The impact and legacy of the London 2012 Games : methodological implications

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Structure of the Presentation

1. London Games and Legacy Promises

2. Meta-evaluation as an approach to assessment of Games legacy / impact

3. Metasynthesis of the evidence that hosting the Games would result in higher levels of participation.

    a. **National Surveys** of Sport Participation – Difficulties of Measurement

    b. Difficulties of Measurement at **the Programme and Project Level**

        *   The Partial availability of evaluation
        *   The quality of the data
        *   The quality of the evaluations

4. Realist evaluation and ***causal attribution*** in the achievement of policy outcomes.

5. Conclusions – strengths and limitations of the meta-evaluation approach

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1. The Context: the London Games and Legacy Promises

The Legacy Evaluation Study

5 Reports 2010-2014

Grant Thornton, Ecorys, Centre for Olympic Studies and Research Loughborough University & Oxford Economics 2013.

Format 4 Legacy Areas

- Harnessing the UK's passion for **sport**
- Exploiting opportunities for **economic growth**
- Promoting **community engagement and participation**
- Driving the **regeneration** of East London

2. Meta-evaluation as an approach to assess Games legacy

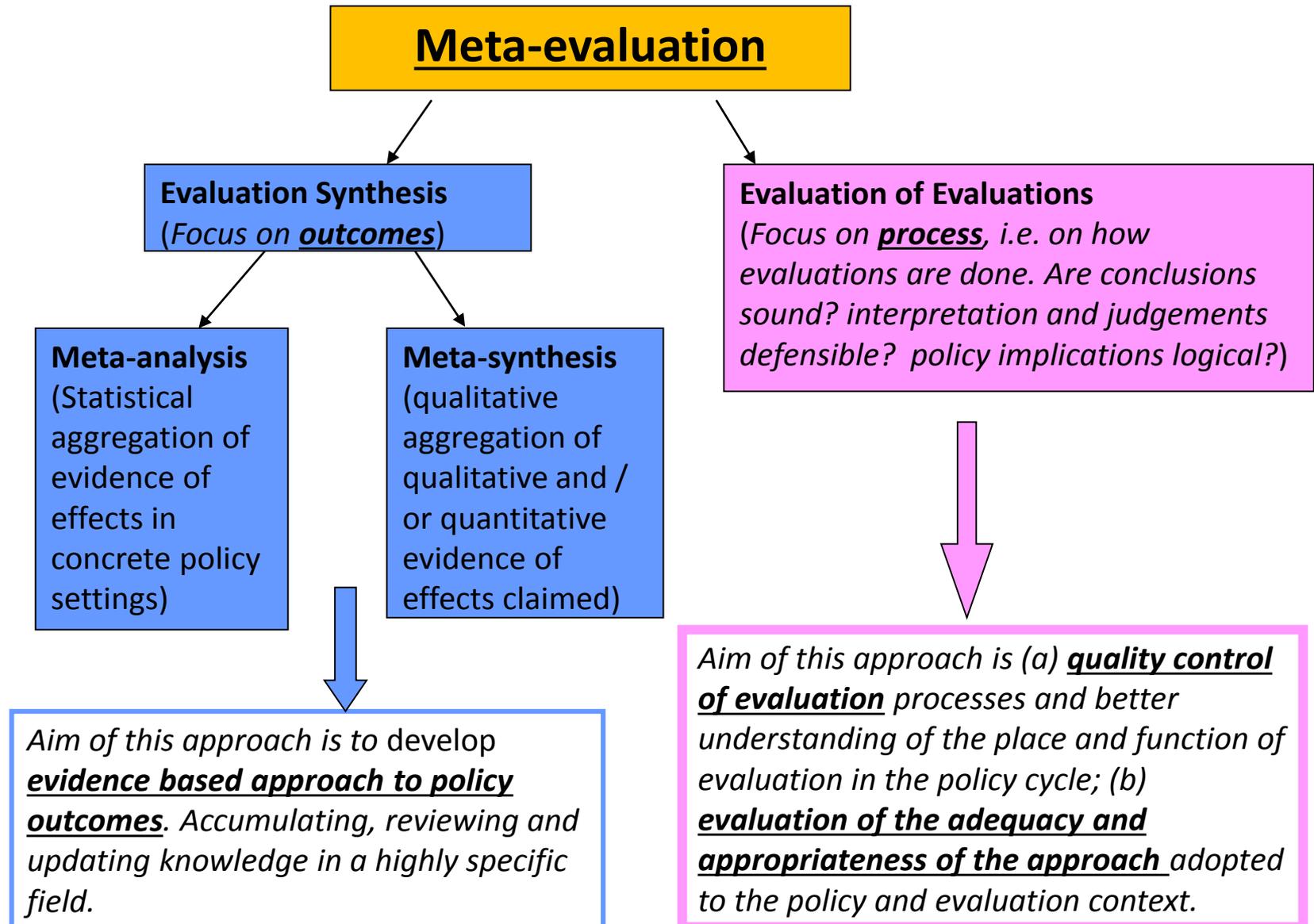# The Perceived Significance of the 2012 Meta-evaluation Study

*"The study is of **<u>the utmost importance</u>** in demonstrating the legacy impact of the 2012 Games across all thematic areas and will be **<u>the single largest and most comprehensive evaluation exercise commissioned</u>** in connection with the event."* [My emphasis added]

Source: Gough, G., Martin, P., Grant Thornton & ECORYS 2012. *Meta-evaluation of the Impact and Legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games: Developing Methods Paper* London: DCMS.

See also Reports 1-5 e.g.

- *Grant Thornton, Ecorys, Loughborough University & Oxford Economics 2013. Report 5: Post Games evaluation. Meta-Evaluation of the Impacts and Legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. London: Department of Culture, Media and Sport.*

Meta-evaluation as an Approach

Meta-evaluation

Evaluation Synthesis
(*Focus on **outcomes***)

Evaluation of Evaluations
(*Focus on **process**, i.e. on how evaluations are done. Are conclusions sound? interpretation and judgements defensible? policy implications logical?*)

Meta-analysis
(Statistical aggregation of evidence of effects in concrete policy settings)

Meta-synthesis
(qualitative aggregation of qualitative and / or quantitative evidence of effects claimed)

Aim of this approach is to develop ***evidence based approach to policy outcomes**. Accumulating, reviewing and updating knowledge in a highly specific field.*

*Aim of this approach is (a) **quality control of evaluation** processes and better understanding of the place and function of evaluation in the policy cycle; (b) **evaluation of the adequacy and appropriateness of the approach** adopted to the policy and evaluation context.*

3. Metasynthesis of the evidence and Evaluation of the Quality of Project Evaluations.

Sources of Evaluations I: National Participation Surveys

- Active People Survey (APS): 2005 – 2015, survey using landline telephone surveys – 161,000 households

- Taking Part Survey (TPS): 2005 – 2013, face-to-face interviews 9838 adults and 801 children

- Physical Education Sport Strategy for Young People 2002-2010 – school based evaluation of participation in 2/3 hours high quality sport and physical education

Active People Survey Data: October 2006 to March 2015

Once a week sport participation (millions)
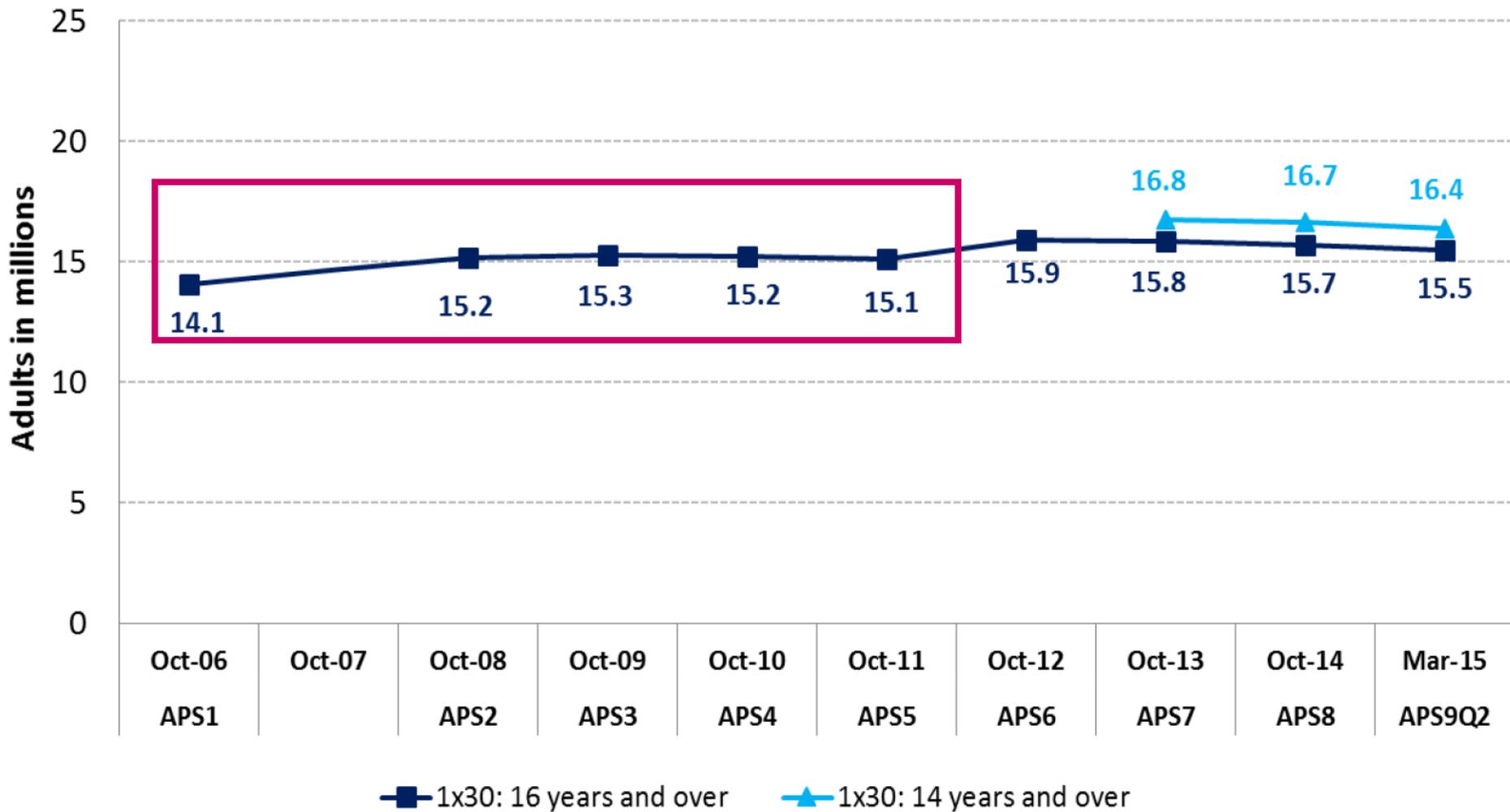
Examples of the 20 Major Programmes / Projects Aimed at Increasing Levels of Sport Participation in the UK Population

- Places People Play (including Sportivate and Gold Challenge, each of which reports providing 100,000 opportunities)

- School Games (13,600 schools participate)

- Change4Life Sports Clubs (over 61,000 young people participating with 90% of these choosing to play sport every week at the end of the first year)

- Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People (discontinued)

- Free Swimming (for the over 60s and under 16s (discontinued):

The Quality of the Evidence and of the evaluations

- National Surveys of Sport Participation – Difficulties of Measurement
- Difficulties of Measurement at the Programme and Project Level
  a. The quality of the data
  b. The Partial or non-availability of evaluations
  c. The quality of the evaluations (in particular **failure to account for additionality**)

Net Impact = Additionality of Intervention

Net Impact*= [Gross Impact x (1-Leakage) x (1-Displacement) x (1-Substitution) x (1+Multiplier effect)]

*after taking into account of the counterfactuals effects

Consideration of (and Failure to Account for) Additionality

Failing to Consider Additionality

Outcome counterfactuals

- The School Games initiative replaced School Sports Partnerships which had been reported as successful in driving up young people's participation

Displacement

- Sportivate reports providing 100,000 opportunities for sport: do new participants displace others in clubs since coaching, equipment and space resources are finite and carrying capacity limited?

Calculating Additionality

- Evaluation of the Free Swimming Scheme – the fullest account of additionality being calculated – but leads to the abandonment of the programme because of problems of substitution, displacement and leakage

4. Realist evaluation and *causal attribution* in the achievement of policy outcomes

Reporting of Impact versus Realist Evaluation

- While good examples of traditional evaluations may uncover / report net impact, they do not directly address causal mechanisms – what brings about desired outcomes.
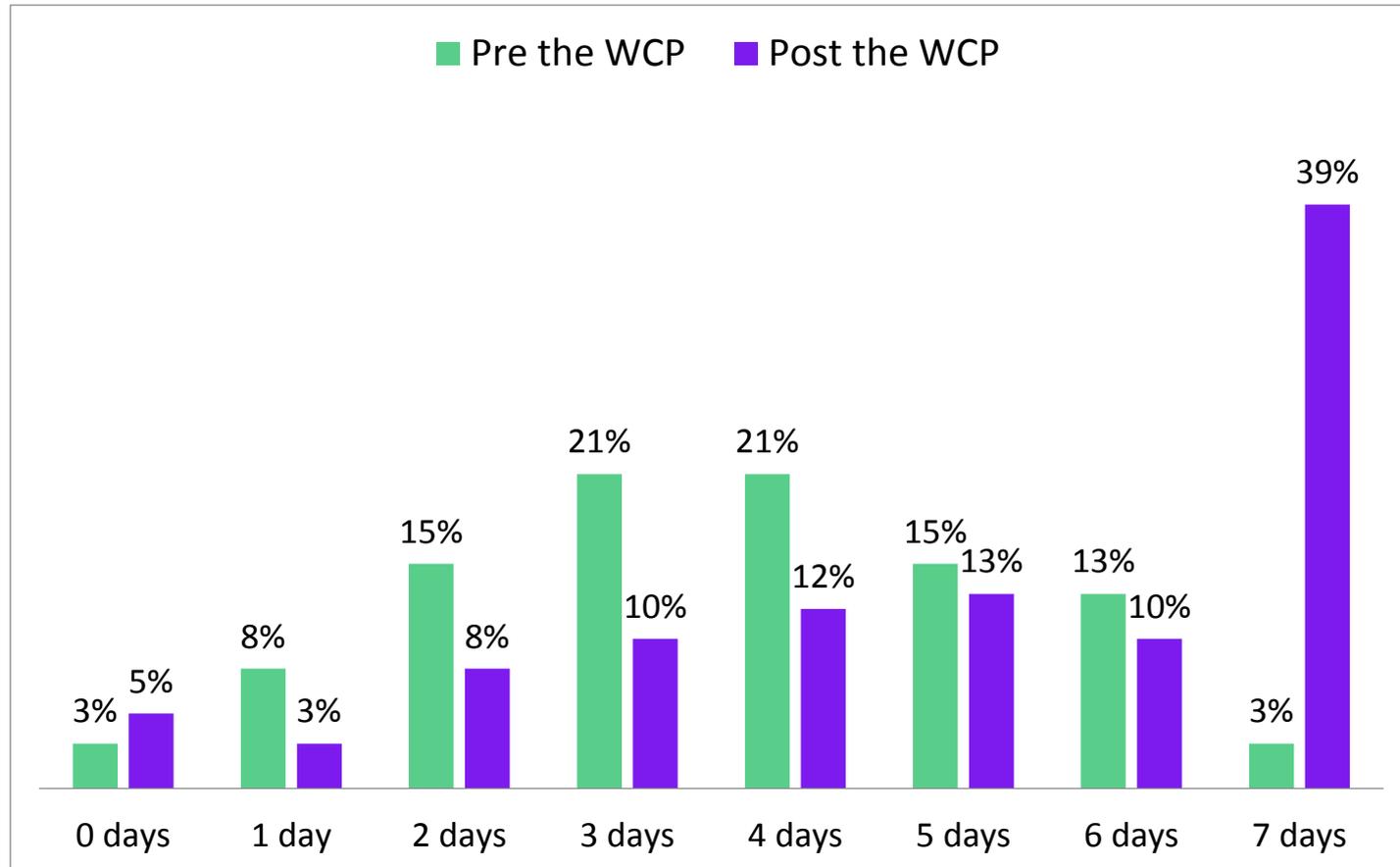
An example of Realist evaluation – the Workplace Challenge Programme

- WCP was a free, online competition between businesses running in 2011 and 2012 that allowed participants to log their activity over the course of the programme.

- The aim of the WCP was to stimulate competition between organisations in terms of the recorded levels of sport and exercise undertaken by their employees over a given period.

- Prizes were offered to encourage continued participation in WCP forindividuals as well as the overall workplace.

- There were many toolkits, resources and forms of support available, to help the workplace organisation to actively engage with the programme.

- Evaluation study involved data from two waves of questionnaires in 2011 (n=125) and 2012 (n=77) and a qualitative data from interviews with participants and programme deliverers (n=15). (Potential bias in the sample to those positively predisposed to the programme.)

Some _crude_ data:

Comparison of the days of moderate intensity physical activity (at least 30 minutes) per week before and after the 2012 Workplace Challenge programme

Legend: ■ Pre the WCP ■ Post the WCP

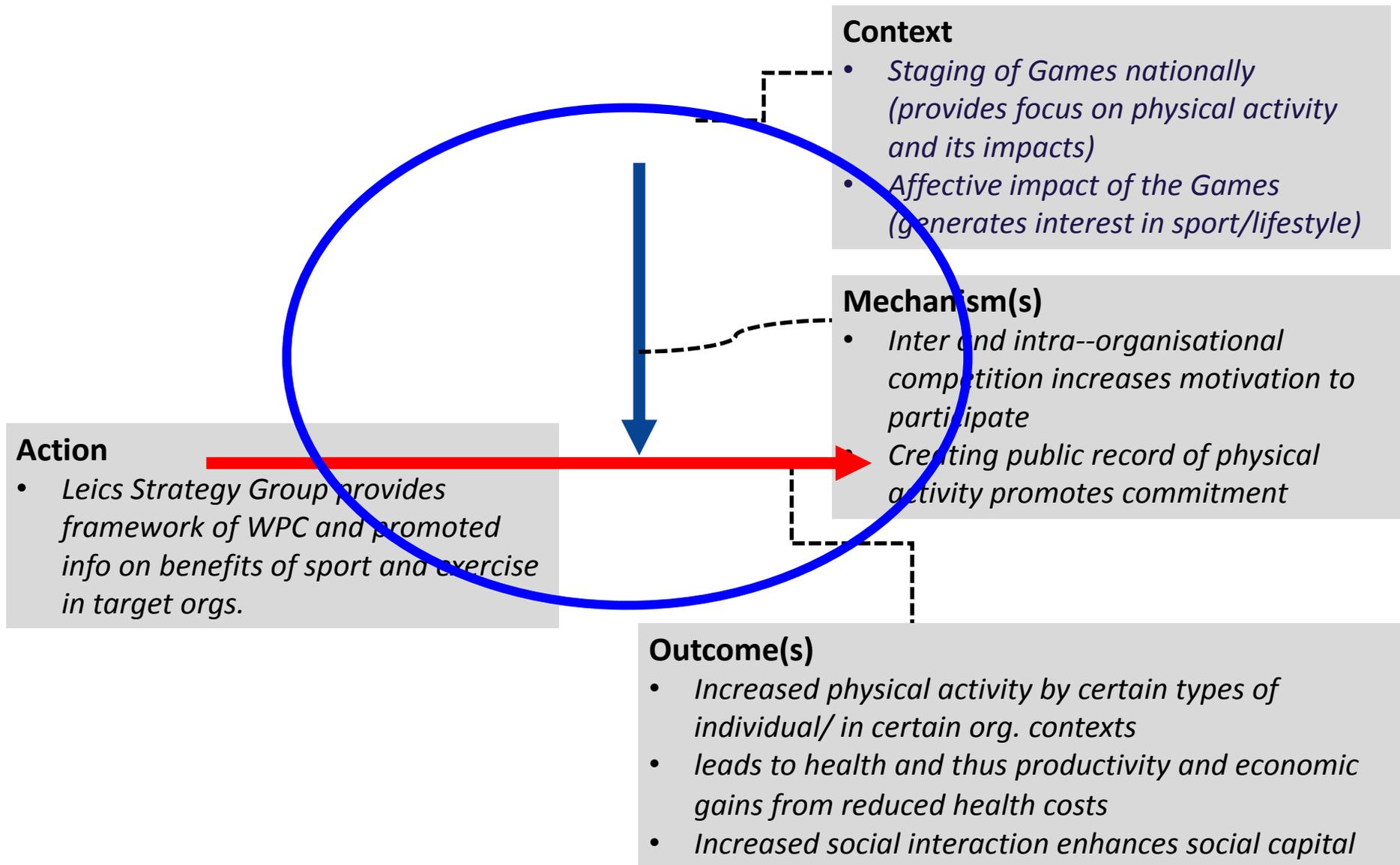| Days	Pre the WCP	Post the WCP
0 days	3%	5%
1 day	8%	3%
2 days	15%	8%
3 days	21%	10%
4 days	21%	12%
5 days	15%	13%
6 days	13%	10%
7 days	3%	39%

NB Those participating in 1 * 30 minutes for 6 days or more per week increases from 16% to 49% after the WCP in 2012

But as proponents point out (Pawson, et al) realist analysis is not about answering the question 'What works?' but rather what works ……

'For whom?'	*Gender; age; previous sporting / exercise history*
'In what ways?'	*Sport / non-sport exercise; competitive or recreational; episodic / regular*
'Under what circumstances / in which contexts?'	*Which kinds of employing organisation? Existence of organisational champions of the WCP? Nature of work (physical / sedentary etc)*
'With what kinds of outcome?'	*Types, regularity, sustainability of activity*
'Why? What **causal** mechanisms (and / or barriers) are evident?'	*Effectiveness of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators; Positive and negative organisational cultures, etc.*

Realist Explanation of the Workplace Challenge (WPC)

Context
- *Staging of Games nationally (provides focus on physical activity and its impacts)*
- *Affective impact of the Games (generates interest in sport/lifestyle)*

Mechanism(s)
- *Inter and intra--organisational competition increases motivation to participate*
- *Creating public record of physical activity promotes commitment*

Action
- *Leics Strategy Group provides framework of WPC and promoted info on benefits of sport and exercise in target orgs.*

Outcome(s)
- *Increased physical activity by certain types of individual/ in certain org. contexts*
- *leads to health and thus productivity and economic gains from reduced health costs*
- *Increased social interaction enhances social capital*

Conclusions – strengths and limitations of the meta-evaluation approach

1. Full synthesis of evaluations is only possible if certain quality thresholds are respected in each of the evaluations included in the synthesis

    - problems of quality of the data; lack of evaluations and lack of consideration of additionality limit the quality and extent of conclusions that can be drawn from a meta-synthesis.

2. The evaluations considered (unlike that of Chen and Henry 2015 as discussed) provide data on **outcomes** but do not address **causes** of those outcomes.

    - Identifying whether certain outcomes occur without explaining what causes such outcomes is of limited value for policy makers.

    - Need for detailed realist evaluations which will identify and test causal explanations, and provide context-specific explanations of causality. Better understanding of the causes of change can directly inform policy decision making for the future