

BALL GAMES ALLOWED

DARNALL FA, SHEFFIELD

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'Ball Games Allowed' is a StreetGames initiative which aims to support young people to play football in their local community.

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Darnall FA (DFA) has been working in the Sheffield community since 2013, particularly around the Darnall suburb - an area with high levels of deprivation. Their sessions provide young adults and children with football activities for all abilities in a non-competitive environment.

The StreetGames 'Ball Games Allowed' funding enabled DFA to try something completely new aimed at engaging girls and boys of different ages; as parents had often asked DFA if they could put on some sessions for the girls, many of whom were reluctant to get involved in mixed sessions. Following discussions with local parents and children activities were planned to start in Spring 2020. However, due to Coronavirus and lockdown restrictions, the planned activities had to be delayed.



WHERE WE ARE NOW

Once restrictions eased DFA re-contacted parents to let them know that they were planning to start delivery over the summer.

Despite the challenges and additional requirements posed by Covid-19 DFA began their new sessions in August 2020. They have built up a group of engaged young people who want to participate in football and other sports and also have a number of volunteers who are interested in supporting the organisation.

“

....the sessions were a great opportunity to get out and have fun with my family as well as meeting new people. I found it especially beneficial in the Corona virus situation. I would like to see more of these sessions run locally....It definitely helped me get out more and helped me to start more physical activities. It gave me the motivation to start other clubs such as badminton

”

Mezab, Participant.

To date, the programme has engaged 576 participants - with on average, 50+ at each session.

To achieve this success, a flexible approach was required with some of the groups. For example, in some sessions mums wanted to be involved with their daughters too, as they rarely had the opportunity to take part in sport.

However, the activities were not without challenge - the long period of no school/ further education meant the older children, aged 14- 18 were more dis-engaged. In addition, forced stop/start of activities and some children being kept back by concerned parents had some negative impact. Plus poor weather conditions sometimes meant that activities had to be limited on occasions.

IMPACT BEYOND NUMBERS.

The activities have generated fun and laughter between young people, new friendships and an interest in keeping fit. For many this opportunity has allowed more children and their parents to engage with each other more.

“ I thoroughly enjoyed working as part of a team that was able to provide much needed activities for the kids. The sessions were very popular and very well attended, which reflects the demand in the Darnall community for such events. Not only were we able to offer a variety activities for the children, we were also able to empower them by giving them roles and responsibilities each day which were well received. All in all, the sessions were very successful, and it was a real pleasure to be part of a team that could facilitate them! ”

Mike, Coach

LEVEL 2 MULTI SKILLS

In addition, volunteers from DFA had the opportunity to attend the level 2 Multi skill course - some of whom have gone on to deliver paid sessions at other DFA programmes.



WHAT NEXT?

DFA are keen to continue growing the programme and deliver more sessions at different times. In particular, they are keen to develop more evening based activities for the young adults and continue growing their girls offer - all of which will require securing more facilities for the different groups.

DFA are also keen to develop additional opportunities to up skill older participants to future leaders of similar activities, with demand for further multi-skills and football activator training workshops.

