

**CARNEY'S
COMMUNITY**



SAFER TOGETHER THROUGH SPORT
CARNEY'S COMMUNITY CASE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2019, StreetGames launched the London Safer Together Through Sport (STTS) programme across six London boroughs'. Funded by The Mayor of London, STTS was aimed at engaging and retaining young people in identified 'hotspot areas' and providing them with a range of positive activities to help prevent and deter them from becoming involved in youth crime, gang activity and/or entering the youth justice system.

The activities were provided by six locally trusted organisations (LTOs) in the StreetGames network. This document provides a case study about one of those LTOs - Carney's Community. A summary report about the STTS programme as a whole is available to download [here](#)

CARNEY'S COMMUNITY / STTS PROGRAMME

Carney's Community is a community organisation based in Wandsworth, south London, which aims to put mentoring and social work at the heart of all they do.

For the STTS programme, Carney's Community ran over 180 activity sessions which included running two 1.5 hour long boxing fitness sessions each week, comprising: one session for those aged under 18 years and one for over 18 year olds from the local community.

Importantly, the activities provided more than 'just' activity sessions. Like all of the LTOs involved in STTS their offer was designed using evidence based learning collated by Loughborough University who had previously identified the 10 most important ingredients of effective sports-based programmes. Carney's approach is summarised below across these 10 key ingredients.



10 KEY INGREDIENTS

A CLEAR ETHOS

Carney's ethos is built around offering long term, consistent and unconditional support and empathy - 'to behave in the way a good parent would to their child. Once a young person becomes a part of Carney's, they are always a carney's member, the aim is that we change their role as the young person develops'.

RIGHT STAFF

Staff at Carneys are carefully selected - the majority are ex-participants that understand what is required. They have lived experiences and this is invaluable. Carneys also has a strict process to follow when employing ex-participants, which focuses on ensuring they have moved away from any negative lifestyle, for a number of years, and have demonstrated that they are able to hold down a job.

Their sessions include both youth workers and coaches, to ensure the sport is a focus, but so is the engagement and development of the young people; It is all about Sport for Good.

RIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE

The STTS sessions were open to all, but staff made sure disadvantaged young people were also targeted for example, by linking with local partners including: the local authority, partner agencies, schools and youth providers to ensure those most in need were given the opportunity to attend. Also, because the facility is situated close to a number of different estates and the fact that Carney's have been delivering there for years and has built a really strong reputation, it tends to naturally attract the most vulnerable young people who live nearby.

ATTRACTIVE OFFER

To help shape their offer, Carneys consulted with the young people that they work with and new young people - who told them that they wanted a combination of sport, mentoring and youth activities.

SUSTAINED DELIVERY

Carney's Community has a varied approach to funding including: operating a social enterprise that provides boxing fitness and personal training sessions to members of the public. This not only provides paid work for the participants that gain coaching qualifications, but is also a source of revenue for the charity. There are also donation boxes at all sessions as some of the people that come training (who are not the main target group) donate after they have trained.

MULTI - AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

Carney's works closely with a number of partner organisations, including: the Youth Offending Team, Probation and gangs Team. They are also embedded in the Wandsworth community and are a lead member of the Wandsworth Knife crime Forum, as well as being involved with other local agencies working with young people in Wandsworth.

They also work closely with the Wandsworth Council Community Safety team and often target people that they highlight as being of concern. With regards to referrals, many are self-referred; that hear about us through word of mouth, but some are referred young people from various agencies and/or family members.

RIGHT STYLE AND PLACE

Sessions take place at Carney's centre in Battersea, which has been highlighted as a neutral area, as it is not in one of the local estates. Instead it is near a number of estates, which have fairly high crime and ASB rates. Accessibility for the STTS sessions was ensured by making the sessions free and providing things like food after the session.

REWARDS / REWARDING INCENTIVES

The STTS sessions at Carney's were incentivised by providing free food after sessions, certificates of achievement, the opportunity for participants to earn Carney's t-shirts and opportunities to attend talks given by celebrity sports men and women to help motivate the groups.

In addition, the most deserving young people were are given the opportunity to be a Carney's volunteers as a way to incentivise them to make positive life choices and stay out of trouble - with many of Carney's volunteers progressing to become coaches.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Alongside the Doorstep Sport sessions Carney's provided a number of the participants with mentoring and/or key worker support, to help them progress in the sport and also other areas of life. For example, training opportunities were provided for attendees to undertake sports coaching and fitness instructor qualifications.

POSITIVE PATHWAYS

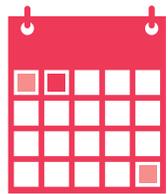
As mentioned above, Carney's work with participants for the long term, which means that young people are always informed of opportunities that help them progress in a positive direction. This could be in terms of: progressing into coaching at Carney's or moving into a competitive boxing club such as: Fitzroy Lodge and Earlsfield, gaining work or volunteering in other areas of the charity. They also liaise with local schools and employers, to keep in touch re progress.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

To help monitor the impact of the STTS programme, StreetGames supported the LTOs involved to capture data and information in a variety of ways, including: using the Views online monitoring tool, participant questionnaires and case study interviews - with specific learning captured regarding the challenges of adopting some of these approaches (see below).

Carney's used the Views on-line monitoring system to capture participant attendance and engagement levels and also managed to undertake questionnaires with a sample of participants. These were supplemented with sessional visits by StreetGames DSAs to undertake interviews with young people and coaches.

Monitoring data captured via the Views monitoring system showed that the STTS sessions provided by Carney's Community engaged 872 participants comprising:



183

SESSIONS



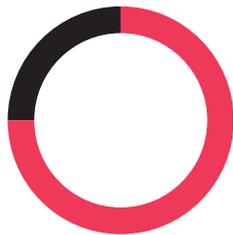
872

PARTICIPANTS



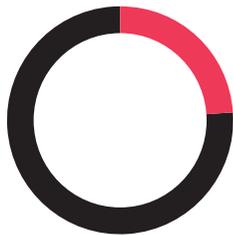
7368

ATTENDANCES



76%

BAME



24%

FEMALE



ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

To help review levels of engagement and attitudes of attendees, LTOs were also asked to record the 'level of engagement' at two different points on Views using the 'Engagement Ladder'.

The Engagement Ladder was developed by Substance and originally used in relation to the Positive Futures programme. It includes five different 'levels' of engagement (1 - disengagement, 2 - curiosity, 3 - involvement, 4 - Achievement, 5 - Autonomy) and includes descriptors to help coaches and mentors assign a level to their attendees.

Staff at Carneys recorded the engagement levels of over 100 young people, and as can be seen below, circa half (48%) moved up at least one level, 31% maintained their level and 21% decreased their involvement.

Importantly, the data showed that the proportion of participants that were seen to be at a level 3 (Involvement) or above increased from 41% at baseline to 60% at the follow up.



IMPACT

Information captured through case study interviews with projects staff, volunteers and young people at Carney's proved extremely useful in highlighted how sessions had impacted positively across a range of different outcomes - see examples below:

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

'We have had three that have taken up a new role we have created called Young Leaders, where they are essentially acting as young volunteers. We also have numerous young people helping out in sessions and offering peer support. On top of this one of our boxers completed the City Leaders Program with London Youth in September'

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR / REDUCED CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

'Participant J who is 15 and male has had a lot of stress and high emotions when joining Carneys and did not have a lot of confidence. The coaches helped him to channel his stress and emotions. He has enjoyed attending - participating regularly and also staying in the youth club part of Carneys to eat and socialise with the other young people. He is now engaging frequently with the Carney's youth boxing and drop in sessions, as well as with the Carney's Cycles Bike Project, where he has flourished to become a skilled young mechanic. He has grown in confidence and loves to volunteer with the bike workshop run by Carneys. He enjoys using the skills he has learnt to teach his neighbours in the local community about fixing bikes. Carney's has helped his mother recently, to support her with creating positive progress in J's behaviour, which was going through a bad period a few weeks ago'.

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH, WELL - BEING AND RESILIENCE

'Participant T who is female and 16 has faced some problems with her physical and mental health. At Carneys she has taken part in boxing sessions as well as volunteering at Fit & Fed sessions, boxing and other workshops. The coaches and volunteers at Carneys have provided continuing support and guidance when needed and her mental and physical health has improved. She loves the 'family atmosphere' which is created at Carneys. Over the summer T benefitted from the Carney's Tutors project that provide academic support for the GCSE exams and has also received mentoring support and extra personal training sessions. She would like to continue volunteering with Carneys and hopes to do a Business course once she has left school'.

IMPROVED LIKELIHOOD OF ENGAGEMENT WITH SUPPORT SERVICES

'We partner with numerous other support services, such as social services and youth offending team. When we have a participant they are trying to engage we always encourage this and provide opportunities for them to meet at our centre, just before or after sessions and have found that this helps with their engagement. On occasions we have also allowed participants on orders, to complete their reparation or community service at Carney's where they are more likely to engage'

SELF - ESTEEM

'Participant Z who is male and 15, has been attending sessions at Carneys for a number of months and is now attending 3-4 times a week. Although he was initially shy, through the support of coaches has grown in confidence. He now acts as a role model and likes to help others who need support. He has been inducted to become a 'Young Leader' and is giving up his time to support events and activities. He is also participating in a youth leadership course called City Leaders'.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

'A key aim of our work is to help develop participants to get them to a point where they are able to enter into employment. Sometimes that employment could be with Carney's, such as our new apprentice who has been working with us since June (following him being referred to us 3 years ago from the Youth Offending Team). We have also had four participants complete a bike maintenance workshop and are working towards being employed in our bike maintenance social enterprise. Added to this, we work closely with Wandsworth Work Match who help support our participants into both part-time and full-time employment'.

LEARNING AND SUMMARY OVERVIEW

Evidence captured for the STTS programme as a whole and in particular this case study, has highlighted how providing 'more than just sessions' has enabled large numbers of young people to be engaged in positive activities, and make a positive impact on young people's lives.

However, this area of work is not without its challenges. With significant external influences impacting on some local areas and some young people, a number of LTOs not only reported stories of positive success, but also reported some cases of young people that were still drawn into anti-social behaviour and youth crime. This is an area of work that requires continued and dedicated support over sustained periods.

The long-term approach taken by Carney's Community is really important and the challenges involved should not be under-estimated.

Learning from this programme also emphasised the importance of a 'tailored' and long-term approach in relation to gathering evidence of impact.

Many of the LTOs involved in the one year STTS programme experienced challenges when they looked to gather feedback through the use of baseline and follow-up surveys, and in some cases found that they: "actually acted as a barrier to engagement and [that participants] often gave false information". Staff at Carney's provided insightful feedback on this issue, which challenge requirements for evaluation data using 'fixed' methods. Their experiences highlighted that:

The most 'hard to reach' young people will often see filling out paperwork as a chore (even when staff do it for them) they are often paranoid about why they might be collecting the information - they often think it is to feed into the police or council.

Participants with poor literacy skills feel intimidated by having to fill out forms and embarrassed when offered support by a member of staff.

Some participants will have had previous experiences of baseline assessments being used by staff from social services, schools, YOTs and the Probation service - who are generally agencies they do not want to work with. So when staff at a Carney's bring out the assessment they immediately associate them with those statutory agencies, which makes them not want to engage

Some participants think that the assessment mean that Carney's staff are working with them as a job, rather than because they care - experiencing comments such as: "You are just doing it cos you get paid....you don't really care....I'm just another statistic to you."

Information gathered at baseline are often not a true reflection of the participants' life. They often don't highlight what is really happening in their life and are too embarrassed (as they have only just met staff) to highlight factors such as: offending behaviour, family situation, mental health issues, substance misuse issue and experiences of abuse. This is all found out further down the line, once they have built a positive relationship. So when a young person does a baseline assessment with someone they do not know well, they are more likely to say they don't have any family issues, or don't get in trouble with the police or at school and are healthy etc. It is only after time spent building a relationship, that staff tend to find out the truth and do another assessment where they are honest and may highlight issues, such as: being constantly kicked out of the house, not communicating with their parents (some of whom may be drug users), or having a lengthy criminal record, suffering from anxiety and depression or may not have attended school for two years. The story in these instances would appear to show a deterioration from baseline to follow-up which in reality is just not true.

Often, things get worse before they get better. One example Carney's staff provided, was of a participant they have been working with for 17 years: "He came to us at 11 as being at risk of offending. We started working with him and found out there were abuse issues, substance misuse and mental health issues in the family, as well as complex relationships and generational offending. He then went on to continue offending, serving over 7 years in custody on 7 different convictions and being the boroughs most prolific offender. However, we supported him throughout the time he was in prison, set boundaries with him which resulted in him going to custody twice due to reports we wrote on his behaviour, whilst still offering our unconditional support and then a period of us trying to get him to work through the cycle of change for about 5 years, where he relapsed on a number of occasions". However, through the long term, holistic support offered by Carney's, he now runs his own business (developed alongside Carney's and which has a community give back element), pays taxes, employs other Carney's participants and has not offended for over 6 years.

The experiences and feedback provided by Carney's is not uncommon in the youth and community sector and over recent years, there have been a number of academic research papers which have highlighted similar challenges¹. Meaning that community organisations which are often working with key target audiences, are not able to meet (for good reasons) the evaluation methods required by some funders.

Therefore, learning from this programme emphasises the need for pragmatic research approaches i.e. one which allows for flexibility so that the methods used are the most appropriate ones for the context and intended audience being targeted.

1) For example, see the following article: 'Youth work, performativity and the new youth impact agenda: getting paid for numbers', Dr. Tania de St Croix (Kings College London), Journal of Education Policy, 2017

THANK YOU

Finally, the information provided in this case study highlights the vitally important and dedicated work undertaken by the staff and volunteers at Carney's Community in supporting young people. StreetGames would like to say a huge thank you for all their efforts and for their involvement in the STTS Programme.

