

HOW MANY INDOOR SPORTS CENTRES ARE THERE IN ENGLAND?

Mike Fitzjohn and Malcolm Tungatt, July 2021

Introduction

1. It will be apparent from a reading of earlier SLLP Chapters that this is a question which has vexed mankind from the dawn of history! And, it is one which is impossible to answer. But fools rush in..... Quite simply there is no universally 'right' answer. So this paper can only be an attempt; there can be no definitive attempt. Difficulties include matters of definition, the previous lack of any consistent data gathering, the embryonic nature of the business and its records in the 1960s and 1970s, and the fledgling nature of IT during much of the period under consideration.
2. However, the establishment by Sport England in 2003/4 of its Active Places facilities database, which massively helped to overcome some of these difficulties, provides an opportunity, never previously undertaken to our knowledge, to address the question with rigour and consistency, and this has been our principal source. Further details of Active Places, and our research methodology and data tables, are provided in a Technical Annex.

Objectives

3. To document on a consistent basis over time:-
 - a) the opening of indoor sports centres;
 - b) the closure of indoor sports centres;
 - c) the net provision of indoor sports centres;
 - d) the replacement, or otherwise, of closed indoor sports centres;
 - e) the refurbishment of indoor sports centres;
 - f) variance between freestanding Local Authority centres, other freestanding centres, and centres on educational sites;
 - g) and variance between regions.

Defining Indoor Sports Centres

4. The Introduction and Foreword to the SLLP indicates:-

At the heart of developing this story has been the challenge of 'defining' what was originally a new concept, the community indoor sports centre, which has evolved over the 50 or so years. The core definition of a 'community indoor sports centre' for the purposes of 'Harlow to K2 and Beyond' is the one broadly accepted from the early days by the Sports Council and adopted by 'The British Leisure Centre Guide 1993', published by John S Turner Associates in association with Longman Group UK Limited.

It is – an indoor centre with a sports hall and some other facilities, which may include a swimming pool, and has significant use by the general public.

5. This is the definition which we have used for our current work.

Thus we have excluded any facility which:-

- a) does not have a sports hall at all;
 - b) only has a hall which does not meet the Active Places definition of a 'Main Hall' (3 badminton courts, or more) in addition to other indoor facilities;
 - c) meets the Main Hall requirement, but has no ancillary indoor facilities, i.e. stand-alone sports halls.
6. This does, of course, rule out quite a number of significant facilities which many would colloquially accept as 'indoor sports centres'. However, the important point here is consistency of definition and consistency of data.
7. It was also important in agreeing a definition that it was capable of analysis within the Active Places data framework since Active Places does NOT seek to classify 'indoor sports centres'.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Active Places

8. Advantages

- a) the vast majority of the data appears to be very accurate;
- b) it is presented on a consistent basis;
- c) it has comprehensive coverage;
- d) it has been, and continues to be, regularly reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis.

9. Disadvantages

- a) a very small amount of data is clearly wrong. Where we have clear evidence of this, we have amended the dataset;
- b) it only gives data for individual facilities (e.g. Main Halls, Activity Halls, Squash Courts, Health & Fitness Suites, Studios, etc), so we have had to manipulate it in accordance with our definition of indoor sports centres;
- c) build dates of individual facilities are recorded, but it does not identify when public use (e.g. of school premises) actually began;
- d) therefore it tends to overestimate the role of school premises built prior to the 1970s;
- e) whilst it records the ownership status as it is in 2021, it does not give any relevant history;
- f) the original database was only established in 2003/4 and the first recorded closure date is 2002. While this tends to include most centres built post-1965, we are conscious of some omissions of early centres and have augmented the dataset from other SLLP research and personal information.

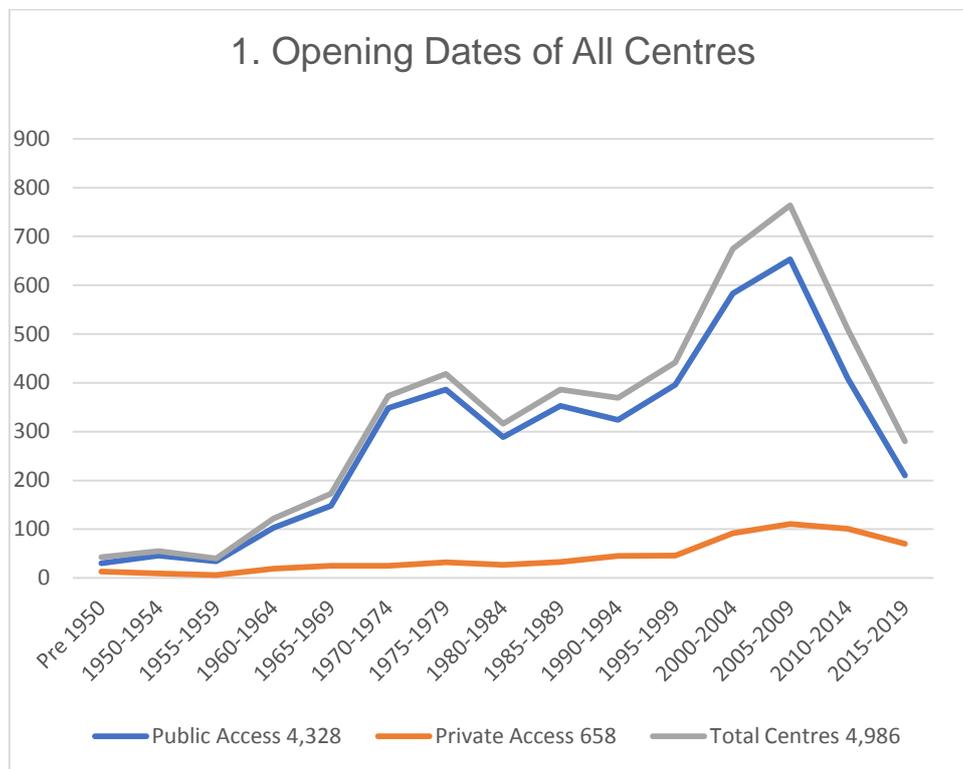
Results

The Opening of Indoor Centres

All Indoor Centres

10. In total the full dataset reveals 4,986 indoor sports centres have been provided, of which 4,328 (87%) have public access and therefore meet the project definition, and 658 (13%) are restricted to private access. Chart 1 shows their

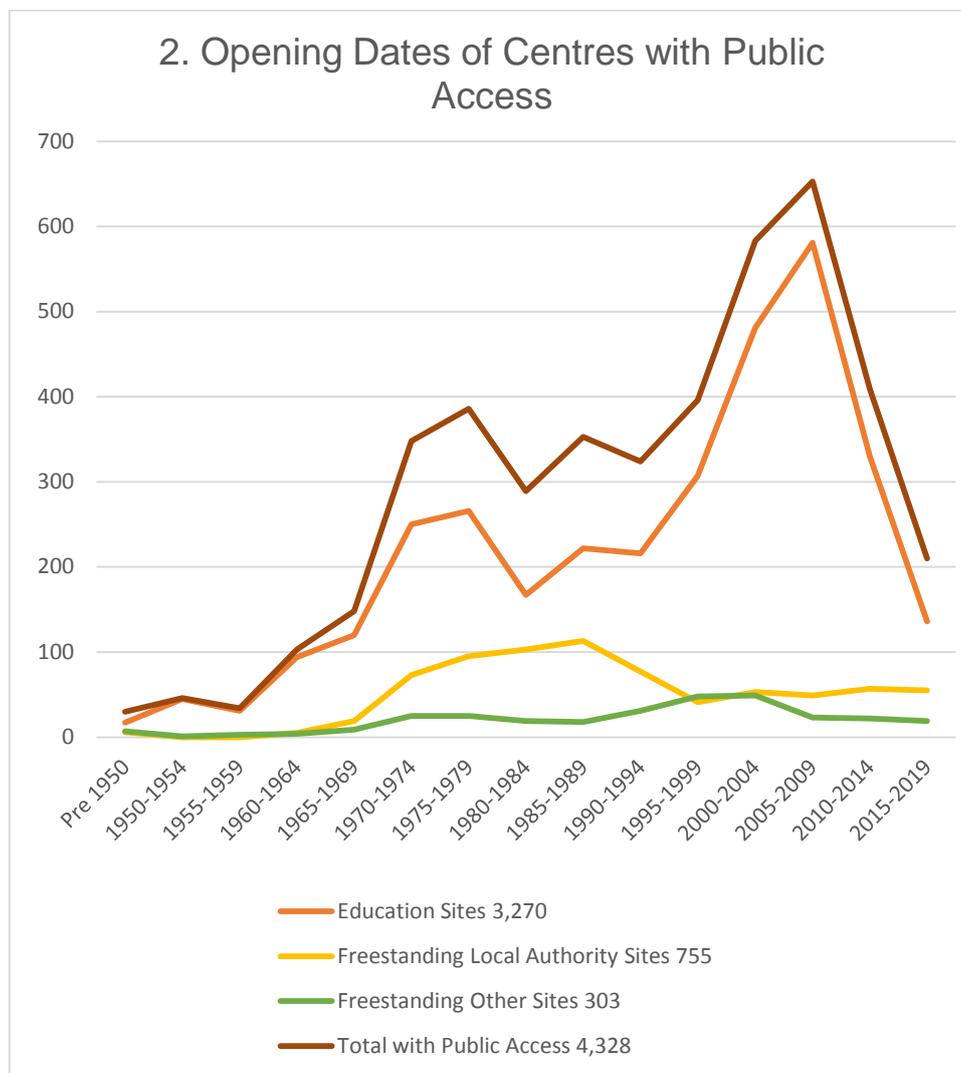
provision over five-year periods from 1950 to 2019 (the data tables on which all charts are based are shown in the Technical Annex). We will not comment on the detail at this point because there is a more detailed analysis in the following sections.



11. However, from hereon we concentrate in our analysis almost exclusively on the 4,328 'public access' centres which meet the project definition. But the 'private' centres are not unimportant. Firstly 'access' can be a relatively transient variable and, in a short time frame, a centre which currently has private access can 'throw open its doors' to a wider public. Such a change is often observed, for example, when an existing facility is replaced by a new one.
12. There was also a surge in 'private access' provision from 2000, largely accounted for by educational establishments building sports centres for their own use, representing some 93% of all 'private access' centres built in the 20 years since.

Public Access Centres

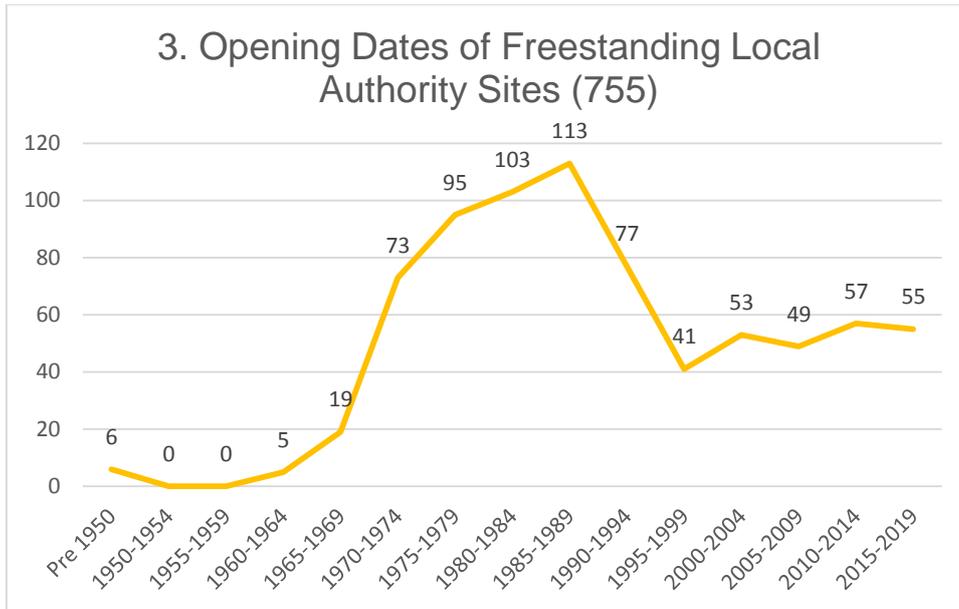
13. Chart 2 shows the provision over time of the 4,328 public access centres by type of site. By far the largest number, 3,270 (76%) are on Education sites. Freestanding Local Authority centres account for 755 (17%), and the remainder, 303 (7%), are Freestanding Centres of Other Providers (sports clubs, commercial companies, community organisations, MOD, Trusts, etc).



Freestanding Local Authority Sites

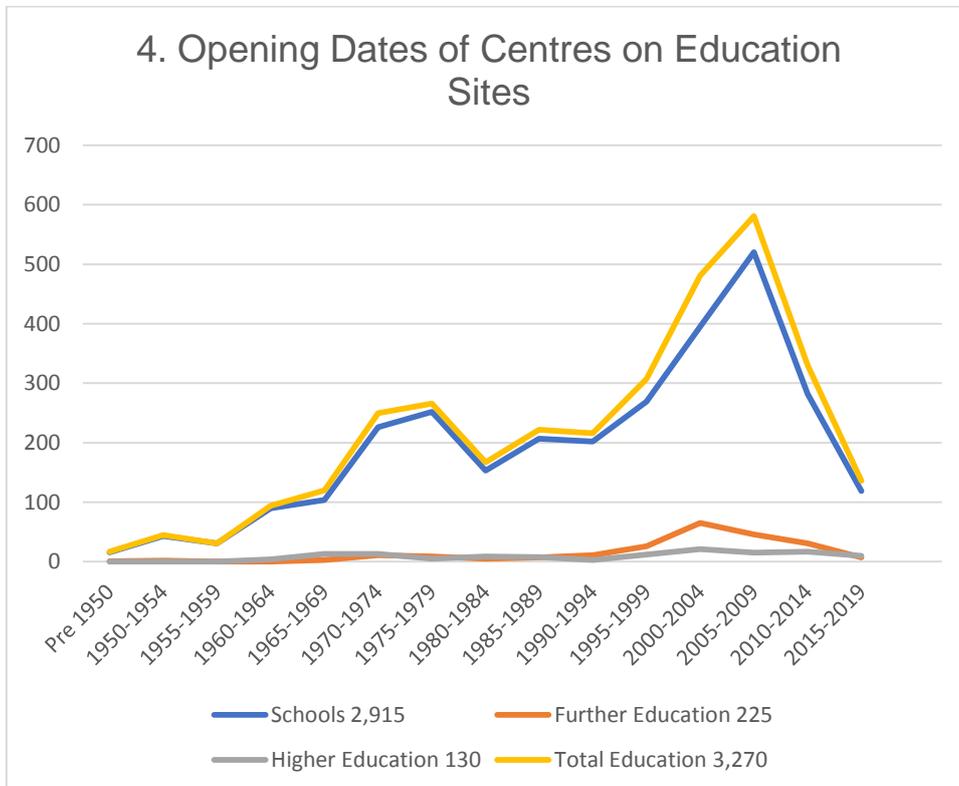
14. It is important to point out at this stage that Freestanding Local Authority sites are not the sum total of Local Authority endeavour in the provision of indoor sports centres. In particular, it excludes centres jointly provided between Local Authorities and Local Education Authorities on school sites, principally in the 1970s and 1980s, which are included in the 'Education sites' totals. It is impossible to distinguish such centres in any systematic, consistent and reliable way in Active Places, but Chapter 8 of the SLLP website indicates the proportion of such centres within the total for parts of England where data is available.
15. Chart 3 shows the provision of centres on Freestanding Local Authority sites over time. The surge in the 1970s, fuelled by Local Government reorganisation, is clearly visible, continuing and peaking in the 1980s where the trend to build a more modern design of "leisure centre" was in vogue. There then follows a steep decline in provision in the 1990s, probably brought about by the threats perceived from Compulsory Competitive Tendering. Since 2000 provision in the sector has levelled, providing on average about ten new centres per annum.
16. We were surprised and intrigued to find six centres apparently built before 1950. Closer investigation revealed only two of them were 'bona fide' sports centres by our definition, the remaining four appearing to be stand-alone swimming baths built in the 1930s. We report them faithfully, but with a degree of scepticism, although one of them was converted into an indoor sports centre in 2016 some

28 years after its closure as a swimming pool.



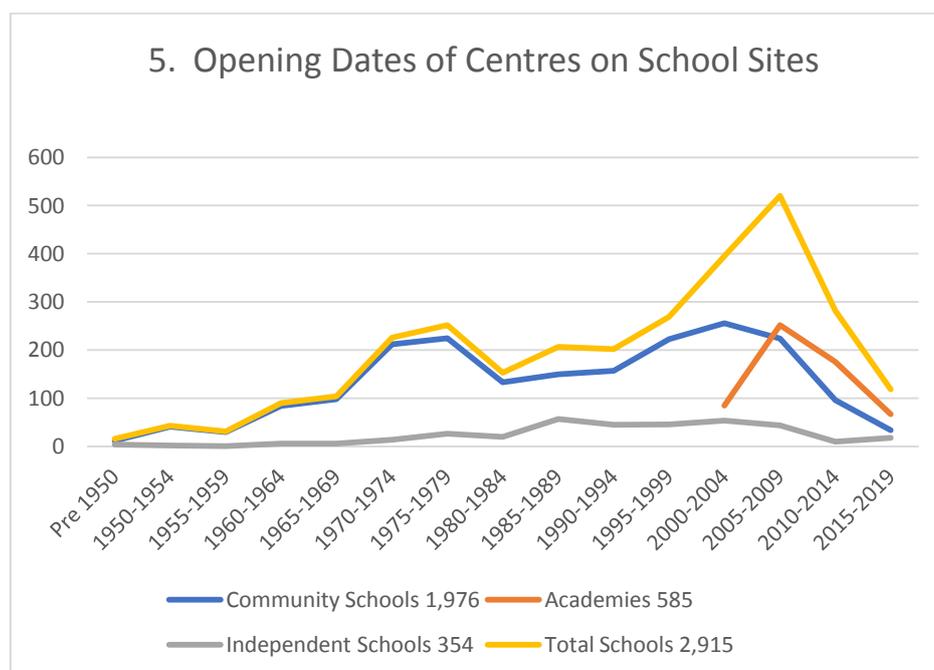
Education Sites

17. Chart 4 provides a more detailed breakdown of centres provided on Education sites over time. It will be seen that the large majority, 2,915 (89%) are schools. A more detailed analysis of these is provided in Chart 5. Further Education, 225 (7%) and Higher Education, 130 (4%) provide the balance, both surging between 1995 and 2014, many stimulated by support from the National Lottery.



School Sites

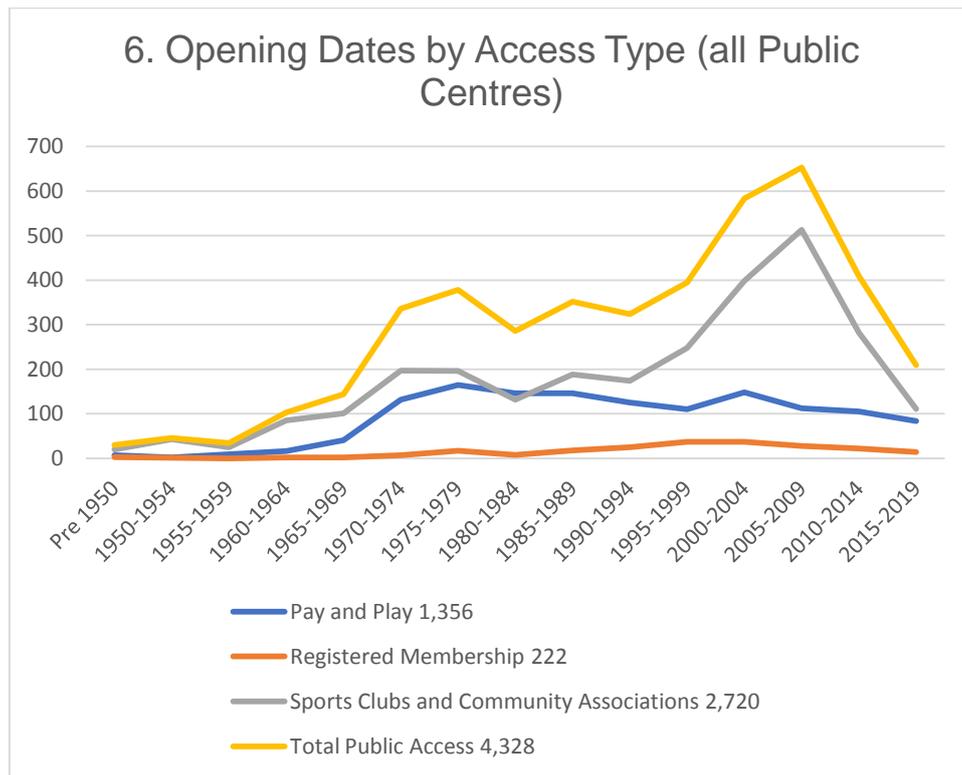
18. Chart 5 drills down to the details of provision on school sites. We have developed a three-fold division of schools into 'Community' (68%), Academies (20%) and Independent (12%). Further details of definitions are in the Technical Annex.
19. We have some reservations about the 284 centres recorded before 1970 on school sites, but this is a limitation of the Active Places data. In essence, the 'access' status recorded represents the position in 2021, with no historical information available. In practice, while we accept that these centres were built as shown, all our experience suggests that access for community users was probably extremely limited, if any, and that opening up to the wider community came later.
20. The Chart shows a number of significant trends:-
- an upturn in the 1960s as the 'baby boomers' reached secondary school age;
 - a significant upturn in the 1970s resulting from the building of new comprehensive schools. In addition here, the data includes a large number of joint provision centres developed by Local Authorities and Local Education Authorities (Cheshire alone built 22);
 - a huge surge in provision between 1995 and 2009 driven by three key factors; the replacement of outdated 1950s and 1960s schools, the arrival of the National Lottery, and the advent of the Government Academies programme.



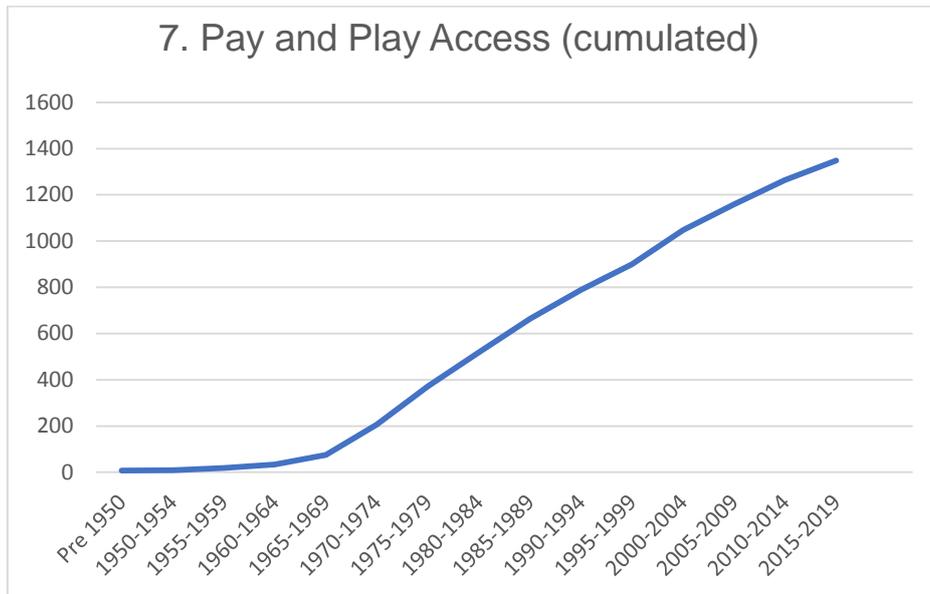
Types of Public Access

21. Active Places divides 'public' access into three types; 'Pay and Play', 'Registered Membership', and 'Sports Clubs and Community Associations'. Again, full definitions are given in the Technical Annex. We have some reservations on the self-classification of individual centres and have amended a few in the database.

22. Chart 6 shows the preponderance of 'Sports Clubs and Community Associations' access (2,720, 63%), with 'Pay and Play' being a significant second (1,356, 31%). Some 77% of Education sites have 'Sports Clubs and Community Associations' access, perhaps confirming the points made above about the true extent of 'public access'.



23. Chart 7 shows the cumulative openings of 'Pay and Play' access centres. The steady increase over a long period is perhaps the best indicator we have seen of the growth in the number of centres widely available to the public led by Local Authorities providing new facilities.



Opening of Public Access Centres by Regions

24. Chart 8 shows the percentages of all public access centres opened in each ten year time period, both nationally and in individual regions. The green shading shows the East Midlands, East and North West regions forging ahead in the 1970s, principally because of developments on school sites, particularly joint provision centres. Conversely London became very much left behind, largely because Local Government there had been reorganised in 1965, and the London Boroughs missed out on the ‘bonanza’ of new provision elsewhere associated with reorganisation in 1974.

8. OPENING DATES BY REGIONS (ALL PUBLIC ACCESS CENTRES)
(Percentages)

OPENING YEARS	EM	E	L	NE	NW	SE	SW	WM	Y&H	NATIONAL
Pre 1960	3	2	4	2	3	1	1	3	4	3
1960-1969	3	6	7	8	6	4	6	5	8	6
1970-1979	21	21	10	20	21	15	17	15	16	17
1980-1989	14	16	11	17	11	17	17	17	16	15
1990-1999	13	19	18	10	16	18	20	17	14	17
2000-2009	30	23	34	30	28	29	26	27	28	29
2010-2021	16	13	16	14	16	15	12	16	15	15
%	100	100	100	101	101	99	99	100	101	102

Highlighting indicates in excess of 3% variance from national average for relevant time period (green above; yellow below).

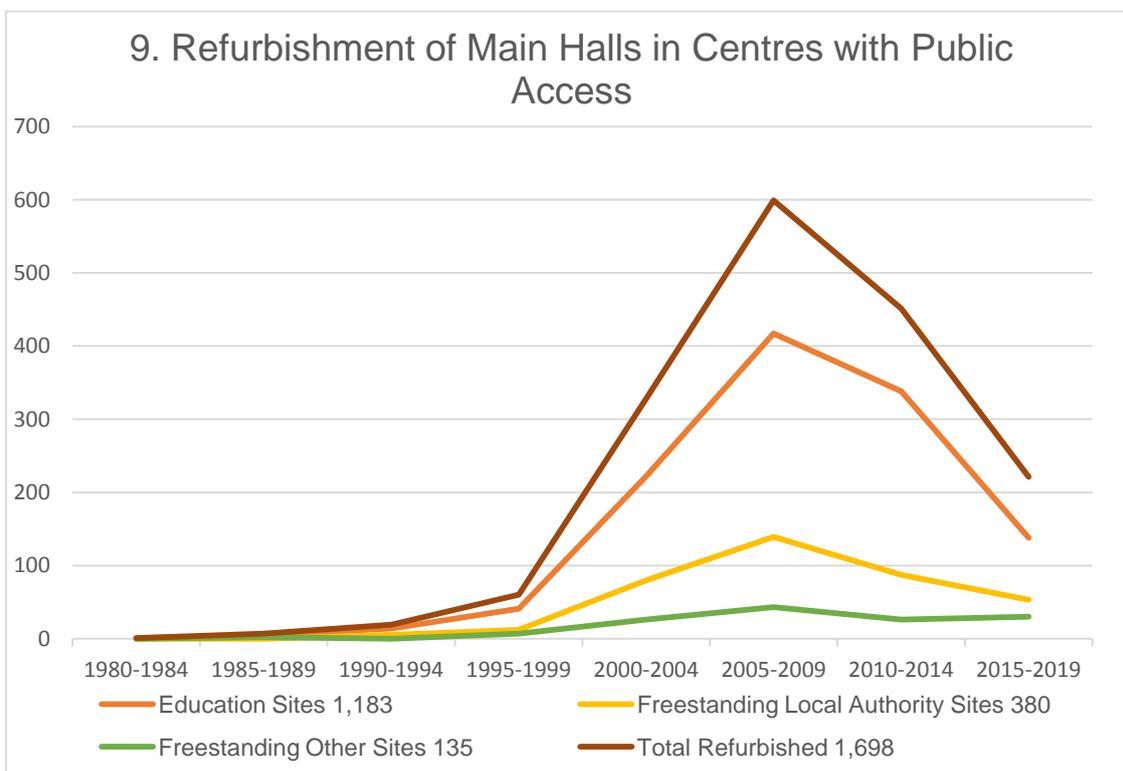
EM East Midlands; **E** East; **L** London; **NE** North East; **NW** North West; **SE** South East; **SW** South West; **WM** West Midlands; **Y&H** Yorkshire and The Humber

The Refurbishment of Indoor Centres

25. Active Places defines refurbishment as ‘significant improvements made to the main hall, activity halls, reception areas associated to the hall (and similar facilities).....not general maintenance and repair of the building’. The way in

which we have had to extract the data from Active Places means that this section primarily relates to the refurbishment of Main Halls, and not necessarily other parts of centres. Further information is in the Technical Annex.

26. We continue only to analyse the 4,328 centres with public access. No information is available regarding refurbishment in 63 cases, and 37 Main Halls were refurbished as stand-alone Halls before meeting our indoor sports centre definition with the later addition of other facilities. In total, 2,530 centres (58%) have never been refurbished.
27. Across all centres, 1,698 Main Halls (39%) have been refurbished. The percentage of Freestanding Local Authority centres is significantly higher at 50%. Chart 9 summarises refurbishments over time. Refurbishments peaked between 2000 and 2014, possibly assisted in part by the National Lottery. The data is unsurprising because by the former date a large number of centres built in the 1970s were 20-30 years old. The average age of the centres at the time of their Main Hall refurbishment was 24.5 years.
28. It should be noted that 223 (13%) of refurbished Main Halls are in centres which have subsequently closed.



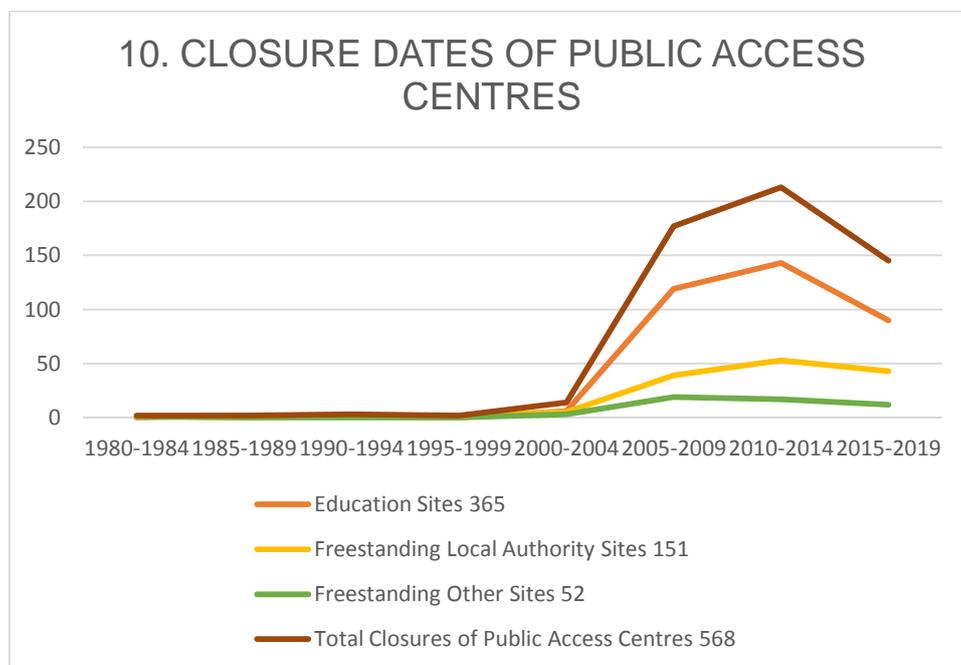
The Closure of Indoor Centres

29. Our use of the word 'closure' is that the centre no longer meets our definition of an indoor sports centre as set out in paragraphs 4) and 5) above. It can arise for a variety of reasons, such as:-
 - a) the whole centre closed, and was usually demolished;
 - b) in the case of Education sites, the whole school/College was closed;
 - c) the Main Hall was closed or converted to another use, so any facilities remaining no longer met the definition;

- d) all ancillary facilities were closed, so that the Main Hall became stand-alone and no longer met the definition;
- e) the centre remained, but ceased to be available for public use.

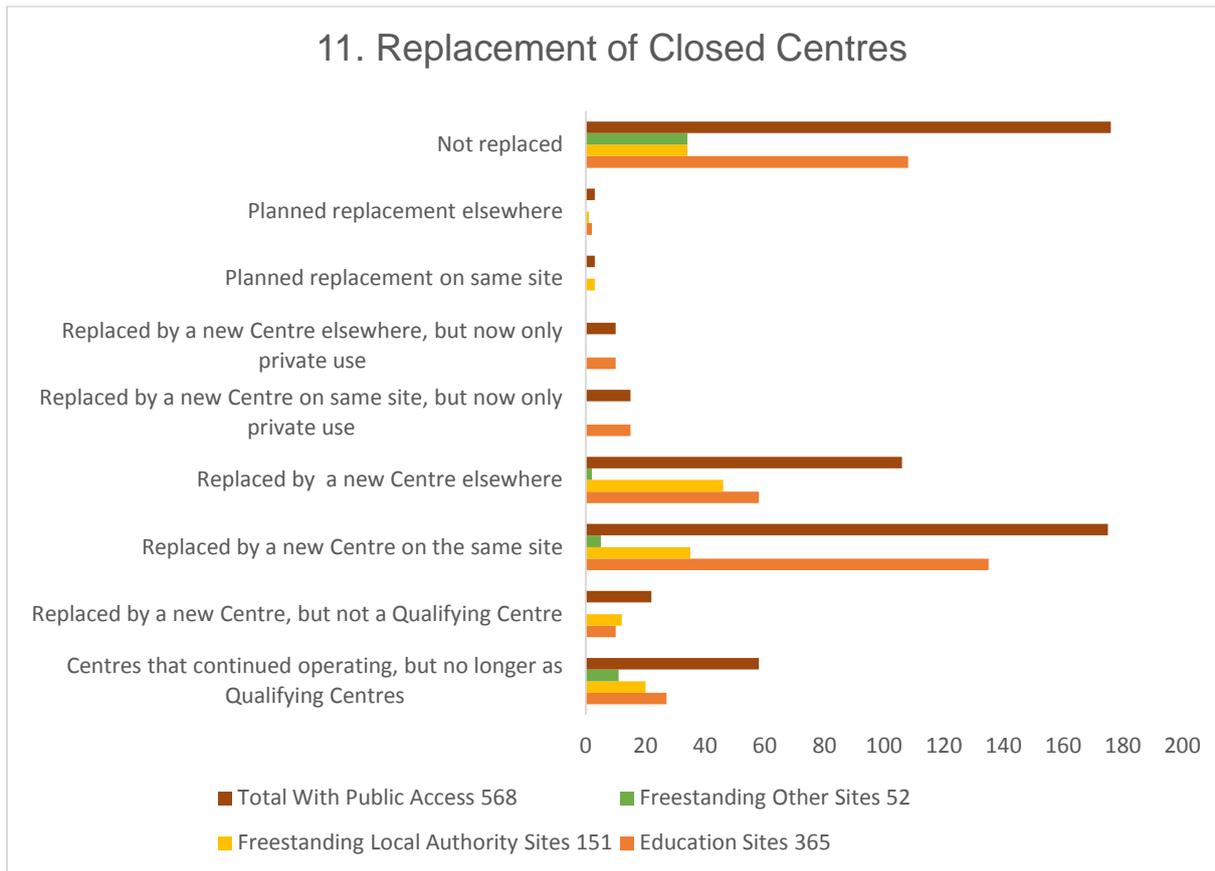
30. We have some reservations about the coverage of Active Places data for centres which closed before its establishment in 2003/4. We have augmented the database with details of 26 centres in this category which are known to us, but the case remains that such centres may be underestimated. Further details are in the Technical Annex.

31. In total 568 (13%) of the 4,328 public access centres have closed. The percentages are higher for Freestanding Local Authority centres (20%) and Freestanding Other centres (17%), and lower for centres on Education sites (11%). Chart 10 shows that closures appear to have accelerated dramatically from 2005, and this may in part be explained by the previous paragraph. However, as with refurbishments, many centres were reaching the end of their serviceable life; the average age of closed centres was 30.1 years. Moreover, as indicated above, the Academies programme provided a massive impetus in the schools' sector for mergers and rationalisation, resulting in the closure of some centres, but also the provision of new buildings on many sites.



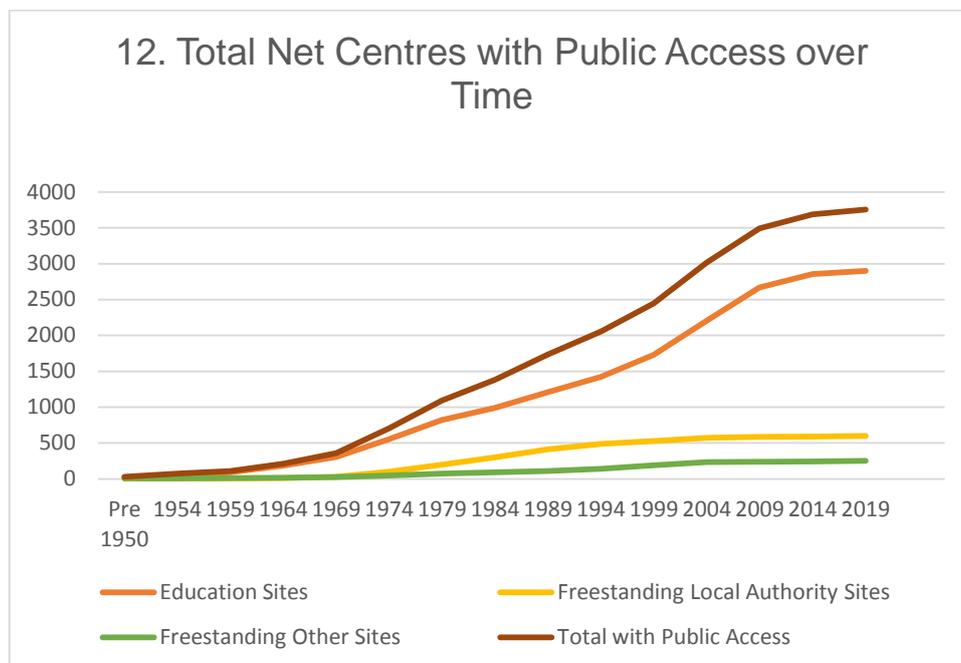
32. Chart 11 shows the detailed outcomes of the 568 closed centres. In all, 176 (31%) were not replaced in any shape or form. But almost the same number were replaced on the same site, and a further 106 replaced elsewhere (49% in total). Active Places often mentions that closures were part of a 'strategic review' of needs in an area and that a closed site was often deemed surplus to changing local requirements.

11. Replacement of Closed Centres



The Net Position of Centres and the Situation in 2021

33. By integrating the openings data in the first part of this paper with the above closure data it is possible to see the net position over time. Chart 12 shows that the steady increase in the number of centres publicly available since the 1960s has almost flat-lined in recent years. In short, the surge of new provision largely stimulated by the National Lottery and the school building programme from the turn of the Century has almost been offset by the closure of older centres.
34. There is also some evidence emerging in recent years of new centres being built *without* Main Halls, some Main Halls being converted to specialist uses (e.g. large multi-station gyms, badminton centres, trampolining centres and so on) and some Main Halls being sub-divided into smaller, more manageable, Activity Halls. None of these, of course, now meet our definition of an indoor sports centre.



35. In 2021 there are 3,760 indoor centres with public access, as Chart 13 shows, with 1,075 (29%) having 'Pay and Play' type access. Schools account for 2,611 of the 2,905 centres on Education sites, meaning that school sites represent 69% of the overall stock of public access centres. The average age of the stock is 27 years.

13. PUBLIC ACCESS CENTRES IN 2021

	Education	Freestanding Local Authority	Freestanding Other	TOTAL
Centres	2905	604	251	3760
%	77	16	7	

36. There is also some regional variation as Chart 14 shows. London clearly remains significantly less well provided than the other regions, probably a legacy of the 1970s from which it has never recovered. But current levels of provision are a far cry from early standards of provision set out in planning documents from the 1970s of 1:40,000, 1:90,000, etc – a remarkable achievement for the whole sector.

14. PUBLIC ACCESS CENTRES BY REGION

	Public Access Centres 2021	Provision per Head of Population
East Midlands	330	14,655
East	406	15,360
London	427	20,988
North East	215	12,419
North West	523	14,036
South East	670	13,701
South West	421	13,361

West Midlands	390	15,215
Yorkshire & The Humber	378	14,558
ENGLAND	3760	14,970

37. In order fully to round off the picture, in addition to the 3,760 centres with public access there are a further 589 solely with private access, making an inclusive total in England of 4,349.

Conclusions

38. We return to the point made in our Introduction that this paper can only be ‘an attempt’, not a definitive statement, to answer the question of our title. We have pointed out along the way some of the reasons: matters of definition; imperfections, for our purposes, in the Active Places data; some errors in the original database; and no doubt a few errors of our own !!

39. It is best not to get hung up on individual numbers. Nevertheless, we believe the broad trends which we have identified, and the principal reasons for them, provide an accurate picture of the development of indoor sports centres over the past 50 years or more. That development has been nothing short of remarkable.

MF/MT Manchester, July 2021

TECHNICAL ANNEX

Sources

1. Our principal source for this work is Sport England’s online facilities database, Active Places, (www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data#activeplaces-2916) first established in 2003/4 and continuously updated. The advantages and disadvantages of this approach are shown in the main text, and further details are given below.
2. This was supplemented by six additional sources, in order of importance to the work:-
 - a) Google Maps – every site was examined, in particular to establish whether the facility was on an educational site or freestanding. Some facilities have been

built close to education sites and, in these instances, our usual approach has been to establish whether the facility concerned had its own separate access road and/or its own separate car park. If it did, we considered it to be freestanding. Google Maps was also used to track changes and replacements on the ground, in particular changes in educational provision consequent on closures, mergers and name changes.

- b) Websites of Local Authorities and Individual Facilities – on some occasions it was necessary to use these to clarify uncertainties in the data, particularly in respect of ownership of facilities outside the public sector.
- c) Government Website giving basic data on schools (get-information-schools.service.gov.uk) – this enabled us to develop our classification of schools where there was any uncertainty.
- d) Other SLLP Documentation – we reviewed both material available on the website and additional material in the possession of the Editor. It was especially useful as a source for facilities which had closed before the establishment of Active Places and were therefore not recorded in its dataset.
- e) Contemporary Reports for North West England – these had a small impact on the work but, in particular, showed minor variations in some opening dates compared with Active Places and, again, a few facilities which had closed and were not recorded in Active Places.
- f) Personal Knowledge – in a few instances our own knowledge of specific facilities from our personal and working lives helped to clarify some aspects of the data.

Active Places

- 3. Active Places is essentially the brand name for a sports facility database. The national database was launched in 2004 and currently holds data on over 157,000 facilities located at over 39,000 sites for 15 different facility types (approximately 80% of where formal sport takes place), with each record being checked on an annual basis (counts accurate as of December 2019).
- 4. The original business case for Active Places came from the 2002 Cabinet Office publication, 'Game Plan'. This recommended setting up a facilities database to help ensure that facility provision is planned at the national and local level, and investment is going in the right areas and not leading to duplication of provision. Sport England was given the responsibility to establish the database. Since 2004 the data has primarily been used to provide information on where to play sport to consumers and also deliver a number of services to assist Local Authorities and other facility providers in the strategic planning of sports facilities.
- 5. Active Places records details of each individual site (address, postcode, ownership, etc) and further details of each individual facility on that site (sports halls, swimming pools, squash courts, etc). It **DOES NOT** attempt any definition of an 'indoor sports centre' nor any such classification. It was, therefore, necessary for us to manipulate that data for our needs, and responsibility for any matters of definition and the manipulation of data remains our own.

6. Within the overall volume and range of data in Active Places, our especial concern was with indoor facilities, which Active Places defines as Main Halls, Activity Halls, Swimming Pools, Squash Courts, Studios, and Health & Fitness Suites (the last recently retitled Health & Fitness Gyms).
7. Active Places definitions of the first two are as follows:-

Main Multi-Sports Hall Minimum size is marked out as three Badminton courts and above. Dimensions: Min Width 18m, Max Width 70m; Min Length 27m, Max Length 90m.

Activity Hall is a multi-sports hall (below three badminton courts) where activities take place that does not qualify as a main hall and is not a purpose-built studio. It can include Community/Village halls. It should be between the following dimensions: Min Width 9m, Max Width 18m; Min Length 17m, Max Length 26m. It may or may not be marked out.

8. Other key Active Places definitions to which reference is made are:-

a) **Access Types**

Pay and Play - The main means of public access to the facility is on payment of a charge. The facility may also have a membership scheme, and it may be possible to block book the facility for a specific activity or for lessons, but during the public opening hours anyone can just turn up, pay and play.

For example: Local Authority swimming pool or health and fitness facility, where the casual user pays per session, although there is also a membership scheme.

Sports Club/Community Association use - The main means of public access to the facility is via sports clubs or community associations, which book it for use by their members. Membership of the club or association is based on a particular sport or community group, and is not based on performance criteria or on a particular facility. The club or association may use several different facilities.

For example: Access to indoor bowls greens is through a bowls club, or to athletics tracks through an athletics club; school swimming pool that can be used by a swimming or sub-aqua club, but cannot be used by the general public.

Registered Membership use - The main public access to the facility is by membership. Members usually pay a joining fee as well as a monthly or annual subscription. Membership is controlled by the owner or manager of the facility. For example: Fitness First health and fitness facility can only be used by registered members.

Private use - The facility cannot be used by the public, either on a pay and play basis or through a recreational club, except when playing against the owner of the site. It may be available for use by elite clubs or development squads. For example: University, prison, MOD, etc facilities that are not available for public use.

As with Active Places itself, we usually group the first three above into the generic '**public access**'.

b) **Refurbishment**

Significant improvements made to the main hall, activity halls, reception areas associated to the hall (and similar facilities). These works include all significant improvements to the building to ensure the facility meets current standards for indoor sports halls. These improvements must represent a significant investment which improves the quality of the facility. Examples include: replacement of structural elements; installation of lighting and wiring to meet current standards; new floor to halls, or improvement to existing, e.g. installation of shock absorbing flooring system; and major improvements to, or new provision of, reception/community/social areas, to service the sports hall, to make the facility more welcoming for users. IT DOES NOT include general maintenance and repair of building, such as repairs to lifting floors, repairs to lighting, painting of walls, floor polishing.

Methodology

9. We downloaded from Active Places an initial dataset of 6,001 Main Halls on 5,714 sites on 4 March 2021 (numbers and details can marginally vary daily because of the continuous updating and validating process).
10. Our principal aim was to convert this by analysis into a dataset of indoor sports centres which met our definition. Each of the 6,001 Rows in the Main Hall dataset was examined and coded in line with the details set out below. Additional sources (see paragraph 2 above) were used to try to clarify any matters of uncertainty.
11. We introduced into the Active Places spreadsheet six additional columns of our own for analysis purposes:-

a) Ineligible Rows

An analysis of each Row as to its validity in the ongoing dataset; the essential mechanism for reducing the dataset of Main Halls to a dataset of indoor sports centres.

Coding: Single code only, used in order shown if multiple eligibility.

DC Double count or other obvious error

SH Second **Main** Hall in the same centre

NC Does not meet indoor sports centre definition criteria

O Other – usually where vital date was missing (e.g. no record of a Build Date)

For convenience in the later analysis, we also coded any Row in which the Main Hall had “Private Use Only” as a “P” code in this column. As paragraph 11 in our Main Report explains, these were analysed in the same way as other eligible Rows, but were excluded from our analysis of indoor sports centres with public access.

b) Effective Operational Date

For many purpose-built Local Authority centres, and similar, this is the same as the building date recorded in Active Places. For centres developed incrementally, especially schools, this is the date when the facilities on a site

first met the indoor sports centre definition. It is important to point out, however, that even this date does not necessarily equate to the date when the centre first became available for public use.

Coding: four digit year date

c) Site Type

An analysis of sites, in particular to seek to address the age-old question of the proportion of centres on school and other educational sites.

Coding:

FLA Freestanding – Local Authority sites

FSC Freestanding – Sports Club sites

FO Freestanding – Other sites (commercial, community organisations, MOD, Trusts, etc)

These latter two codes have been merged in our Main Tables as the number of FSC centres is usually too small to analyse meaningfully

E Education sites

NK Not Known

d) Education Sub Coding

Sites coded 'E' above were further classified into five types to enable distinctions to be made in the analysis.

Coding:

C 'Community Schools', including all school types which were neither Academies nor Independent Schools

A Academies

I Independent Schools

F Further Education

H Higher Education

e) Centre/Hall Closure

Since the database was Main Halls, any Main Hall closure would be recorded in Active Places, even if other facilities remained on the site. It was important that we were able to distinguish between them.

Coding:

C Centre closed

PC Partial Closure (i.e. facility no longer met our indoor sports centre definition even though other operational facilities remained on site).

H Main Hall only closed

f) Replacement Type

An analysis of recorded closures to understand which had been replaced (and, if so, how and where), and which had not been replaced.

Coding:

RS Replaced on same site

RS(P) Replaced on same site, but by centre with only private use

- RE Replaced nearby
- RE(P) Replaced nearby, but by centre with only private use
- RNC Replaced by a facility not meeting our indoor sports centre definition
- FC Some facilities continuing on site, but no longer meeting our indoor sports centre definition or converted to other sporting use
- RS(PL) Where the Active Places database Closure Notes record a 'planned' facility to be built on the same site, but we have limited this to centres closed since 2018 which we believe might have a realistic chance of actually being built
- RE (PL) As for RS(PL) but where the Closure Notes record a "planned facility" on a nearby site
- NR Not replaced

12. We made a limited number of amendments to the Active Places data during this process, as shown below, though this was undertaken sparingly so as not to undermine the consistency of the data:-

- a) Clear and obvious errors, e.g. the Pier Sports Centre in Herne Bay, Kent was shown as being located in the London Borough of Bromley !!
- b) Some opening dates were amended where contemporary records, particularly for NW England, indicated marginal differences.
- c) 'Access type' was amended in 19 cases, of which 17 we believed were wrongly attributed in Active Places to 'private access'. In eight of these cases we were aware of support from the Lottery Sports Fund, where public access is a condition of award, and another four were Freestanding Local Authority sites where we believed private access was a contradiction in terms.
- d) Active Places records the type of school in 2020/21, without any regard to its history. Thus we found many well-known facilities built in the 1970s on school sites, including many joint provision centres, classified as 'Academies' consequent on subsequent changes of status. In order to overcome this problem we set a default year of 2003 and coded any 'Academy' centres built before this date to the 'Community' or 'Independent' status under which they had originally been built.
- e) In instances of the closure of a centre in the same year as the opening of a successor, the date given in Active Places for the closure was retarded by one year to avoid a 'double count' of centres in that year.
- f) We recorded amendments for individual facilities in the ongoing Active Places updating process between early March and early June 2021. In one instance a previously recorded 'closed' centre was apparently, and plausibly, 'resurrected' !!

13. We also made three types of addition to the Active Places dataset:-

- a) Indoor Tennis Centres – Our attention was drawn to this issue by the absence from the dataset of the Westway Centre in London, legendary for its development of community sport. Further interrogation of Active Places revealed it to be recorded as an 'indoor tennis centre', despite the fact that

the Active Places definition for such centres explicitly says ‘only include dedicated indoor tennis courts, and not multi use halls’. We therefore undertook a separate exercise to review all 374 Indoor Tennis Centres recorded in Active Places. Our conclusion, based on a comprehensive website search was that eight such centres, including Westway, met the definition of an indoor sports centre and should be added.

- b) Closures – Active Places has diligently recorded facilities which have closed since its establishment in 2003/4, a valuable resource for the historian. But we are aware from the work of the SLLP and our own North West Region documents of a significant number which closed before that date. Perhaps the best known example is the Picketts Lock Centre (1973-2002), described at the time it was built as the largest centre in Europe. We have identified 26 such centres to be added to the database, though this may be a modest under-estimate.
- c) New Centre – We identified one centre from our Lottery work which has received an award, but does not appear in Active Places. It has been added to our dataset.

The Resulting Dataset for Analysis

14. Putting together the above information, the final dataset of indoor sports centres which we have used for our analysis is 4,986. The number of centres with only private access is 658, resulting in a dataset of indoor sports centres available to the public of 4,328.

	Para Ref	Number	Total
Main Halls in Original Database	9	6,001	6,001
Double Counts and Errors	11a)	-17	5,984
Second Main Halls in Same Centre	11a)	-339	5,645
Not meeting Indoor Centre definition	11a)	-684	4,961
Data missing	11a)	-10	4,951
Indoor Tennis Centres	13a)	8	4,959
Closures pre 2004	13b)	26	4,985
New Centre	13c)	1	4,986
Private Access Centres		658	
TOTAL PUBLIC CENTRES			4,328

Data Tables

TABLE 1 - OPENING DATES OF ALL CENTRES

OPENING YEARS	PUBLIC ACCESS	PRIVATE ACCESS	TOTALS
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Pre 1950	30	13	43
1950-1954	46	9	55
1955-1959	34	6	40
1960-1964	103	19	122
1965-1969	148	25	173
1970-1974	348	25	373
1975-1979	386	32	418
1980-1984	289	27	316
1985-1989	353	33	386
1990-1994	324	45	369
1995-1999	396	46	442
2000-2004	583	92	675
2005-2009	653	111	764
2010-2014	409	101	510
2015-2019	210	70	280
2020-2021	16	4	20
TOTALS	4328	658	4986

TABLE 2 - OPENING DATES OF CENTRES WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

OPENING YEARS	E	FLA	FO	TOTAL WITH PUBLIC ACCESS
Pre 1950	17	6	7	30
1950-1954	45	0	1	46
1955-1959	31	0	3	34
1960-1964	94	5	4	103
1965-1969	120	19	9	148
1970-1974	250	73	25	348
1975-1979	266	95	25	386
1980-1984	167	103	19	289
1985-1989	222	113	18	353
1990-1994	216	77	31	324
1995-1999	307	41	48	396
2000-2004	481	53	49	583
2005-2009	581	49	23	653
2010-2014	330	57	22	409
2015-2019	136	55	19	210
2020-2021	7	9	0	16
TOTALS	3270	755	303	4328
%	76	17	7	

E Education Sites

FLA Freestanding Local Authority Sites

FO Freestanding Other Sites

TABLE 3 - OPENING DATES OF FREESTANDING LOCAL AUTHORITY SITES

The data on which Chart 3 is based is shown in the FLA column in Table 2 above.

TABLE 4 - OPENING DATES OF CENTRES ON EDUCATION SITES

OPENING YEARS	SCHOOLS	FE	HE	TOTAL
Pre 1950	16	1	0	17
1950-1954	43	2	0	45
1955-1959	31	0	0	31
1960-1964	90	0	4	94
1965-1969	104	3	13	120
1970-1974	226	11	13	250
1975-1979	252	9	5	266
1980-1984	153	5	9	167
1985-1989	207	7	8	222
1990-1994	202	11	3	216
1995-1999	269	26	12	307
2000-2004	395	65	21	481
2005-2009	520	46	15	581
2010-2014	282	31	17	330
2015-2019	119	7	10	136
2020-2021	6	1	0	7
TOTALS	2915	225	130	3270
%	89	7	4	

FE Further Education

HE Higher Education

TABLE 5 - OPENING DATES OF CENTRES ON SCHOOL SITES

OPENING YEARS	C	A	I	TOTAL SCHOOLS
Pre 1950	12	0	4	16
1950-1954	41	0	2	43
1955-1959	30	0	1	31
1960-1964	84	0	6	90
1965-1969	98	0	6	104
1970-1974	212	0	14	226
1975-1979	225	0	27	252
1980-1984	133	0	20	153
1985-1989	150	0	57	207
1990-1994	157	0	45	202
1995-1999	223	0	46	269
2000-2004	256	85	54	395
2005-2009	224	252	44	520
2010-2014	96	176	10	282

2015-2019	34	67	18	119
2020-2021	1	5	0	6
TOTALS	1976	585	354	2915
%	68	20	12	

C 'Community' Schools

A Academies

I Independent Schools

TABLE 6 - OPENING DATES BY ACCESS TYPE (ALL PUBLIC ACCESS CENTRES)

OPENING YEARS	P & P	R	C & C	NOT KNOWN	TOTAL PUBLIC ACCESS
Pre 1950	7	3	20	0	30
1950-1954	2	1	43	0	46
1955-1959	9	0	25	0	34
1960-1964	16	2	85	0	103
1965-1969	41	2	101	4	148
1970-1974	132	7	197	12	348
1975-1979	165	17	196	8	386
1980-1984	146	8	132	3	289
1985-1989	146	18	188	1	353
1990-1994	125	25	174	0	324
1995-1999	110	37	248	1	396
2000-2004	148	37	398	0	583
2005-2009	112	28	513	0	653
2010-2014	105	22	282	0	409
2015-2019	84	14	111	1	210
2020-2021	8	1	7	0	16
TOTALS	1356	222	2720	30	4328
%	31	5	63	1	

P & P Pay and Play

R Registered Membership

C & C Sports Clubs and Community Associations

TABLE 7 - CUMULATIVE OPENING OF PAY & PLAY CENTRES

OPENING YEARS	P & P
Pre 1950	7
1950-1954	9
1955-1959	18

1960-1964	34
1965-1969	75
1970-1974	207
1975-1979	372
1980-1984	518
1985-1989	664
1990-1994	789
1995-1999	899
2000-2004	1047
2005-2009	1159
2010-2014	1264
2015-2019	1348
2020-2021	1356

TABLE 9 - REFURBISHMENT OF MAIN HALLS IN CENTRES WITH PUBLIC ACCESS

YEARS OF REFURBISHMENT	E	FLA	FO	TOTAL REFURBISHED
1980-1984	1	0	0	1
1985-1989	5	0	2	7
1990-1994	14	5	0	19
1995-1999	41	12	7	60
2000-2004	222	80	26	328
2005-2009	417	139	43	599
2010-2014	338	87	26	451
2015-2019	138	53	30	221
2020-2021	7	4	1	12
TOTAL REFURBISHED	1183	380	135	1698
TOTAL SITES	3270	755	303	4328
% age of Total Sites Refurbished	36	50	45	39

E Education Sites

FLA Freestanding Local Authority Sites

FO Freestanding Other Sites

TABLE 10 - CLOSURE DATES OF PUBLIC ACCESS CENTRES

CLOSURE YEARS	E	FLA	FO	TOTAL WITH PUBLIC ACCESS
1980-1984	0	1	1	2

1985-1989	2	0	0	2
1990-1994	1	2	0	3
1995-1999	0	2	0	2
2000-2004	6	5	3	14
2005-2009	119	39	19	177
2010-2014	143	53	17	213
2015-2019	90	43	12	145
2020-2021	4	6	0	10
TOTAL CLOSED	365	151	52	568
TOTAL SITES	3270	755	303	4328
% age of Total Sites Closed	11	20	17	13

E Education Sites

FLA Freestanding Local Authority Sites

FO Freestanding Other Sites

TABLE 11 - REPLACEMENT OF CLOSED CENTRES - PUBLIC CENTRES

	E	FLA	FO	TOTAL WITH PUBLIC ACCESS
Centres that continued operating, but no longer as Qualifying Centres	27	20	11	58
Replaced by a new Centre, but not a Qualifying Centre	10	12	0	22
Replaced by a new Centre on the same site	135	35	5	175
Replaced by a new Centre elsewhere	58	46	2	106
Replaced by a new Centre on same site, <i>but now only private use</i>	15	0	0	15
Replaced by a new Centre elsewhere, <i>but now only private use</i>	10	0	0	10
Planned replacement on same site	0	3	0	3
Planned replacement elsewhere	2	1		3
Not replaced	108	34	34	176
ALL CLOSURES	365	151	52	568

E Education Sites
FLA Freestanding Local Authority Sites
FO Freestanding Other Sites

TABLE 12 - TOTAL NET CENTRES WITH PUBLIC ACCESS OVER TIME

YEAR	E	FLA	FO	TOTAL WITH PUBLIC ACCESS
Pre 1950	17	6	7	30
1954	62	6	8	76
1959	93	6	11	110
1964	187	11	15	213
1969	307	30	24	361
1974	557	103	49	709
1979	823	198	74	1095
1984	990	300	92	1382
1989	1210	413	110	1733
1994	1425	488	141	2054
1999	1732	527	189	2448
2004	2207	575	235	3017
2009	2669	585	239	3493
2014	2856	589	244	3689
2019	2902	601	251	3754
2021	2905	604	251	3760

E Education Sites
FLA Freestanding Local Authority Sites
FO Freestanding Other Sites

TABLE 14 - REGIONAL PROVISION IN 2021

	EM	E	L	NE	NW	SE	SW	WM	Y&H	ENGLAND
Total Centres with Public Access	330	406	427	215	523	670	421	390	378	3760
Population 2019 Mid Year Estimate (000)	4,836	6,236	8,962	2,670	7,341	9,180	5,625	5,934	5,503	56,287
Population per Centre	14,655	15,360	20,988	12,419	14,036	13,701	13,361	15,215	14,558	14,970

Difference from National Population per Centre	315	-390	-6,018	2,551	934	1,268	1,609	-245	412
Percentage Variance from National	2	-3	-40	17	6	8	11	-2	3

EM East Midlands; **E** East; **L** London; **NE** North East; **NW** North West; **SE** South East; **SW** South West; **WM** West Midlands; **Y&H** Yorkshire and The Humber