

# TACKLING INEQUALITIES FUND

In 2020, Sport England launched the Tackling Inequalities Fund (TIF), which forms part of a £210 million support package to help the sport and physical activity sector throughout the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. To date 93 Locally Trusted Organisations (LTOs) from within the StreetGames Network have accessed Tackling Inequalities Funding. This has supported LTOs to re-engage young people from Lower Socio-Economic Groups - with funding predominantly aiming to support additional staff costs, equipment, venue hire and training for a period of six months.

TiF projects began delivery between July and January and their experiences have been unique due to their differing timings, circumstances and locations. At some point they have all had to pause, adapt or completely change their delivery plans due to either national and/or local lockdown restrictions.

Despite these constant challenges, delivery partners have continued to put young people first and provided support and physical activity, where and when it is safe and right to do so. Through TiF funding, StreetGames LTOs have delivered a wide variety of sports and activities including boxing, dance, dodgeball, football and running. In addition to the investment from Sport England, all have received an activity kit containing equipment such as rackets, balls, cones, beanbags, quoits, hula hoops, foam dice, skipping ropes and table tennis bats and balls. To support with activity ideas, they were also sent electronic and hard copy versions of recently produced **StreetGames Activity Cards**.

This document provides a variety of examples, of the ways that TiF funding has sought to respond to some of the key issues caused or worsened by the pandemic. See links below, which share the concerns and issues highlighted by LTOs and young people in the Network during Lockdown 1:

- The Experience of the Coronavirus Lockdown in Low Income Areas of England & Wales
- Youth Voice Research - COVID-19 and Lockdown
- Re-engaging and Reactivating Young People



# MISSING OUT

LTOs usually provide young people with a regular face-to-face, 'Doorstep Sport' offer, i.e. one which takes sport to the doorstep of disadvantaged communities. Without Doorstep Sport, young people from disadvantaged communities often miss out on regular exercise, their favourite sports/activities, seeing friends, positive role models and some form of structure or routine to their week.

LTOs have persisted with dedication to provide these things for their participants. Unfortunately most could not deliver in full how they wanted to, but by reacting, adapting and adding additional aspects to their offer, they have made great progress in replacing some of the key aspects of Doorstep Sport that young people are missing.

## REGULAR EXERCISE



**DURING THE FIRST NATIONAL LOCKDOWN, OUR SURVEY OF YOUNG PEOPLE HIGHLIGHTED THAT 68% WERE LESS ACTIVE THAN NORMAL**

Despite numerous challenges, around half of LTOs who received TiF funding were still able to deliver their planned 'face-to-face' sessions where possible in 2020 and mitigate inactivity, albeit often at reduced capacity to abide by national and local lockdown or tiered restrictions and where this hasn't been possible, many have moved delivery online.

For example:

*St Matthews Project* have used TiF funding to pay coaches to deliver zoom sessions during lockdown.

As well as funding sessions, *Wapping Youth* have used funding to provide weekly prizes to encourage members to increase their online attendance.



## — PROVISION OF RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT —

Many LTOs shared that:



**“A LOT OF OUR FAMILIES LACK EVEN BASIC RESOURCES LIKE A FOOTBALL TO PLAY WITH.”**

Whilst activities such as walking/running can still be undertaken in some form during a full lockdown, most sports and activities are much harder to enjoy with limited space, people and equipment. However, TiF funding has helped many LTOs to provide equipment for participants to enjoy a range of activities, some of which may be new to them and encourage new sporting habits.

For example:

*Stay Fit Stay Focused* carried out home visits with sport equipment, adhering to social distancing.

*Wapping Youth* have used the investment to pay for equipment packs, which they were able to give out to a total 50 participants.

Plus the kit bags and activity cards distributed by StreetGames to LTOs have also supported young people to be active during lockdown.

## — OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT & SEE FRIENDS —

The StreetGames Youth Voice Lockdown Survey highlighted that:



**77% OF YOUNG PEOPLE WERE MISSING THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY THE MOST, OR SOCIALISING IN GENERAL DURING THE FIRST NATIONAL LOCKDOWN.**

**81% OF YOUNG PEOPLE ALSO SAID THAT ONE OF THE THINGS THEY MISSED THE MOST ABOUT THEIR DOORSTEP SPORT SESSIONS, WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET UP AND SOCIALISE WITH FRIENDS.**



Where possible, LTOs have delivered 'physical' sessions, in reduced capacity which has allowed some young people to see friends and socialise, albeit 2 metres apart. However, during full lockdowns in particular, most LTOs have mitigated this issue through delivering to groups online via Zoom or similar. Many LTOs have also put considerable effort into keeping conversation flowing between participants via phone calls and WhatsApp groups.

For example:

*A number of young people were known to DOST before and during lockdown, they kept in touch through text, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, calls and videos. They also ran over 100 group zoom sessions.*

# MENTAL HEALTH

We know that the mental health and wellbeing of young people has been hugely affected by Covid-19, with the lack of Doorstep Sport in their lives only being part of the problem. Feelings of loneliness and isolation have naturally increased and fears around the virus for themselves and their family is also contributing to a decline in mental health. In addition to this, the impacts on young people's employment and education is causing further upset and stress.

Experiences shared by LTO staff included:

*One coach, who received a call at 3:00am from a young person in distress, because a relative had just died of Covid and they were afraid they were going to lose their family.*

*"The pressure to shield the older members of the household added to the fears and distress of the young people".*

In the Youth Voice Survey, young people also share their concerns:

**"THE COURSE I AM STUDYING HAS GOTTEN HARDER AS I HAVEN'T HAD CONTACT WITH MY TUTOR FOR NEARLY 2 MONTHS"**

**"I CANNOT WORK AND I AM CURRENTLY NOT BEING PAID"**

**"MY PLACE OF WORK HAS HAD TO CLOSE DOWN"**

Worryingly, eight months later the country is in full national lockdown, suggesting that for most, many of these issues will not have improved. The longevity of these issues poses huge risks to mental health and LTO staff are now mentioning depression and suicide, when referring to some young people they have been in contact with since. Consequently, some coaches and volunteers are being drawn into youth worker and counselling situations.

As such, many LTOs have prioritised some of their funding to help alleviate the detrimental effects of the pandemic on mental health.



## — MENTORING/ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT —

A greater focus is being put on supporting individuals on a one-to-one basis, to listen, support and shape conversation around their wants and needs. This is being carried out face-to-face, online and through phone calls.

For example:

**Benson** are addressing the need for mental health support by arranging mentoring sessions and telephone 'listening' calls whenever required, often daily. Professional agencies such as *Mind* are considered and signposted to when possible, for those in greater need of support.

As part of their programme, **Jason Roberts Foundation** has suitably qualified staff on hand for one-to-one support, as well as mentoring sessions, for young people to receive advice and to discuss any concerns or issues they are facing.

**Stay Fit Stay Focused** supports on a face-to-face, one-to-one basis speaking to young people who feel isolated, they keep regular phone contact or general meetings at places to discuss any ongoing or freshly arisen issues.

## — GROUP ACTIVITIES —

**Abraham Moss** have developed four new sessions under the banner of 'Chattercise' - quite simply encouraging people to meet and talk whilst exercising outdoors. Activities included Walking, Cycling, Rounders and Gardening.

**Reach Up Youth** tackled isolation with a buddying system called *Hand in the Hat* project and marketed with flyers, asking people to get in touch if they need a buddy or a friend for the COVID lockdown and they are matched with a leader who will stay in regular, casual contact with them.

These projects have been a huge success and help people come together and provide a non-threatening environment in which to share their fears and worries.

## REFERRALS/OUTREACH

LTOs are using a variety of different methods to engage/re-engage young people, including word of mouth, information on social media, peer promotion, outreach and via referrals from other local organisations, including: Youth offending Teams, Family Hubs, Schools, local police teams, CAMHs, community organisations, churches, social services, social workers, Pupil Referral Units, hostels and parents.

Those LTOs that already worked on a referral basis have experienced a significant increase in uptake since the start of the pandemic.

Examples shared have included:

**Wapping Youth** have worked with local stakeholders and the local authority to engage young people who either: missed a lot of school, are at risk of isolation, or have been severely affected by the pandemic. They have also carried out outreach work - speaking to parents and guardians to inform them of their services and meeting many outside supermarkets with some publicity. Their social media presence helped to target many inactive young people and they receive a lot of referrals from the Tower Hamlets Youth workers.

**DOST Centre** who received a huge 56 new referrals over the first lockdown.

**Benson Community** who have received referrals from: schools, local policing teams, care homes and foster parents - meaning that many young people in need have been reached this year.

**Young Champs** have adapted their service, one of their main attributes to success is now reaching into the community and visiting young people. "By doing this, we have the chance to have a conversation with parents too, giving them information and also we can ask questions regarding their children in regards to support needs".



# ONLINE/SOCIAL MEDIA

Where face-to-face contact has not been possible, social media and online methods have been the platform to allow most LTOs to continue to deliver sessions and support their young people. Eight months into the pandemic and some young people, coaches and staff alike are experiencing 'online fatigue', finding it increasingly difficult to mix things up, stay engaged and replicate the value of face-to-face contact.

However, LTOs have used TiF funding and their creativity to do more than host a weekly Zoom call has proved successful.

For example:

*Freedom Foundation* have developed a 'Lockdown Learning Hub' which has enable them to reach more young people

*Wapping Youth* have increased their social media presence, which has helped to target many inactive young people and has also drawn a lot of referrals from the Tower Hamlets Youth workers.

*Waterfront* have put a great deal of effort into driving their social media to spread awareness, recruit new young people and use it as their main platform.

More than ever, LTOs are looking at the needs of families as much as their children, as they too have been hit hard by the pandemic through pay cuts, furloughing and redundancies.

# FAMILY SUPPORT

One LTO said:

**"THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR JOBS OR BEEN FURLOUGHED AND NEVER HAD TO NAVIGATE THE SYSTEM ARE HAVING AN EVEN HARDER TIME. THOSE ARE THE FAMILIES THAT ARE STRUGGLING THE MOST."**

During the first lockdown, young people told us:

**"[THE VIRUS HAS] STOPPED MY PARENTS GOING TO WORK. MY MOTHER IS SELF-EMPLOYED SO MONEY IS MUCH LOWER THAN USUAL AT THE MOMENT."**

**"ALL OF MY FAMILY MAINLY WORKS IN HOSPITALITY OR THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY, SO ALL JOBS HAVE BEEN SEVERELY AFFECTED."**

TiF funding has helped LTOs to address the needs of young people's households, primarily to ensure no one goes hungry. In addition to providing activity opportunities, many have distributed food parcels to households, and some have provided participants with food at their face-to-face sessions, when restrictions permitted.

# TARGET AUDIENCES

## BLACK ASIAN & MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME)

*Abraham Moss*, through their 'Chattercise' project - have run a few different sessions alongside each other targeting the BAME community. Their club currently has members from 47 nationalities with 99% membership from the BAME Community.

*The DOST Centre* engaged young people aged 13-19 - from a refugee or newly arrived background. The aim was to engage young people new to the country and from BAME backgrounds, to decrease isolation and to create friendships and opportunities. They saw 68 young people between August and October, including young people from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Vietnam, Gambia, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Pakistan, Egypt, Kuwait, UK, Bangladesh, who had travelled from all areas of London.

## SEND

*Jason Roberts Foundation* are delivering some one-to-one sessions with SEND families at weekends, which is engaging some of the most vulnerable children.

LTOs in the StreetGames network are using TIF funding to engage young people from LSEGs - within this group, some are looking to engage specific demographics including young people from BAME communities, females and SEND children in particular.

Some examples are provided below:

## FEMALES

*Abraham Moss*' 'Chattercise' project has engaged predominantly females as well as those in the BAME community. Going forward they plan to target the mums, aunts, sisters of their current young participants who do not currently exercise much at present, as well as other female members of the community referred by G.P.'s.

*Wapping Youth* have been supporting women and girls, as they feel there are limited opportunities for them in the local community

## FAMILIES

As well as supporting families with deliveries of food and activity packs, LTOs are also including parents and guardians in their physical activity offers, both online and face-to-face as they recognise that in most cases, they are in as much need.

*Abraham Moss*' 'Chattercise' cycling sessions have proved to be popular and have gone from one session a week to four sessions a week, initially teaching the mums and sisters how to ride a bike now they are actively taking part in the sessions alongside their children. This has seen the adults and children learning new skills together, increasing their physical activity and developing their social and language skills with new friends.

# KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Feedback provided by LTOs has highlighted a number of factors which have helped their TIF delivery to be successful, this has included: the additional funding, the right staff, youth voice, training, use of the natural outdoor environment and booking systems.

## FUNDING

From a recent survey, 93% of LTOs said the TIF funding was 'Extremely Important' in helping their organisation to continue to exist and engage with young people in their communities, with a view to keeping them afloat and active. (One response gave 'Somewhat Important')

*DOST, Stay Fit Stay Focused and Young Champs also specifically highlighted the additional funding being key to their recent success.*

*United in Sports said "Funding support from Street Games TIF Fund has proved invaluable, in some cases this has allowed us to subsidise memberships & sessions, allowing all individuals who were wanting to engage to do so, whilst ensuring that financially we are still able to cover the cost of facilities and coaches"*

## THE 'RIGHT' PERSON

During the first lockdown, young people said they missed their coaches, learning from them and just having an adult to talk to other than family members. Many LTOs highlighted that rapport with coaches has been key to keeping participants engaged throughout the pandemic, with many confiding in them as a trusted adult and positive role model.

*Waterfront shared that: "The right personnel leading the session has been a key factor. Prior to Covid-19 our coaches had built strong rapports with participants which helped in re-engaging individuals back into activity as a sense of familiarity was created".*

*DOST shared that: "The flexibility of our staff in terms of their working hours, being innovative about what sessions to do, where and when has been a key success factor".*

*The St Matthews Project also shared that "using former participants as coaches not only has a knock-on effect for the individual concerned, but also on the young people they are working with, who begin to see what could be on offer to them in the future".*

## YOUTH VOICE

Understanding the wants and needs of the young people has proven key for many, with most delivery plans having to be paused, altered or even totally scrapped. By listening to young people and asking them to help shape delivery, has allowed some LTOs to start afresh.

*Goole's* key success factor was "Listening to young people and putting on activities that they want!"

*Wapping Youth's* online sessions are all designed to educate members to understand different sports and find out which sport they enjoy the most so they can pursue it further.

*IMO Charity* highlighted the importance of their young leaders liaising with their group through social media, discussing what they want to do.

## TRAINING

Some LTOs shared how valuable it has been to support their staff and volunteers to gain new knowledge and skills through online workshops provided by the StreetGames Training Academy:

*Wapping Youth* shared how important "the support and training provided by StreetGames for their volunteers".

*Young Champs* shared that "been very lucky to be a part of StreetGames as the support has been fantastic, from the online learning platforms to partnership work and receiving funding. This has allowed us to adapt gain new skills information and all at the right time to put things into practice. Staff have been on numerous learning courses through Zoom. Altogether this has been a very good learning platform for us all to share information and ideas of how to support young people and our communities in this difficult time".

## BOOKING SYSTEMS

Online registration methods have been mentioned throughout the pandemic, as a great way to book onto a reduced capacity session. It also allows the LTO to gather all the necessary information for Test and Trace requirements, without wasting time at the session. For example:

*Goole* have made use of the online booking system Eventbrite, asking people to book onto their sessions whilst also registering their contact details, so they could support during the pandemic and inform of future activities.

## OUTDOOR SPACE

Many LTOs shared how valuable the outdoor environment has been - particularly those who have been able to deliver in a local park, or outdoor space at their venue. For example:

*Young Champs* have been delivering an outdoor youth project where they have adapted their resources to be able to work with Manchester Parks in an outdoor space.

# ISSUES

Whether mentioned directly or given due to changes in their delivery, all LTOs have been impacted by lockdown/tightening of local restrictions and is the main issue across the board. The changing nature of the environment over this time period has meant that it has been very stop/start for many. Local restrictions have varied across the country and many areas have found that they have been under the tightest level of restrictions for much of the time. The ever changing guidance has also led to some anxiety amongst LTOs about 'doing the right thing' and a fear of 'getting it wrong'.

Some delivery partners also highlighted that:

*Staffing shortages was sometimes an issue, particularly given the restrictions on group sizes and in incidences where staff had had to isolate or shield.*

*With less access to indoor facilities - whilst the outdoor environment has proved hugely valuable, it does also mean that sessions are sometimes impacted by poor weather.*

*During the times when face to face delivery was possible, the need for some young people to self-isolate meant that numbers fluctuated considerably between sessions which made it difficult to plan.*

# FUTURE

StreetGames will carry on listening and talking to our Network of delivery partners to understand the continuing need and changing need as the virus continues to impact. This will influence the priorities for phase 3 of the investment to ensure it gets to the areas, young people and organisations that need it most.

