

February 2024

substance.



Substance Research Internship Opportunities 2024-5

Substance - Sport England Club Matters Evaluation: Research internship opportunities

Background

In 2022 Substance was appointed by Sport England to conduct a three year evaluation of their Buddle (formerly known as Club Matters) Programme (<https://buddle.co/>).

Buddle is a Sport England Lottery funded programme that provides free resources, support, guidance and workshops to:

- Grassroots sports clubs, groups and community organisations.
- The professional workforce that supports grassroots sports clubs, groups and community organisations.

Buddle resources are designed to support organisations who are looking to set up, develop, grow, reach out to new communities and maximise their engagement with new and existing members, participants and volunteers. The research to date has been focused on the impacts of the different strands of work within the programme on its target audiences, through a variety of methods including surveys, case studies, interviews, observations and website usage data analysis.

The final year of the evaluation will run from July 2024-July 2025 and will involve some additional research activities to broaden understanding of the impact of the Buddle Programme. Substance will be recruiting 1-3 research interns to contribute to this work, for short term internships based in our central Manchester office (hybrid option available). These positions would best suit a current or recent undergraduate student in the field of social sciences, or someone without university experience, who would like to pursue a career in research, evaluation or insight in the sport and physical activity sector.

Interns will be supported and supervised by Brigid Bell (Senior Researcher, Buddle Evaluation Project Lead) and Joe Williams (Research Analyst, Buddle Evaluation Operational Lead), but will be integrated into the full Substance Research team for the duration of the placement.

The internships will be paid at £12p/h. Other benefits will include:

- Gaining experience within a research company that is highly regarded in a number of sectors.
- The opportunity to work in a professional, Central Manchester office as well as hybrid working from home.
- Exposure to a multi-year evaluation commissioned by Sport England

Internship 1: Alignment of the Club Matters Programme to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

- Internship period: 80 hours
- Dates of placement: between February – May 2025

Understanding the wider social value of the Club Matters Programme will be done through a process of aligning activities with the UN SDGs (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>).

“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.”

Specific outcomes of the Club Matters Programme are focused on workforce equality and community cohesion, and reporting social value in this way will be done using the UN SDGs as a framework of reference.

This will be a desk-based research project which will involve analysing survey data and case studies. This is data that will already have been collected, and will include information around wider impacts, awareness, needs and applications of Club Matters resources. The data will be mapped against the UN SDGs framework, and will effectively demonstrate the areas of the UN SDGs that the Club Matters Programme is delivering against.

A short final report will be written up by the end of the internship. This will present the findings of the mapping exercise, and conclusions drawn from the results. The report will be submitted to Sport England alongside other evaluation outputs.

We are looking for an intern with a specific interest in mixed methods impact research, social value and insight, and desk-based evaluation work. All training will be provided, so prior knowledge and experience is not required, however some previous use of Microsoft Excel would be advantageous.

Internship 2: Creative dissemination of research outputs

- Internship period: 80 hours
- Dates of placement: between May – July 2025

A key output of the Club Matters evaluation will be reporting of results to various stakeholders. Final written reports will be submitted directly to Sport England, but additional outputs to other audiences will be essential for communicating the results of the evaluation. This might include infographics, social media content, video animations and/or slide deck reports.

We are looking for an intern with a specific interest in scientific communication, research dissemination, graphic design and/or social media marketing to create a suite of research

outputs that will communicate the results of the three year Club Matters evaluation to all relevant stakeholders. This internship will involve designing a communications/dissemination strategy, producing the outputs and sharing with relevant stakeholders.

Guidance will be provided, so the intern will not have to devise the strategy without support, however some experience of graphic design tools (e.g. Canva) and social media marketing would be advantageous for this role.

Internship 3: Case study research

- Internship period: 80 hours
- Dates of placement: between November 2024 – June 2025

A large element of the Club Matters evaluation is the production of case studies, which provide a rich and detailed picture of how Club Matters is supporting organisations on the ground. The case study research to date has involved surveys of staff, interviews, focus groups, observations, all written up in the style of a case study report.

We are looking for an intern with a specific interest in qualitative research, case study approach, impact and insight evaluation. This internship will involve working directly with Substance staff to help deliver 10 case studies across a range of organisations delivering sport and physical activity in England, and work will include transcribing interviews, survey data analysis and report writing.

All training will be provided so no prior experience is required for this role, however some experience of working with survey data in Excel, report writing and/or use of Canva would be advantageous.

How to apply

To apply, please submit a covering letter explaining how this opportunity will contribute to your development and future career aspirations, and what you would bring to the role.

Please include your preferred internship period/dates and preferences around hybrid working and number of hours per day/week. Please also indicate if you wish to apply for more than one of the available internship opportunities.

Please include details of two references we can contact as part of your application. At least one of these should be a professional reference, a lecturer or teacher.

If you have any questions, please contact brigid.bell@substance.net.