

SATELLITE CLUB PROGRAMME

ADAPTING DURING COVID-19



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In 2020, 95 Locally Trusted Organisations (LTOs) had planned to deliver doorstep sport sessions aimed at engaging young people aged 14+ from lower socio-economic groups (LSEGs) via Sport England Satellite Club funding. However, when the coronavirus pandemic hit the UK, these sessions were impacted along with the rest of the country testing the resilience of coaches, volunteers and young people.

In September 2020, StreetGames distributed an online survey to LTOs in receipt of recent Satellite Club funding, to find out their current status, how the pandemic had affected their delivery and how they had attempted to overcome its challenges.

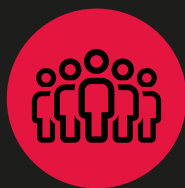
IMPACT

The feedback highlighted that when the UK went into lockdown:

- No Satellite Clubs were able to continue delivering as normal.
- Nearly half were forced to pause their delivery until restrictions were lifted/eased.
- Around a quarter of LTOs managed to continue delivering by changing their methods.

CHALLENGES

Lockdown restrictions affected LTOs in many different ways, the most common challenges being:



Reduced group sizes/rule of six



Keeping sessions engaging with limited things to offer



Indoor venues closing



Lack of support from schools



Ever-changing government guidance



Technology issues
(not enough devices at home,
learning Zoom)



Forced to stop delivery by
councils/governing bodies



Keeping sessions COVID safe and
insisting the importance of the
rules on participants

ADAPTABILITY

Despite these challenges, the adaptability of LTOs is evident – as 66% have now (October) returned to delivering since lockdown restrictions began, despite it not being how they originally planned, or would like to deliver. Commonly LTOs have adapted over the year by:

- Transitioning their delivery using online/virtual methods
- Delivering resources such as equipment, activity packs and food
- Using the opportunity to try new activities/ideas

We asked LTOs how their activities/methods had to adapt when restrictions were eased:

- Altered activities to reduce physical contact e.g. boxing sessions are now non-contact
- Venue changes – often moving to use outdoor spaces
- Shorter, more frequent sessions to accommodate everyone
- Providing equipment handouts to enable young people to exercise at home
- Higher emphasis on hygiene and cleaning processes
- Signposting to other local organisations/facilities

SHARED IDEAS AND APPROACHES

Despite the challenges faced, a number of LTOs also highlighted a number of positives from their adapted approaches which included:

- Adapting to work with smaller groups of young people had led to improved engagement/retention
- Online sessions encouraging some 'less sporty' young people to engage and helping them to get to know other participants before they joined in with face-to-face sessions
- Using the opportunity to try new activities, new ways of working and engage with new partners
- Online provision helping them to maintain engagement and friendships between young people



SOME EXAMPLES FROM LTOS ARE SHARED BELOW:

“

From March 16th until July 1st we moved the whole club online and delivered over 30 activities a week via WhatsApp and then Zoom, including 90 minute daily football and tennis coaching sessions. From July 1st onwards we returned to face to face sessions in small groups. We're now (September) offering 53 activities a week, in a mixture of online and face to face sessions ”

ABRAHAM MOSS WARRIORS

“

Lockdown measures forced our clubs to close in mid-March. We quickly adapted our activities to source and deliver sports equipment packs for our members, so disabled people could keep active from the safety of their own home. We also developed free downloadable activity guides, run weekly online activity classes and arrange calls between coaches and members to help people keep connected ”

DISABILITY SPORTS COACH

“

As soon as the lockdown started we moved online, delivering classes on Instagram! It soon became apparent that young people in our local community were quite uncomfortable with this, so we moved to Zoom classes for more privacy. Eventually, when the government allowed us to deliver in small bubbles we moved to my back garden (240 foot) – 3 times weekly, 3 hours per day. All sessions were once again full and the young people made every effort to attend ”

ESSENTIAL REJUVENATION

POSITIVE CHANGE

Despite an increasingly difficult time for everyone – most Satellite Clubs still felt that their activities had:

- Helped more young people to be more active (69%)
- Helped young people feel more positive towards sport/exercise (69%)
- Helped young people to build more regular activity habits (64%)

‘Other’ positive changes LTOs shared, included:

- *‘Helping to build friendships and allowed students to share experiences during lockdown’*
- *‘It was more about their mental well-being young people was suffering from lack of socialising’*
- *‘Improved young women’s confidence and given them a can-do attitude’*
- *‘Some young participants have progressed into employment with our support’*