

PROJECT 500

MORE WOMEN, BETTER COACHING

One Year On...

An evaluation of the first year of Project 500

Prepared by the Research Team at sports coach UK

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Executive Summary

"I think projects like project 500 are fantastic. The fact that they're driven to increase the number of women coaches across all sports, for me, is absolutely inspirational. I think programmes like this should be supported and endorsed more than ever, because they have identified that we do have a low percentage both across grass roots and elite levels. It's critical that we understand how we work with these kind of projects, to inspire, make connections to role models and give [female coaches] more opportunities."

Anna Mayes, England Netball Head Coach

Women make up more than half of the population, but only 25-30% of the coaching workforce is female, while only 18% of qualified coaches are female.

Project 500 has been developed to respond to this gender imbalance in the workforce. Set to run for two years between April 2013 and April 2015, the first full year of the project has now been completed.

In evaluative terms, the two key objectives which can be measured at this stage are well on course to being achieved.

Against an overall target of 500 female coaches, over half (53%, 264 coaches) have been supported so far across 37 different sports. It is also clear to see that a genuine culture of support has been established for the coaches, and they have continued to access this support in a variety of ways.

However, the more notable achievements from the first year become apparent when delving a little deeper into the evaluation findings.

These show us that the project is not only expanding the female coaching workforce in numerical terms, but developing more highly qualified, skilled and better prepared coaches.

For example, over a third (35%, 96 coaches) of the coaches supported so far were unqualified when they registered. A quarter of these (24 coaches) now hold a Level 1 or Level 2 coaching qualification, while 34 coaches who were qualified at registration have been upskilled to a higher qualification level.

Coaches have also highly valued the more informal learning opportunities they have accessed so far. The networking and workshop events have been particularly well received, and this is reflected in how coaches rated themselves in eight key areas.

From their knowledge of coaching to interpersonal skills, goal setting and planning sessions, coaches have developed in all areas since becoming involved in the project, and significantly in terms of their technical/tactical abilities and their confidence to coach.

Those taking part in the evaluation also say they have had a very positive overall experience in the first year.

While continuing to deliver Project 500 at the current pace will ensure all 500 eventual coaches have a very high quality experience, we can also learn from the evaluation to make things even better in the second year.

Opportunities may exist to improve communications with coaches after registering as well as enhancing the already highly valued networking opportunities by making more content and connections available online.

We recommend the project management team carefully consider these opportunities – summarised in Section 5 – to ensure those already engaged and those yet to engage on the project have an even better experience in the second year.

1. Introduction

While women make up more than half of the population, only 25-30% of the coaching workforce is female, and only 18% of qualified coaches are female.

sports coach UK and the seven South East County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) - Sport Hampshire & IOW (SHIOW), Oxfordshire Sport Partnership, Leap, Get Berkshire Active, Active Surrey, Active Sussex and Kent Sport – developed Project 500 to respond to this gender imbalance in the workforce.

The project aims to increase the number of female coaches, and in the process, create a more diverse coaching workforce while driving the growth of females playing sport.

Set to run for two years between April 2013 and April 2015, the first full year of the project has now been completed. This report evaluates the first year against the project's four key objectives.

It uses coaches' feedback to assess progress so far as well as highlighting key achievements and areas for improvement in the second year.

A second evaluation will also be conducted at the end of year two. This will build on this initial evaluation report by assessing the overall success of the project.

2. Methodology

2.1 Aims of the project and evaluation

The evaluation assesses progress so far against the key objectives of Project 500. For clarity these are included below:

1. Recruit, develop, deploy and/or retain 500 female coaches across the South East between April 2013 – April 2015
2. Establish a culture of support for female coaches including mentoring, co-coaching, communities of learning and coach observations to underpin coach development and deployment
3. Raise the profile of females in coaching through the development of a women's coaching network
4. Create clear guidelines and provide a body of evidence to encourage the roll out of this project nationally from April 2015 – *Project 5000*.

At this stage of the project, the development of the womens only network is ongoing therefore Objective 3 will be evaluated at the end of the second year. And, as the requirements of Objective 4 will be met by the year one and two evaluation reports, this

objective is not explicitly mentioned in the remainder of this report. Instead, the findings presented focus on progress against Objectives 1 and 2.

2.2 Data sources

We used a range of methods to collect data to inform the evaluation. For Objective 1, we have used information from the Project 500 tracking document to assess progress towards the overall target of 500 female coaches. The tracking document includes details of all coaches involved in the project so far, including their CSP, sport and typical coaching practice.

For Objective 2, we managed two surveys with coaches. All coaches were invited to complete an online survey, regardless of whether they had received specific support via the project or simply registered their details but not yet taken this initial interest any further.

We received a total of 184 responses to the survey. Of these, 71 have received specific support since registering on Project 500. Based on the number of coaches supported so far (264, see Section 3), this represents a very healthy response rate of 27%.

The remaining 113 respondents had not – at the time of the survey – taken their initial interest any further. They explained why this was the case and this information is included in Section 4.

Finally, we conducted a telephone survey with six coaches who have received specific support through the project. These in-depth interviews added greater depth to the findings and are included at relevant points throughout Section 4.

3. 500 Female Coaches – Where are we now?

Objective 1 - Recruit, develop, deploy and/or retain 500 female coaches across the South East between April 2013 – April 2015

At the half-way stage we are on course to achieve this objective. Over half (53%, 264 coaches) the total target of 500 coaches have been supported in the first year. The breakdown of coaches supported by each CSP is below:

Table 1 Coaches supported by CSP

CSP	Coaches	%
Get Berkshire Active	46	17%
Leap	15	6%
Sport Hampshire & IOW	37	14%
Kent Sport	39	15%
Oxfordshire Sport Partnership	32	12%
Active Surrey	61	23%
Active Sussex	34	13%
Total	264	100%

The types of support the coaches have received vary and are included in Table 2 below. Though smaller numbers have been mentored and deployed so far, these are two areas which will be developed further in the second year of the project.

Table 2 Types of support coaches have received

Type of Support	No. Coaches Supported
Recruited from a non-coaching role to P500	66
Upskilled (received formal coach education training)	70
Developed (attended formal or informal learning opportunities)	169
Mentored	37
Deployed (within a sport-specific or Sport England programme)	23

Note: numbers do not add up to 264 as approximately 45% (120) coaches have received more than one type of support

Coaches have been supported in a wide range of sports in the first year. Table 3 below shows the top seven sports. These account for almost two-thirds (63%) of the coaches supported so far.

An extended table including the sports accounting for less than 5% of the total is included in Appendix I. This shows coaches from a further 30 sports have been involved to date.

We believe engagement from coaches in 37 sports is an encouraging result given that more female coaches in more sports ultimately provides participants with greater choice when deciding who they want to be coached by. This increased choice may lead to increased female participation, particularly among groups of women who prefer to be coached by female coaches.

Table 3 Coaches supported by sport

Sport	Coaches Supported	%
Netball	49	19%
Athletics	29	11%
Cricket	21	8%
Gymnastics	21	8%
Cycling	18	7%
Football	14	5%
Rugby	14	5%

There are also encouraging signs from the upskilling that has taken place in the first year.

Over a third of the coaches supported so far (35%, 96 coaches) said they were unqualified when they first registered on the project. Of these, a quarter (24 coaches) are now qualified at either Level 1 (71%) or Level 2 (29%).

In addition, 34 coaches who were qualified at registration have been upskilled to a higher qualification level. The majority (74%) have moved from Level 1 to Level 2, with small numbers also advancing from Leader to Level 1 (15%), Leader to Level 2 (3%) and old (non-UKCC) Level 3 to a current Level 2 (8%).

This shows the project is helping to develop a more highly qualified female coaching workforce.

Finally, Figures 1 to 4 below show the coaches' average coaching practice in terms of time spent coaching per week/year and the number of participants they coach. The overall averages for all coaches are compared to the top seven sports.

These sports are slightly above average in all areas, with cycling coaches appearing to undertake the most coaching (in terms of hours/weeks per year and number of participants coached).

The coaches currently coach, on average, around eight more adult (over 25 years of age) participants than young people (11-25) each week.

Figure 1 – Average number of hours coached per week

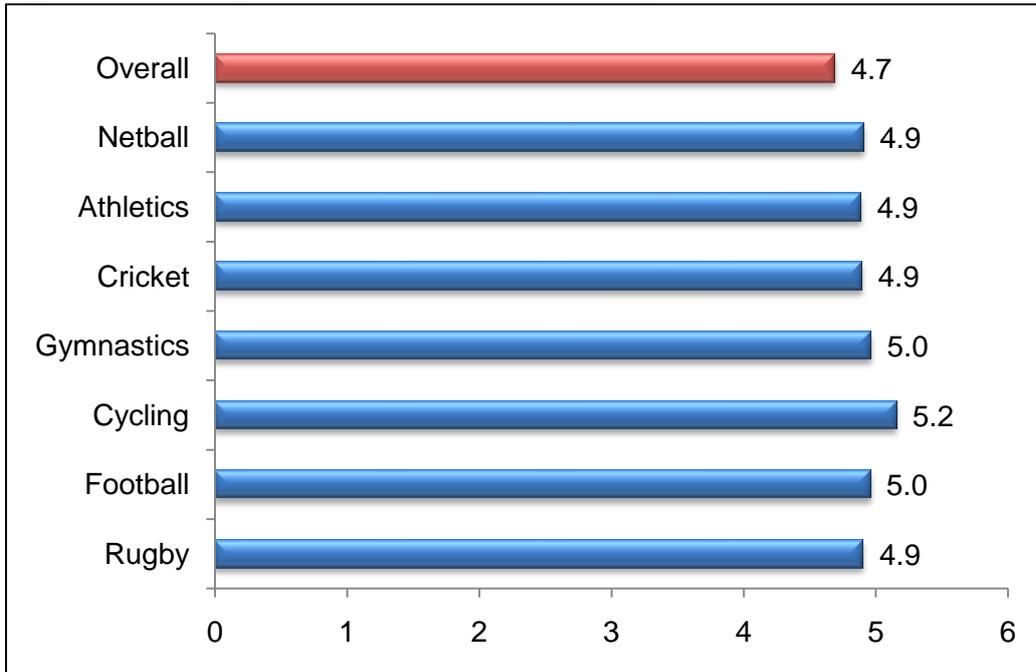


Figure 2 – Average number of weeks coached per year

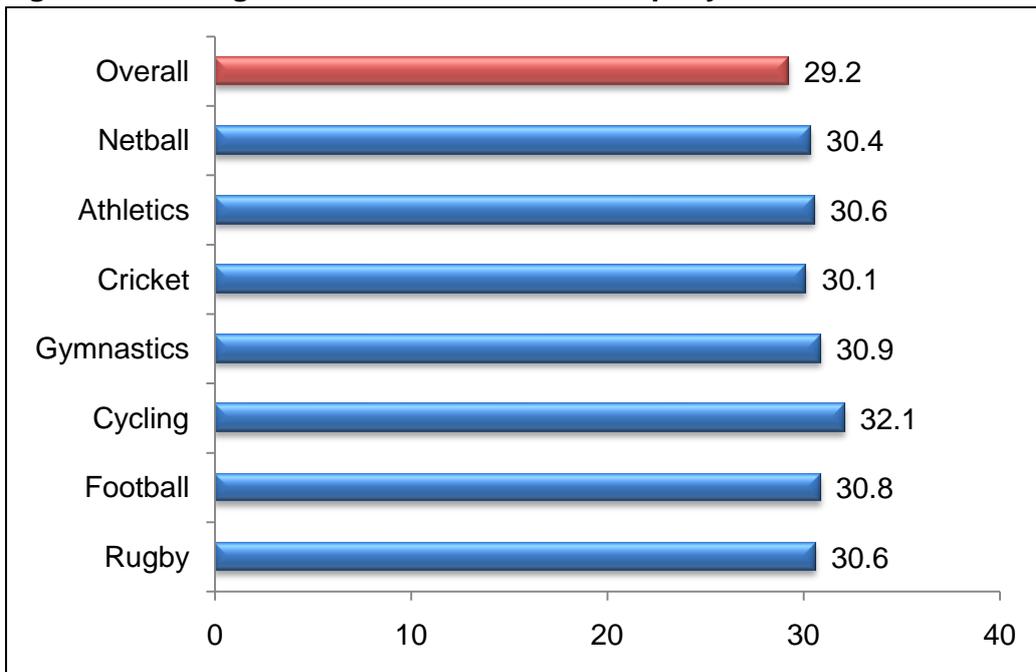


Figure 3 – Average number of 11-25 year olds coached per week

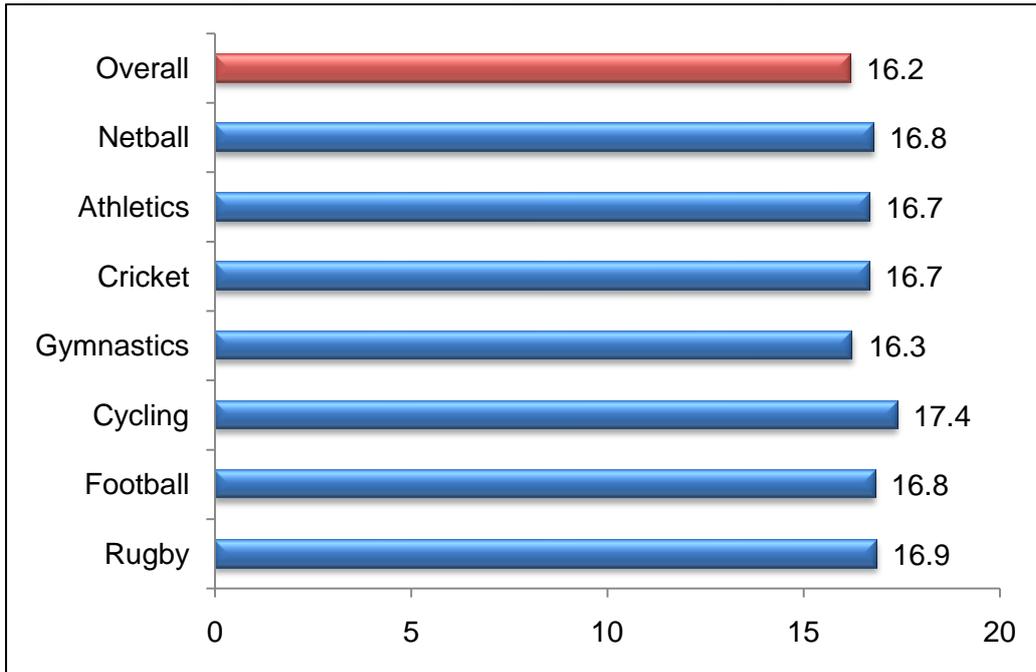
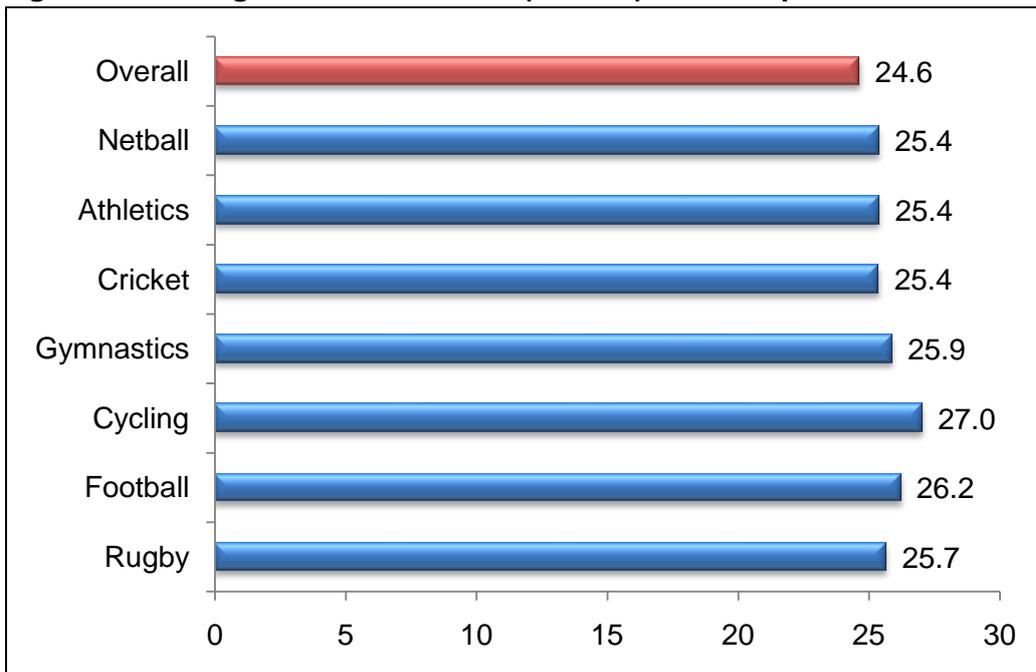


Figure 4 – Average number of adults (over 25) coached per week



4. Establishing a Culture of Support – Where are we now?

Objective 2 - Establish a culture of support for female coaches including mentoring, co-coaching, communities of learning and coach observations to underpin coach development and deployment

After one year of the project we are also on course to achieve this objective. The information in Section 3 above shows, in numerical terms, that a culture of support exists and that female coaches have accessed it in a variety of ways.

Crucially, coaches have also provided feedback which shows the culture of support is underpinning their development.

The remainder of this section explores coaches' experiences so far, setting out what has worked well and why, as well as what may be improved in the second year.

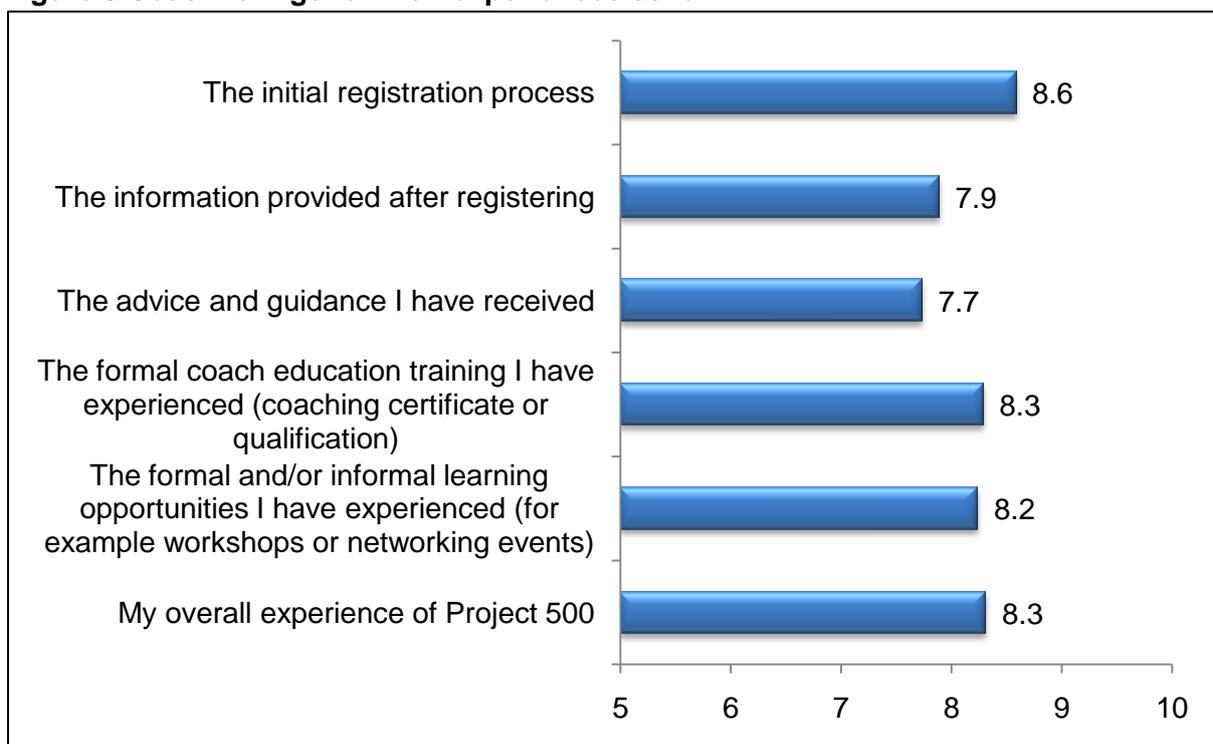
It also focuses on how the coaches have developed since being involved in the project.

4.1 Coaches' experiences so far

Coaches responding to the online survey were asked to rate the things they had experienced so far on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.

As well as having very positive overall experiences so far, coaches are particularly positive about the initial registration process and the formal and informal learning opportunities provided (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Coach ratings for their experiences so far



4.1.1 Registration, information, advice and guidance

A number of coaches praised the ease of initial registration.

“Very simple and easy to register”

“Was very simple and efficient”

“This was very easy and straight forward”

The only suggestion to improve this was to make it clearer that the project is open to all women, not only coaches. One coach said this may help boost registrations from volunteers and women not currently coaching.

“Believe the initial registration process needs to be more widely advertised as being for all, not just coaches. By this I mean I personally thought you have to be a coach before registering but this has since come to light it is for all, so could just currently be just a volunteer. If this is more widely known think it will help boost the project even further”

Coaches were slightly less positive about the information provided after registering and the advice and guidance they have received.

While the ratings in Figure 5 (7.9 and 7.7) show they are not dissatisfied, the feedback provided in supporting questions suggests there may be room for improvement.

‘Sketchy’ and ‘limited’ are two words coaches use which help illustrate what a small proportion (approximately 18%) of survey respondents experienced.

“Information was a bit sketchy - a welcome pack to introduce the scheme might have been good”

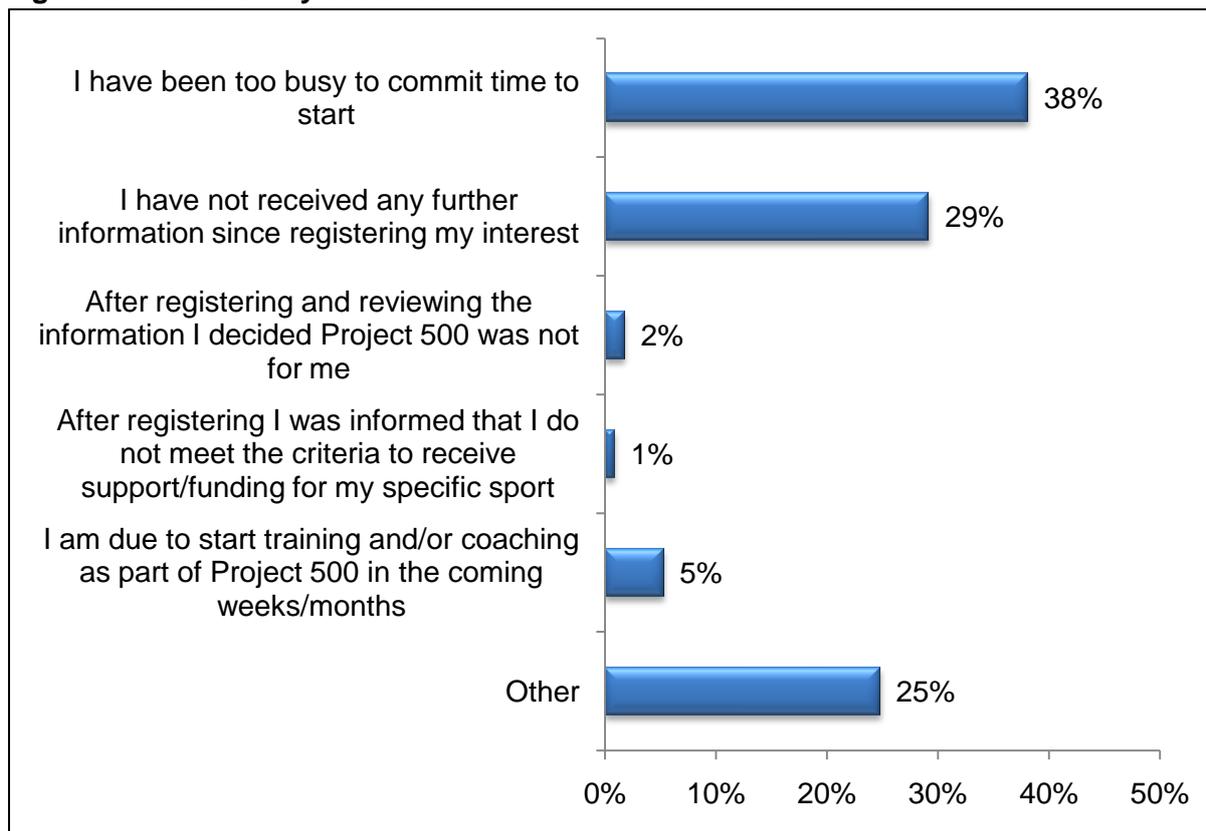
“I wasn't entirely clear what Project 500 was, or what I was actually signing up for originally”

“Not been loads of info about what the project has achieved, what the work is that it is doing, what other opportunities might be available etc”

“I didn't hear very much after registering with project 500, the first email I received was inviting me to a free coaching education workshop day. It would be nice after registering to received a welcome email explaining what is available to me being part of project 500 and who to ask for help”

In addition, Figure 6 below shows that of those coaches who have registered on Project 500 but not yet taken their initial interest any further, almost a third (29%) said this was because they have not received any further information since registering.

Figure 6 Reasons why coaches have not taken their initial interest further



Base = 113

'Other' responses mainly relate to coaches being unable to start the programme due to other commitments or being scheduled to start in the coming months, however a further five coaches highlighted similar issues with the information provided.

"Had some contact but amounted to not much. Unsure of what project 500 has to offer me"

"Not very clear (from the few emails I've received) what is available, coaching course wise"

And while coaches taking part in the telephone interviews were broadly satisfied with this aspect, two comments suggest more regular updates could give coaches a greater sense of being involved in Project 500.

"Since my first involvement I wouldn't have minded slightly more regular updates, I think it keeps it in the forefront of your mind more than letting it slip away a bit. Email is probably the best way and you can always refer back to them."

"It would be nice to have an informative email to say what's happening and when. It keeps you involved and just confirms to you that something IS happening. So often you sign up to these things and then you think I haven't heard anything, I wonder if it's still actually happening."

CSPs managing Project 500 with sports coach UK are already discussing ways to improve communications with coaches prior to this evaluation. To assist this process, coach

suggestions for improving the information, advice and guidance provided after registering are listed below.

CSPs may consider implementing these in the second year to ensure all coaches enjoy the same high quality communications which the majority of coaches have received in the first year.

- After registering give coaches clear information on the specific aims of the project, for example what is the project about, what is it trying to achieve, what are the benefits of being involved etc
- Provide coaches with information which clearly sets out the different types of support and opportunities available to them through the project, for example, formal and informal learning, mentoring etc and how they access these
- Provide more regular, Project 500 branded updates to coaches registered on the programme (preferably by e-mail). As well as keeping them up-to-date with recent project news, key milestones/achievements and new opportunities, this will give them a greater sense of being a part of something that is worth being involved in.

4.1.2 Learning opportunities

We have seen in Figure 5 that coaches are very satisfied with both the formal and informal learning they have accessed so far.

We have also seen in Section 3 how a number of coaches have been upskilled through formal qualifications.

In addition to these positive findings, online and telephone survey feedback highlights just how highly coaches value the more informal workshops and networking events.

Over half the coaches responding said these were the best thing about the project so far.

“Meeting other female coaches and attending the workshops.”

“Networking with coaches from other sports and sharing good practice ideas”

“The access to communications with female coaches from other sports at different levels”

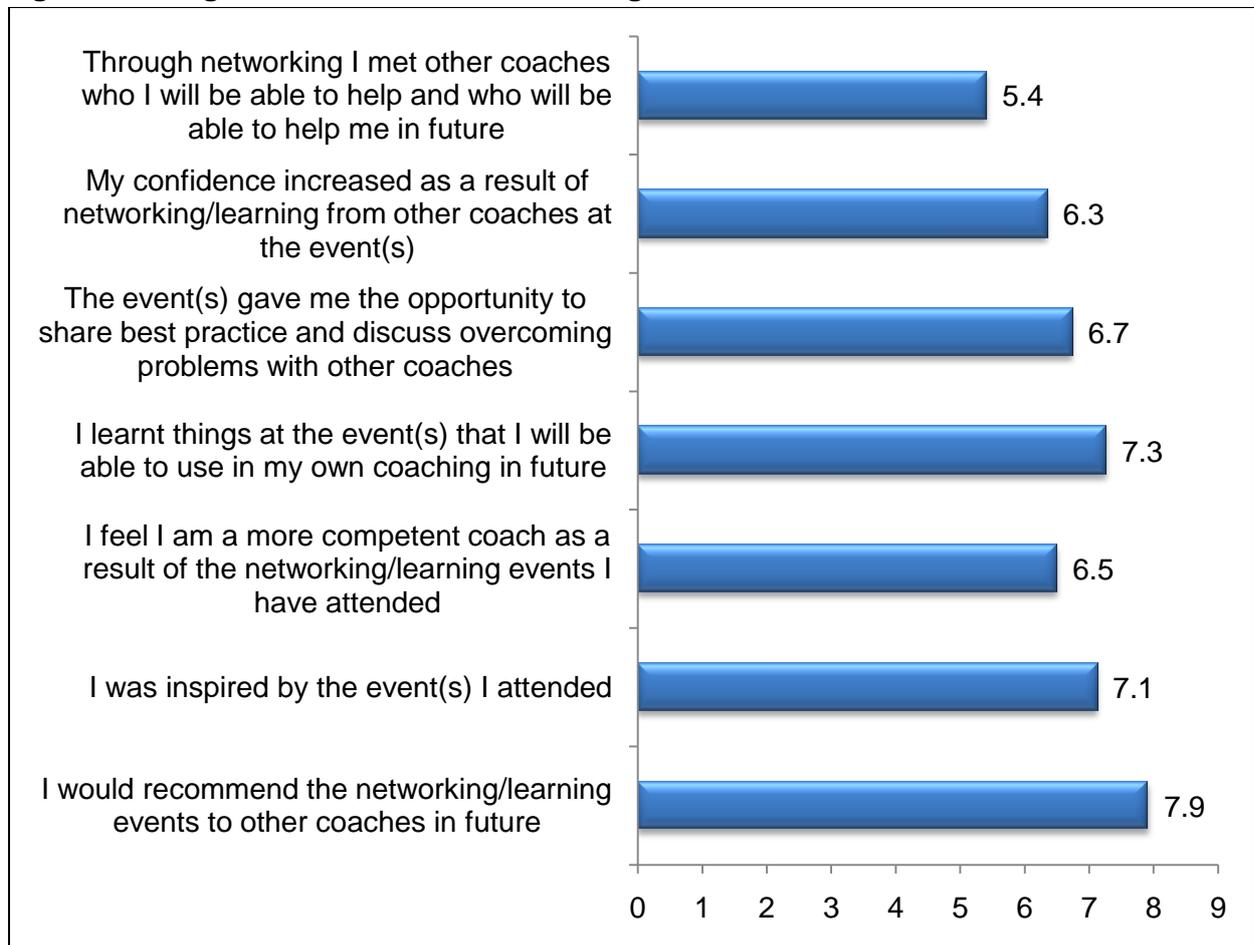
“The 2 sessions I have attended have been excellent for gaining information, ideas, and discovering reference material”

“I have only attended one workshop and loved it”

In addition, coaches who have attended an all female networking event rated the overall usefulness 7.8 out of 10.

Additional ratings in Figure 7 below show coaches were inspired by the events, learnt things that they could use in their own coaching and would recommend them to other coaches in future.

Figure 7 Ratings for the all female networking events



They are less positive about the impact of the events on their confidence (6.3) and competence (6.5), while the ratings for networking with other coaches (5.4 and 6.7) appear quite low. This may be surprising at first glance given how valuable and useful coaches say these events are.

Further analysis of the supporting comments shows these ratings may in fact be lower because some coaches felt they needed more time to network with other coaches at the events.

“More opportunities for networking as part of the evening”

“I did talk to some of the other ladies there from other sports but would have liked more opportunity to do this.”

“It was a bit of a strange introduction. Myself and several other female coaches on the day said that it would have been helpful if we all could have stood up and introduced ourselves to each other so we could then talk to others of the same sport. I found out near the end that

there was another L1 Tennis Coach like myself as we happened to be in a group together during the Workshop.”

A small number of coaches also asked for more sport specific content, but recognised the difficulties in making this happen. An alternative suggestion was for more focus on issues or problems which are relevant to coaches in both individual and team sports.

“More relevant to specific sport if possible”

“I suspect that the events I have attended have been less useful than I anticipated because they were attempting to cater for all sports, and didn't feel particularly relevant to my sport. They might do better to focus on 'issues' or 'problems' faced by all coaches? - e.g.: How to motivate athletes?”

Coaches also suggested creating an online community to enable them to make contact and stay in touch after or outside of Project 500 events.

“More time for networking, or ways to make connections with other coaches over the internet, as well as in person.”

“To be able to access Project 500 online as part of a membership and to be able to log on and contact other coaches in my field for support and advice. Also could be a good way of sharing up and coming events, funding support information and resources to help female coaches be motivated and push forward to improve their coaching techniques.”

“A Facebook group as part of the project would be a good idea to start off networking discussions.”

“As a new coach it would be really useful to network with coaches who have a lot more experience or even other coaches who've had different experiences so we can share our knowledge if you like. Contact details for coaches locally if you can't attend the events or Facebook which is such a big tool for contacting people that could be good too. If you put on a short message about "does anyone have experience in this area" then you could swap details or private message. I just think in this day and age, my group is completely run off Facebook so it's such a powerful tool that we could use.”

One of the coaches taking part in the telephone survey took the online community idea a step further. She suggested making more content from the networking events available online could help coaches overcome practical barriers relating to time and travelling to venues.

“Delivering them at different times would help or more online stuff, online seminars, I'm always up for that. It saves on travel. Videoing sessions sounds good, watching the speakers at a later stage.”

Another coach interviewed by telephone echoed this view. She has found it difficult to attend all the events due to the time she spends coaching. She agreed that online or even audio content would be a very useful and welcome addition.

“Yes it really has, one of the difficulties I have is getting to the events as I do a lot of coaching. I do try to change dates but it's unfortunate the next one I can't get out of my coaching commitments.

[Videoing workshops or speaker sessions] Oh that would be brilliant, in America they're really big on it, it's available on a video link or online, I'd fully support that. The other thing is I spend a lot of time in the car so any audio resource, a podcast or similar, would be really useful. We do travel a lot as coaches so if you could use it as things like that I think it would be great.”

As the only barrier coaches identified is finding the time to attend events and training, it may be worth considering the viability of the online community and content ideas, particularly if they can be developed relatively inexpensively (for example by using free tools and resources such as Facebook).

Finally, further comments from the online survey show coaches who have received funding value this support extremely highly.

“It was a great to receive funding to enable me to qualify as a British Cycling coach - something I have wanted to do for a number of years.”

And, at a broader level, some coaches said how positive it is to see an initiative purely for female coaches, with one suggesting she would not have become a coach without the support of the project.

“It provides opportunity for females who may not have otherwise become coaches if it wasn't for the support.”

“[The best thing about the project?] Someone is thinking about encouraging more females into coaching.”

“I don't actually know if I'd have started this journey without something like this to give me that extra push.”

4.1.3 Coach development

The previous sections have shown that a culture of support exists for female coaches and is valued by those who have accessed it so far. However, it is perhaps most encouraging that this culture of support has helped develop the coaches and prepare them for deployment.

Figure 8 below shows how coaches rated themselves in a number of different areas, thinking about their abilities before they became involved in the project and now at the halfway stage.

Since being involved in the project coaches have developed in all eight areas. Their confidence to coach has increased significantly and this cannot be underestimated, given

that we identified how much of a barrier confidence can be in our recent Women and Qualifications research¹.

Their technical and tactical abilities have also increased significantly, particularly their ability to plan and deliver engaging sessions and set goals for their participants.

This all suggests the project has helped to develop higher quality coaches who are better prepared for deployment in their sports.

Figure 8 – How coaches rated themselves before starting P500 and now



¹ Women and Qualifications Research, sports coach UK, 2013

5. Preparing for Year 2

While the evaluation has shown the first year of the project has been a real success, coaches put forward a number of suggestions which could help make the experience even better in the second year. These are summarised below.

We recommend the Project 500 management team – sports coach UK and the seven South East CSPs – consider the validity and feasibility of implementing these in the second year.

1. Give all coaches high quality information, advice and guidance after they register on the project. This could include clear information on the specific aims of the project and the benefits for coaches, the different support and opportunities available and regular Project 500 e-mail branded updates to help them feel a part of the project. (See Section 4.1.1 for more details)
2. To enhance the already highly valued networking events and workshops, give coaches more time to network with other coaches at the events. Also consider developing an online community (possibly using Facebook) to enable them to stay in touch with each other afterwards. (See Section 4.1.2 for more details)
3. The only barrier identified by coaches is finding the time to attend all the events and training. Providing video or audio content of key session speakers and workshops via the Project 500 website could help overcome this and ensure coaches who are unable to attend remain fully engaged. (See Section 4.1.2 for more details)

Appendix I – Additional Tables/Charts

Coaches supported so far by sport

Sport	Coaches Supported	%
Netball	49	19%
Athletics	29	11%
Cricket	21	8%
Gymnastics	21	8%
Cycling	18	7%
Football	14	5%
Rugby	14	5%
Badminton	10	4%
Hockey	10	4%
Swimming	9	3%
Basketball	8	3%
Equestrian	7	3%
Multiple sports	7	3%
Bowls	6	2%
Handball	4	2%
Lacrosse	4	2%
Tennis	4	2%
Sailing	3	1%
Canoeing	3	1%
Archery	2	1%
Dance	2	1%
Rowing	2	1%
Softball	2	1%
Triathlon	2	1%
Golf	1	0%
Martial Arts	1	0%
Scuba Diving	1	0%
Shooting	1	0%
Skateboarding	1	0%
Squash and Badminton	1	0%
Stoolball	1	0%
Taekwondo	1	0%
Ultimate Frisbee	1	0%
Wake boarding	1	0%
WCBB	1	0%
X Country Ski	1	0%
Zumba	1	0%
Total	264	100%