Northern Community Leisure Trust
Supporting Healthier Lives

ANNUAL REVIEW 2025 – 2026

Executive Summary

2025/26 represented a year of significant recovery and growth for Northern Community Leisure Trust. Participation increased, social value reached a record £4.88 million and community programmes delivered measurable health and well-being benefits across Ards and North Down. Despite continued market pressure, the Trust maintained financial stability, achieved 100% compliance and strengthened its position as one of the leading social impact leisure operators in the UK.

The Five Pillars of Northern Community Leisure Trust

The Five Pillars provide a balanced view of how Northern Community Leisure Trust delivers against its purpose of creating healthier communities through sustainable leisure, well-being and community services. Together they measure not only financial and operational performance, but also the impact NCLT has on the health and well-being of residents across Ards and North Down.

What is Social Value?

Social Value is the monetary value generated through physical activity participation and is measured through the UKActive Community Platform.

The platform applies nationally recognised health economics models to participation data and calculates the wider benefit generated for society through improved physical and mental health.

Social Value is generated through:

- Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease
- Improved mental well-being
- Increased life satisfaction
- Improved productivity and community resilience
- Reduced obesity and diabetes risk
- Reduced social isolation
- Reduced pressure on health services

The value is expressed as a financial figure (£), allowing organisations to demonstrate the return generated from public investment.

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Northern Community Leisure Trust operates Bangor Aurora Aquatics Centre, Queen's Leisure Complex and Bangor Sportsplex via its management agent Serco Leisure on behalf of Ards and North down Borough Council .

Pillar 1 – Social Value

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	% Growth
Social Value Generated	£3.90m	£4.88m	+25%
National Benchmark	Top Quartile	Top Quartile	Maintained

Social Value remains the Trust's strongest area of performance. NCLT generated £4.88 million of measurable health and well-being impact and maintained a top quartile national ranking.

Pillar 2 – Participation and Health & Well-being

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	% Growth
Total Visits	913,674	954,833	+4.5%
H&F Members (Health & Fitness)	4,587	4,613	+0.6%
Swim Lessons	2,412	2,242	-7.1%
Class Attendance	65,500	67,925	+3.7%
Sports Hall Usage	35%	38%	+8.6%

Participation continued to recover throughout 2025/26 with annual visits increasing by 4.5%, supported by strong programme delivery and community engagement. Swimming lessons moved backwards, the introduction of new programmes will support addressing the gaps Sept 2026 - Dec 26.



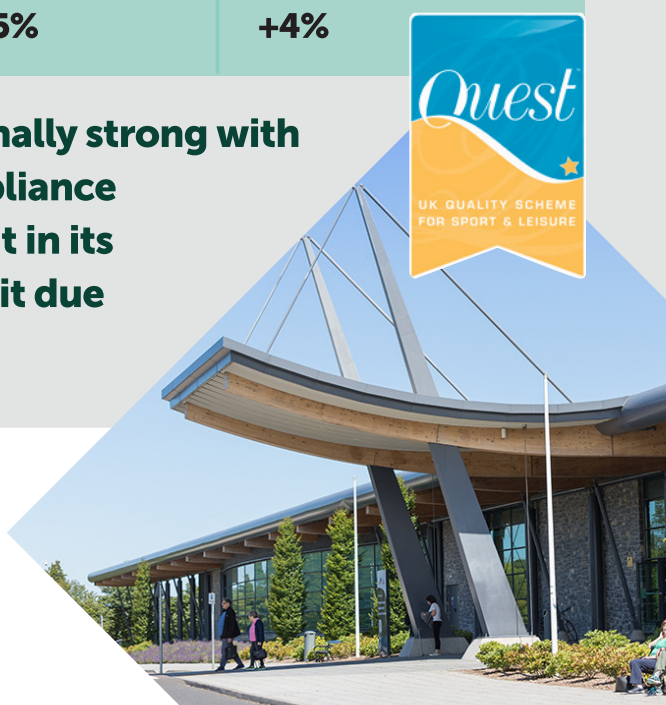
Measure	2024/25	2025/26	% Growth
Active Ageing	8,539	12,508	+46%
Disability Participation	780	1,192	+53%
Wellness Studio	3,100	4,165	+34%
Community Activities	800	938	+17%

Health and well-being programmes delivered significant impact, particularly within Active Ageing and disability inclusion programmes.

Pillar 3 – Operational Excellence

Measure	2024/25	2026	% Growth
Quest Aurora	Very Good	On track	Maintained
Quest Queen's	Very Good	Very Good	Maintained
Compliance	100%	100%	Maintained
Food Audit	95%	98%	+3%
Pool Audit	96%	98%	+2%
Technical Audit	91%	95%	+4%

Operational performance remained exceptionally strong with outstanding audit performance and full compliance maintained. * Quest Aurora achieved Excellent in its Directional Review Nov 2025, with Quest Audit due in November 2026.



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Pillar 4 – Fit for the Future

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	% Growth
Quarter 4 Surplus	£84.4k	£27.1k*	Improved
Payroll to income Ratio	55%	47%	Improved

*Feb - Nov 2025 Sports hall and other facilities closed due to storm damage (significant impact on users and financially)

The Trust remained financially sustainable and delivered strong value for money while continuing to invest in community outcomes.

Pillar 5 – Customer Experience

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	% Growth
Customer Satisfaction	4.0	4.1	+2.5%
Staff Rating	4.3	4.4	+2.3%
NPS (Net promoter score)	18	21	+17%
Stakeholder NPS	75	100	+33%

Customer satisfaction remained consistently above target, with staff recognised as the Trust's greatest strength.



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2026/27 Priorities

- Deliver £5m+ Social Value
- Expand Active Ageing Provision
- Launch Diving Programme
- Grow Membership and Swim Lesson Participation
- Strengthen Community Partnerships
- Support Bangor Sportsplex Development
- Maintain Sector-Leading Operational Standards



Community Projects - 2025/26

Project	Details
Autism Impact	3 year partnership including Autism Impact Award, making our sites more autism friendly
DSNIT	All disability sport including Boccia, kurling and wheelchair sport
Clifton School	School programme - Physical activity for children with learning difficulties
Killard School	School programme - Project independence & sports/multi skills & work placement during the year
Torbank School	School programme - Primarily swimming and lunch for children with learning difficulties
Mae Murray	Partnership with charity for people with learning difficulties - Class and gym programme
Orchardville	Charity for adults with learning difficulties - Group training, primarily gym based
Avondale	Local TRC/day centre for adults - Class based programme
Cedar Foundation	Referrals for adults with learning difficultie.
Active Aging	Active Ageing partnership with SETrust - Programmes for clients 55+
PHA Health	GP Referral scheme - WSA Obesity - Neurological disorders project
PARS	GP Referral scheme - Large programme with £35k funding
ANDBC	Community programming across the borough

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Community Projects - 2025/26 continued...

Project	Details
Physical Literacy	Partnership with Sport NI - Programme encouraging education on physical activity
Women's Aid	Partnership to develop a safe space for physical activity - Continuous staff training and classes
PSNI	Partnership to tackle anti social behaviour and various issues, including immigrants, women etc
NDCN	Partnership, youth work and physical activity
Strides	Partnership for work placements and physical activity for people with learning difficulties
Dept for Communities	Long term work placement project
Aware NI	Partnership, local mental health/depression charity - Fundraising, events etc.
Parkinsons UK	Tailored sessions/classes for people with Parkinsons - Ongoing staff training
Alzheimer's Society	Tailored sessions/classes for people with Azheimers (first of its kind) - Ongoing staff training
Cancer Prehab	Rehab/prehab programming across the Borough
Scrabo Physio	Partnership and pathway developed
Praxis Care	Referrals and group sessions for adults with learning difficulties
Lift the Curfew	Championed by Sport England's This Girl Can campaign - Outdoor after dark running sessions for women during winter months
Moving Communities	Calculate Social Value/Impact in the Community
Arts Council /Boom Studios	Arts/Dance Projects
Active Youth NI	Youth activity groups and disability - Continuous upskilling of staff
Simon Community	Healthy lifestyle physical-activity pathway focused on increasing activity levels and reducing harmful habits
Inspire Well-being	3 year partnership - A mental-wellbeing physical activity pathway using gyms, pools, classes and low-intensity sessions
Pulmonary Rehab	Develop a pathway post 6-week NHS rehab programme to encourage continued activity and reduce waiting lists/service stress
YMCA	Friday Night Youth Club project with PSNI- 'Good Relations'



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