

Ping Pong Parlours – A Pathway to Regular Participation

Theme: regular participation, behaviour change

Defining the Issue

According to the COM-B model, developed by Michie et al in 2011, in order for behaviour change to occur an individual needs the capability, opportunity and motivation to do so. The *Ping Pong Parlour* project, which often creates links with local table tennis clubs, provides the perfect opportunity for people to change their behaviours and create a regular playing habit.

Background Information

The Ping Pong Parlour project takes otherwise empty retail units within shopping centres and turns them into pop-up vibrant spaces for the public to play table tennis for free.

Castle Quarter shopping centre in Norwich opened a Ping Pong Parlour in October 2017. Since its opening, the Parlour has welcomed tens of thousands of people through their doors, supported charity events and hosted weekly 50+ *Bat & Chat* session.

In addition, a club link with local Norwich City Table Tennis Club (TTC) has provided added value to the Ping Pong Parlour at Castle Quarter. Norwich City TTC have hosted numerous events and regular activities for visitors to the Parlour, including youth coaching events, holiday challenges for children, robot challenges raising money for two local charities, and a weekly *Bat & Chat* session aimed at those aged 50+.

Details of the club are displayed in the Parlour, should anyone be interested in moving into a more formal club setting.

Norwich City TTC have been very supportive of the Ping Pong Parlour at Castle Quarter and understand how it can benefit both the social and competitive sides of the sport.

“The Parlour highlights an inherent love for the game at grassroots levels and suggests that if we really want table tennis to be in the psyche of the public we need sustainable venues like this in the centre of cities” – Shaun Parsley, Norwich Table Tennis League Chairman



case study

November 2019

The Results

Norwich City TTC have seen numerous benefits as a result of their involvement in the Ping Pong Parlour;

- Through hosting regular events and displaying information about the club, Norwich City TTC have seen over 40 people come to the club after playing in the Parlour. Over 25% of these have stayed at the club to play competitively, with the rest taking part in other social table tennis opportunities.
- Norwich City TTC has entered three teams in the Norwich League for the first time this year, with kit sponsored by Castle Quarter and players who joined from the Parlour.
- Numerous members from Norwich City TTC have been involved in running events at the Parlour, giving them exposure to new players, new ways of thinking and new engaging activities.

The social *Bat & Chat* sessions have also proven extremely successful, attracting an average of 15 people each week with the majority of participants being regulars at the session.

“Everyone enjoys it, and it’s much more fun than other things could be! A few of them had played table tennis before outside of this session, but most of them are brand new to table tennis... when they started they couldn’t get the ball on the table; but now they’re getting it back, they’re getting movement and it helps them” – Doug Randall, Bat & Chat Activator

“Tuesday mornings I play [table tennis] at a senior citizens club and then I come here – it makes my day up! You get the company, try to improve your table tennis and it gives you a reason to come out” – Phil, Bat & Chat participant

“Maureen and I used to play golf, and last year we decided that we’d had enough and wanted to do something else. [These sessions] were in the paper and we thought we’d just come along and try it and we absolutely loved it! We just like the people and having a knock about. We’d be heartbroken if it stopped because we really do enjoy coming” – June, Bat & Chat participant



Key Learnings

1. Ping Pong Parlours provide an opportunity for people to change their behaviour and create regular playing habits.
2. Links with local clubs enhance the opportunity people have to create regular playing habits, both socially and competitively
3. Having other social opportunities to signpost people towards is important, as a club setting isn’t right for everyone

Further Information

Find your nearest Ping Pong Parlour at www.pingpongparlour.net

Find your nearest club at www.tabletennisengland.co.uk



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21 Bloomsbury Street
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sportengland.org