphasis could be placed in the scheme's publicity on targeting the younger unemployed.
5.8 Summary of chapter

The schemes examined in this chapter illustrate a wide range of approaches to provision for the unemployed and the results show that there is no single blueprint for success. All the schemes had a slightly different rationale, and as a result attracted slightly different sorts of users. All, however, can claim some success in generating a core of enthusiastic, regular users, for whom the provision was very important. Users of all schemes displayed a similar range of motives for attending and obtained similar benefits from participation. For many unemployed users the benefits of occupying time, social contact and getting out of the house were as important as taking part in sport itself.

The schemes varied in the extent to which they were successful in attracting users from all sectors of "the unemployed". At most the hard core of users comprised the young, male unemployed, but some had successfully attracted housewives and the older unemployed as well. Where schemes included a range of active and passive activities and a mix of coaching courses and informal multi-activity sessions, the combined effect was that most groups were catered for.

In general the overall number of users regularly involved in schemes was relatively small, and poor publicity was often partly to blame for this. Most schemes "failed" in some aspect of publicity; it was either inadequate, or else not targeted effectively at the unemployed, and was often unclear in conveying the terms and nature of provision.

The case studies also illustrate the importance of accessibility and of providing activities in the local community. In general the unemployed were not able or prepared to travel out of their immediate community; hence if no local facilities were available schemes with their own transport were vital.

Further key ingredients in the success of schemes were flexibility, informality and the attitude of staff. Facility based schemes were successful where the staff were prepared to allow centres to be used as
much as a social meeting place as a sports facility. Informality in
enforcing rules and in leading sessions was also vital, as was the ability
of all staff to relate to users. The commitment of the local authority to
the project was another influential factor; where financial back-up was
provided the range of activities, transport, and scheme publicity were all
improved. Childcare services also played an essential role in attracting
women to schemes.
Chapter 6  Issues and conclusions

Nearly three quarters of the local authorities in the U.K. are currently catering specifically for the unemployed in their sports provision. This thesis has examined in detail the different types of schemes being operated, and has considered the response of users in selected case studies. This final chapter considers, firstly, some general issues arising from this research and secondly, some practical implications for providers, in particular the key ingredients of successful schemes for the unemployed. To conclude, areas for future research are identified.

6.1 General issues regarding provision

6.1.1 The politics of provision

Ultimately the question of whether or not local authorities should provide sports schemes for the unemployed is a political issue, but given the continuing high rates of unemployment and the constraints to participation faced by the unemployed, many local authorities have decided to run schemes in order to give those out of work the same freedom to take part as the rest of society. However, the exact priority given to such schemes in local authority leisure expenditure and the extent to which local councils are supportive varies greatly; this research has shown that provision for the unemployed is influenced to a large degree by party politics, even to the extent of overriding the influence of local unemployment rates. Many authorities admitted starting schemes for political reasons, and at a national level both the incidence and type of provision were significantly related to the political complexion of the local council. A number of non-providing authorities commented that policy decisions by council had prevented them making provision; other local authority officers had had to push hard to get their schemes accepted by council. Conversely, some councils which were committed to high expenditure on schemes for the unemployed faced strong opposition both from officers and from the general public.
At a political level therefore, sports provision for the unemployed has still not met with widespread and unqualified acceptance. It is not necessarily viewed as a legitimate and justifiable component of local authority leisure expenditure, perhaps because such provision implies acceptance of the fact that unemployment is here to stay and is a fault of society and of successive government policies (of both major parties), not necessarily the individual. In the future the proposed privatisation of local authority sports facilities will undoubtedly have far-reaching implications both for the nature and extent of provision for the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups in the community. At the present time, however, sports provision for the unemployed demonstrates the scope for local autonomy in leisure provision mentioned in Chapter 1, and the political influences on how that autonomy is used should not be underestimated.

6.1.2 Lack of commitment and conflicting objectives

The political controversies surrounding provision for the unemployed are echoed in the fact that many authorities displayed a lack of commitment to their provision and had not overcome the problem of the conflicting objectives of schemes for the unemployed on the one hand, and of facility managers on the other. Many schemes were hedged around with provisos that safeguarded the council's income, in particular restricting provision to off peak hours. Similarly, leadership schemes often faced antagonism from centre managers working under the dictates of maximising revenue and hence completely opposed to concessionary usage. In addition, in an effort to maintain "respectable" centres, facility managers were often trying to keep out the very people unemployment schemes aimed to attract. Where these conflicts went unresolved schemes failed to realise their full potential, since the wholehearted cooperation of all parties was found to be essential in successful schemes. The less than total support for many schemes undoubtedly contributed to their lack of effectiveness, and was often related to the initial aims of the scheme. Where schemes were provided only as a token gesture there were rarely sufficient human and financial resources allocated for adequate research, planning, promotion and monitoring. Similarly, if increasing off peak usage was the main aim, it
was unlikely that publicity would be targetted at those most in need of a concession. Too many authorities were only prepared to go so far in their provision, hoping that with the minimum of effort they could score political points, attract unemployed users, and maintain their income, and were then surprised at their lack of success.

6.1.3 Breaking down the barriers to participation

One reason that many authorities underestimated the effort required to increase participation by the unemployed was that they failed to understand the nature of the constraints experienced by the unemployed in their leisure participation, as highlighted by the work of Kelvin et al (op. cit.) considered in Chapter 1. This was especially the case among providers of Type 2 concession schemes, many of whom had focussed on the financial barrier to participation, thinking that reduced prices alone would be sufficient to attract the target group. Many of these authorities, however, found that simply reducing the charges was an insufficient stimulus to participation:

"experience in this area confirms that if people have no interest, or have lost that interest, then low rates of charges are far from being effective in encouraging them back to leisure"

"those who have no desire to take part in sport will still not do so if free of charge"

With the benefit of hindsight, several providers of price concessions remarked that to overcome the social and psychological constraints to participation, some form of motivation was the key:

"our experience confirms other research and monitoring which indicates that the only schemes likely to succeed are those involving major staffing and leadership and revenue commitments."

"The council offers free use to the unemployed as a political gesture. There has been little attempt to attack the problems of motivation of the unemployed. As a result the scheme has had little impact with only previous regular users of our centres enjoying free use now they are unemployed."
It is obvious therefore that finance is not the sole barrier to participation, and, as Kelvin et al. (op.cit.) commented, although it may be a necessary condition for participation, it is not on its own a sufficient condition. This is reflected in the fact that sports leadership schemes were often the most successful in attracting non-participants, whereas price concession schemes, to use the terminology employed by Rigg (op.cit.) in evaluating Action Sport, were better at moving people up a rung on the ladder of participation rather than helping them onto it in the first place.

6.1.4 Integration of the unemployed with other users

The providing authorities differed widely in the basic principles underpinning their schemes, and in particular over the question of whether the unemployed should be made the subject of special schemes at all. Several felt that the unemployed should be integrated into general leisure provision to avoid any stigma and segregation:

"The unemployed deserve to be integrated into sporting activities. It should not be necessary to treat them as a separate and different group."

"Schemes for the unemployed only are doomed to fail."

One authority felt that schemes aimed solely at the unemployed only perpetuate the "apartheid based on unemployment" in our society. For example, off peak price concessions preclude the unemployed from participating with employed friends at peak hours, thus reinforcing the social isolation of unemployment.

The opposite view was that certain groups had to be targeted, otherwise high participant groups would inevitably be the ones to benefit from provision. This was illustrated by Knowsley's off peak price concession for all users. In terms of overall numbers it was very successful, but closer examination revealed that the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups comprised only a small proportion of users compared to those in employment.
To have an impact, therefore, resources need to be spread less thinly, and promotional efforts directed at certain groups:

"with this borough's increasing problem of unemployment and scale of disadvantage it makes it vital to exercise positive discrimination"

The dilemma was summed up by Halton Borough Council, who acknowledged that

"schemes exclusive to any one disadvantaged target group, particularly the unemployed, tend to segregate rather than integrate"

and that reduced rates could be interpreted as charity, and the requesting of proof of deprivation as means testing. Nevertheless, the council concluded that

"notwithstanding the above, certain disadvantaged groups need to be targeted, in view of the selective, and often elitist, nature of existing recreational participation."

Segregation is therefore to be avoided, but an unwillingness to concede that the unemployed face more and different constraints than society in general results in inappropriate and inefficient methods of promotion which fail to reach the target groups.

6.1.5 The role of sport for the unemployed, and the need for realistic expectations

The interviews with users of the case study schemes give some indication of the possible role of sport in the lives of the unemployed. The evidence showed that schemes were valued by the users, and provided a range of benefits for them in helping to cope with unemployment. By far the most important benefit to emerge was the social aspect of provision, which helped to overcome the isolation of unemployment. This was illustrated by the success of the Stadium Centre in Belfast, which had few facilities but far more unemployed users than other centres because of its importance as an informal meeting place. Flint Sports Centre performed a similar function for the young unemployed girls in Delyn, but many managers were unprepared
to allow access to people not actually participating, thus preventing their facilities from fulfilling the need for somewhere cheap and welcoming for young unemployed people to go.

The second main benefit of sports schemes as reported by the users was the relief of boredom and a chance to get out of the house; often participation was prompted by negative reasons - to avoid doing nothing - rather than by enjoyment of the activity, a finding which agrees with Kelvin et al (op.cit.) and Haworth and Evans (op.cit.). Those who were already keen on sport, however, came for more "positive" reasons, and found that schemes enabled them to take part more often and in a greater range of activities. The schemes varied in the extent to which they attracted non-participants, but the leadership schemes certainly provided examples of people for whom sport had become a new interest since joining the scheme.

Although most users obtained a range of benefits from participation, there were, however, very few for whom sport became a central life interest. In all the case studies there were examples of unemployed people, mainly young unemployed men, who spent most of their time at the scheme, but for the vast majority of users the schemes achieved less. For the minority sport became an all-consuming interest, but even so it is doubtful if it truly acted as an alternative to work, lacking as it did work's "compelling manifest function" (Jahoda, 1981, op.cit., p.189). For the majority of users, although the benefits of taking part did include many of the "latent" functions of work considered in Chapter 1, it was evident, as Kelvin et al (op.cit.) found, that sport acted as a palliative rather than an alternative to work.

Many providers were questioning the untested claims attached to sport and refuting in particular the notion that there is an easy transition from work to a fulfilling leisure-dominated lifestyle. The following two quotes illustrate the increasing realism which pervaded many providers' assessments of their schemes as they considered the reasons for
disappointing results:

"A general scheme for the unemployed appears to be based on the misconception that the unemployed are in any large scale turning to sport and recreation as an alternative to work. These activities lack the characteristics which many people need and obtain through meaningful employment."

"However, I would not expect a mad influx of madly keen unemployed people hammering on the door .... because people are unemployed it does not mean that this will lead to a boom in leisure - that is not to say that the unemployed will not take part in leisure activities but rather that it will not be one of their main priorities."

Despite this increasing realism, many authorities still approached their schemes with unrealistic expectations. The unemployed were widely acknowledged to be the hardest target group to attract, both because so many of Rodgers' (op.cit.) "filters" operated to discourage participation, and also because, as one authority commented:

"most of the unemployed in this area are in the lower skilled group - numerous well-documented surveys of income groups show a marked correlation of this group with non-sporting leisure activities."

However, many authorities had obviously not considered these factors and were surprised at the relatively low take-up of their schemes. Many admitted thinking that the unemployed would automatically turn to sport to occupy their leisure time if it was made cheap enough, disregarding other constraints on participation:

"Unemployed = leisure time. This leisure time would be meaningfully channelled into purposeful activities"

"everybody thinks the unemployed should just jump up and use the facilities whenever you ask"

However, as another authority commented, increasing and sustaining participation by the unemployed is not something that can be achieved
overnight or without considerable effort:

"...had at first thought that just by making something available it would be taken up - but it proved to be something not at all like that ... something which needs continued and long term effort."

This research has shown then, that both providers and users agree that sport does not offer a satisfactory alternative to work, and it is unrealistic to base provision on the assumption that it can do so. Indeed, attributing too many benefits to sports schemes can serve as an excuse for not tackling the real problems of reducing unemployment and providing materially for those on the dole. As one authority perceptively commented:

"at the end of the day most people want work, they don't want to play badminton. With some of these schemes it's a bit like putting bandages over the symptoms."

Realistically, sports schemes will be of major importance to a minority of users, but there will be a greater number for whom sport plays a much lesser, but nevertheless important role, in overcoming some of the problems of unemployment. However, given that sport is a minority activity among the population at large, and especially so among those groups comprising the unemployed, as shown in Chapter 1, it is inevitable that the majority of unemployed people will remain non-participants. The benefits achieved by those who do take part nevertheless suggest that such provision is valuable and a legitimate form of public expenditure. However, to truly give equal opportunities, in terms of leisure provision, to the unemployed, local authorities should turn their attention to including other spheres of leisure activity in their provision, as for example Leicester City Council have done recently in extending their Passport to Leisure card to cover major cultural facilities in the city. Sport is, after all, only one facet of our leisure lives, and the unemployed are constrained in all aspects of leisure participation, not just sport.
6.2 Practical implications - some pointers to success

This section considers some of the aspects of provision which emerged as prime determinants of the success or failure of schemes, and which authorities should consider when planning their provision. The section concludes with a brief evaluation of the different types of scheme.

6.2.1 Pricing - the question of free use

One of the key issues to emerge from local authorities' comments was the question of whether or not the unemployed should be offered free facility usage, as opposed to a charge being demanded. In theory, if the scheme is aiming to remove the barriers to participation, then totally free use is the best way of ensuring that finance is no obstacle. However, the vast majority of price concessions and concession card schemes did not offer free use, and many of those that did wondered with the benefit of hindsight whether it was the best policy:

"A lot of trouble with the UB40 scheme was it was free - a lot of people feel better paying a nominal charge"

There were two reasons why making a charge was viewed by many providers as preferable to free use. Firstly, for the unemployed user to retain a sense of self-esteem:

"By making a charge as opposed to free facilities seems to give our clients a feeling that they are contributing to the cost and that they can maintain personal dignity. Some people will refuse to accept a free scheme as they think they will be perceived as being in receipt of a charitable handout."

Secondly, there was evidence that paying for use gave it more value in the eyes of users. The following quote relates to Northern Ireland but was echoed by many providers in mainland Britain:

"... it's almost a national characteristic that says if you don't charge for something it can't be any good"
Another authority commented:

"One question must be whether or not free use is counter productive. Some people think that because it is free, it is no use."

There was also more evidence of disciplinary problems in those price concession schemes which offered free usage, and there was little evidence of users objecting to paying in schemes where a charge was made. However, it is questionable whether the same principle holds for sports leadership schemes, many of which did offer free, or virtually free, usage. It seems that the wider range of activities provided and the presence of motivators gave these schemes a value even where use was free. However, leaders in two of the case study leadership schemes did comment on the need for staff to be reliable because users easily lost interest and felt no commitment to attend if no payment was required.

6.2.2 Terms and conditions

Under this heading come the issues of timing, eligibility and proof of unemployment required, all of which particularly relate to Type 2 price concession schemes and were often the subject of complaints from users. Firstly, the timing of the concession was very important, and highlighted the conflicting objectives mentioned in section 6.1.2. The majority of authorities wanted to preserve their income and therefore only offered concessions during off peak hours, failing to acknowledge that from the point of view of an unemployed user, unemployment does not cease after 5 pm. Many users commented on the need to extend the hours at which concessions were available.

One of the major problems facing providers of price concession and concession card schemes was the question of eligibility for their provision. Many Type 2 schemes failed purely because using the UB40 as the entry criterion excluded members of an unemployed person's family. As a result of pressure from users many were changed to concession card schemes which enabled the inclusion of family members. However, even providers of concession cards had to decide which groups to include, and many were
caught between the demands of users for access and pressure from the council to maintain income. Some authorities overcame the problem by charging for the card but making it available to all borough residents; in many ways this was the most equitable and the simplest solution.

Linked with the issue of eligibility was the question of requesting proof of unemployment and the resultant stigma felt by the individual. There is conflicting evidence regarding the extent to which the unemployed felt a sense of stigma at showing a UB40 card, and the effects of this on their propensity to take part. As was mentioned in Chapter 4, some authorities found stigma to be a considerable problem, whereas others commented that users were not sensitive to it. However, the difficulty with evaluations of this sort is that without surveying non-users it is impossible to tell how many people have been put off attending, as presumably those who do take part are those who are not unduly affected by a sense of stigma. Certainly, many providers came to the conclusion that it was degrading to ask for proof of deprivation, and therefore changed to a concession card scheme which

"still shows you're unemployed, but proves that you're a sportsman, rather than unemployed - it's a different label to stick on someone"

6.2.3 Activities

Not surprisingly the activities which were most popular with users varied from scheme to scheme, depending on local preferences, the characteristics of users, and also the way in which activities were presented. This latter point is crucial for leadership schemes, as the same activity could be greeted with apathy and boredom or be consistently popular, depending on the qualities of the staff and the atmosphere of the session. One authority even commented:

"The activities are incidental as long as they are confidence boosting and enjoyable."
The social function of activities was also found to be essential:

"Tea and coffee afterwards is a very therapeutic part of the activity... almost as important as the activity itself"

Concerning the way in which activities were presented, there seems to be a need for both casual and structured activity. Many organised sessions had failed due to poor take-up, indicating that the unemployed preferred unstructured activity:

"They're not interested in sport and recreation on a structured, regular, timetabled basis... they say they prefer to work out everything else they have to do - day to day chores, jobs to check, messages - and then if they want to, say they might go for a swim."

Several authorities commented on the unpredictability of the unemployed and their unwillingness to commit themselves to activities in advance, preferring just to turn up on the day, because

"they have their priorities and for the majority sport and recreation is not one of them."

However, although organised sessions in isolation met with failure, in the context of leadership schemes and with the encouragement of motivators they were generally very successful, as long as they maintained an informal and social atmosphere and welcomed people of all abilities. Interestingly, several authorities cited leagues and competitions as the most successful aspect of their provision, despite being the most structured. This could be because these activities come closest to work - in terms of the demands made of participants, the commitment to a team, and the sense of competition and achievement - and hence were the most rewarding.

Bearing in mind that the unemployed are not an homogenous mass, but comprise different groups of people with differing recreational needs and aspirations, the central lesson to emerge is the need for variety in terms of activities and their presentation within any one scheme. Where activities were limited schemes often failed to broaden their appeal beyond
the ubiquitous young male unemployed. By contrast, Middlesbrough's SMP demonstrates the potential of a scheme which gears different aspects of its provision to the different sub-groups of the unemployed. The Leisure Leaders scheme in Kirkcaldy similarly showed how a range of casual and organised sessions in any one venue attracted the most diverse user group. There is also considerable scope for schemes to diversify beyond sport, in order to attract a wider cross section of the unemployed.

6.2.4 Promotion and publicity

In the vast majority of authorities the standard of publicity and promotion was very poor. Publicity was generally accorded a low priority in terms of finance and staff time, and many authorities failed to make the most of what limited resources they had. As a result the general level of awareness of schemes was very low, with several examples of users having attended facilities for some time without being aware of a scheme. Within-scheme publicity was often poor as well, with many users unclear of the schemes' terms and conditions. In several cases poor publicity was explicitly blamed by authorities for poor take-up of their provision, and where a scheme was very popular with those who did use it, poor promotion was often the only explanation for low numbers.

Publicity material was often poorly designed, with little attempt to target the unemployed, and often failed to portray all the basic details of a scheme. Too many authorities viewed promotion as a one-off activity at the launch of the scheme; very few (except the leadership schemes) promoted their schemes on a continuous basis. Furthermore, most authorities used methods which were inappropriate to the target group and were ineffective, such as newspaper advertisements. Too often authorities failed to consider the characteristics of the target group, and had not appreciated that an unemployed person who is uninterested in sport is unlikely to respond to a poster advertising a scheme, as they will perceive it to be irrelevant to them. Word of mouth, together with eyecatching high-profile methods, was the only sure way of getting through initially, as personal contact was vital in overcoming some of the psychological "filters" preventing participation. However, conventional methods, when properly designed, did
have an important back-up role for those who were already interested, and for existing users.

6.2.5 Transport and accessibility

One lesson which emerged very clearly was the need for schemes to be community based and for facilities to be accessible to the target group. The unemployed showed a remarkable reluctance to travel to facilities, partly because of the cost and inconvenience of public transport, but also because of a reluctance to move outside "home territory" and lose their sense of security. If sport is low on their list of priorities anyway, then the extra effort involved in travelling to take part can act as a deterrent. The quality of the facility was often less important than its proximity to users; indeed, informal facilities were often preferred. Schemes which used local community centres had a distinct advantage because the facility was often already used and recognised by potential scheme members.

Hand in hand with the need for local, community based facilities goes the need for schemes to provide transport. Obviously this applies mainly to leadership schemes, and was used to great effect in some schemes which took users to more specialist venues which were distant from where the majority lived. Schemes without their own transport were severely limited in the range of activities they could provide. A scheme minibus serves many purposes; transporting staff, users and equipment, and also helping to publicise a scheme and give it a sense of identity.

6.2.6 Staff

Section 6.1.3 showed that sports leaders or motivators are a vital ingredient in encouraging participation by the unemployed. Most leadership schemes relied on the MSC for their staff, but this brought almost unavoidable problems of lack of continuity and poor staff morale. Permanent council-funded posts were few and far between but where they existed were invaluable in encouraging long term planning, improving scheme morale and giving schemes a sense of continuity and permanence. However, the
commitment needed from local councils to fund establishment posts is, as has been shown, far from common, and unless this funding gains more general acceptance it seems unlikely that many permanent posts will be created.

Given that the social function of schemes was so important to most users, many providers realised that sporting excellence was far from being the main criterion in the recruitment of successful leaders. In addition to the ability to get on with people, a sense of commitment and reliability was vital, because users easily became disenchanted if staff failed to turn up. Staff training was also crucial, and schemes varied greatly in the priority they attached to this. It was clear that where training was neglected and leaders put "on the job" with no prior instruction or familiarisation with the work, the inevitable slow progress in motivating a difficult target group resulted in disappointment and loss of morale, both for staff and users.

Many authorities also gave inadequate attention to the relations between established, facility staff and scheme leaders. Because of the conflicting objectives of the two types of provision there was a need for careful explanation of scheme aims by local authority officers, and also a need to reassure facility staff that their jobs were not in jeopardy. If this was neglected, facility staff could be deliberately (and often understandably) obstructive in allowing schemes the use of their centres.

6.2.7 Other issues

The advantages of providing a creche became very apparent from the case study fieldwork. Obviously the presence of young children is a major constraint to participation for women, who although they may not be registered, may nevertheless perceive themselves as unemployed. The success of Nottingham's Sport for the Unemployed scheme in attracting women was primarily due to the provision of a creche at most women only sessions; no other scheme made such extensive creche provision, or attracted so many women. Many users of other leadership schemes said that a creche would enable them to participate more fully.
The "handing over" of activities to the target group to run themselves was an objective of many of the leadership schemes, but few achieved substantial success in this area. There were examples from many schemes of individual clubs or leagues which had become self-supporting, but there was also evidence that most authorities found the process harder than they had expected. In many ways there is little incentive for the community to run on a voluntary basis activities which are currently organised and financed by paid staff. This is especially true of the unemployed who are not a static group, have no positive bond as a group, and who are unlikely to have the experience and enthusiasm to take over activities. The presence of key, motivated individuals was sufficient to overcome this on some occasions, but the process also required the support of staff and initial financial input from the scheme. The development of self-supporting groups is an important aim if temporary schemes are to have a lasting impact, but it is not something which happens automatically.

6.2.8 Evaluation of scheme types

It is not possible to conclude that one type of scheme is always going to be more successful than another, since so much depends on factors such as the commitment and support of the local council, the nature of the facilities available and the size of the population. Indeed certain types of scheme may be inappropriate for some authorities; for example a leadership scheme would be wasteful of effort in a sparsely populated area. However, other things being equal, certain types of scheme are more successful in attracting the unemployed, and this is confirmed by changes in the nature of provision since 1982.

The decline in the number and proportion of authorities operating Type 2 price concession schemes since 1982 bears witness to the fact that in general this type of provision was the least successful in attracting new unemployed participants and was the most beset with problems. Several authorities reported changing to other types of scheme after having unsuccessfully run a price concession, and others were planning to do so in the future. Because of the requirement to show the UB40 and the fact that they were usually restricted to off peak hours, Type 2 price concessions
tended to segregate rather than integrate the unemployed. This type of scheme failed to attack the problem of motivation of the unemployed, and hence attracted mainly those who already used the facilities. Furthermore, Type 2 schemes were often introduced as a token gesture or to boost council income and were therefore often accompanied by minimal effort and commitment.

Type 1 price concessions overcame the problem of stigma, and some of the sense of segregation, and to that extent were more successful. However, they also failed to address the problem of motivation, and because they included all the community were rarely promoted in such a way as to attract the unemployed.

Organised sessions emerged as a new type of provision since 1982, and were introduced by many authorities in an attempt to incorporate a social and coaching aspect to provision. However, although many authorities were setting up organised sessions, this type of provision had a high failure rate and was most common among the lapsed schemes. Structured, weekly activities of this nature were generally resisted by the unemployed outside the context of leadership schemes.

Concession card schemes showed the greatest increase of all scheme types since 1982, and in 1985 were the most common type of scheme to be started. Second to leadership schemes concession cards were perhaps the most successful type of provision, in that compared to price concessions they were seen as something of value, and therefore more likely to attract non-participants. They also overcame the problems of stigma and segregation, especially when available to the whole community. Furthermore they had the potential to include a range of non-sporting leisure activities which is vital if a broad cross section of the unemployed is to be catered for.

However, it was the leadership schemes which had the most success in attracting non-participants into sport through breaking down the social and psychological barriers to participation, and which provided the greatest range of benefits to users. Mostly this was due to the role of motivators, but also to the deliberate use of community based facilities, and greater
council support and commitment which enabled a wide range of activities to be provided, often with transport. Interestingly the increase in the number of leadership schemes had slowed down by 1985, perhaps because those authorities where it was feasible to introduce them, and where the political will exists, had already done so. More recently, however, the widespread introduction of Action Sport bears further testimony to the potential of this approach compared to other types of provision.

6.3 Further research

As a result of this study, and in the context of other literature in the field, four areas of future research are suggested as worthy of investigation.

The bulk of research into sports schemes for the unemployed has concentrated on management implications and aspects of "good practice". This research has attempted to redress the balance by considering the usage and users of seven case study schemes, but inevitably the general conclusions which can be drawn from a small number of schemes are limited. There is therefore scope for considerable further research concerning users of schemes, over a wide geographical area and across all types of provision, rather than in the isolated case studies which have so far been the norm. In particular there is a need to establish more widely the benefits obtained from participation, and how these vary across different types of scheme. In addition it would be worthwhile to evaluate in more detail how the different types of provision overcome the barriers to participation, the precise mechanisms by which unemployed people become users of schemes, and the extent to which the different types of provision are successful in attracting new participants to sport.

A second neglected area concerns the precise role which sport plays in the context of the total leisure lifestyles of unemployed users of schemes. This was examined recently in a sample of users of the Leicester STARS scheme (Kay, 1987), and obviously this type of research involving time budget diaries and in-depth interviews is costly and time consuming to do.
However, it would put in perspective the contribution which sport makes in the lives of the unemployed, and provide more evidence regarding the types of activity which are most likely to prove satisfying for those inevitably facing periods of unemployment. It would also have implications for authorities considering extending their provision to include other leisure activities.

The second potential area for future research concerns non-users of schemes. The vast majority of schemes only attract very small proportions of the unemployed in their area, and to identify the reasons for this low take-up, and the barriers to participation which have not been broken down, it would be necessary to conduct sample surveys of unemployed non-users. Again this technique was successfully used in monitoring the STARS scheme (Glyptis, Kay and Donkin, op.cit.) and its use in other areas and with other types of scheme would give a clearer idea of the extent to which non-participation is due to a genuine lack of interest in sport, and how much to inappropriate means of encouraging that participation. In particular such information would be valuable in assessing the impact of publicity and the general level of awareness of schemes.

Research hitherto has focussed primarily on sports schemes for the unemployed which are provided by the public sector. In order to gain a complete picture of the leisure opportunities available for the unemployed, a third area of research would be to investigate, firstly, public sector non-sporting leisure provision, and secondly, leisure provision by other agencies in the local community, in particular the voluntary sector, whether of a sporting or non-sporting nature. There is evidence that cooperation between the various bodies at a local level is sporadic and *ad hoc*; one step towards improving this situation would be to establish exactly who is providing what, and evaluate the success of existing inter-agency partnerships.

Finally, turning to wider scale issues, provision for the unemployed is determined to a large extent by the political system and bias of a country, its system of local government and the administration of sport and recreation in the local community. The response of the individual to
unemployment itself and to schemes of the sort studied here will also be affected by the way in which unemployment is viewed by society, and the policies adopted by government in coping with unemployment. It is therefore important to consider comparisons in terms of the nature of, and response to, unemployment schemes, with countries with different systems of local and national government, and different contemporary and historical perspectives on unemployment. In particular it would be interesting to examine the extent to which the unemployed in countries such as Sweden, with a high level of state benefit, are still constrained in their participation despite the removal of the financial barrier. In this country, local authorities obtain their ideas for provision primarily from each other; learning from the experience of other countries could overcome this inertia and be of some benefit to those of the unemployed who do value the opportunity to take part in sport.
REFERENCES


Appendix 1  Documents relating to postal questionnaire survey
(Stage 1)

1) The questionnaire

2) Reply slip for non-providers
SPORTS SCHEMES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

If you have more than one scheme to report, please complete a separate questionnaire for each scheme (extra questionnaires may be obtained from the research team at Loughborough).

Name of Authority: __________________________

Name (if any) of scheme: _______________________

If scheme no longer running, please tick box

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEME

1. a) When did your scheme start?

b) If your scheme is no longer running, when did it stop?

2. What were the main aims of your authority in introducing the scheme?

3. How was it felt that the unemployed would benefit from the scheme?

4. During the planning stage did your authority look to other schemes for guidance or consult other agencies?

   If so, which schemes?

   Which agencies?

5. Were any attempts made to find out the interests of the local unemployed before the scheme began? If so, please describe.
MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHEME

Staffing

6. How many staff, if any, are employed specifically in connection with the scheme? Please give numbers of staff and job titles.

7. Is there any one person with specific responsibility for managing the scheme? If so, please give job title.

Funding and involvement with other agencies

8. What is the scheme's approximate yearly cost to your authority?

9. Do any other a) public sector bodies or b) private or voluntary agencies contribute financial support? If so please specify which ones and the amount contributed.
   a) public sector

   b) private/voluntary agencies

10. Please give details of any non-financial help or co-operation that you receive from:
   a) national agencies

   b) local agencies (e.g. other LA departments, Job Centres, DHSS, voluntary groups etc.)

11. Are there ways in which you feel national agencies could assist local authorities in providing sports opportunities for the unemployed? If so, which agencies and in what ways?
Details of provision

If you have lists of charges, publicity materials, etc. which give further information on the following aspects of the scheme, please enclose them with the questionnaire.

12. Is the scheme specific to the unemployed? If not, what other sectors of the community does it cater for?

13. Does the scheme aim to cater for the unemployed generally, or a specific sector of the unemployed?

14. Are scheme users required to present proof of unemployment? If yes,
   a) What form of proof (e.g. UB40)?
   b) Is it required at every attendance?

15. Please give details of the pricing structure of the scheme (e.g. whether free admission or concessionary rates) and of the times and days on which this applies.

16. What facilities and activities are made available through the scheme?
17. Please give brief details of the following aspects of the scheme if applicable:–

   a) transport to facilities for users

   b) availability of equipment

   c) coaching provided

18. Is there a particular base or office available as a permanent point of contact for scheme users?

19. In what ways has the scheme been publicised?

20. Which means of publicity, if any, have proved most effective?

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

21. Is the scheme monitored? If so, in what ways?

22. Are any records kept of numbers attending and of user characteristics? If so, please indicate the type of information that is recorded.

23. Please describe any ways in which the scheme to date has proved particularly successful.
24. What problems, if any, have been encountered in running the scheme?

25. What feedback, if any, has the scheme had from users?

26. If the scheme is no longer in operation, why did your authority terminate it?

27. What future plans, if any, does your authority have regarding sport and leisure provision for the unemployed?

Please use this space for any comments you might like to make.

Thank you very much for your help.

Please fill in the following details of the person completing the questionnaire.

Name ___________________ Address ___________________
Designation ___________________  __________________________________________
Department ___________________  __________________________________________
Tel. No. ___________________  __________________________________________

Please return the completed questionnaire, together with any further information you can give us, in the envelope provided, to:

Miss C.M. Pack,
Sports Council Unemployment Project,
Department of Physical Education & Sports Science,
University of Technology,
LOUGHBOROUGH,
Leics. LE11 3TU
This authority is not currently involved in sports provision for the unemployed and has not been involved in the past.

Please give details of any particular reasons for not making such provision.

Name: _________________________________ Authority: ________________________________

Designation: ____________________________ Department: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________________________

______________________________

This authority is not currently involved in sports provision for the unemployed and has not been involved in the past.

Please give details of any particular reasons for not making such provision.

Name: _________________________________ Authority: ________________________________

Designation: ____________________________ Department: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________________________
Appendix 2  Documents relating to interviews with local authority officers
(Stage 2)

1) List of local authorities visited for interview

2) Checklist of topics to be covered in interviews
Local authorities visited for semi-structured interview (Stage 2)

Type 1  Off peak price concessions for all users

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Rhondda Borough Council

Type 2  Price concessions for the unemployed

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Carrickfergus Borough Council
Wansbeck Borough Council

Type 3  Organised sessions

Antrim Borough Council
Stirling District Sports Council
Waveney District Council

Type 4  Concession cards

Belfast City Council
Birmingham City Council
Delyn Borough Council
Gateshead Borough Council
Gillingham Borough Council
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Wrexham Borough Council

Type 5  Sports Leadership

Corby District Council
Dundee District Council
London Borough of Hackney
Halton Borough Council
Kilmarnock and Loudoun District Council
Kirkcaldy District Council
Middlesbrough Borough Council
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Nottingham City Council
Thamesdown Borough Council
Western Education and Library Board (Northern Ireland)
Wrexham Maelor Borough Council
CHECKLIST OF TOPICS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY INTERVIEWS

Interviewee's role in/time been on project

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

When did scheme begin/new or modification existing provision? What prompted LA to introduce/modify scheme? Percentage unemployment - particular characteristics Scheme origins - councillors/officers. Differences of views. Political effects Objectives and targets to measure achievement Have objectives changed, or only evolved since scheme began?

2. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Why how chose particular form of provision - influence of other bodies Definition of target group - why? Provision for other target groups at time, and other forms of provision for unemployed Decision on content of provision - research among target group - consultation with other bodies Scheme launched for trial period?

3. MANAGEMENT

Who has overall responsibility? Steering group? - who on it? - how often meets? - brief, and how effective Autonomy of staff and decision making process - Involvement of staff on ground - Involvement of community and unemployed Finance - budget - other contributing bodies - bodies which refused finance - accurate assessment of cost of scheme?

4. MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

Marketing at start of scheme - to department - or acceptance - to LA generally - to other local agencies dealing with unemployed - support achieved Local agencies - how have they helped/co-operation - in what ways could they help/problems
Marketing to community - initial publicity - characteristics?
  - who targeted at?
  - continual publicity/changes
  - budget/who does publicity
  - success and how measured

5. STAFF

Staff employed specifically - MSC/volunteers/other/Full Time or Part Time
  - change in numbers over time
  - engineering staff composition
  - qualities looked for - ease of finding staff
  - qualities needed in retrospect /role of staff in practice
  - staff training
  - effect of MSC 1 year contract - on staff morale/continuity/destination of leaders

Staff already employed
  - co-operation/problems
  - time involved in scheme

Any participants become staff?

6. SCHEME DETAILS

Gaps in questionnaire

Price concessions
  - Eligibility? Families? Problems?
  - ID needed? Always? Problems - for staff, for users
  - activities/facilities
  - casual use booking facilities for unemployed/concession applying to organised sessions
  - changes since scheme began

Concession cards
  - eligibility/families/problems
  - ID needed/registration/issuing of card/cost/length of validity/needed every time/problems - staff and users
  - concessions conferred by card - casual use only/facilities booked for unemployed/admission to organised sessions
  - facilities and activities
  - changes since scheme began

Organised session
  - activity/frequency/eligibility/venue
  - how decided upon activity
  - organised for this target group?
Leadership
- staff as in section 5
- how decided upon activities
- facilities - use of non LA facilities?
- current range activities and times, including residential
- activities geared to sub groups within target group?
- relative success and different times/venues/activities
  and how is this success defined
- socialising outside activities /group identity
- changes over time

All schemes
- transport - problems?
- office base
- are other agencies making sports provision for unemployed,
  and is LA making provision other than sport?

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Records kept
- since when and by whom
- number? Unemployed? Age/Sex etc?

User surveys
- when/who/what
- how are records/survey information used? Monitoring of
  response by steering group and how often? Is scheme
  changed if necessary?

Evaluation - what records/surveys show
- characteristics and numbers of users - unemployed or not, age
  and sex, groups or individuals - changes over time
- feedback from users/general public
- response as expected? Improvements that could be made?

Particular successes - in reaching unemployed
- (define success) - for lives of unemployed
  - for LA in use of spare capacity

Particular problems - stigma, staff, transport, apathy and attracting or
  retaining users, other groups wanting concession
  - if starting again, do anything differently?

Future plans
- how long scheme planned for
  - changes to be made
Appendix 3  Documents relating to case study fieldwork  (Stage 3)

1) Belfast - monitoring sheet  (usage by concessionary members)
   - questionnaire  (centre user surveys)

2) Delyn - questionnaire  (survey of Fair Play cardholders)

3) Kirkcaldy - monitoring sheet  (attendances at Leisure Leaders scheme)

4) Knowsley - questionnaire  (surveys of daytime centre users)

5) Middlesbrough - monitoring sheet  (attendance at SMP sessions)
   - questionnaire  (survey of users of coaching courses)

6) Nottingham - questionnaire  (survey of Sport for the Unemployed users)
**SPORTS COUNCIL NATIONAL REVIEW OF PUBLIC SECTOR SPORTS PROGRAMMES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED.**

**Belfast City Council Concessionary Membership card scheme**

**Monitoring of usage of sports centres by unemployed cardholders**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Casual or Organised</th>
<th>Card Number</th>
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Hello! We would like to find out more about our users and their interests here at the centre. Please help us by completing this short questionnaire; it will only take a couple of minutes. Your answers will be confidential: no identification is asked for.

1) What activity(ies) have you come here to do today?

2) How many times have you used this centre in the last four weeks?
   - 0
   - 1
   - 2-4
   - 5 or more

3) Do you hold a valid centre membership card?
   - Yes
   - No

4) If you do hold a valid membership card, what category of membership is it?
   - Adult
   - Family
   - Unemployed
   - Under 18
   - Senior Citizen
   - Disabled

5) If you hold a membership card, have you used it at the centre today?
   - Yes
   - No

6) Are you
   - In full time employment
   - In part time employment
   - Shift worker
   - Retired
   - Unemployed
   - In full time education
   - Housewife
   - On a government training scheme

7) Are you
   - Male
   - Female

8) Which of the following age categories do you fit into?
   - Under 16
   - 16-19
   - 20-24
   - 25-29
   - 30-44
   - 45-59
   - 60+

9) Please use this space for any comments you would like to make about the centre or the membership scheme

Thank you very much for your help.
Hello! We would like to find out more about the users of the "Fair Play" ticket scheme, and we hope that you will help us by completing this brief form; it will only take a couple of minutes. Please fill in the form even if you have completed one previously. Your answers will be confidential: no identification is asked for.

1. How many times in the last four weeks, including today, have you bought a "Fair Play" ticket for yourself?

1. [ ]
2. [ ]
3. [ ]
4. [ ]

2. Have you had a Fair Play ticket at any time before this week?

[ ] YES  [ ] NO

If NO please go to question 3.

If YES

a) At which of the following sports centres did you use your last ticket?

[ ] Flint
[ ] Holywell
[ ] Mold

b) How many days per week, in general, did you use your ticket to obtain free usage of the centres?

1 [ ]
2 [ ]
3-5 [ ]
6 [ ]

b) What activities/sessions did you attend with your last Fair Play ticket? (please tick all boxes that apply)

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<tr>
<th>FLINT</th>
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Other activities (please specify centre and activity)
3. Have you at any time in the past four weeks used these sports centres at normal admission price?

- Flint  
- Holywell  
- Mold  

(please tick all boxes that apply)

4. Have you at any time in the past four weeks used your Fair Play ticket to attend any session run by Operation Sport?

- Yes  
- No  
- Don't know  

(please tick box)

5. Where do you live? (Please give street name & district or village)

6. Are you Male  

(please tick box)

Female  

7. Are you

- In full time employment  
- In part time employment  
- Shift Worker  
- Retired  
- Unemployed  
- In full time education  
- Housewife  
- On a government training scheme  

(please tick all boxes that apply)

8. Which of the following age categories do you fit into?

- Under 16  
- 16-19  
- 20-24  
- 25-29  
- 30-44  
- 45-59  
- 60+  

(please tick box)

9. Have you previously filled in one of these forms?

- YES  
- NO  

(please tick box)

10. Please use this space for any comments you would like to make about the Fair Play ticket scheme.
# LEISURE LEADERS PROJECT: MONITORING SHEET

**Venue:**  
**Session/Activities:**  
**Day and date:**  
**Time of day:**  
**Total attendance:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Nickname</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Approx age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>M = Male</td>
<td>a = Under 25</td>
<td>U = Unemployed</td>
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<td>F = Female</td>
<td>b = 25-40</td>
<td>H = Housewife</td>
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<td>c = Over 40</td>
<td>R = Retired</td>
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<td>P = Part-time or shift worker</td>
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<td>G = Government training scheme</td>
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Hello! We would like to find out more about our daytime users and their interests here at the centre. Please help us by completing this short questionnaire; it will only take a couple of minutes. Your answers will be confidential: no identification is asked for.

1) What activity(ies) have you come here to do to-day?
________________________________________________________________________

2) How many times, if at all, have you used this centre at the daytime rate of 25p in the last four weeks?

   0   (Please tick box)

   1

   2 - 4

   5 or more

3) How did you first hear about the daytime rate of 25p?
   (Please give as much detail as possible)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4) How many times, if at all, have you used this centre after 5 p.m. during the last four weeks?

   0   (Please tick box)

   1

   2 - 4

   5 or more

5) Have you used any of the following centres in the last four weeks?

   Bridgefield Forum
   Kirkby Sports Centre
   Kirkby Pool
   Prescot Leisure Centre
   Scotchbarn Pool

   (Please tick all boxes that apply)
6) Where do you live? (Please give street name and district)

__________________________________________

7) How did you travel to the centre to-day?

- Own/Family car
- Lift in friend's car
- Bicycle
- Motor cycle
- Walk
- Bus
- Other (Please specify) __________________________________

(Please tick box)

8) Are you Male [ ] Female [ ] (Please tick box)

9) Which of the following age categories do you fit into?

- Under 16 [ ] (Please tick box)
- 16 - 19 [ ]
- 20 - 24 [ ]
- 25 - 29 [ ]
- 30 - 44 [ ]
- 45 - 59 [ ]
- 60+ [ ]

(Please tick box)

10) Are you in full time employment [ ] in part time employment [ ]

- Shift worker [ ]
- Retired [ ]
- Unemployed [ ]
- In full time education [ ]
- Housewife [ ]
- On a government training scheme [ ]

(Please tick all boxes that apply)

11) Please use this space for any comments you would like to make about the centre or the system of charges

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.
# S.M.P. ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>MALE/FEMALE</th>
<th>O.A.P. HOUSEWIFE UNEMPLOYED SHIFT WORKER</th>
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The Sports Motivation Project exists to increase sporting and recreational opportunities for those people who have time to fill during the day. It would be much appreciated if you could complete the following questionnaire and return it to a member of the S.M.P. team.

1. Are you Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. In what area of Middlesbrough do you live?

3. In what age range do you fall? Under 16 [ ] 16-19 [ ] 20-24 [ ] 25-29 [ ] 30-34 [ ] 35-44 [ ] 45-59 [ ] Over 60 [ ]

Continued/....
4. Which of the following activities have you taken part in with S.M.P. over the past 4 weeks:

- Football
- Pony Trekking
- Keep Fit
- Canoeing
- Indoor Games
- Cricket
- Skiing
- Tennis
- Golf
- Orienteering
- Other

Please State

5. Have you taken part in any of the above activities over the past 4 weeks but not with S.M.P.?

- YES
- NO

6. How did you find out about S.M.P.?

- Posters
- Displays
- Newspapers
- Word of Mouth
- Other

Please State

7. Are you:

- Unemployed
- Full-time Worker
- Part-time Worker
- Shift Worker
- Housewife
- O.A.P.
7. Cont/...

Y.T.S. Trainee
Other (Please State) 

8. If you are unemployed, how long have you been unemployed?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months - 1 year
- 1 year - 2 years
- Over 2 years

9. If there are any comments you would like to make about this course or S.M.P. in general, OR suggestions for improvements, please make them here:-

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your co-operation.
SPORT FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

Hello! We would like to find out more about our users and their interests, and we hope that you will help us by completing this brief form; it will only take a couple of minutes. Please fill in this form even if you have completed one previously. Your answers will be confidential: no identification is asked for.

1) Have you already filled in one of these forms over the last couple of weeks?
   Yes [ ]
   No [ ]
   (Please tick box)

2) What activity(ies) have you come here to do today?

3) How many times in the last four weeks, including today, have you attended a Sport for the Unemployed session,
   8 or more [ ]
   5-7 [ ]
   2-4 [ ]
   1 [ ]
   (Please tick box)

4) Where do you live? Please give street name and district.

5) Are you
   In full time employment [ ]
   In part time employment [ ]
   Shift Worker [ ]
   Retired [ ]
   Unemployed [ ]
   In full time education [ ]
   Housewife [ ]
   On a government training scheme [ ]
   (Please tick all boxes that apply)

6) Are you
   Male [ ]
   Female [ ]
   (Please tick box)

7) Which of the following age categories do you fit into?
   Under 16 [ ]
   16-19 [ ]
   20-24 [ ]
   25-29 [ ]
   30-44 [ ]
   45-59 [ ]
   60+ [ ]
   (Please tick box)

8) Please use this space for any comments you would like to make about Sport for the Unemployed, or any suggestions you have for improving the scheme.