



National Try Bowls Weekend:
Review & Recommendations 2026



Executive Summary

The inaugural **National Try Bowls Weekend (NTBW)** marked the **first coordinated national recruitment weekend** delivered by Bowls Scotland, bringing together clubs from across Scotland to collectively showcase the sport and encourage new people to give bowls a try.

National Try Bowls Weekend 2026 at a Glance

Participating Clubs	66
Events Delivered	71
Local Authorities Represented	19
Estimated Participants	1,210
Average Attendance	27 per event
Highest Attendance	140
Clubs who would participate again	91%
Clubs who felt the timing was appropriate	89%
Clubs rating Bowls Scotland's support as Good or Excellent	76%

The weekend successfully introduced an estimated **1,210 people** to the sport, generated strong engagement from participating clubs and achieved representation across **19 local authority areas**, demonstrating the potential of a coordinated national recruitment campaign.

With high levels of club satisfaction, encouraging participation figures and a strong appetite to build on the initiative, National Try Bowls Weekend has established a solid foundation to support future club recruitment and membership growth.

Planning and Promotion

A coordinated communications and marketing campaign was developed to raise awareness of the inaugural National Try Bowls Weekend. Bowls Scotland promoted the initiative through its digital channels, particularly Facebook, alongside external promotion through GoRadio which meant we were able to engage with a new audience. Participating clubs were provided with a suite of promotional resources to support local marketing, while an interactive **Event Finder** map on the Bowls Scotland website enabled prospective participants to identify their nearest event.

Campaign Reach

Social Media Views	493,893
Social Media Engagement	29,020
Event Finder Page Visits	2,359
GoRadio Audience Reach	36,449

The combination of national and local promotion established a consistent campaign identity while allowing clubs to tailor activity to their own communities.

Event Delivery

The **National Try Bowls Weekend** was officially launched with a flagship event at **Neilston Bowling Club**, attended by Scotland international para bowlers, Bowls Scotland staff and Finnie, the Commonwealth Games mascot. The launch provided a positive start to the weekend and helped generate momentum for participating clubs across the country.

Across Scotland, **66 clubs** delivered **71 Try Bowls events**, representing the first coordinated national recruitment weekend delivered by Bowls Scotland.

The National Try Bowls Weekend achieved encouraging geographic coverage, with participating clubs representing **19 local authority areas** across Scotland. Events were delivered from the **Highlands** and **Aberdeenshire** in the north, through **Dundee, Angus, Fife, Stirling** and **Clackmannanshire**, across the **Central Belt**, including **Glasgow, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Renfrewshire** and **North Lanarkshire**, and extending south to the **Scottish Borders, Dumfries & Galloway** and **South Ayrshire**. This broad geographical spread demonstrates the appetite for a coordinated national recruitment campaign while providing opportunities for people to experience bowls within their local communities.

While participation represented approximately **8%** of Bowls Scotland's affiliated clubs, the inaugural event provides a strong platform on which participation can continue to grow in future years.

Outcomes and Feedback

Following the event, participating clubs were invited to complete an evaluation survey, with **45 responses** received.

Feedback from participating clubs was overwhelmingly positive and demonstrated strong confidence in both the concept and delivery of the inaugural National Try Bowls Weekend.

- An estimated **1,210 people** attended events across Scotland.
- Events attracted an average of **27 participants**, with the largest event welcoming **140 attendees**.
- **89%** of responding clubs felt the event was well positioned within the bowls calendar.
- **91%** indicated they would participate in National Try Bowls Weekend again.
- **76%** rated the support and resources provided by Bowls Scotland as **Good** or **Excellent**.

These findings demonstrate strong club engagement and provide confidence that National Try Bowls Weekend has the potential to become a key annual recruitment initiative for Bowls Scotland.

Measuring Success

Whilst attendance figures and club feedback provide encouraging early indicators of success, the longer-term impact of National Try Bowls Weekend will ultimately be measured through **membership growth**.

At the conclusion of the 2026 bowling season, Bowls Scotland will review membership trends across the **66 participating clubs** to better understand the contribution that National Try Bowls Weekend has made towards recruitment. This will provide valuable evidence to inform future investment in the initiative, evaluate its effectiveness and identify examples of good practice that can be shared across the membership.

Recommendations for National Try Bowls Weekend 2027

The success of the inaugural National Try Bowls Weekend has provided valuable learning opportunities that will help strengthen future delivery. The following recommendations have been identified for 2027.

Strengthen Communications and Marketing

Develop a more comprehensive communications plan with earlier promotion and clearly defined milestones throughout the year. The Bowls Scotland AGM should be used as an opportunity to encourage clubs to **"save the date"**, helping to reduce fixture clashes and improve planning.

Marketing resources should also be enhanced through the introduction of editable templates and more accessible promotional materials, enabling clubs to deliver consistent, high-quality local campaigns. Future reporting should also capture campaign performance, including digital reach, website traffic and audience engagement.

Increase Club Engagement

Host dedicated information-sharing sessions with clubs and bowling associations ahead of the event to share good practice, answer questions and provide practical guidance.

Earlier engagement will support increased participation, improve planning and give clubs greater confidence in delivering successful events.

Enhance Event Delivery

Clarify the role of National Development Officers and other members of the Development team throughout the planning and delivery process to ensure consistent support for participating clubs.

Greater use should also be made of Bowls Scotland accredited coaches, encouraging them to support events at their home clubs and enhance the participant experience.

The introduction of three regional showcase events, located in the East, West and North of Scotland, would help generate additional media interest, create regional momentum and provide examples of best practice for other clubs.

Raise the Profile of the Campaign

Consider appointing well-known bowlers as ambassadors for National Try Bowls Weekend to increase public awareness and strengthen the campaign's national identity.

Recognisable ambassadors would help generate greater media interest, inspire clubs to participate and encourage more people to experience bowls for the first time.

Continue to Measure Impact

Alongside participation and satisfaction data, future evaluations should place greater emphasis on measuring communications performance and longer-term membership outcomes.

Capturing this evidence will enable Bowls Scotland to demonstrate the value of National Try Bowls Weekend, refine future delivery and ensure the initiative continues to support club recruitment effectively.

Conclusion

The inaugural National Try Bowls Weekend successfully established a national platform for club recruitment and demonstrated the willingness of clubs across Scotland to work collectively in promoting the sport.

The positive feedback received, combined with encouraging attendance figures, broad geographical representation and high levels of club satisfaction, provides confidence that the initiative has significant potential for growth.

By building on the lessons learned from its inaugural year, National Try Bowls Weekend is well positioned to become a flagship annual event within Bowls Scotland's recruitment strategy. Through stronger promotion, increased club participation and continued evaluation of its impact, the initiative has the potential to play a significant role in growing participation, strengthening clubs and supporting the long-term development of our sport across Scotland.