EVALUATION REPORT

SPORT AND SERIOUS VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROJECT

Authors: Dr Caron Walpole

Dr Carolynne Mason

Dr Tarryn Godfrey

Date: October 2020

Contents

1. Overview of the Sport and Serious Violence programme

In August 2019, StreetGames was awarded funding from the Home Office: Early Intervention Youth Fund to deliver the 'Sport and Serious Violence' programme. The aim of the programme was to use sports-based volunteering and effective coach mentoring to tackle the drivers of serious youth violence. This programme was designed as an extension to the StreetGames 'Safer Together Through Sport' which aimed to develop insight-led referral pathways between youth justice services and trusted community sport providers.

The funding was intended to:

- Work with locally trusted organisations (LTOs) across 11 Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) areas [Northumbria, Cleveland, Durham, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, West Midlands, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Devon & Cornwall, Nottingham].

- Enable LTOs to design meaningful volunteering programmes to engage and support 165 'at risk' young people (15 per OPCC area) to volunteer and achieve positive outcomes as a result of their engagement.

- Enhance newly developed referral pathways between criminal justice and sport to engage 55 young people (included in the overall 165 output) who are part of existing criminal justice cohorts to engage in sports volunteering.

- Enable LTOs to designate a 'Volunteer Mentor' who is responsible for regularly connecting with young volunteers and providing ongoing support to enhance their personal development journeys.

- Benefit a further 1,320 young people who attend local community sport sessions through Youth Action projects.

- Provide a robust training and development offer which supports both young volunteers and volunteer mentors to tackle the drivers of youth serious violence through effective sport-based interventions.

- Support the development of an external evaluation which demonstrates the impact of sport-based volunteering and effective coach mentoring on 'at risk' young people.

The key outcomes for the programme were to:

- Address the drivers of serious youth violence through sports-based volunteering and effective coach mentoring;

- Provide high quality support and advice to young people who are at risk of criminal involvement;

- Improve local, multi-agency partnership working; and

- Reduce the harm caused by, and prevalence of, Serious Violence.

The outputs for the programme included engaging 'at risk' young people, aged 10-17 years in sport-based volunteering; other young people benefitting from youth-led activities delivered by volunteers and young people being referred into community sport via robust referral pathways. Youth volunteering projects were intended to be operational across 11 OPCC areas. Indicators of success were engagement and retention levels of young volunteers throughout programme delivery and 'personal development' growth of the volunteers engaged *(e.g. resilience, confidence, self-efficacy and social skills)* that support the development of key 'protective factors'.

The StreetGames' in-house Research & Insight Team were responsible for the data collation regarding the programme outputs through baseline and follow up surveys, monthly monitoring returns (via VIEWs or offline tracker documents) and Training Academy participation data.

2. Youth Offending – Contextual Issues

2.1 Risk factors

This section provides contextual information relevant to the Sport and Serious Youth Violence Programme by considering why young people become involved in offending and why they may get involved in serious youth violence.

Risk factors (see Table 1 below) were previously used in attempts to identify children and young people who were most likely to follow a 'delinquent pathway' and 'to identify areas for intervention and management' as a solution (Goldson, 2012, p 308).

Table 1: List of risk factors for offending (adapted from the Youth Justice Board, 2005)

Risk Factors	Detail
1. Family factors	• Poor parental supervision and discipline • Conflict • History of criminal activity • Parental attitudes that condone anti-social and criminal behaviour • Low income • Poor housing
2. School factors	• Low achievement beginning in primary school • Aggressive behaviour (including bullying) • Lack of commitment (including truancy) • School disruption
3. Community Factors	• Living in a disadvantaged community • Disorganisation and neglect • Availability of drugs • High population turnover and lack of neighbourhood attachment
4. Personal, individual or peer factors	• Hyperactivity and impulsivity • Low intelligence and cognitive impairment • Alienation and lack of social commitment • Attitudes that condone offending and drug misuse • Friendships with peers involved in crime and drug misuse

However, it is increasingly recognised that the use of risk factors should be treated with caution. Goldson (2012) stated a reliance on risk factors:

• Reduces the young person to a 'repository of risks'

• Has the potential for the labelling of the young person

• Has the potential for widening the net and including other young people who might meet the risk criteria but who might never become involved in youth offending

• Places the focus on individuals and their families and pays less attention to structural issues such as poverty and social exclusion.

Haines and Case (2015) argue that a focus on risk factors creates a negative, deficit focused view of a young person rather than the promotion of positive processes and that it is more relevant to consider them as contextual risk factors.

More recently, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have also been associated with the likelihood of offending as well as other negative life outcomes (Fox et al., 2015). ACEs are individual negative childhood events that are interrelated and exert a cumulative effect on the individual (Fox et al., 2015). ACEs include physical, emotional and sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, household substance abuse, violent treatment towards mother, parental separation or divorce, household mental illness and a member of the household in prison.

2.2 Involvement in Serious Youth Violence

Young people's involvement in serious youth violence and crime is complex and contested – there is not one single reason why a young person becomes involved (Thompson, 2019).

McAra and McVie (2016) highlight that young people involved in violence are often highly vulnerable and display high levels of victimisation and that violence is a 'mechanism used by young people to overcome experiences of vulnerability and adversity'(p75). Vulnerable young people who become involved in violence may have limited opportunities to gain status in pro-social ways and do not see education as a route to self-advancement so violence may be seen as a way for the young person to exert power and to develop a sense of self (McAra & McVie, 2016).

Situational factors such as intense peer pressure and specific adolescent developmental changes may also act as triggers for an involvement in SYV for some young people (Steinberg, 2008).

Young people's involvement in serious youth violence may be transient. Rational choice theory (Becker, 1968) suggests that prior to committing a crime a young person weighs the potential risks and costs against potential benefits. As the desire for rewards is elevated during adolescence (Galvan, 2013), the potential benefits of receiving admiration from their peers and the 'thrill' experience outweighs the perceived chances of getting caught and punished and any social disapproval. As a result of the maturation process, this desire for rewards eventually reduces and maturation is therefore associated with less or no involvement in SYV for most young people.

2.3 Involvement in Gangs

Youth gang members contribute disproportionately to overall levels of crime, including violent and serious offences, which has an adverse impact on local communities (O'Brien et al., 2013). Gang membership is known to be associated with knife and gun crime and more recently with county lines and child criminal exploitation.

Most young people's involvement in gangs is fluid and temporary, lasting for an average of 1-2 years and membership is again related to maturation. However, membership of a gang may have consequences for life (Carson et al., 2013).

Risk factors for young people getting involved in gangs are highly complex and operate across multiple domains including the individual, peers, family, school and the community. The nature and the complexity of these risk factors means that it is impossible to accurately predict which young people will become gang members. Common factors in the context of gangs are socio-economic disadvantage and vulnerabilities of the young people (Gebo, 2016).

Reasons for joining gangs are complex and cannot be understood as a conscious decision to become involved. Gang members are mainly male, often seeking a sense of family, bonding and a sense of belonging. Dong and Krohn (2016) suggest that individuals with a history of gang affiliation are likely to experience lower educational attainment, unemployment, economic hardship, family problems, sustained delinquency and increased probability of arrest.

Girls who belong to gangs are more likely to enter and exit gangs at an earlier age than boys and to commit more crime than 'non-gang' girls. Their reasons for joining gangs are usually linked to delinquent peers and social disorganisation. Sutton (2017) also points out that 'gang' girls are more likely to have experienced physical and sexual abuse and may join gangs for protection, a sense of family and to escape the history of trauma even though this may increase their risk of victimization by members of their own gang.

2.4 County Lines and Serious Youth Violence

County lines drug dealing is a rapidly evolving illicit drug supply model which sees urban drug gangs cross police borders to courier heroin and crack cocaine to rural or coastal towns (HM Government's Serious Violence Strategy, 2018)

Robinson et al. (2019) suggest that in the context of county lines and drug dealing:

- Criminal gangs seek marginalised, vulnerable young people, mainly males, from care home settings, those not attending school and typically in areas of socio-economic disadvantage to sell drugs.

- Young people involved in cannabis supply had often been drawn into county lines activity to pay off a debt. Victims, usually male, were unlikely to see themselves as being exploited and rejected the victim label 'to uphold their masculine status and professed it was their own choice' (p706).

- Involvement often resulted in exposure to the risk of violence, danger and contact with the criminal justice system.

2.5 Safer Together Through Sport

The current programme built on the work started through the StreetGames 'Safer Together Through Sport' programme and, in particular, the design and development meetings and the 'coffee mornings' which had supported new partnerships between the LTOs and local referral agencies. As identified in the evaluation report for the StreetGames 'Safer Together Through Sport' programme, the scope of the programme evolved to extend beyond collaboration with local youth offending services (YOS). By Autumn 2019 collaborative partnerships included local criminal justice and early intervention services which involved local police, schools, early help services and housing associations. LTOs utilised these new partnerships to support the recruitment of young people to the current 'Sport and Serious Youth Violence Prevention' programme.

2.6 Sport and Serious Youth Violence Programme Delivery

The Sport and Serious Youth Violence Prevention' programme delivery started in Autumn 2019 with the recruitment and referral of young people to take part in sport-based volunteering supported by a mentor. The programme delivery was supported by a small StreetGames team led by the National Doorstep Sport Advisor. StreetGames also provided a training package for the mentors which included a two-day mentor training workshop in Leeds, Activator courses, Level One Youth at Risk, Mental Health First Aid and Managing Challenging Behaviour training.

However, in March 2020, the delivery of all sport and physical activity programmes was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in the face to face work with young people being paused in mid-March. Although some projects were able to keep in contact with their young

people, the volunteering and mentoring activity was largely unable to continue beyond this point.

3. Programme Evaluation

3.1 Introduction

Loughborough University was commissioned to undertake an external, independent assessment of the impact of the programme which placed an emphasis on the identification of key learning and insight into the critical success factors for an effective sport-based mentoring programme. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the planned data collection as the evaluation team was unable to conduct face to face interviews with young people and the data collated by StreetGames only continued up to mid-March 2020 which had implications for identifying the impact of the programme. The evaluation findings are based on case studies of twelve projects and quantitative data collated by StreetGames staff.

3.2 Case Studies

The evaluation team undertook case studies of twelve projects funded through the Sport and Serious Violence Prevention' programme using telephone interviews with staff. Project staff were also asked to complete a case study pro-forma about the experiences of their young people and two projects completed these forms. The telephone interviews explored:

- The ethos and nature of the LTO

- The recruitment of young people including the use of referral pathways

- The profile of the young people recruited

- The role of sport and volunteering

- The mentoring programme including the mentoring relationship

- The qualities of the mentor

- Challenges facing the LTOs

- Impact of the volunteering and mentoring

- Future plans

Exemplar project case studies of four projects can be found in Appendix A. Examples of three young people's journeys were developed based on the case study interviews which can be found on pages 30,31 and 41.

Table 2. Summary of twelve case study projects

Case Study	Type of LTO	Summary of project
1. Project One, West Midlands	Boxing Club run by local volunteers	Informal mentoring of very vulnerable young people by experienced boxing club volunteers. Use of boxing as the main activity complemented by the use of an informal one to one mentoring style.
2. Project Two, North West	Community organisation involved in sport	Informal mentoring of young people as part of youth-led sports sessions with volunteering opportunities.
3. Project Three, South Yorkshire	Community project involved in sport working mainly with young Muslims	Informal mentoring of vulnerable young people as part of youth-led sports sessions with opportunities for young people to become volunteers and mentors
4. Project Four, West Midlands	Community company providing health, sport and volunteering opportunities	The formal mentoring of an adult young male volunteer as a new mentor working with vulnerable young people as mentees taking part in local sports sessions.
5. Project Five, East Midlands	Local community company involved in sport, the arts etc.	Experienced adult mentors working with referred young people on a one to one basis, using sport. Involvement of mentees in wider group sports activity sessions and access to volunteering and qualification opportunities.
6. Project Six, South West	Local charity providing a Streetsports facility	Informal mentoring with young volunteers using Streetsports.
7. Project Seven, South Yorkshire	Community organisation involved in sport, the arts etc located in an area with a mainly BAME population	Informal mentoring of young people as peer mentors and volunteers. Using sport and bolt-on education sessions for young people and their parents.
8. Project Eight, North East	Youth club involved in sport etc based on a local estate	Supporting young people as volunteers
9. Project Nine, North West	Community-based social enterprise specialising in school activities, with their own sports clubs including boxing, martial arts, football.	Experienced, trained mentor encouraging young people to take part in sport regularly and then supporting them to become peer mentors, volunteers and coaches.
10. Project Ten, North East	A youth and community organisation	Experienced volunteer mentor using sport and volunteering to work with very

Case Study	Type of LTO	Summary of project
		vulnerable young people on a one-to one basis.
11. Project Eleven, South Yorkshire	Local charity working with young people and the local community on a local estate and wider in the city	Experienced volunteer adult mentors working with formally and informally referred young people on a one to one basis, using sport. Involvement of mentees in wider group sports activity sessions and access to volunteering.
12. Project Twelve, West Midlands	Local charity, closely linked to a Premier League FC, using sport including football to work with people	Project aim was to support referred young people from the local YOT to get involved in volunteering with access to coaching and leadership qualifications

3.3 Quantitative data

Monitoring records held by StreetGames showed that at least 149 young people were engaged in the programme. However, it is believed, that the actual number of young people engaged was greater than 149 as the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown restrictions in March 2020 meant that a number of LTOs went into shut-down and furloughed staff. This meant that not all monitoring data forms and participant questionnaires were returned.

StreetGames utilised the baseline and follow-up surveys to identify and track the young people's experiences of the projects. Young people completed the baseline survey either before or at the first session and were then asked to complete a follow-up survey either during or at the end of the twelve-week programme to assess the impact of their involvement in the programme. The surveys collected data on the:

- Demographics of the young people
- Recruitment/ referral routes
- Reasons for joining the project
- Mental health and well-being
- Confidence and resilience
- Trust and sense of belonging
- Sport and physical activity
- Attitudes towards school/ college

- Crime/ conflict and aggressive behaviour
- Future employment outlook

By the end of March 2020, 149 baseline surveys and 63 follow-up surveys had been completed. 70% of the baseline respondents were male and 29% female whilst 67% of the follow-up respondents were male and 33% female. Table 3 below reveals that the respondents to the follow-up survey were on average older than those who completed the baseline survey.

Table 3: Age of respondents

	10-13 years	14 or 15	16-19	20+
Baseline	26%	46%	28%	1%
Follow-up	19%	40%	40%	0

Table 4 below indicates that fewer white young people and more Asian/Asian British young people completed the follow-up survey.

Table 4: Ethnicity of respondents

	White	Asian/Asian British	Black/Black British	Mixed-Race	Chinese/Or Another Ethnic Group
Baseline	72%	14%	6%	6%	1%
Follow-up	48%	32%	13%	6%	0

The results of the surveys inform this evaluation report. However, due to the difference in the total number of respondent samples collected for each of the two surveys, the extent of any changes between the baseline and follow-up surveys should be examined with caution. It should also be noted that as discussed later in this report, not all the LTOs delivered sport-based mentoring programmes as some were involved in delivering peer mentoring programmes or supporting young people in volunteering programme. Whilst these programmes all benefitted young people, it is important to note that the survey results do not differentiate between the different types of programmes that young people engaged in.

4.Evaluation Findings

4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the findings from the evaluation. Section 4.2 examines the programme structures including the LTO structures and approach and the participants who engaged in the programme. Section 4.3 focuses on the programme delivery whilst Section 4.4 examines Mentors, Mentoring and Mentees. The impact of the programme of young people is discussed in section 4.5 and the final section examines the future plans of LTOs.

4.2 Programme Structures

4.2.1 LTO Structures

There was considerable variation between the organisations involved in the programme and this was reflected in the projects. The size of the LTOs ranged from very small organisations with very little infrastructure to much larger organisations with a city-wide remit and a well-developed infrastructure including HR support, policies and procedures. The smaller, local LTOs demonstrated that they were still able to engage effectively and flexibly with their mentees and were able to develop strong relationships in spite of the lack of organisational infrastructure and resources. A small number of larger voluntary LTOs attracted young people from across their cities as a result of their strong reputation even though they were based in a local community. Staff working for the LTOs often lived locally, sharing a passion and commitment to improving the lives of young people in their communities which meant that they were prepared to go the extra mile and to make a difference even if funding for their work was limited.

The case studies showed that the majority of LTOs involved in the programme were community-based, often voluntary organisations located in deprived areas. Although the nature of the LTOs ranged from sport specific LTOs such as boxing and football to those with a much broader remit including multi sports, the arts and youth and community work, all the LTOs used sport to support their programmes and recognised its value.

Most LTOs worked solely with young people although a small number did have a broader remit to work across the wider community. Most LTOs shared a good understanding and knowledge of their own local communities and, for the smaller, estate-based LTOs, this

included a good knowledge and understanding about local families and the community dynamics. Their staff either lived locally or had worked in the community for a long time and knew their local communities well, a quality that was identified in the case studies as an essential requirement for a mentor working with young people.

> 'It always comes back to local knowledge and understanding local people and local families … a lot of these young people, I know their uncles or their granddads… and that's significant to these young people as well, they're not working with a stranger, you know.' (Project mentor)

The localised nature of the LTOs contributed to high levels of trust between the LTOs and the local communities including young people and their families which was an important factor for their mentoring programmes. Community trust was something that had been established over a long duration and this was considered by interviewees to be extremely important in facilitating this project.

> 'So, it's took us twenty years to build up that in-depth trust with communities... The other side of that is if you don't get that part right, if you haven't got that level of engagement and trust from families then you could be in trouble because their perception is if you're educating my child around gangs or you're having that discussion, then who are you to do that?' (Project Manager)

The importance of trust was highlighted by the survey results which indicated that some young people faced issues trusting both other young people and adults in their community. Around a third of those completing the baseline survey and just under 20% of those completing the follow-up survey stated that they could not trust same-aged peers.

Table 5: Levels of trust

How much do you feel you can trust people who are a similar age to you?				
	Can trust a lot	Can trust a bit	Can't trust very much	Can't trust at all
Baseline	16%	49%	30%	5%
Follow-up	24%	59%	16%	2%

The survey results also indicated that 40% of those who completed the baseline survey and 18% of those who completed the follow-up survey did not feel strongly that they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood.

Table 6: Sense of belonging to local community

How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood? (Please think of the area within a few minutes walking distance from your home).				
	Not at all Strong	Not Very Strongly	Fairly Strongly	Very Strongly
Baseline	10%	30%	41%	20%
Follow-up	2%	16%	51%	32%

4.2.2 LTO Approach

The case studies demonstrated that the majority of LTOs were based on a strong youth work ethos which guided their work and ensured that they only became involved in programmes which complemented this ethos.

> 'Our board is very, very, very clear on this that if we get funding, we have a funders' criteria but we also have EYP's criteria on the long-term ethos and relationship with the young people, we will never, never jeopardise that with the young people.' (Project manager)

Despite the small size and voluntary nature of some of the LTOs, all interviewees stated that they had sufficient infrastructure and strong policies and procedures in place which underpinned the success of the mentoring programme. However, the case studies showed that having formal policies and procedures could sometimes act as a barrier to young people's engagement in the programme. At one LTO, the project staff reported frustration that their LTO's procedures required their young people to undertake a lengthy induction programme before they could start volunteering.

> 'Everybody must do an induction if they're going to go out with our staff into our field, so … everybody has to complete the induction and it's quite lengthy……given the type of, you know, participants that we were working with, it was, you know, we were there for a long time, you could see that they were getting itchy feet, they were getting fed up.' (Project staff)

On the other hand, it was often easier for the larger LTOs to offer a wide range of opportunities to young people within their organisations ranging from playing, volunteering, event management, administration and leadership and coaching qualifications.

> 'We've got a lot of sessions and a lot of coaches, there's plenty for the volunteers to go out and have a look at. So you know there is scope for them to go out and volunteer in lots of things. We probably do fifty sessions a week. … and then obviously we've got like the primary stars stuff, the disability stuff, you know so there's lots of things that they can go and look at.' (Project staff)

4.2.3 Young Participants

The programme aimed to recruit young people at risk of or already involved in serious youth violence. As noted above most of the young people who completed the surveys were typically male and mainly older teenagers aged 14 to 19 year olds. The baseline survey asked the young people about their reasons for joining the projects and the most popular reason given was 'To have fun' (60%) and closely followed by wanting 'to be active' (54%) and wanting 'to learn new things' (50%). 'Taking part in training and obtaining a qualification received the lowest number of responses' (31%). The results show that 41% of respondents were recruited because an adult told them to and 41% stated that they decided to take part because they wanted to keep out of trouble. The baseline survey results indicated that 46% expressed an interest in taking part in volunteering.

Table 7: Reasons for taking part in the project

Why did you decide to take part in this sports session/project?	
Response	Baseline percentage
To have fun	60%
To be active	54%
To learn new things	50%
I like to do new things	48%
To volunteer	46%
Because I like sport	45%
I was told to come by another adult (e.g. support worker)	44%
To meet new people	44%
To keep out of trouble	41%
To be healthier	38%
My friends come to this session	33%

To take part in training and get a qualification	31%

According to the interviewees, the challenges faced by the participants who attended the projects were varied but included:

- Being seen as a 'problem' at school or at home, in the wrong peer group

- Being marginalised and disengaged from the community

- Having special needs e.g. ADHD

- Often excluded or disengaged from school or were receiving education in a PRU, with a support worker

- Involvement in ASB and alcohol and substance misuse

- Experiencing trauma included PTSD (child sexual abuse, county lines)

- Challenging home lives often involving domestic violence, parental alcoholism or parents in prison

Interviewees suggested that some participants were victims of crime and others were both a victim and perpetrator and, as a result, some participants were already working with the youth offending service. Interviewees confirmed that the young people involved in the programme had varying levels of complexity and vulnerabilities and required the corresponding levels of expertise and support from LTOs.

The survey results revealed that there was variation in the extent to which participants were physically active. Approximately half (49%) of the baseline respondents confirmed that they participated in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on four or more days per week whilst 24% of the young people only participated in this level of physical activity on one day per week or not at all. 65% of the follow-up respondents confirmed that they participated in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on four or more days per week whilst 5% of the young people only participated in this level of physical activity on one day per week or not at all. Less than 20% of survey respondents did 30 minutes physical activity each day of the week.

Table 8: Levels of physical activity

In the past week, on how many days have you done a total of 30 minutes or more of physical activity, which was enough to raise your breathing rate?		
Number of days per week	Baseline	Follow-up
0	8%	0%
1	16%	5%
2	9%	13%
3	19%	16%
4	12%	19%
5	16%	16%
6	9%	11%
7	12%	19%

Survey respondents were asked to state how much particular attitudes and behaviours were like them by choosing from the responses of 'a bit like me', 'quite like me', 'just like me' and 'not like me'. Their responses are summarised in the table that follows. Interestingly, the majority (>90%) of respondents said 'love to do sport' was either a bit, quite or just like them.

Around 80% stated 'Lack confidence in themselves' was either a bit, quite or just like them. The majority of respondents suggested that problem behaviours were a bit, quite or just like them.

- 38% of baseline and 48% of follow-up respondents stated that 'Often get involved in conflicts and violence' was not like them
- 41% of baseline and 47% of follow-up respondents stated that 'Do things that are bad for their health' was not like them.
- 41% of baseline and 50% of follow-up respondents stated that 'Do things they feel are wrong because friends do' was not like them
- 34% of baseline and 53 % of follow-up respondents stated that 'Often get into trouble with adults' was not like them

Just under a third (31%) of the baseline respondents stated that 'enjoying school' was not like them whilst 23% stated 'doing well at school' was not like them. However, survey respondents were generally positive about gaining employment in the future but only 13% of baseline and 14% of follow-up respondents stated that 'Think they will get good jobs later in life' was not

like them. Only 14% of baseline and 2% of follow-up respondents stated that 'Have the skills that will help them get good jobs' is not like them

Table 9: Attitudes and behaviours

		A bit like me	Quite like me	Just like me	Not like me
Love to do sport	Baseline	25	23	43	9
	Follow-up	16	31	48	5
Have lots of things to do in their spare time	Baseline	32	27	18	23
	Follow-up	19	53	18	10
Enjoy school/college	Baseline	38	24	7	31
	Follow-up	42	31	15	13
Do well at school/college	Baseline	35	28	14	23
	Follow-up	31	34	26	10
Feel valued by adults	Baseline	37	35	16	12
	Follow-up	24	42	31	3
Live in places where there is lots of crime	Baseline	31	25	22	22
	Follow-up	31	31	23	16
Have choices about what to do in life	Baseline	32	37	24	8
	Follow-up	30	41	28	2
Lack confidence in themselves	Baseline	44	32	5	20
	Follow-up	40	27	10	23
Feel good about themselves	Baseline	34	33	19	14
	Follow-up				
Often get angry/lose temper	Baseline	27	23	22	27
	Follow-up	27	44	11	18
Often get involved in conflicts and violence	Baseline	36	19	7	38
	Follow-up	26	16	10	48
Do things that are bad for their health	Baseline	28	23	8	41
	Follow-up	28	18	7	47
Do things they feel are wrong because friends do	Baseline	34	21	5	41
	Follow-up	34	10	7	50
Often get into trouble with adults	Baseline	43	13	10	34
	Follow-up	28	15	3	53
Think they will get good jobs later in life	Baseline	23	42	23	13
	Follow-up	16	41	31	12
Have the skills that will help them get good jobs	Baseline	32	32	23	14
	Follow-up	19	45	34	2

Interviewees in the case studies stated that young people having an interest in sport and physical activity and wanting to be part of the programme was an important success factor.

4.2.4 Referrals

The young people who took part in the programme were recruited in different ways. Some young people were already involved in other projects run by the LTO or were already known to the LTO staff. Other young people were referred into the projects through a combination of formal and informal referral pathways.

The 'Safer Together Through Sport' programme had been designed to support collaboration and to develop and embed formal referral pathways between the youth justice sector and community sport predominantly via local Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). However, the programme coincided with local YOTs focusing their work on much smaller cohorts of challenging and vulnerable young people and, therefore, the number of referrals decreased in numbers and increased in complexity. As a result, other local agencies became involved in the referral process resulting in a cohort of young people being referred which included young people who required different levels of intervention. Initially it was intended that the formal referral pathways would be utilised as the preferred method of recruitment to this programme as a continuation of the previous 'Safer Together Through Sport' programme.

The interviewees revealed that only one case study LTO relied solely on referrals from their local YOT and they highlighted that this was a risky strategy for the recruitment of young people to the programme because it resulted in the referral of a very limited number of young people who all had complex needs. Although five young people were formally referred, the mentor only had limited contact with two of the young people referred by the YOT. Staff reported that it had taken several weeks to make contact with the young people and that contact could only be made via the YOT officer which slowed down the referral process. The vulnerabilities and complex lives of these young people meant that the YOT officers needed to ensure that it was safe and appropriate for them to start to engage with the programme. Although initial indications were positive about the involvement of the two young people referred to the programme, this approach made it difficult for the project staff to engage the young people and to develop the mentoring relationships. Other LTOs reported that although they had started to engage with their local YOT and hoped that referrals would be made in

the future, they were now working with a wider range of referral agencies to reduce their reliance on their local YOTs.

Interviewees confirmed that projects received the appropriate number and type of referrals when a wider range of agencies was involved in the formal referral process and, in particular, if they were based at the early intervention level as this increased the number of referrals. Referral agencies such as schools, PRUs and Children Services were keen to work with the LTOs and soon became key partners in the programme. For one LTO, this complemented the mentoring programme that they were already running for local schools and PRUs and helped to extend it to benefit more local young people. Referrals were made by a range of agencies including:

- Schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) (n=6) who referred young people who were disengaged from education, were displaying challenging behaviour or who were in 'anti-social' friendship groups.
- Early Help/ Intervention services (EIS) including a Multi-Agency Team.
- A small number of local YOTs (n=2) who referred young people with complex needs.
- Professionals working with children including a school nurse, a local police office, a social worker.

The case studies also showed that not all referrals were made formally as some were made informally, usually by word of mouth, through the following channels:

- Project workers who were already working with these young people and knew that they would benefit from the programme.
- Parents and family members.
- Local partners such as the local authority e.g. local leisure centre.
- The young people themselves who asked to be included in the programme.

This mixed approach to referrals was reflected in the survey data from the young people as the baseline surveys revealed that:

- 50% of respondents were formally referred as a volunteer
- 35% were informally referred as a volunteer
- 7% were referred as a participant
- 8% joined their programmes via open access as a volunteer.

The follow-up survey revealed that:

- 28% of respondents were formally referred as a volunteer
- 26% were informally referred as a volunteer
- 25% were referred as a participant and
- 19% joined via open access as a volunteer.
- 2% confirmed that they had joined the programme via open access as a participant.

The informal referral process emerged as being more significant than anticipated at the beginning of the programme. Early intervention referrals were considered by interviewees to be potentially more effective:

'I work in the schools, get the really early intervention bit, and then you speak to that young person, find out their story and you think, well bloody hell, this is a right rock I've uncovered here, but you've got it before it's ever got to YOT…. And that to me is how I've sort of done it. I've sort of gone out and sourced really my own referrals because I know what I'm looking for and I know I can get them…. When you've got an eleven year old that's just starting to do things like being violent to other students in the school, being you know verbally aggressive to teachers, and it hasn't quite gone into being noticed on any level, those are the kids that you need to be getting in and getting them into something.' (Project manager)
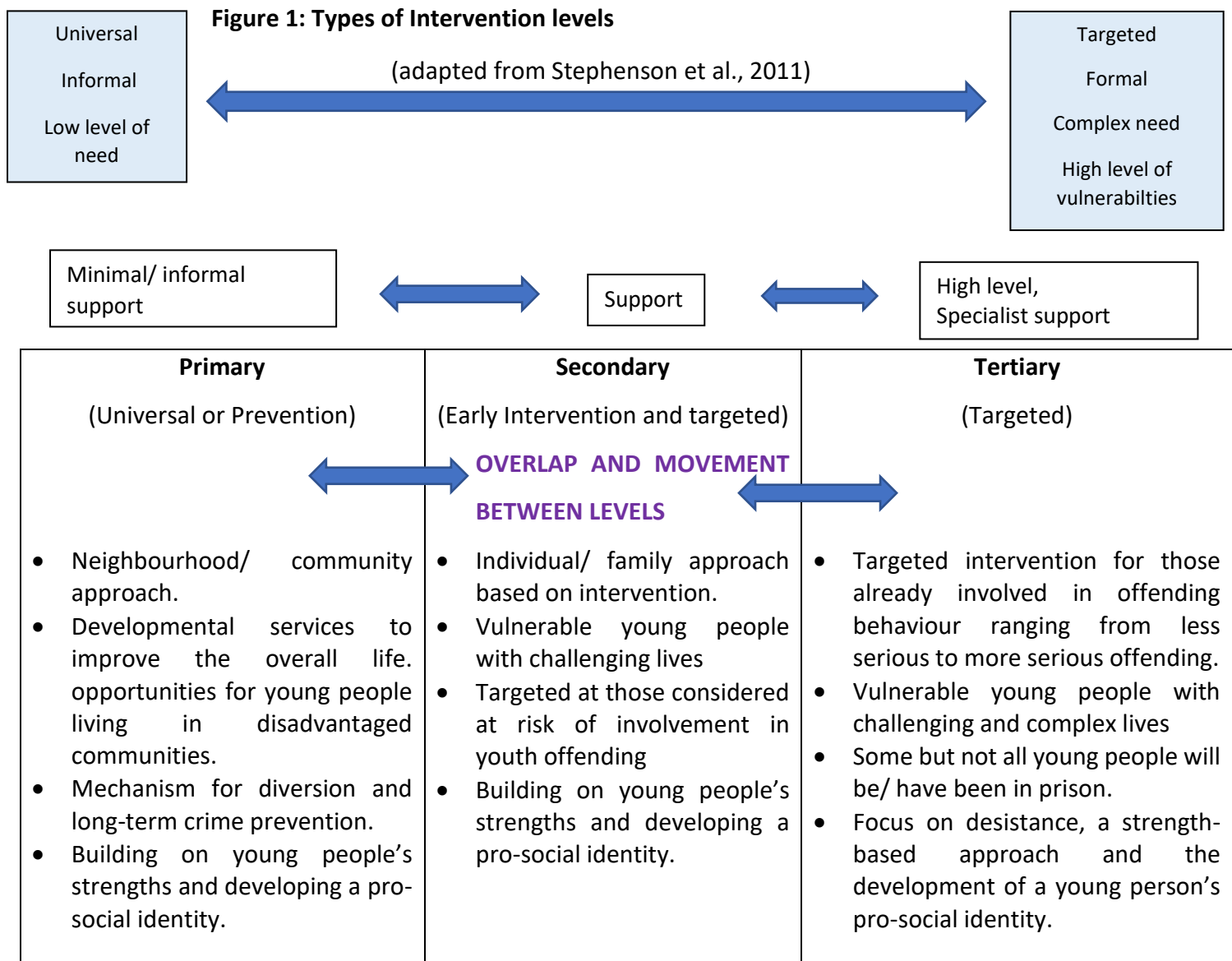
Some LTOs reported that they had encouraged young people that they were already working with to join the programme. In some cases, this included young people who were not in either the youth justice or criminal justice system but who interviewees believed been involved in criminal behaviour to varying degrees.

Despite the initial intention to prioritise formal referrals the flexible use of referral pathways using a combination of formal and informal referrals from a wide range of partners and the local community (including self-referrals by young people) ensured that LTOs were able to run the projects with sufficient young people and be able to respond to the needs of local young people. As discussed below the lead in time for formal referrals was challenging as the programme was time-limited.

4.3 Programme Delivery

4.3.1 Types of Intervention

The case studies showed that LTOs specialised in working with young people to prevent or reduce youth offending at either the low or the high end of secondary intervention or both and, for some LTOs, this reached into the lower end of tertiary level. Figure 1 below shows the definition of the different intervention levels and highlights that a young person can move between the intervention levels which is relevant for the LTOs' work with the young person.

Figure 1: Types of Intervention levels

(adapted from Stephenson et al., 2011)

Universal		Targeted
Informal		Formal
Low level of need		Complex need
		High level of vulnerabilties

| Minimal/ informal support | | Support | | High level, Specialist support |

Primary	**Secondary**	**Tertiary**
(Universal or Prevention)	(Early Intervention and targeted)	(Targeted)
	OVERLAP AND MOVEMENT BETWEEN LEVELS	
• Neighbourhood/ community approach. • Developmental services to improve the overall life. opportunities for young people living in disadvantaged communities. • Mechanism for diversion and long-term crime prevention. • Building on young people's strengths and developing a pro-social identity.	• Individual/ family approach based on intervention. • Vulnerable young people with challenging lives • Targeted at those considered at risk of involvement in youth offending • Building on young people's strengths and developing a pro-social identity.	• Targeted intervention for those already involved in offending behaviour ranging from less serious to more serious offending. • Vulnerable young people with challenging and complex lives • Some but not all young people will be/ have been in prison. • Focus on desistance, a strength-based approach and the development of a young person's pro-social identity.

Some projects were examples of secondary interventions which involved young people who were targeted as a result of indicators including being involved in low level ASB, displaying challenging behaviour at school, not attending school, attending a Pupil Referral Unit, living in a difficult home environment or were part of an 'anti-social' friendship group.

He [local partner] said, oh I've got a couple of young people, that you know could do with something like this, where they've got this variety and you know just to prevent them from sort of hanging around with the wrong kind of person.' (Project staff)

'A lot of our young people are actually already in care with a one on one supervisor through a intervention service or something, but they come in one on one with an

intervention officer during the day when kids are at school because they're disengaged or they're not at school' (Project manager)

Other projects worked with young people already involved in serious youth violence as perpetrators and victims and therefore were offering interventions that were at the tertiary level.

'He's got some significant issues around knife crime and has been carrying a knife. He was well-known to the police and YOT, he's been on managed placement at the Pupil Referral Unit, that didn't work.' (Project mentor)

'Sadly she lost her brother to a shooting in the area two years … three years ago now, he was shot dead, and since then she's never really came back from it like mentally, so she's getting multiple support.' (Project manager)

'We've got one of the young people, unfortunately who was involved in a knife incident where he was the perpetrator, he stabbed another young person.'

Although the tertiary intervention level is often considered in the context of young people's involvement in the criminal justice, youth offending system or the secure estate, as the case studies show, some LTOs were working with young people who had already been involved in serious youth violence but who had not always been identified by these services. Several interviewees suggested that their work with young people was often unpredictable therefore project staff needed expertise to respond flexibly.

'the other thing that happens is the more chaotic that boy's life gets is that twenty four hours in that boy's life can be a major change between … I had one from when I was dealing with a highly prolific offender, saw him on the Wednesday, he went out and stabbed and killed somebody on the Saturday, because he lost his accommodation on the Friday and things went downhill so quickly.' (Project mentor)

An example of how quickly things can change is one of the young people involved in the mentoring project was the perpetrator of an incident with a knife. The mentor from this project was experienced and as he was based in the local community, he knew the perpetrator and the victim and their families. He worked closely with both young people and

their families to prevent further escalation of violence. The implications for LTOs working with young people at the higher level of secondary intervention and the lower level of tertiary intervention is significant. As shown in Figure 1, the higher the intervention level, the more complex are the needs and vulnerabilities of the young person which requires more intensive and specialist support and resources from LTOs, ideally as part of a holistic package in partnership with other support agencies. The case studies showed that LTOs working with young people with the most complex circumstances needed to provide high levels of support and needed to be prepared for the potential escalation of serious youth violence.

4.3.2 The role of sport

Interviewees stated that sport was used as a 'magnet' to attract the young people to the programme. The programme offered a wide range of sports with some projects adopting a multi-sport approach including football, tennis, table tennis and adventurous sports. Other projects used a more specialist approach focusing on football, martial arts or street sports including skateboarding and scooters. One project offered a choice of adventurous sports such as mountain biking and kayaking as well as more traditional sports. Football, the gym, multi-sports and boxing were the main types of sport used in the projects. Interviewees agreed that it was important to find the sport that young people wanted to play to get the best results.

> 'So when it comes to sports, definitely to tailor it to the young people is the main lesson I've taken from it, because trying to just put up sessions without running it past them first can go definitely either one of two ways, it can go really well or really bad.'

All interviewees agreed sport was also important as a means of gaining engaging participants. Playing sport with the young person either on a one- to- one basis or as part of a group was the starting point for their engagement in the programme.

> 'Sport is the main way of engagement. And from there, what we do is we filter some of these young people out, we even identify young people having problems and we know what's happening in school, what's happening outside in the community because these sessions are done right in the heart of the community, in the schools or you know where the vast majority of young people have access to.' (Project manager)

Sport helped to 'break down barriers' and acted as a 'normalising' positive activity for young people, helping them to settle in and feel comfortable. Whilst most participants continued to play sport throughout the projects, some young people focused more on volunteering rather than playing at later stages.

4.3.3 Sport and Mentoring

Mentors who played sport with the young people used this time to develop trust with the participants and this was typically achieved informally. Taking part in sport supported the development of the mentoring relationship as it provided opportunities for informal conversations, finding shared interests and listening to the young person as the first steps towards building trust. Mentors often built on this and found 'teachable moments' (Choi et al., 2015) where they could reinforce skills or qualities that they were working on with the young person whilst playing sport. For example, mentors supported participants to reflect afterwards on how they had dealt with situations.

Playing sport together also provided opportunities for mentors to model positive behaviours and to provide encouragement for positive lifestyle choices such as adopting a healthy lifestyle, improving fitness and cutting down or stopping smoking.

Mentors supported participants to recognise the skills that they developed and to celebrate their achievements, however small. Some participants learnt new sports and some discovered they had the potential to play that sport competitively. These moments were important in facilitating identity change towards developing a pro-social identity. Exit routes were important in terms of maintaining involvement in sport and positive activities. Examples included going to the gym and joining a local sports club.

4.3.4 Volunteering

Volunteering formed an integral part of the programme by providing a wide range of opportunities and benefits for the young person whilst also supporting the mentoring relationship.

Some participants became involved in volunteering organically as they started by helping the coach or mentor with manageable tasks whilst still being participants in the sports session gradually developing into with a more formal 'volunteering' role.

All the case study projects provided volunteering opportunities. Examples of these included:

- Supporting the sports coach to run activities informally and then progressing to more formal volunteering

- Completing a Youth Sports Leaders Award course to provide them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to volunteer at the sports activities.

- Running a FA referee course and then providing young volunteers with the opportunity to officiate and help to run a football competition.

- Gaining the FA Coaching Level One qualification and then volunteering as a coach at local primary schools.

- Supporting the hosting of boxing competitions including taking responsibility for publicity and social media.

- Taking on management duties at the project including taking bookings and session fees from young people and adults.

Some projects provided non-sport volunteering opportunities. Examples included:

- Helping outdoors on the youth allotment

- Helping to set up a food bank for their local community

- Distributing food and essentials to older people in their local community who were unable to leave home due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Cooking food for young people attending half-term activities

- Practical tasks such as repairing fences, building tables and shelves

Interviewees believed that volunteering was valuable because it helped mentors get to know participants and build the relationship with them often on a one-to-one basis. Mentors described opportunities for 'hidden mentoring' where they were able to have informal conversations with young people especially if it was a volunteering experience that involved just the young person and the mentor. In some cases, young people disclosed abuse or traumatic experiences to the mentor whilst volunteering, possibly the first time that they had talked to anyone about it.

> 'We knew there was something underlying and we could never, ever get to the bottom of it, but to be fair to Social Services, they'd never, ever get to the bottom of it … his social worker hadn't. And it took about four sessions of getting him in doing things for him to start wanting to tell his story, so obviously we weren't, you know, we

weren't asking him the question, we allowed him to start peeling his own onion and telling us….

It was definitely giving him [the mentee] more time and spending significant periods with him and doing the sport and doing the volunteering that really got to the point where he thought, I trust [name of mentor] to say what I've got to say to him.'

ARUN

Arun was referred to the project at 13 years old when he was in a temporary foster placement. Because he had been involved in knife crime and was close to going to a young offender's institute.

Arun's journey at the project started by playing sport with his mentor and later he started volunteering by helping out on a DIY project with his mentor, building a table. They spent a lot of time together, getting to know each other and building trust.

The mentor listened to Arun, wanting to understand his story and to know more. When Arun disclosed that he had been carrying drugs for his father, his mentor listened and let him tell his story. Arun also explained that he had been avoiding involvement in some sports activities such as swimming, PE at school and going on a residential at the project as he did not want to reveal the scars.

His mentor supported him to access other support services and Arun continued to spend time with his mentor reflecting on his experiences and thinking about his future. He returned to education within a PRU, supported by his mentor and had not offended since.

In addition to the value of volunteering for supporting the mentoring relationship, the practical aspect of the volunteering experience was also important for participants as this provided a sense of accomplishment.

'We raised money for new fence because someone broke it. I liked helping the lad fix it and move our old wood.' (Young person, survey)

For some young people this was especially important where they had struggled at school. Building a table, putting up shelves or mending fences was a visible achievement for young people to be proud of.

Thomas

The project staff had known Thomas and his family for several years and understood his situation. Thomas had been 'passed around' in education and had left school unable to read and without basic maths skills and as a result 'Life was tough for him'.

Thomas began his volunteer journey by helping out at the project taking money, using the till, making bookings and answering the telephone. He attended some StreetGames training courses which boosted his confidence. Informal support was also provided by project staff who supported him discretely with maths and literacy skills. Project staff were mindful to create opportunities for success and protect him from failure for example by avoiding paperwork

Thomas involved himself in different aspects of running the venue where the project was based using his strong practical skills including building a counter for the reception. Thomas had developed a strong connection to the project and staff there acted as a second family. As a result of his success at the project, he had become a paid member of the team.

The case studies showed that for some participants volunteering enabled them to make a positive contribution to their own communities. Some participants suggested setting up a food bank to distribute food to local families that were struggling as they knew that this was an urgent need in their own estates. At one LTO, the young people wanted to change their image in the local community by repairing the fence around the community centre which young people had vandalised. Project staff encouraged and supported young people to plan of their initiatives and this planning helping to bring young people together and feel part of their community.

4.3.5 Personalisation of Support

The case studies showed that the majority of projects offered young people a personalised package of activities, volunteering and mentoring. LTOs developed this package on the basis of what the young person was interested in and what they wanted to do in the future. Examples of packages included:

- One to one sports participation with mentoring once a week plus taking part in a sports session with other young people at the project initially and then encouraging

the young person to help out at the group sports session and build their volunteering role. Informal mentoring being embedded within the sport and volunteering activities.

- Providing sport and volunteering activities combined with mentoring for half the programme on a one to one basis and then bringing mentees together as a group with their mentors to volunteer together for the second half of the programme.

- Providing two-hour sessions with 90 minutes of sport with informal opportunities for one to one mentoring and followed by 30 minutes issue-based sessions with food and the opportunity to discuss issues identified by the young people themselves e.g. drugs, gangs and supported by the mentors. The mentors were also available at other times of the day and week so that young people could talk to them as issues arose rather than having to wait for a specific day and time.

Interviewees believed that providing a combination of activities and volunteering opportunities contributed to the development of stronger mentoring relationships as this more frequent and varied level of engagement helped the mentor and mentee to get to know each other more quickly which resulted in high levels of trust. The nature of both the sport and volunteering activities complemented the informal mentoring style and enabled the mentor to use 'teachable moments' and reflection for both sets of activities.

The effectiveness of this approach was demonstrated by the progress that some young people made in a relatively short time as it offered them the potential for a wider range of benefits and achievements in both the sport and volunteering context. As an example, one young person who started going to the gym regularly with this mentor, recognised that his fitness levels had improved and built up his confidence to continue going to the gym with a friend outside the project. The same young person also gained a sports leadership award and became a regular volunteer at the project which provided him with the opportunity to continue his engagement with the project after the programme had finished.

The following sections focuses on providing insight specifically on outlining the findings relating to the mentoring elements of the programme.

4.4 Mentors. Mentoring and Mentees
4.4.1 Types of Mentoring

Effective mentoring requires the mentor to become a significant adult in the life of the young person (Dubois et al., 2002). Mentoring can be defined as:

 "a relationship between a more experienced, formal adult (the mentor) and an unrelated younger protégé (the mentee) where the mentor provides 'ongoing guidance, instruction and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character' of the mentee" (Rhodes, 2002, p3).

The case studies showed that LTOs did not share a common approach to mentoring as each had developed their mentoring programmes in different ways. It was apparent that some staff did not have clear understanding of mentoring as they described activities that they believed were examples of mentoring but which did not align with definitions of mentoring or peer mentoring. Examples of activities that were defined as mentoring by LTO staff included:

- Mentoring of a young person by an experienced adult
- Coaching of a mentor to work with young people as mentees
- Support for a group of young people who were volunteering
- Supporting individual young people as volunteers
- Peer mentors (young people called mentors being supported to be volunteers and role models to other young people)

The case studies showed that programme included the use of both paid and volunteer mentors which was often determined by whether the LTOs used paid or volunteer staff. The academic literature review suggests that there are differences between the use of paid and volunteer mentors. The benefits of using paid mentors are shown below (Nichols, 2007):

- Can be easier to recruit, train and supervise paid mentors.
- Likely to complete the time period specified for the mentoring relationship if selected effectively.
- Can be effective mentors if the programme is well-designed.

The benefits of using volunteer mentors are identified below (Higley et al., 2016):

- Seen as more authentic and genuine by young people.

- Might be the only other significant adult in their lives who is not paid to work with them.

- Likely to complete the time period specified for the mentoring relationship if selected effectively

Few differences emerged from the case studies in terms of the effectiveness of paid or volunteer mentors. The LTOs who used volunteer mentors already had established volunteer mentoring programmes in place with bespoke training and support and, as they were already using existing volunteer mentors for this programme, they did not face the challenge of recruiting local volunteers. It is important to note that the volunteer mentors still required the same levels of access to resources and support as the paid mentors and were not seen as a way to deliver a mentoring programme with minimal funding.

The case studies showed that the mentoring projects were based on different types of mentoring relationships which included:

- A combination of formal and informal mentoring with young people on a one to one basis

- Informal mentoring with young people on a one to one basis

- A combination of one to one and group mentoring

- Group mentoring

Some interviewees stated that the most effective mentoring was on a one-to one basis as this helped the mentor and the young person to get to know each other and to build trust.

> I would say the one to one basis definitely worked well because I feel that over the time I've spent in that area, I've built up quite good relationships, like what I said earlier, not just with the young people, with the families as well.

Some LTO interviewees explained that they started the mentoring relationship with a more formal one- to-one chat with the young person which helped to provide a focus on programme goals which has previously been shown to be important (Rhodes, 2008). Some

LTOs blended a more formal and informal style by talking about the mentoring, the young people's goals and choice of activities more formally at the beginning and at different points after this but adopting a more informal style overall. These conversations were used as the basis for the development of the personalised package of activities:

> 'They'll [the mentor and the mentee] do some one to one work initially to build on and you know if they do know each other, just kind of explaining the expectations we have of them being part of the mentoring programme and, you know, kind of agreeing on setting goals and expectations. And then also kind of working out a bit you know of … sessions. '
>
> 'We don't want the mentoring to be completely formal, you know it could be informal and it could be taking place during the session.'

Case study interviewees suggested a combination of formal and informal mentoring ensured that the mentoring was purposeful and working towards the agreed goals.

> 'There are sessions where we do need the mentoring to be formal and kind of go through certain sessions, whether it's maybe anger management, whether it be a session on, you know, recognising things around staying motivated or having you know aspirations or raising the aspirations, and that would be done in that one to one setting. And then it allows us to then almost you know support the young person to reflect on some of those sessions. So you know if … if they are doing something, then you know the mentors at times would kind of say, oh if you remember we talked a bit about that during our session, and then the young person can relate to them and kind of appreciate having that one to one space as a benefit.'

The informal mentoring usually took place within either the sport or volunteering context where the mentor played sport and supported volunteering alongside the young person. This context provided opportunities for meaningful interactions and structured activities and has been shown to prolong the mentoring relationship (DeWit et al., 2016). The mentor confirmed that they would usually spend the first few weeks getting to know the young person informally, asking and listening and then starting to develop more meaningful conversations before, during or after taking part in activities mirroring a youth work

approach. The recognition of the significance of listening to the young person was important as this is an intervention in its own right and important for allowing space for the mentee to make their own sense of things, to unburden problems (Buck, 2018).

One LTO confirmed that they had moved towards one-to-one work and away from group work at the beginning of their work with mentees to avoid reinforcing anti-social values amongst the group as a form of 'deviancy training' (Hennigan et al, 2010).

> 'I've found coming away from the group [work] and doing the work as individuals was far, far, far more beneficial. It was better doing the group stuff at the end because they were able to help each other, I definitely wouldn't go back and do the group stuff early because it turned into a bragging right.'

The majority of LTOs complemented the one-to-one mentoring approach by additional group work which involved the mentor also working with their mentee alongside other young people as participants, either taking part in sport and/ or volunteering. Examples of this included taking part in group sports sessions or attending a sport leadership course and using their new skills to volunteer at the sports project. The case studies showed that some LTOs encouraged their mentees to take part in regular group activities alongside their peers so that they could benefit in different ways including teamwork, organisational skills, social skills and communication skills.

> 'I think we should be introducing these young people to working with their peers, rather than like keep it long-term, one to one and they're working in isolation all the time, but I don't … I don't try and rush it.'

Some projects included an element of issue-based work, often based on youth work principles, which included alcohol and substance misuse, knife crime, gangs, violence. The issue-based work was usually based on informal group discussions responding to problems that young people had identified and was only one element of the mentoring package.

> 'The first hour is in the sports hall doing the sports, and the second hour we take them throughout where we do our youth sessions after, where they get like … they can order food and that, they can have food. But it's kind of like that was their incentive

to get to that first hour, so to do the sports at first we were like, well if you come and do the sports hour, we'll put on a normal youth session what they like, like that's what they rant and rave over. That's kind of like an incentive for them.'

The delivery style of these sessions was important in this context as they provided young people with the opportunity to talk about their experiences and to think about these issues more broadly. However, issue-based work needs is complex and should avoid making participants feel stigmatized or labelled negatively. ChildFirst principles suggest that young people benefit most from 'normalising' experiences with a focus on fun, positive experiences, building strengths and achievements to support the development of a pro-social identity (Haines & Case, 2015 ; Hazel & Bateman, 2020).

Mentors tended to respond to conversations initiated by the young people themselves as well as integrating personal development into their work with the young people. Examples of this included developing sports skills, improving fitness, working towards a healthier lifestyle, building confidence, improving public speaking skills, developing life skills and dealing with immediate issues that had arisen during the projects.

'Something might have happened at school on the same day and obviously they've not had a chance to speak to their mentor but they've come to the session and they'll have a conversation with their mentor, say, oh you know this has happened today.'

Mentors adopted a positive approach to their work with their mentees, building on the young people's interest in sport and building on their strengths. The mentors agreed that this informal mentoring style complemented the use of sport and some of the mentors confirmed that they would not have felt comfortable with the more formal, 'sit down and talk about specific personal issues' style.

The importance of mentoring programmes based on a set of standards with formal processes and procedures to support the mentoring relationship is highlighted as important in the academic literature (Higley at al., 2016). Interviewees suggested that mentors with less experience in delivering sport-based mentoring programmes might have benefited from a more formal, structured approach to the planning of their mentoring work so that they had a

clearer vision of the aims of the programme, their role and the support and resources that were required. This would have helped to ensure that the less experienced mentors had a stronger focus on their role in supporting the young person's goals and their journey which was not always clear from the case studies. At one LTO, there had been limited contact between the mentor and their mentees and little evidence of planning for their future work with them. However, a more structured approach would still need to be balanced against being able to respond flexibly to the young person's needs and being able to deliver the mentoring work in an informal style.

4.4.2 Mentor Qualities

The case study interviews highlighted that mentors needed to develop a rapport with young people and this was often achieved through adopting a traditional youth work style approach.

> 'It's understanding the challenges young people are facing, you know, as much as you want to help, I think it's understanding where they're at and more importantly, I think one of the things that really does help us is you know we always try and … because a lot of our sort of background is youth work and quite a lot of the work that we do is embedded with good youth work principles, it's recognising you need to begin at where that young person's at. And if you don't have those sort of built-in sort of principles, I think it just makes the journey a bit more difficult.'

Local knowledge of the community, an understanding of the local dynamics, a shared 'lived experience' and ideally an existing knowledge of the young person emerged as important qualities of the mentor which contributed to a caring mentoring relationship.

> 'I was brought up in another bad area, so I always say to them, I know exactly what you're going through, I lived in a bad area.' (Project mentor)

LTOs highlighted that mentors needed to be non-judgemental, authentic and good listeners for this programme to work effectively. The importance of the quality of 'caring', being unconditionally supportive and persistent is highlighted as essential for mentoring in academic literature (Higley at al., 2016). Caring for their mentees was demonstrated by

mentors who had managed to develop effective one-to-one mentoring relationships with young people through being empathetic or by 'going the extra mile' when the young person was in a crisis situation.

'Another word I would say for my mentoring would be … I always try to be compassionate and understanding…If one young person has an issue about something… to that certain specific young person it could be a massive issue that needs to be addressed.'

The ability of the mentor to act as a positive role model was also considered to be important by interviewees.

'A lot of these young lads, many of our mentoring learners, who are the majority male although we do have girls, they've not got male role models at home.'

The majority of the mentors were male which reflected the profile of the participants. None of the case studies provided any examples of a female mentor working with a male mentee on a one-to-one basis although there were a small number of examples of male mentors working with female mentees. The gender of the mentor and the mentee is an important consideration in planning projects particularly where the mentee is a victim of abuse or violence:

'I basically asked her why we didn't retain girls, and she said, not being funny, but if you've had a really bad experience with boys or men, you don't want to be training next to some sixteen year old lad that's got his top stripped off while you're skipping, who's giving you sideways looks. I thought, yeah, I get that totally.'

4.4.3 Role of the Mentor

The case studies showed that the role of the mentor was multi-faceted and needed to adapt throughout the young person's mentoring journey. For the majority of LTOs mentoring began with a conversation with the young person about their expectations for the mentoring programme and to agree shared rules, goals and plan activities. The role of the mentor was founded on this basis but evolved over the duration of the project. As many of the mentees

were not physically active the mentor supported them initially by refreshing or teaching new sports skills, helping them to feel comfortable, building up their fitness levels.

> 'It's quite normal for them to be lacking confidence when they come to us and be a bit disengaged and ….. it can be several weeks, and until that point, you know until that point I'm always quite cautious … because you know it's that sort of comfort zone you need to build them up to a little bit really.'

> 'They do tend to be quite physically unfit when they come to us and they are … they are very often they're spending quite a lot of time on their Xboxes, you know quite a lot of them smoke unfortunately(!) which we're always trying to work on and obviously discourage. But yeah, without making it … too difficult…I try and encourage them and inspire them.'

After the mentoring relationship became established, the role of the mentor evolved according to the needs of the young person and the type of mentoring programme. Building confidence and improving communication and organisational skills were typical aims for mentors whilst making sure that the young person enjoyed taking part and learning new skills which was seen as important for retention (Reagan-Porras, 2013). Mentors often went at the pace of the young person as setting manageable goals and taking small steps to sustain motivation is a key role of the mentor (Buck, 2018).

> 'When they're building them relationships, which takes a period of time, trusted relationships with them young people, they can at any time … step up to do small pieces of work with them young people and be positive and be well-respected and heard.'

In the latter stages of the project, the role of the mentor was to signpost the mentee to further opportunities.

> 'Towards the end, we would look at sort of services as well, so ways where we can signpost that young person, just so that they're aware of what are the services that are out there as well.'

<div style="border: 2px solid #000; background-color: #c5d9f1; padding: 10px;">

ETHAN

Ethan was referred to the project by the local Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) when he was 16 years old. He started by going to the gym with his mentor and taking part in other sports activities including multi-sport sessions, mountain biking, hill walking and kayaking.

Ethan's mentor encouraged him to start volunteering by doing some sports leadership training courses. He used his new skills to help out at the project's multi-sports sessions and at a bootcamp at a local primary school. Ethan then started volunteering at the project's youth allotment and Forest schools project.

His mentor provided constant support on a one-to-one basis as Ethan lacked confidence and was withdrawn at the beginning, often pulling his hoodie right over his face when he was asked to do something he found difficult. Although Ethan's behaviour could be challenging in certain circumstances – usually with his peer group where he tended to act up - his mentor continued to support his involvement in a wide range of opportunities. Over time, Ethan became more positive, his confidence and self-esteem increased and he stopped acting up with his peers.

As Ethan was interested in a career in construction, his mentor went with him to an open evening at his local college to find out about courses. Ethan attended the collage interview and was accepted onto a college course in construction which he was due to start in Autumn 2020.

</div>

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, not all the LTOs reached this stage, however, there was some evidence that mentors were able to signpost and support some mentees back into education and many mentees were likely to remain engaged with the LTOs as either sports participants and/ or volunteers.

> 'The young people they want to carry on, you know, they want to carry on as they're volunteering, some of them want to become coaches in the future.'

Some projects involved young people as peer mentors in volunteering, supporting social action and acting as role models to other young people. The academic literature on youth mentoring suggests that caution needs to be taken before considering young people in the role of a mentor (Leenstra et al., 2019). Young people lack the necessary maturity and experience and will, therefore, have a limited role as a mentor in projects that aim to support young people at risk of being involved in serious youth violence.

4.4.4 Developing the mentoring relationship

Interviewees concurred that developing effective mentoring relationships takes time.

'There's got to be a level of recognition and trust, … trust can't be developed in two weeks. Trust can't be developed in six months.'

However, the case studies showed that the mentoring relationship developed more quickly if the mentees were already familiar with the project and had either previously attended sessions at the project, self-referred or if they lived locally and had been referred by families or local projects.

The matching of the mentor and the mentee has been identified as an important factor for the quality of the mentoring relationship as it can result in considerable variations in their effectiveness (Rhodes, 2008). The case studies indicated that the majority of LTOs matched the young people with mentors informally. Only the LTOs that already had established mentoring programmes used a formal matching process for this programme.

'Once we've had the referrals, or once we've identified young people in need of mentoring, it's been crucial to identify the right mentor for them, and you know that selection process is often looking at you know what it is that that mentor can potentially support with that young person… if there's one of the youth workers or if there's one of the volunteers that they've … yeah, they would … preferably want to work with, to get more support then we would offer that.'

Academic insight suggests that a structured approach to a mentoring programme which includes a formal matching process supports the mentoring relationship more effectively and acts as a safeguard to the young person as mentoring matches that last less than six months can be harmful to the young person as it can lead to feelings of rejection, abandonment and unfulfilled expectations (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).

Parents are important gatekeepers for a young person's involvement in mentoring (Taylor & Porcellini, 2013) and this was reflected at some projects. Shared expectations and values between the mentor and the mentee's family were important so the mentor can avoid feeling that they are crossing boundaries with the mentee without parental support (Bernhard et al., 1988). This was particularly important for projects working with young people at risk of being involved in gangs and serious youth violence as exemplified by one LTO that recognised that parents needed to have high levels of trust in work with their children. One interviewee described how they worked with groups of parents to reinforce their work with young people:

'They [the parents] were talking about anti-social behaviour, youth violence, gang affiliation, the drugs. Once you've got parents galvanising and coming together and having them discussions and debates and asking questions and not feeling almost stupid in asking, that means that then they're the ones who are going back home to almost deliver the outcomes you're looking for with their children, because they're with them a good percent of the time.'

However, the same interviewee also emphasised the importance of retaining boundaries between the mentor, the mentee and parents in relation to safeguarding and confidentiality.

'If that relationship with the child and parent is damaged and you're trying to do a specific piece of work with a child who becomes a priority, so that flags up a question in itself. The second thing is around that level of confidentiality, we all know the safeguarding framework…. If a child's expecting you to have a conversation with you about how they want to develop in the future but then one of the parents become their biggest challenge, then they wouldn't want them involved.'

4.4.5 Mentor Training and Support

Training and support for mentors is important in light of the complexities and vulnerabilities of the mentees (Wilson et al., 2018). The potential risk of harm for young people working with a mentor are significant if the mentor role and the mentoring relationship are not understood and the appropriate skills and knowledge are not in place.

In recognition of the importance of training, the StreetGames team, in partnership with a freelance mentoring trainer, developed and delivered a two-day training programme for mentors. The training programme was based on the use of Choice Theory (Glasser, 1998) as its framework as to empowering and support young people to problem-solve and gain control over their lives. The training programme involved:

- Building the mentoring relationship, the importance of rapport and engagement and tools to strengthen the relationship
- The role of the mentor
- Young people's needs and behaviours
- A four-step framework for how, where and when to hold conversations with mentees

- Follow-up sessions with mentors on putting it into practice, sharing practice, trying it out in different scenarios, reflecting and applying learning

Between October 2019 and May 2020, StreetGames delivered six training courses. Of these one was a face-to-face two-day training course in Leeds (before lockdown) and the remainder were online mentoring training courses. A total of 63 mentors were trained during this period. Feedback from the mentors showed that they had found it useful, engaging and they liked the interactive format. They confirmed that it had helped to improve their knowledge, provide new tools and techniques, learn from each other and change their practice.

I'm the lead youth worker on the project, so when I went on the actual mentor training down in Leeds in October last year, which was a good training session, it was really helpful……I learnt new techniques, but the main reason it was probably most beneficial to myself is I got to see how different people from different backgrounds obviously dealt with different things.'

'I would say all of the training that we did through the induction process was beneficial, there was lots of new tools and techniques, but I think putting them together with the techniques we already had as youth workers, it comes together and makes it a lot easier. Lots of things that I learnt when we went to Leeds I would never have thought of before, and they're really simple techniques.'

'New knowledge I have learnt about youths at risk and what type of people they need around them.'

'How to properly understand and communicate with youths at risk.'

'How to support and help young, disadvantaged people. And how to set up an intervention with every aspect included to support.'

In addition to the mentoring training, LTOs were able to access StreetGames training which included the Activator training, Managing Challenging Behaviour and Mental Health First Aid courses. A small number of LTOs were also able to access training from local partners:

'We access a lot of training from the community voluntary service, so we go on-line, safeguarding training and young person's mental health awareness training and them kind of short courses.' (Project manager)

However, the case studies showed that few LTOs had a formal support system in place for their mentors despite support for mentors being shown to be important for sustaining effective mentoring relationships and to equip mentors with specific skills and to avoid potential burnout (Liang et al., 2013). Some interviewees stated that informal support for their mentors was provided. Examples of support included:

- Listening to mentors.

- Advising mentors about best practice based on previous experiences.

- Opportunities to shadow more experienced mentors.

A small number of LTOs with established mentoring programmes were able to provide more formal support which included regular support sessions for mentors as the role can be challenging and overwhelming. These sessions provided reassurance for the mentors to reflect on their practice and to access additional support.

> 'We have weekly or fortnightly reflective sessions for the mentors, and then if there's anything that they come across in terms of that needs more … that's more urgent and then maybe a safeguarding issue, then obviously we would flag that up as soon as … But it's really important and I think there's … there's quite a lot of … … it can be overwhelming, particularly when some of the young people are going … they're vulnerable and they're going through a number of issues, I think it's been really useful for the mentors to have that base, sort of reassurance that they're actually doing the right thing but also a space for them to reflect on their practice and if they … if what they're doing needs additional support.'

Clinical supervision was also being provided by a partner referral agency for a mentor who was working with a young person who had experienced significant trauma.

Academic insight acknowledges that there are risks from the emotional labour associated with mentoring and that this needs to be considered as part of the training for mentors as well as part of a structured mentoring programme with regular support and supervision for the mentor. The case studies demonstrated that the majority of mentors worked with young people affected by serious youth violence and other ACES which indicates that formal support and supervision for mentors should be a priority. An example of a disclosure was:

'And getting to the bottom … underneath of what was going on. And if I'm honest with you, he's been trafficking drugs on behalf of his father around different parts of the country …we're talking this child is only thirteen years old, and the method of doing that was his dad would gaffer tape it to his body. And the scars and marks he had as a result of that were terrible.'

Some of the LTOs had long-established relationships with participants prior to the mentoring projects being established. Interviewees believed that these long-term relationships were instrumental in the success of the projects because young people trusted the mentors from the LTOs in ways that would not have been possible with unfamiliar mentors.

'Yeah, they're [referral partners] just not getting at the root cause, that's what I would say. They don't have the ability as strangers to go into a young person's life, to get to the root cause.'

Mentors' access to professional support beyond the LTO was however very limited and therefore mentors would have benefited from additional clarity around their role around defining the boundaries of the mentor role and the mentoring relationship and providing techniques to respond to young people's disclosures.

4.5 Impact on young people
4.5.1 Effectiveness of projects in tackling the drivers of serious youth violence
The primary aim of the programme was to use sports-based volunteering and effective coach mentoring to tackle the drivers of serious youth violence. The evaluation was conducted in April 2020 in the middle of the lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which meant that LTOs had not been able to complete the programme and projects were at different stages. The research team was unable to collect data directly from young people however the case studies and survey data indicated that the use of sport, youth volunteering and mentoring had made a positive contribution.

4.5.2 Impact of Covid-19 Lockdown

Some LTOs continued to keep in touch with their mentees during the lockdown period imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and at the time of the interviews staff planned to continue their work with their young people after the lock down had been lifted. Some LTOs had planned new initiatives including sports qualification courses and a residential and some were hoping to develop new mentoring projects to continue this work. The majority of LTOs confirmed that even though the programme funding had finished, they would continue to work with the young people when they were able to do face to face work again and had already started to put opportunities in place for young people to stay involved with their organisations including as participants, volunteers and apprentices and to support young people to go back to education.

4.5.3 Long term versus short term impact

Interviewees emphasised that it would take longer than twelve weeks to make a significant impact on young people's lives and that ideally they would have months and even years to be able to develop and build on the mentoring relationship to support young people. This aligns with academic insight that suggests that the most effective mentoring relationships tend to last between one and two years (Higley at al., 2016). Where projects accepted new participants through referral agencies, staff typically spent the first few weeks getting to know the young person before developing mentoring relationships.

4.5.4 Evidence of personal growth

The interviewees provided examples of where the projects had resulted in 'personal development' growth for the volunteers engaged *(e.g. resilience, confidence, self-efficacy and social skills)* that could support the development of key 'protective factors'. The survey results from participants supported these views.

Positive changes that were seen in the short-term for participants included increased levels of happiness, improved physical fitness through taking part in sport, improved awareness about a healthy lifestyle e.g. the benefits of reducing or stopping smoking and sustained participation in sport and physical activity e.g. going to the gym, joining a boxing club.

- The follow-up young person survey results showed that 86% of young people were happier and more satisfied with their lives. *(See Appendix B)*
- *'Getting more healthier and fit.' (Young person, survey data)*

- *'Enjoyed exercising and knowing I'm improving.' (Young person, survey data)*
- *'Getting fitter and stronger' (Young person, survey data)*
- *'Keep progressing and keep motivated to exercise and stay active, Improve my strength'(Young person, survey data)*

Participating in sport enabled participants to learn to play new sports and improving playing skills:

- *'Learning new skills boost my confidence, learn new sports.' (Young person, survey data)*

A primary aim of the projects was to keep participants meaningfully engaged on positive activities and the benefit of this was recognised by some participants:

'The best thing about taking part is it gets you off the streets and it can stop you from getting in gangs.' (Young person, survey data)

Accreditation such as Sport Leadership awards and Activator training courses was important for young people not in mainstream education to engage in learning opportunities.

- *'Getting qualifications and doing something positive to stay out of trouble' (Young person, survey data)*

Participants who volunteered gained increased confidence and resilience from their experiences volunteering through activities such as talking to adults, undertaking administrative tasks including cash handling, facility bookings and answering the telephone. Using practical skills to build or repair tangible objects such as tables, shelves, reception counter provided a sense of accomplishment and resulted in tangible, visual reminders of their efforts. Volunteering also provided young people with a means to connection to the local community and to demonstrate their altruism

- 93% of young people indicated they could achieve most of the goals they set, 91% that they keep trying when things are difficult and 97% felt confident achieving new things (See Appendix B)
- *'I want to help others and carry on volunteering and maybe want to be a coach' (Young person, survey data)*

These experiences also provided opportunities for young people to be seen more positively by the local community through making a positive contribution which also resulted in positive

identity changes amongst the young people. In some cases, this impacted favourably on participants future aspirations:

- *'I think I would like to learn more about coaching and help people with disabilities' (Young person, survey data)*
- *'To volunteer more in projects and help out with younger kids (Young person, survey data)*
- *'I would like to do my FA Level 1 badge' (Young person, survey data)*
- *'Pass maths & English to complete my education and get a good job' (Young person, survey data)*
- *'To keep attending youthy and helping out to try and be a youth worker get good grades in school.' (Young person, survey data)*

Some young people were also able to access targeted specialist support as a result of engaging in the mentoring projects because they were able to articulate aspects of their lives that they had not previously shared. These findings align with the academic literature which has documented positive effects from youth mentoring programmes, mainly small in scale, in the areas of improved behaviour and attitudes, improved school attendance, academic performance and achievement, increased levels of confidence, positive outlook and self-image, improved personal skills and relationships with families and peers (DuBois et al., 2011). Projects were able to offer participants bespoke experiences which combined sports participation, volunteering and mentoring. This approach offered a number of positive outcomes:

- Increased contact to several hours a week enabling the young person to feel comfortable in the project environment, to become familiar with staff and other young people and to develop a relationship with their mentor quickly and to build trust.
- Provision of a variety of activities that were fun and meaningful which had the potential to support the retention of the young person as a mentee which was key for achieving positive changes and avoided the early ending of the mentoring relationship which has been identified as harmful to the young person.

- Provision of a setting for the young person to be mentored informally but purposefully by using their involvement in activities and volunteering for 'hidden teaching' or reflection moments to support positive changes.

- More opportunities to engaged in positive experiences which maximise the opportunity to develop towards a pro-social identity.

It is important to note that some interviewees stated that they had observed very limited or even no differences in mentees and that this was not surprising for the young people with particularly complex and challenging lives. Based on their previous experiences some interviewees who had been involved in mentoring young people for several years described how challenging this work could be and how long it had taken before they could see the impact of their work with some of the most challenging young people. As one interviewee stated, 'we are not miracle workers'. Another interviewee proposed that the distance travelled by young people is important to recognise. This approach aligns with the concept of desistance which recognises that the process of stopping offending behaviour is a journey where young people start to stop offending (McMahon &Jump, 2018).

4.5.5 Contribution Towards Enhancing Protective Factors

The findings indicate that sport-based mentoring programme can make a positive contribution towards enhancing protective factors such as resilience which are perceived to be important in mitigating the impact of ACEs, reducing mental illness (Hughes et al., 2018) and preventing young people offending (Craig et al. 2017). Although the impact of protective factors on offending behaviour is complex and not well understood and is being superseded by the use of ChildFirst principles in the youth justice sector, protective factors are still used by partners and agencies, including funders working with children and young people in this context. Higley et al (2016) suggests that mentoring has a role in supporting the following four protective factors for an 'at-risk' young person which could potentially be considered as an additional tool to capture evidence about the programme.

1. Relationship for a secure attachment
2. Resilience
3. Readiness for success

4. Respect

It is, however, acknowledged that this evidence is limited as it relies solely on interviews with LTOs and the mentors and does not include interview data from the young people themselves which would have provided a much fuller and more accurate picture of the impact.

4.5.6 Child First Principles

As noted earlier in this report a focus on risk factors is increasingly recognised as being problematic and the value of Child First principles are becoming embedded into the youth justice and criminal justice sectors. The sport-based volunteering and mentoring projects within this programme were aligned with these principles.

4.6 Future Plans

The case studies showed that LTO staff wanted to continue their involvement in sport-based mentoring to build on the work they had begun with their mentees. A twelve-week programme was considered too short and this was mirrored by the young people also wanted their involvement in the programme to be longer as some young people expressed that they would have liked more provision:

- *'I would like activities to go on longer, for the sessions to continue'*
- *'Could have went on more weeks otherwise it was good'*
- *'Wish it could continue I enjoyed everything else'*

One interviewee noted that it could take up to three months to recruit a young person through their local referral systems. This claim was reflected in the findings from the 'Safer Together Through Sport' programme which showed that the timespan between informing referral agencies about the opportunities that they could offer to young people and then starting to work referred young people was much longer than expected. LTOs stated that working with young people who were new to them also needed several weeks to develop a trusting relationship with the young person before they could start the mentoring element of the programme. Interviewees also agreed that supporting a young person to meet their long-term goals could take up to two years depending on the needs of the young person. One LTO reported that they had been working with a young person who had been in serious trouble for over two years and that it had been a significant workload. They suggested that ceasing

to work with the young person posed a risk that the young person 'would go back to their old ways'.

5. Summary of Key Learning

The findings from the evaluation indicate that there was considerable variation between the projects that were involved in this programme and therefore drawing conclusions about effective practice is challenging. The impact of Covid-19 on the programme and on the evaluation has further compounded the ability to draw definitive conclusions. However, there is important learning to be gained from this programme.

The findings indicate that combining sports participation, volunteering and mentoring provides valuable opportunities for young people to develop personally and thereby enhance protective factors. Sport was important both as a magnet to attract young people to projects and as an engagement tool. Sport was used to support the mentoring relationship by helping the mentee and the mentor to get to know each other informally, providing opportunities to ask, listen and talk and develop trust. Sports activities created 'teachable' moments for mentors to capitalise on. Sport provided a gateway to volunteering including the opportunity to engage informally and safely by helping out at sports activities where they were also participants. A wide range of volunteering activities were provided for young people with personal development opportunities as well as the potential for achievements including qualifications. A personalised package based on a young person-centred approach proved to be attractive to many young people and supported their engagement in the programme. This package was valuable for mentors to develop relationships with a new young person as it offered a range of different experiences and settings as well as the potential for increased intensity of contact.

Interviewees also explained however that it could take several years of working with the young person to make a significant impact. The findings reveal that some projects worked with young people at both the secondary and tertiary levels and the position of young people could change quickly. The vulnerability of some young people suggests that caution is required for setting specific outcomes for projects and for individual young people. The intended outcomes should reflect the individual young person's goals, circumstances and timescales. Possible considerations for areas of measuring success include:

- The sustained engagement of the young person as a mentee

- The type and range of activities that the mentee is involved with

- A focus on positive benefits as a form of short-term impact which includes sport, volunteering, personal development and achievements

- The tracking and analysis of the journey of the young person at the project

- The tracking of the pathways taken by the young person to other opportunities within the project and to opportunities outside the project including education, training, employment and other support services and agencies

Interviewees from LTOs agreed that it was often problematic to capture evidence about the positive benefits and impact of their work with their mentees. Experienced and larger LTOs tended to find this easier as they already had systems in place as described by one LTO where they kept case notes of work with mentees, carried out regular surveys and used Vlogs made by the mentees. Small LTOs often lacked the resources to undertake this work but recognised its importance for building credibility with partners and for future funding bids. Some LTOs were keen to support young people to capture their own journeys and impact and were keen to explore using social media and digital methods to collect evidence.

Interviewees' understanding of the role of mentors varied between projects. This confusion about mentoring programmes highlights the lack of guidance available for community sport practitioners about the definition of mentoring and the role of mentors and has been identified as a problem for all sectors (Armitage et al., 2020). It is likely that for some community sport practitioners, current understanding about mentoring is based on their own experience of sports coaches as informal mentors with roles including youth work, providing protection from bullying/ gangs, escorting young people home, breaking up fights and offering advice on difficult school work as well as relationships problems (Rogers, 2011).

Academic insight suggests that the quality of the mentoring relationship is at the heart of mentoring programmes as mentees with longer and higher quality relationships with their mentors received the most significant benefits (Heerera et al., 2007). The findings support this as the key qualities of the mentors were central to the quality of the mentoring relationship. However, building effective mentoring relationships is time-consuming. Some

LTOs utilised this programme to support their work with young people already known to them. This was an effective approach for short-term mentoring programmes as the young people were already familiar with the project and had developed trust in the project staff so that the mentoring work could start much more quickly.

The use of informal referral pathways and self-referrals was an important form of recruitment as it enabled young people to become involved in the programme who were at risk of offending, unwilling to engage with other agencies or who had remained unnoticed. The involvement of a wide range of agencies using referral pathways ensured that LTOs received sufficient numbers of referred young people to run their programmes as well as the type of young people who matched the LTOs' level of expertise and resources.

Some young people made serious disclosures which highlights issues around confidentiality and safeguarding and also the need to ensure that mentoring does not result in increased harm to the mentee. A high level of expertise is required by mentors and projects to support mentees who may have experienced ACEs. The higher the intervention level, the higher the level of expertise and resources that were needed to support the young person. Training and support for mentors is therefore vital.

Recommendations

It was clear that there was variation between projects understanding of sport-based volunteering and mentoring programmes. It is recommended that projects are supported to understand that different types of mentoring offer different opportunities for the young people involved.

Some case study projects were able to offer young people personalised packages of support which included sport, volunteering and mentoring. It is recommended that projects are supported to understand what each of these activities offers for young people's development journeys and the potential synergy offered by a personalised package.

The programme initially aimed to prioritise the use of formal referral processes but it was apparent that using a combination of formal, informal and self-referral pathways was beneficial for projects. The findings indicate that formal referrals are challenging because mentors need to build relationships with young people before they can be effective mentors. Responding to the starting point of young people who are referred formally also presents

challenges for projects. It is therefore recommended that projects do not overly rely on any one referral mechanism.

Using sport, volunteering and mentoring to support young people at risk of being involved in serious youth violence is very challenging and young people's needs can change very quickly. It is therefore recommended that mentors are supported at all stages of the mentoring process.

LTOs developed unique projects as part of this programme. It is recommended that a framework which incorporates the critical success factors for the design and implementation of sport-based mentoring programmes is shared with LTOs to inform their future planning.

Future Research

The case studies did not demonstrate whether some types of sport were more suited for this type of programme than other sports. It is recommended that future research examines which sports work best within these programmes.

 The experiences reported in this report are predominantly based on male experiences as the majority of the participants and mentors were males. There is also a paucity of academic evidence focused on interventions aimed at girls at risk of serious violence. It is therefore recommended that future research focuses on the experiences of girls and women who were under-represented in the programme and the evaluation.

The evaluation provides no insight about understanding of the varying effectiveness of different mentoring models. It is therefore recommended that future research examines the contribution that different approaches make.

Additional research would be beneficial into the comparison of the use of paid and volunteer mentors for sport-based mentoring programmes especially for long term programmes so that further insight could be gained.

Appendix A – Project Case Studies

Case Study A

Project Overview

This project predominantly engages Muslim young men, including refugees or those that have moved from abroad and have dual nationalities. The LTO works with young people aged from 8-25 years old over a long duration and works in partnership with other local organisations. The interviewee is a British Muslim who experienced challenges in his own life in reconciling dual identities.

Due to the limited availability of sports facilities in the local area this project offers opportunities for young people to participate in activities that would not otherwise be available and therefore sport, and other activities, are utilised as a hook for engaging young people.

> "Sport is a way out. We don't have many facilities in the area… you know many open spaces. We offer a wide range of activities. We get young people coming to football and cricket, dodgeball … We use sport as the vehicle, that's what hooks them in. Even the ones who are not keen on sports stuff, they'll still attend because … there is this sense of belonging in these groups."

The LTO aims to create a personalised approach for participants which includes personal development activities, volunteering and referrals to other opportunities.

Mentoring and Volunteering Programme

The volunteering programme involved 14 young people undertaking a level 1 qualification. Despite the project switching to online delivery due to the Covid-19 lockdown the interviewee reported a high level of engagement from the young people who all completed the programme.

During recruitment it was made clear to the young people what they will gain through becoming a volunteer (e.g. accreditation, skills) so that they were able to make an informed choice about their involvement. Engagement was entirely voluntary.

The LTO staff have realistic expectations about the young people they work with and they acknowledge that some young people struggle to meet the expectations placed on them. LTO staff work with individuals to ensure that they can make progress and that their progress is recognised. An example of this is a young person who is often late who is supported to become punctual at least some of the time. Staff ensure that when young people fail in meeting an expectation they are supported to work out how they can succeed in the future:

> "It's small gains … it's engaging, it's about self-learning."

Some of the young people engaged by the LTO were known to be at risk of being involved in serious youth violence as a result of a combination of individual and contextual risks. An example was one participant who was involved in a knife incident where he was the perpetrator against another young participant:

> "It's just being a young person, being in the area that we're in, and he seeks attention and craving and … you know he wants … a set of young people … to be verified you

know as one of them So anyway, I proposed a programme, he's accepted, and so part of this programme was that if we can engage him say for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty hours over the period of the next four, five months, you know that was a great achievement, do you know that for him to be part of it? … But I don't think that he's going to come and join a mentoring project because I've just told him well come and help out at the youth club and stuff, it must mean that he enjoys the sports, he loves the people he's there with or he's got some kind of affiliation with him."

Despite the volunteer completing the programme the mentor was keen not to overstate the impact of this achievement:

"He's done hours. Has his behaviour changed? No. Has his attitude changed? No. Because I'm not going to be able to judge that entirely. But I know this much, the guy's given me so many hours, you know, so something."

The mentor was hopeful that his involvement in the project would contribute to positive outcomes in the longer term because he has been part of an experience where other young men are progressing in a pro-social direction.

"I didn't think that he was going to come and join a mentoring project but I just told him well come and help out at the youth club and stuff… he enjoys the sports, he loves the people he's the with and he's got some kind of affiliation with him … He has managed to complete the entire programme."

The interviewee was confident that the volunteering had been beneficial for the young people involved but he was aware that demonstrating the impact was challenging:

"I think it's definitely had an effect. How we measure that I'm not sure but for me to have a nineteen year old and a fifteen year old with a four, five years gap and they get on so well and they're learning, they're working together, they all understand that they shared in terms of their mentors, their coaches … the sense of belonging, the self of achieving, the … self-esteem and confidence that I can see amongst those young people, it's apparent, you can see it you know."

This volunteering experience opened up opportunities for participants to access a network of other adult volunteers connected to the project who can offer developmental support to the volunteers. The network includes older young people who are further along in their volunteering journey and former participants who have progressed through university and into employment.

Strengths

The LTO founder is an experienced youth worker who has a strong track record of engaging with the Muslim community. He has developed his mentoring skills through these experiences.

The interviewee stated that some of the volunteers and paid coaches at the LTO in their mid-twenties started attending the project when they were ten or eleven and this is important in demonstrating the volunteering pathway to young participants to evidence where volunteering can lead to.

The interviewee also stated that as an organisation they try and avoid projects which prioritise funder expectations and instead aim to only engage with projects that the young people see as valuable whilst acknowledging that it has taken the LTO a long time to be able to be in this position:

> "So our approach is listen, if you guys want to be involved, this is what you're going to get out of it, is that something you're involved with? Is that something you want to be involved with?"

In working this way the LTO gains the commitment of the young people in projects from the outset which is preferable to having to persuade young people to engage.

Staff stated that building relationships and trust were key to mentoring young people particularly when there is a diverse cohort of young people.

> "The young people I'm working with are of a Muslim background, but they're from Yemeni, Somali, Pakistani, different backgrounds altogether, they're Afro-Caribbean or some are non-Muslims … You've got to be absolutely genuine … Our approach is just to be absolutely straight up you know…. They appreciate this and that is how you build trust."

The strength of the relationships with young people and their communities is important because it ensures that LTO staff understand the lives of the young people that they work with:

> "We know what's happening in school, what's happening outside in the community because these … these sessions are done right in the heart of the community, in the schools or you know where the vast majority of young people have access."

Challenges

The interviewee stated that authenticity is vital in building relationships with young people but this requires regular contact over a sustained period of time.

> "Trust can't be developed in six months. You know if you don't even see the guy, if you see him once a week and … I don't think we go according to what the programmes really ask us to do and that's why we're more successful … We work with the young people on a daily basis."

The LTO is regularly approached by funders who are keen to access their participants. The LTO will not accept funding that compromises its mission. Short-term funding is particularly problematic because it limits what it is possible to achieve particularly with young people who are new to the project because success is reliant on relationship building and this can only be built over time:

> "There's got to be a level of recognition and trust… trust can't be developed in two weeks or something. It takes months… Also, some educated fools on programmes that think that someone's behaviour can change in four months, you are absolutely ridiculous. We can't even change our behaviour in ourselves in a few months."

The LTO aim to offer tailored opportunities for young participants but providing a wide range of activities and support is challenging for the LTO to deliver.

Case Study B

Project Overview

Prior to establishing the community interest company (CIC) in 2017 from his home the founder was a volunteer in his community. The LTO has grown but has minimal resources with the founder being the only full-time employee support by a small team of freelance staff and mentors with different specialisms varying from creatives to sports coaches. An apprentice was recently recruited who had previously been a volunteer. Initially the CIC was funded by the borough council to deliver sports-based activities and school holiday programmes. As a result of his experiences as a resident the founder was aware of a need for more positive activities and experiences to divert young people away from ASB and offending.

> "I was frustrated, I were really frustrated there wasn't enough happening for young people locally, and one of the things that inspired me to launch the project was a lot of quite serious vandalism happening locally, and the park behind where I lived was getting smashed up a lot … I was so driven to get something kicked off for young people that I did end up doing quite … as a volunteer, just off my own back. But I think it's created a platform for us, I think it got us recognised. I think in a relatively short space of time it's opened doors for us and created opportunities for us."

Mentoring and Volunteering Programme

The majority of referrals arise through services working with children and young people including Children's Services, Pupil Referral Units, schools, school nurses and alternative provision team and the local MAT (Multi-Agency Team) which acts as an Early Intervention Hub. Despite their growing local reputation the founder suggested that it had been challenging to engage with the local YOT service.

Planning began in November 2019 when eleven part-time mentoring placements were set-up to include volunteering and leadership opportunities and links to participation opportunities and local clubs. The funding for this programme expanded the existing mentoring programme to support an additional five referred young people. The mentoring was embedded within group activities. Attendees also achieved Level 1 Sport Leader awards.

When young people are referred, they initially receive one to one support but the intention is always for them to also towards working with peers in small groups in addition to continuing to receive personalised support:

> "They are originally referred to us as one to one referrals, and that's how their programme starts. And then we look at increasing their participation with other learners where possible but that might be going and taking part in somebody else's group activity, so they're still with a mentor, so they're still essentially one to one … I don't try and rush it but when I get the chance, we try and move them forward, so they do start working with other young people."

The founder tailors the mentoring work to the needs of the young person by building around a weekly one to one mentoring session which is then supplemented by another activity such

as attending the gym, walking or mountain biking also on a one-to-one basis. Training opportunities such as sport activator training and more formal sports leadership training are also a key part of the mentoring programme. The gym was popular and some young people had started attending the gym more regularly. Adventurous activities such as kayaking and mountain biking were also popular activities.

The founder suggested that there were a range of different impacts on the young people. These included training opportunities empowering young people who organised activities or events as volunteers which then resulted in them starting to think differently about what they could achieve in the future:

> "I saw like a … a distinct empowerment in the young people, you could tell that they felt … because they were part of creating and planning something as part of that learning, I could see in them starting to imagine."

Other benefits for participants included increased their participation in sport and physical activity and the resultant health benefits and the development of social skills including consideration and empathy.

> "I've seen them be more considerate and more aware of different peer groups, you know like sort of making allowances for people with different abilities and stuff, probably just become a bit more tolerant and a bit more understanding. I've seen lots of improvement in them in relatively short space of time really, within(?) the sports thing."

Strengths

The mentors associated with the CIC must demonstrate an authentic interest and passion for sport and physical activity, live locally, understand young people and their environment, and be able to develop a rapport with young people. Ideally, they should also already be known to the young people:

> "At least they've got their own genuine interest and genuine sort of bit of passion in sport and physical activity … most of the freelance and volunteer mentors are local people who have got a local understanding of the dynamics and … the social challenges that these young people face … I would expect that they would have a natural rapport with these young people."

Taking time to build the mentor/mentee relationship was considered vital by the founder because young people need to have strong relationships with staff before they start to make visible progress.

> "You don't really see these things a lot of the time until these young people have been with us for several months and you're looking at it in reflection … it's quite normal for them to be lacking confidence when they come to us and be a bit disengaged … It can be several weeks … I'm always quite cautious and I always encourage my staff and my volunteers to be … challenge them, you know but don't like press them too much because … you need to build them up to a little bit really."

Providing young participants with a role model was considered to be a strength of the project especially because the founder was a volunteer himself prior to establishing the CIC.

Accessing training for the mentors was also noted as another strength of the project:

> "We access a lot of training from the Community Voluntary Service, so we go on-line, safeguarding training and young person's mental health awareness training … We access short courses occasionally that are offered through the Derby County Community Trust."

Challenges

Whilst mentors were provided with informal support the founder stated that it was difficult to provide formal support to his mentors as they were still a small LTO which lacked infrastructure and a permanent base.

Another challenge for the LTO was the age of young people who were referred to project. The founder believed that undertaking preventative work at an earlier age would provide greater opportunity to prevent young people going down the wrong pathway.

> "We have tended to get quite some of the probably hardest to reach, who by that age, year 11, a lot of their personality traits and sort of behavioural tendencies if you like, I think they're quite embedded, and I'm really interested in doing some more preventative based work, and that's what we want to sort of really work on a lot more."

Sport is an important element of the mentoring experience but many of the young people involved lack fitness initially and may be reluctant to engage in sport and therefore the founder actively encourages their engagement in sport:

> "They quite often do show an interest in sport at least, but then they do tend to be quite physically unfit when they come to us … they are very often they're spending quite a lot of time on their Xboxes … quite a lot of them smoke unfortunately … I would say all, if not most, or possibly all but one of these young people don't attend any kind of structured sport or anything."

Despite recognising the importance of demonstrating the impact of the project this is particularly challenging for the LTO due to a lack of staffing resources and expertise. The LTO had started to experiment with media equipment which young people were starting to use to create their own multimedia outputs.

> "Yeah, video logs, vlogging I think. We've just set up a You Tube channel, we've got a little bit of recording equipment with Go Pro and stuff, and I think it would be lovely to be able to do a short film and also the young people could take part in that, and I think it would be the perfect way of telling the story, and I think it would be able to capture our impact … I think as long as they were part of that process and you gave them ownership of it, I think that they'd relish, I really think they'd relish it."

Case Study C

Project Overview

This project is a Youth and Community Organisation which has grown from a small Youth Club in 2008 to become the largest Youth and Community Organisation in the Local Authority with responsibility for managing five Youth and Community buildings. They undertake activities for young people, letting out buildings and manage a 3G 7-a-side football pitch.

Mentoring and Volunteering Programme

Identifying young people for the programme was relatively easy because the project has detached youth workers with good community insight and established links with the local authority, Probation Service and Youth Offending Team. Six of the participants were already known to the organisation and the remainder were referrals from either the local neighbourhood policing team or through the Youth Offending Team.

The programme involved informal mentoring and volunteering. Relationships were built with the young people taking part in sports including tennis, table tennis and football. Young people were then asked to volunteer their time to get involved with practical tasks such as building tables. These experiences were rewarding for the young people who took part because they successfully achieved the tasks they were engaged in which was considered to be important for the young people who typically were not successful in school. The project deliberately adopted an informal model of mentoring through completing the practical tasks with one-to-one support because they believed that the young people would not respond to more formalised approaches where they would have been suspicious about the process. Engaging in the practical tasks together created an opportunity for natural conversations. The interviewee described how a vulnerable thirteen year old boy had disclosed to staff that his father who was in prison had previously been exploiting him to supply drugs by taping the drugs to his body which had left him with mental and physical scarring which the boy had hidden:

> "It was definitely the trust that was built up by people wanting to listen to him, for me, wanting to understand his story … it was definitely giving him more time and spending significant periods with him and doing the sport and doing the volunteering that really got to the point where he thought, I trust [name] to say what I've got to say to him … And there was no preamble beforehand … it was just straight, it just flowed out to the point where he did actually cry and … At the end of it, he was like, you better not fucking tell anyone I've been crying mind [name]!"

As a result of the disclosure the interviewee got the agreement of the young person to involve the social work team. At the time of the interview the boy was back in education at a PRU where he had not previously been engaging and he was making good progress.

Strengths

The training that staff engaged in was considered to be very valuable in providing insight into techniques and approaches to adopt with young people.

Working one to one with young people initially prior to attempting any groupwork was beneficial because some of the young people see their challenging behaviour as something that gives them kudos with other young people. For example, one young person bragged about the negative actions they had been engaged in such as petty theft, breaking into derelict buildings and jumping from heights. Working one to one with young people prior to attempting any group work was believed to be an effective approach:

> "It was better doing the group stuff at the end because they were able to help each other, in the early days I definitely wouldn't go back and do the group stuff early because it turned into a bragging right."

Challenges

Data protection and information sharing was noted by the interviewee as being a challenge as referral agencies often do not pass on important information about the young people they refer. The interviewee also stated that because the LTO is rooted in the community they often have intelligence that they think would be valuable to statutory agencies but there are no mechanisms in place for sharing the insight currently due to a lack of multi-agency working. He also stated that the referral agencies have not requested any updates about the young people they referred to the project.

It was intended that the programme would include a residential element but this was not possible as a result of the lockdown in response to Covid-19. The residential was intended to be a rewarding experience that celebrated participants' successes within the programme:

> "I think that's the only thing I think would have changed, just fetching them together as a whole team to celebrate their success, doing some team building, doing some more sport and celebrating their success, because I don't think we should or they should under-estimate the steps that they've taken to where they are now."

The interviewee also noted that engaging girls and young women in the programme was challenging and that this remains a challenge as they did not receive a single female referral.

Case Study D

Project Overview

The project is a charity that provides an indoor skate park which provides opportunities for different wheeled sports including scootering, BMXing, skateboarding and in-line skating. The indoor facility is considered valuable because there are many limitations on outdoor park usage due the weather and night-time use. The indoor park provides a venue for young people to have a hobby and to keep them focused all year round. The venue is very well supported and well-used by young people who may not engage in more traditional activities and this why the project was approached to be involved with this programme:

> "We've got disengaged groups, we've got schools that are calling out for us now because they just need somewhere to bring the young people that … that really like hit their buttons, rather than just doing normal rugby sessions in their PE lessons, they want to do something that they're interested in, and they knew that we were doing girls' nights and the girls' nights were flying."

Mentoring and Volunteering Programme

The venue is open to the public and therefore anyone in the local area can use the facility. The interviewee noted that some of the young people who are regular users are looked-after young people or are young people who are not coping in school and they access the venue with support workers because the venue provides them with a positive activity to engage in.

The project has an established track-record of developing young people through volunteering as described by the interviewee:

> "When they first join us as a volunteer, they're quiet and shy and introverted and don't know how to speak to parents and don't know how to speak to kids. And we put them with somebody that's a head coach or an instructor in their twenties that's very, very experienced and very qualified and they sort of follow that instructor all the way through their journey as an assistant, so a lot of them are assistant coaches, instructors, and before long, within six months to twelve months they are confident enough to lead sessions themselves with the supervisor, they're taking on the warm-ups, they're taking over the sessions ... So, they come a long way within a short space of time because they've got people around them to ask if they're worried. They also put themselves in a more uncomfortable situation than they usually do because they've got to start speaking to parents and they've got to make sure that they're not on their phones and make sure that they're not swearing and they've got to be responsible and professional in front of a new audience… they just shine and you just see new qualities come out in them that you never saw before, you see them grow up before your eyes, literally, they just grown, physically and mentally, and socially. Socially is the most important thing for me."

The project had a number of young people who had moved from being a participant to being engaged in volunteering on an ad-hoc basis. This programme has enabled the project to build

on this experience by developing young people's skills through a combination of formal and informal opportunities:

> "So we've got disengaged kids that we've turned from being users into volunteering … we have trained them up on a couple of workshops with Street Games, they've put on challenging behaviour workshops and different things to be able to encourage those young people to understand what it's like now to be a coach or an instructor or a leader in a volunteer capacity, rather than be the user. So ,they've learnt a lot through that. They've done some first aid qualifications and they've just literally been having experience on the job. So we've not just taught them how to become an assistant coach with one of our head coaches down there, we've encouraged them to work the tuck shop and the tills, so they're learning maths skills, we've encouraged them to go into the kitchens to try and learn how to make a decent cup of tea for parents! Because a lot of young people don't know how to do that! They sweep the ramps, they clean the toilets even some of them, not all of them! They just do everything that's involved in a facility management sort of role with us."

Some of the young volunteers have been involved in Do-it-yourself activities and have helped renovate the building (see photographs below):

> "They just had a key and went down there as a group of young people, with nineteen year olds as well to supervising them, but they completely transformed the place, and they're just very proud of what they've achieved from that."

Strengths

The interviewee described how the project adopts a strengths-based approach in its work to ensure that young people find things that they are good at and enjoy so they have the opportunity to succeed.

> "Some of them are really good at certain things and others are not so good at other things. So, we just try and … we look at their interests and their skills and try and encourage them into doing more of what they're really strong at and what they're really good at and enjoy."

The volunteering also gains tangible rewards for the young people because if the young people undertake one hour of volunteering, they gain free access to the skatepark for following week.

The staff at the skatepark actively create a friendly, welcoming environment and provide a setting for young people where they feel valued and safe. For some young people, the venue provides a place to escape from the challenges they are experiencing in their lives and the staff and volunteers provide informal support for these young people:

> "We are there as a second family for the young people that come down to us all the time, and a lot of them are coming down to us because they need to escape their family home or they feel that they're just more safer with us or they prefer our environment to their homes. So we've got a number of trustees and volunteers that are parents or adults or, like myself that are there all the time to be an ear, a shoulder,

whatever it is that we need to be for these young people if they're going through a tough time."

Another strength of the project is the flexibility of access to the skatepark and as no pre-booking is required, the park is very popular with intervention services in bad weather because of a lack of alternative provision.

The offer that the skatepark provides is one that young people value and this encourages them to engage a pro-social manner within the venue which may be different to the way in which the same young person behaves beyond the venue:

> "I'll phone up a PE department and say, you know this young chap goes to your school, he's called Max, he's done a level 1 qualification in skateboard coaching and he's brilliant, absolutely brilliant as a volunteer for us … So there's a big difference, we're very positive for those young people … some of the authorities are very negative for those young people, so they see a different side to those young people … they only see the crimes, don't they? They only see the bad behaviour … We only ever see the really nice stuff, because they want what we've got."

Challenges

Some young people who attend the skatepark do stop attending and a minority will become involved in problematic behaviours often involving cars and this is challenging because the skatepark staff and volunteers are not in a position to follow-up with these young people. The interviewee mentioned that often these young people will return to the skatepark at some point in the future.

The lockdown resulted in the skatepark closing which was distressing for all the users of the skatepark. It also presented financial challenges for the charity because many of the costs of the building needed to be paid despite the charity being unable to generate an income.

Appendix B

Young Person Survey Findings

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The majority (87%) of the baseline respondents confirmed that they did not have any physical or mental health conditions that lasted, or were expected to last, 12 months or more. Almost all (95%) of the follow-up survey respondents confirmed that they do not have any physical or mental health conditions that lasted, or were expected to, last 12 months or more.

Most baseline survey respondents scored fairly highly in the happiness scale on average, with 58% scoring 7 or above for how happy they felt yesterday. However, 27% of the baseline survey respondents scored 5 or below. The follow-up surveys responses are more positive as 86% scored 7 or above whilst only 7% of respondents scored 5 or below.

Overall how happy did you feel yesterday?		
Score	Baseline Survey	Follow-up
0 (Not at all)	0%	2%
1	0%	0%
2	2%	0%
3	5%	0%
4	9%	0%
5	11%	5%
6	15%	8%
7	19%	37%
8	17%	21%
9	11%	14%
10	11%	14%

Similar findings relating to life satisfaction were presented with 56% of the baseline respondents scoring themselves 7 or above whilst 25% of the respondents scored 5 or below. For the follow-up survey with 85% of the follow-up respondents scored themselves 7 or above whilst only 5% of the respondents scored 5 or below.

Overall how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?		
Score	Baseline Survey	Follow-up
0 (Not at all)	1%	2%
1	0%	0%
2	2%	0%
3	4%	0%
4	5%	0%
5	16%	3%
6	17%	11%
7	16%	29%
8	16%	18%

9	9%	24%
10	15%	14%

Confidence and Resilience

Questions relating to resilience and confidence were posed to the young people. The results indicate that around 20% of respondents who completed the baseline survey lacked both confidence and resilience. Overall, though the findings were positive with most respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they can achieve most of the goals they set for themselves and agreeing that if they find a challenge difficult, that they will keep trying until they can do it (resilience).

Baseline Survey – Confidence and Resilience

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Can't Say	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I can achieve most of the goals I set myself	14%	62%	4%	19%	2%
If I find something difficult I keep trying until I can do it	19%	52%	6%	18%	5%
'I feel confident at having a go at things that are new to me	18%	57%	6%	18%	1%

Again the results for the follow-up survey were more positive with 93% of respondents indicating they can achieve most of the goals they set, 91% that they keep trying when things are difficult and 97% felt confident achieving new things.

Follow-up Survey – Confidence and Resilience

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Can't Say	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I can achieve most of the goals I set myself	22%	71%	5%	2%	0
If I find something difficult I keep trying until I can do it	32%	59%	2%	8%	0
'I feel confident at having a go at things that are new to me	30%	67%	2%	2%	0

Qualitative Comments

Best Thing about their Experiences

Respondents to the follow-up survey were asked what they thought was the best thing about their experiences. Playing sport and being more active was the best aspect for some young people:

- *It was very fun. Loved the friendly competition*
- *Playing Sport*
- *Being involved in these amazing sessions and learning new things and meeting new people*
- *Getting more healthier and fit*

Interestingly the most common 'best thing' was contributing and helping others:

- *Really liked helping the younger kids*
- *Meeting new people and having responsibility*
- *Being a role model. seeing the others smile & have fun. Also, doing different sports*
- *completed by worker; I have really enjoyed helping out the coaches and setting up the activities for the younger kids.*
- *I liked watching the coach and learning from him. I see how hard it is now*
- *Being able to help*
- *Having the opportunity to help younger people and learn new skills that have helped me at college with my sports course*
- *Liked the sports project as I was helping out younger peers*
- *The activator sessions were good meeting new people volunteering and taking responsibilities at session*

The social aspect of the experience was also mentioned frequently by respondents:

- *Meet new people and make new friends.*
- *Felt part of team and liked being involved*
- *Making new friends*
- *Meeting new people and interacting with other people.*
- *Being part of a team*
- Meeting new people and socialising
- Getting to know people, being active, fun
- Good place to come, fun, getting advice and help, meeting new people
- Meet new people. Staying out of trouble
- Meeting new people and improving my health and fitness
- Meeting new people, having responsibilities gaining experience, meeting new friends.

Learning new skills and developing confidence and self-esteem were also commonly mentioned frequently by participants:

- *Learning new skills*
- *Communicating with other people*
- *Learning new things and interacting with other people*

- *Helped me increase my confidence. Good place for advice/help. You can meet positive role models.*
- *Learning new skills boost my confidence learn new sports*
- *It built up my self-confidence and my self-esteem by attending the project*
- *Communicating with adults + young people. boosting my confidence + supporting others*

Some young people made comments which suggested that the project had helped them to reduce their risk of being involved in offending:

- *The best thing about taking part is it gets you of the streets and it can stop you from getting in gangs*
- *Hearing about first aid, feel more confident if someone passed out. Taking part in this got me back into education*
- *Getting qualifications and doing something positive to stay out of trouble*

Some young people mentioned that they had enjoyed making a difference by mending a fence that had been broken:

- *We raised money for new fence because someone broke it. I liked helping the lad fix it and move our old wood*
- *I really enjoy all the sessions and have made in difference in my area helping with new fence*

Interestingly some of the comments provided by participants reflected the ten ingredients.

Right Staff, Style and Place
- *Get the respect you deserve and the environment is comfortable*
- *The environment is friendly and fair. feel really comfortable here.*
- *Good location, staff are supportive and kind, staying fit and healthy*
- *It was at a good place in my community so can just go on my bike*
- *All my friends go here Gets me out the house Coaches are good banter*
- *See friends more often Have a laugh all the time Competitive games*

Positive pathway
- *Enjoyed exercising and knowing I'm improving.*
- *Getting fitter and stronger and being able to learn new things*
- *The talking & mentoring, the different workshops we have done, sessions are well organised and ran*
- *Going new places first aid communication confidence*
Youth-led

- *Doing our own things use our own ideas meeting new people*
- *The staff are really helpful and I like how we are part of planning each session and it is local for me to attend*

Potential Improvements

Participants were also asked to identify anything that they didn't enjoy or should be changed. The majority of comments suggested that nothing should be changed whilst for some the minor suggested changes were about the time, location or being cold outside.

Undertaking coaching roles was clearly challenging but developmental for some young people:

- *I found it hard when people I was coaching didn't listen*
- *Sometimes it was difficult to concentrate and help when I just wanted to join in*
- *I liked the sessions, It's harder to coach than I thought*
- *Collecting all the cones in at the end*
- *It has been hard to lead the sessions but I really enjoyed it and learnt a lot*
- *However, sometimes with some sports it got too competitive amongst some people*

Some young people expressed that they would have liked more provision:

- *I would like activities to go on longer for the sessions to continue*
- *Could have went on more weeks otherwise it was good*
- *Wish it could continue I enjoyed everything else*

Another young person stated that had felt self-conscious as a girl going swimming.

Next Steps

Respondents were also asked about their next steps building on the project. Many of the comments indicated that the participants were aspirational about their future:

- *To keep attending youthy and helping out to try and be a youth worker get good grades in school*
- *Study for exams try do well in school and exams get grades for future be a paramedic or a midwife*
- *Keep out of trouble get involved with the football team, maybe become a coach or a footballer*
- *Stick in more at school in my last couple of years*
- *Go to college after getting decent grades in my GCSEs*
- *I need to work better at school*
- *Being able to work even harder than before*
- *Do more courses*
- *To use the skills I have learnt in this session*
- *Help and support young people and get further in education (college, uni then a job)*
- *I would like to learn new things leading towards getting more qualifications not just sport*
- *To get a good job and make something of myself*

- *To gradually continue and progress and help other people*
- *Pass maths & English to complete my education and get a good job*
- *Want to do other community protects to a make a community to be in*

Some young people mentioned goals that were sport-related:

- *I want start playing football and join a team*
- *Coaching others*
- *I think I would like to learn more about coaching and help people with disabilities*
- *I would like to do my FA Level 1 badge*
- *Be like Razza (coach)*
- *Finish my L2 sports qualification at college then look at the L3*
- *I want to continue with sporting activities*
- *Love to do more football coaching*
- *Encourage younger kids to do sports and stay fit*
- *Keep progressing and keep motivated to exercise and stay active*
- *Improve my strength*
- *Do more sport as it made me feel good*
- *I want to be a sports coach continue supporting the sessions*
- *I want to help others and carry on volunteering and maybe want to be a coach*
- *Develop my sports qualifications in multiple sporting activities*

Volunteering in the future was also mentioned by a number of respondents:

- *Volunteering more*
- *To volunteer more in projects and help out with younger kids*
- *Continue volunteering*
- *To continue volunteering and progress through this project.*
- *To be volunteer and improve as a boxer*
- *Continue volunteering*
- *I want to be a coach and continue to volunteer*
- *Carry on volunteering and gain more experience*
- *Want to become a coach in boxing continue to volunteer*

For some young people staying out of trouble was their next step:

- *To stick in at school and hope to keep out of trouble*
- *To keep attending youthy and keep out of trouble*
- *Nothing Keep out of trouble*

References

Armitage, H., Heyes, K., O'Leary, C., Tarrega, M., & Taylor-Collins, E. (2020) *What makes for effective mentoring programmes? A rapid evidence summary.* Manchester Metropolitan University. Accessed on 24 / 08/ 2020

https://www.careknowledge.com/media/47789/what_makes_for_effective_youth_mentoring_programmes.pdf

Becker, H. (1963) *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: Macmillan.

Bernhard, J. K., Lefebvre, M. L., Kilbride, K. M., Chud, G., & Lange, R. (1988). Troubled relationships in early childhood education: Parent-teacher interactions in ethnoculturally diverse childcare settings. *Early Education & Development, 9,* 5–28.

Buck, G. (2018) The core conditions of peer mentoring *Criminology and Criminal Justice, 18* (2), 190-206

Carson, D. C., Peterson, D., & Esbensen, F.A. (2013) Youth Gang Desistance: An examination of the effect of different operational definitions of desistance on the Motivations, Methods and Consequences associate with leaving the gang *Criminal Justice Review*, 38 (4), 510 -534

Craig J.M., Piquero A.R., Farrington D.P., & Ttofi M.M. (2017) A little early risk goes a long bad way: Adverse childhood experiences and life-course offending in the Cambridge study *Journal of Criminal Justice* 53,34-45

DeWit, D.J., DuBois, D., Erdem, G., Larose, S., Lipman, E., & Spencer, R. (2016) Mentoring relationship closures in Big Brother Big Sister's Community Mentoring Programs: patterns and associated Risk Factors *American Journal of Community Psychology, 57, 1*, 60-72

Dong, B., & Krohn, M.D. (2016) Escape from violence: What reduces the enduring consequences of adolescent gang affiliation? *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 47, 41-50

DuBois, D. L., Holloway, B. E., Valentine, J. C., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs: A meta-analytical review. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30,* 157–197.

DuBois, D. L., Portillo, N., Rhodes, J. E., Silverthorn, N., & Valentine, J. C. (2011). How effective are mentoring programs for youth? A systematic assessment of the evidence. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 12(2),* 57–91.

Fox B.H., Perez N., Baglivio M.T., & Epps, N. (2015) Trauma changes everything: examining the relationship between childhood adverse experiences and serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders *Child Abuse and Neglect* (46) 163-173

Galvan A. (2013). The teenage brain: sensitivity to rewards. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(2), 88–93

Gebo, E. (2016) An integrated public health and criminal justice approach to groups. What can research tell us? *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 4, 376-380

Glasser, W. (1998) *Choice Theory: A new psychology of personal freedom* New York: Harper and Row

Goldson B. (2012) *Dictionary of Youth Justice* Routledge Abingdon

Grossman, J.B., & Rhodes, J.E. (2002) The test of time: predictors and effects of duration in youth mentoring relationships. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *30***,** 199– 219.

Haines, K.R., & Case, S.P. (2015) *Positive Youth Justice: Children First, Offenders Second*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Hazel, N., & Bateman, T. (2020) Supporting children's resettlement (re-entry) after custody: beyond the risk paradigm. *Youth Justice* (in press)

Herrera, C., Grossman, J. B., Kauh, T. J., Feldman, A. F., & McMaken, J. (2007). *Making a difference in schools: The big brothers big sisters school-based mentoring impact study.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Hennigan, K.M., Kolnick, K.A., Tian, T.S., Maxson, C.L., & Poplawski, J. (2010). Five year outcomes in a randomized trial of a community-based multi-agency intensive supervision probation program*. Report to Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*. US Department of Justice.

Higley, E., Walker, S.C., Bishop, A.S. & Fritz, C. (2016) Achieving high quality and long-lasting matches in youth mentoring programmes: a case study of 4Results mentoring *Child and Family Social Work, 21*, 240-248

HM Government (2018) *Serious Violence Strategy* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_ data/file/698009/serious-violence-strategy.pdf

Hughes K, Ford K., Davies A.R., Homolova L., & Bellis M.A. (2018) *Sources of resilience and their moderating relationships with harms from adverse childhood experiences: Report 1: Mental Illness Welsh Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and Resilience Study* Public Health Wales NHS Trust: University of Bangor

Leenstra, T., Keeler, L., Arthur-Camesella, J., & Russell, K. (2019) The peer mentor experience in a physical activity intervention for mental health *Mentoring and tutoring: Partnership in Learning,* 27 (1), 68-87.

Liang, B., Spencer, R., West, J., & Rappaport, N. (2013) Expanding the reach of youth mentoring: partnering with youth for growth and social change. *Journal of Adolescence*, 36(2)**,** 257–267.

McAra, L., & McVie, S. (2016) Understanding youth violence: The mediating effects of gender, poverty and vulnerability *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 45, 71-77

McMahon G., & Jump, D. (2018) Starting to Stop: Young Offenders' Desistance from Crime *Youth Justice*, 18, 3-17

Nichols, G. (2007) *Sport and Crime Reduction: The role of sports in tackling youth crime* Routledge: Abingdon

O'Brien, K., Daffern, M., Chu, C. M., & Thomas, S.D.M. (2013) Youth Gang affiliation, violence and criminal activities: a review of motivational, risk and protective factors *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 18, 417-425

Reagan-Porras, L.L. (2013) Dynamic Duos: A case review of Effective Mentoring Program Evaluations *Journal of Applied Social Science, 7, 2*, 208-219

Rhodes, J. E. (2002). *Stand by me: The risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Robinson, G., McLean, R., & Densley, J. (2019) Working County Lines: Child Criminal Exploitation and Illicit Drug Dealing in Glasgow and Merseyside *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 63,* (5), 694-711

Rogers, R. (2011) Evaluating community-based interventions for young people: measuring the impact of informal mentoring *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 19 (2), 159-68

Sandford, R.A. (2015) Mentoring Youth. In F.C. Chambers (ed) *Mentoring in Physical Education and Sports Coaching*, (pp 41-48). Routledge: Abingdon

Steinberg, L. (2008) A social neuroscience perspective on adolescent risk-taking *Developmental Review, 28*, (1), 78-106

Stephenson M., Giller H., & Brown S. (2011) *Effective Practice in Youth Justice* Routledge: Abingdon

Sutton, T. E. (2017). The lives of female gang members: A review of the literature. *Aggression & Violent Behavior*, *37*, 142-152.

Taylor, A.S., & Porcellini L. (2013) Family involvement. In D.L. DuBois and M.J. Karcher (Eds.) *Handbook of youth mentoring* (pp 457–468). Sage; Thousand Oaks

Thompson, N. (2019). It's a No-Win Scenario, either the Police of the Gang will get you: Young people and organised crime – Vulnerable or Criminal? *Youth Justice* 1-18

Wilson, N. J., Cordier, R., Ciccarelli, M., MacCallum,J., Milbourn, B., Vaz, S., & Stancliffe, R. J. (2018) Intergenerational mentoring at Men's Sheds: A feasibility study *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 31, 1, 105-117.

Youth Justice Board (2005) *risk and protective fact*ors Youth Justice Board for England and Wales: London

And finally: