



YOUNG PERSON'S *Manifesto*

**YOUNG
PERSON'S**
Manifesto



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ABOUT US

StreetGames is dedicated to transforming the lives of children and young people from our most underserved communities through the power of sport. Our work enables young people, and the communities they grow up in, to be healthier, safer, and more successful.

We've been working since 2007, championing sport and physical activity as a right for all young people. We are unashamedly on the side of those from low-income backgrounds living in underserved communities. Sport has a unique power to transform the lives of some of the most excluded young people – to tackle discrimination and inequality, provide safety and support, improve wellbeing, and enable young people to thrive and have their voice heard.

Our work helps support locally trusted organisations (LTOs) in the heart of underserved communities to empower and enable young people to be 'more successful' and help achieve their potential regardless of their background. The LTOs we work with are integral in the development of young people in their communities. LTOs come in all shapes and sizes but what they have in common is that they have won the trust of their community, understand what is needed and what works in that community and are able to make change happen for the benefit of that community.

The young people we work with face significant challenges, threatening their futures and impacting their aspirations during their crucial, formative years. The pandemic led to huge disruption to education, careers, and personal development, with those from low-income backgrounds being the hardest hit and continuing to be hampered by its long-term impact.

We hear from young people every day – they tell us they are scared for their futures, feeling destabilised and debilitated when they should be full of ambition and hope. Our 1,000 Young Voices insight showed that one in three feel they've only a limited sense of control over their lives, 40% are concerned about 'mine and my family's finances', 35% are worried about 'my mental health' and 33% are worried about 'not being able to achieve my career goals'.

We know young people want increased opportunities to feel empowered and inspired, and opportunities to build confidence/self-esteem, grow skills and independence and take back control of their lives. They also want the opportunity to speak their truth to power.

The StreetGames Young Advisors are no different. This is their manifesto.



WHY & HOW?

Young people are at the heart of the community and want to see meaningful change enabling them to learn new skills, invest in their communities, develop, and gain opportunities that young people from more affluent areas have access to. When they have the opportunities to do these things, they can play an important role in changing their local communities for the better, enabling them to level-up. This manifesto has been created to enable young people's voices from underserved communities across the UK to be heard in the lead up to the UK general election 2024.

As part of the creation of the manifesto, five Young Advisors from underserved communities were recruited from across England and Wales. These Advisors worked collectively to develop suitable questions and approaches to obtain the information for the manifesto so that it represents the true voice of disadvantaged young people. The Young Advisors are passionate about sharing some of the challenges they face and their ideas for improvement, as well as advocating for other young people from underserved communities.

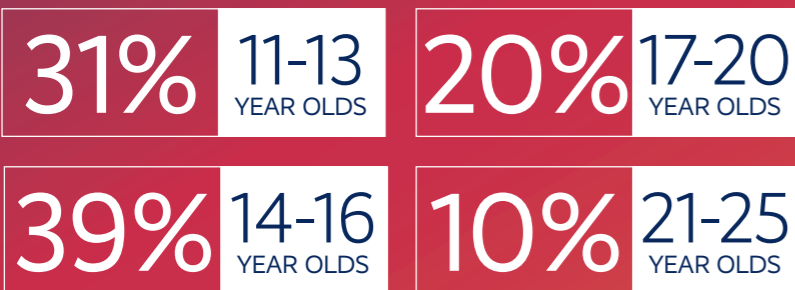
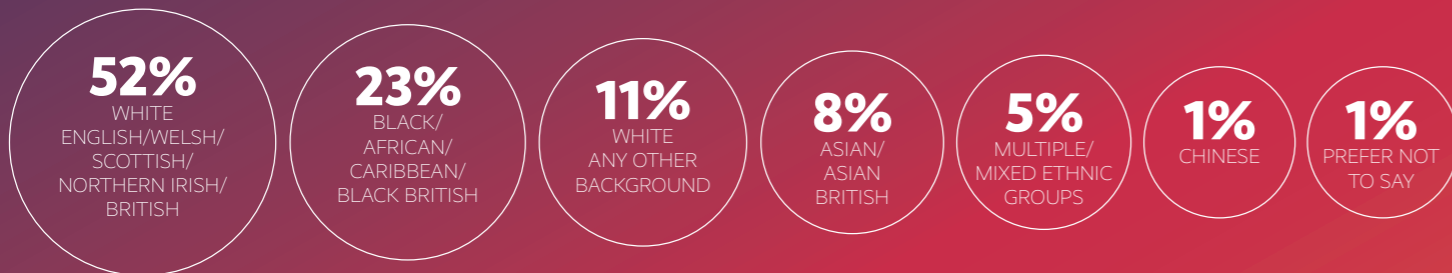
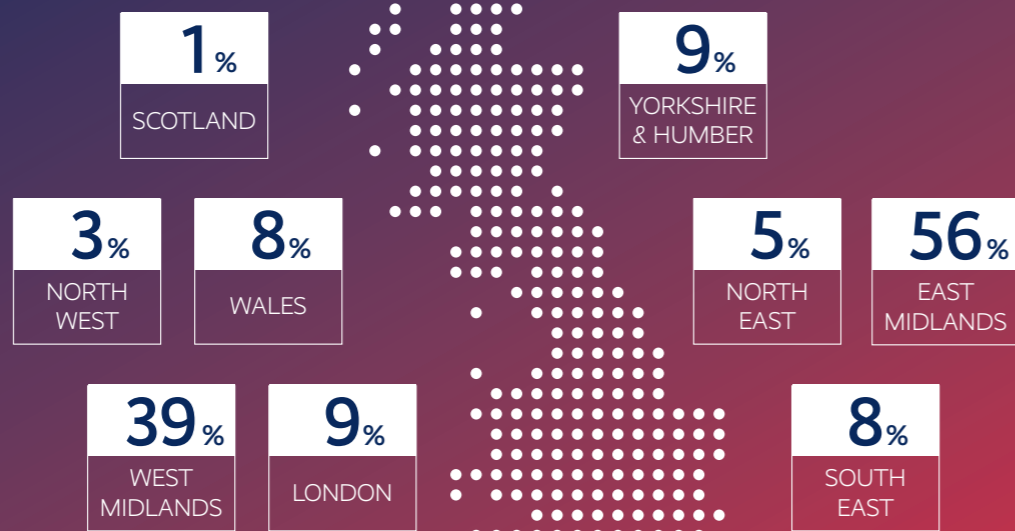
The initial planning sessions were undertaken via online meetings. To help build rapport, the Young Advisors undertook a role play task as members of government and began debating key themes that were important to them, which helped them to create the questions for the manifesto. The decision was then made to develop a simple online survey that could be shared as far and as wide as possible to LTOs and young people in the StreetGames network and beyond.

The Young Advisors took an active role in promoting the manifesto and enabled many of their peers to take part, especially during their own local Doorstep Sport sessions. The information below provides an overview of the profile of young people that took part in the survey. Key themes and potentials 'asks' were identified in response to the survey. This document details the findings from this work.



DEMOGRAPHICS

159 RESPONDENTS



Arissa

Hi, my name is Arissa. I'm 16 and I'm from South Manchester. I've always had a deep passion for sport, especially football and boxing. I struggled quite a lot in school with my mental health and it was never the place I felt a connection with. Luckily, I had an amazing group of people around me who got me involved in a youth prevention programme with an organisation called The Manchester United Foundation.

My coach introduced me to StreetGames. He explained how they use multisport to help underprivileged kids and a lot of what they do resonated with what I was doing already. I soon got into multiple calls with StreetGames and became a Young Advisor with the four other young people involved. We all voiced our ideas on how we can involve sport more in the community but also to hear back from other people. We created a survey where we got some amazing feedback and before we knew it, we were all in London going through the data. It was two days that I'll forever hold dear to me because I made some lifelong friends and really got to talk about what sport and the community means to me. The opportunity StreetGames has given me has left an impact on my life. Not only do I feel empowered, I feel as though we have created a real difference with the survey and what will be coming next. I'm beyond proud of all the people who I've worked with over the last few months and forever grateful for this opportunity.



Yahya

I'm Yahya and I'm from Blackburn. Initially, I had no idea what I was signing up for when I applied to be a Young Advisor with StreetGames. When I was told it was an opportunity for young people to voice our concerns and have a say in deciding our future, I really wanted to take part. Coming from an underserved community, you don't get many opportunities to have the "important conversations" that could potentially impact your futures.

Taking part in this opportunity was amazing. Being able to be part of a team to create the manifesto was really insightful. I learned a lot while also being able to share my ideas and have definitely made new friends for life. As an aspiring economist, this experience made me think that working for the government to try to tackle issues like this may not be as bad as I thought. If what we created is able to make change, be noticed by prominent people or even just spark conversations among people, I feel as though we'll have accomplished way more than anybody thought we could have.



Jamal

Hello, my name is Jamal. I am one of the Young Advisors representing StreetGames from Cardiff. My favourite sport is basketball. My passion for sports was developed at a young age as I used to look up to idols such as Gareth Bale and Sam Warburton. I believe encouraging the youth in terms of sports is the best way to uplift communities, whether it be coaching, workshops or general activities to include the communities, and most importantly, to represent those from a disadvantaged background. I believe taking part in this opportunity allows others that may relate to where I come from or what I look like. This opportunity has impacted me by helping me think of ideas to further help the communities in different ways. I have also gotten to connect to others from different places all over the UK in which I have made friends.



Our asks of government



VOLUNTEERING

More clear routes into positive and constructive volunteering opportunities.

- Local employers and organisations to provide workshops in schools, youth clubs and Doorstep Sport sessions to help young people understand what opportunities are available and different ways to volunteer – utilise experiences of young people who already volunteer to deliver the workshops.
- Include resources during the workshops to support young people in their volunteering, such as funding to help cover travel expenses and food to help those who might not be able to volunteer otherwise i.e. 'poverty proof' volunteer opportunities.
- Consider ways to improve the advertising and promotion of volunteering opportunities and how pathways into the opportunities can be simplified for young people.
- Mandatory volunteering to begin at age 15 in education.
- Introduce a programme of volunteer promotion through school assemblies.



SAFETY

More accessible safe places to attend to reduce antisocial behaviour and crime.

- Create/open up more spaces for young people in local communities e.g. schools and local facilities.
- Fund more activities that provide 'safe spaces'.
- Increase access to training so more people are able to step up and provide youth sessions.
- Increase positive relationships between police and youth groups/young people e.g. [BID Ambassadors in West Bromwich](#)
- Increase the number of police in areas and provide them with the right training to support young people with mental health as well as keeping areas safe.
- All the above could be linked to the concept of a 'safety hub' where young people could go 24 hours a day to seek support.

ACCESS TO SPORT

More affordable and accessible opportunities to take part in sports or physical activities in their local area.

- Improve facilities and provide more specialist equipment so more can be offered e.g. multi-sport sites.
- Improve access to existing facilities e.g. how do we gain increased access to school sites for free or low cost?
- Increase funding to provide more sessions.
- Provide funding for small kit and equipment bags – this will provide an opportunity for flexible sessions to be delivered and increase range of what is offered.
- Improve the amount of multi-sport offered – key help would be more kit to try different things.



VOTING

The voting process for young people is difficult and confusing and should be more easily accessible.

- Include information about the voting system and how to get unbiased information in the education curriculum.
- More easily accessible information and guidance about the voting process.

MENTAL WELLBEING

More access to understanding adults, that advocate for listening, support and dialogue.

- Specialist mental health training for those in youth facing roles.
- Training and support for coaches and volunteers as well as role models in the community – outside of school as it is about support not related to school space.
- More counsellors in schools as volume of demand is high.
- Provision of 'safe spaces' to connect with adults trained in the provision of mental health and wellbeing support.
- More coordinated information about the range of different people that young people can turn to, to access support.



Mia

Hey, my name is Mia, and I am one of the Young Advisors helping to construct the youth manifesto. I currently coach and still play netball for an organisation called Anygirl netball, where they taught me the true value of being a sports coach but also helped me re find myself and provided me the ability to believe in me.

When I heard about this opportunity I couldn't wait to get started as I haven't had the easiest childhood in terms of mental health and growing up in the West Midlands which is deprived of sports activities and resources but also because I want to pass on the life lesson I learnt later in life rather than earlier but to also be a role model for any young person who's struggling or feels worthless that if u believe in something it will happen you just need time, perseverance but most importantly you need to believe in yourself in order to take action. This is what has driven me to want to finally be the change our community needs. Young people deserve a say about their own future and this manifesto is allowing us to give young people a say and create the foundation for making change and I want to be that change.



Scott

Hi, my name is Scott and I'm a Young Advisor for StreetGames. I come from Hastings, which is a seaside town in the southeast. I am left-handed and do some coaching with Active Hastings. I joined the Young Advisor project to see and cause change all over the country. I was introduced to this project by one of the coaches in the Active Hastings team. This impacts me because without doing this project I'm afraid that I would have just gone through life without thinking about the lack of opportunities in this country to volunteer and the safety for the future generations, especially those from disadvantaged areas.



KEY FINDINGS, THEMES & ASKS



VOLUNTEERING

Accessibility to volunteering opportunities

37% of young people that took part in the survey shared that there are opportunities to volunteer in their community settings. However, 35% said they had no opportunities and 27% were unsure if there were opportunities or not – suggesting a lack of volunteering opportunities and accessible information for many young people in their communities.

Young people also shared that there is a lack of opportunities in education/employment when it comes to volunteering and they are finding it increasingly difficult to transition into employment as a result. It was also felt that there is a lack of advertisement around attractive volunteering opportunities and the young people we spoke to want more information on how they can get involved.

Volunteers need to be well managed and have opportunities for development. Young people also told us that there is a need to provide support to increase the take up of volunteering opportunities; providing travel and food would enable those who might not be able to volunteer to do so. For example, one young person suggested:

“

**Make it as easy as possible.
Take away all barriers
and give support staff the
right training to create a
supportive and progressive
environment.**

”

The ask

- Local employers and organisations to provide workshops in schools, community groups and sports settings to help young people understand the different ways to volunteer and what opportunities are available. The experience and expertise of young people already volunteering should be used in the workshops.
- ‘Poverty proof’ volunteering opportunities. Include funding to help cover travel expenses and food to support those who might not be able to volunteer otherwise.
- Consider ways to improve the advertising and promotion of volunteering opportunities and how pathways into the opportunities can be simplified for young people.



Education in schools/youth clubs and employment

Many young people who took part in this survey asked for more open access opportunities to volunteer and develop their own skills. They shared how important they believe volunteering is to aid their employability and skills development. Significant numbers of young people demanded more accessible volunteering opportunities, with several recommending volunteering became mandatory in educational and employment settings. One participant suggested the need to ‘Provide more education schemes for young people so they know how to gain work experience’, whilst another proposed ‘volunteering opportunities to be made mandatory in education’. Young people shared that they are interested in learning future life skills more than other current areas of the curriculum, and that topics such as volunteering/work experience should be considered in this.

The ask

- Mandatory volunteering to begin at aged 15.
- Introduce a programme of volunteer promotion through school assemblies and youth club settings.



SAFETY

Relationship building with the police and society

To help young people to feel safe when they are getting to and from school, college, work, and sport/ physical activity sessions, one of the key themes that emerged from this survey is the need for more street lighting and cameras in local communities. Young people also shared the need for more policing in the local areas, with the 'right people' helping to ensure the safety of young people.

It was felt that this could be done by involving police in local community sessions, enabling the young people to build trust and rapport, and helping them to share concerns and issues with the police more freely. Knife crime was a commonly mentioned concern, and there was a sense that by having these parameters in place as well as a safe space to spend time in, these crimes would reduce.

One young person shared that:

“
They should ensure that people have a better chance of making it home safe. Many people get assaulted, and I have seen this with my own eyes.
”

An example that was shared by our Young Advisors were the [BID Ambassadors in West Bromwich](#), providing a strong link between the community and the police, enabling a direct line between ambassadors and police when young people witness crime or are feeling unsafe.

Young people have shared that it is vital to build trust between young people from ethnically diverse communities and the police, so that young people feel safe to contact the police when an issue arises, rather than being subject to discrimination.

The ask

- Increase positive relationships between police and youth groups/young people e.g. [BID Ambassadors in West Bromwich](#)
- Increase police presence in areas and provide them with the right training to support young people with their mental health as well as keeping areas safe.



Safe places

In addition to feeling safe on the streets young people shared the need for 'safe places' within local communities, with activities to attend on a regular basis, as a means of reducing the risk of young people being on the street and participating in anti-social behaviour or crime.

“
Keep safe places open. Help the people that want to keep youth clubs and community centres open. Then we have a safe place to go.
”

Having a safe space and leaders they can trust will support young people to attend sessions regularly. Another participant stated:

“
They should allow for more sports sessions, so kids get off the streets.
”

The ask

- Create/open more spaces for young people in local communities e.g. schools and local facilities.
- Fund more activities that provide 'safe spaces'.
- Increase access to training so more people are able to step up and provide youth sessions.
- All the above could be linked to the concept of a 'safety hub' where young people could go 24 hours a day to seek support.



“
Provide us with more free or discounted activities so we can learn and stops us conforming to antisocial behaviour.
”

VOTING AGES

48% of the young people who completed this survey stated that the voting age should not be reduced to 16. They highlighted there was a lack of information:

“

Most teenagers do not feel ready to vote and are not knowledgeable about current politics.

”

Young people also shared that politics is not taught enough in schools, as the focus is on the main curriculum subjects, and isn't easily accessible to help them make informed decisions. Many stated that 17 was a better age to begin to vote as young people have a greater maturity at that age.

“

We are old enough to drive and to get jobs, so we should also be old enough to have a say about our future.

”

However, 39% of young people believe that they should have the right to vote at 16. With the future in their hands, these young people felt they had a right to make critical decisions that will impact them in the future. One participant stated:

“

It's our future and we deserve a say, if people actually listened to us they would realise what we are saying and what we want is impactful.

”

These young people also shared that they wanted the opportunity to learn more about politics and that it should be made a priority in schools to ensure that they have the right knowledge and understanding to make informed decisions.

The young people stated that the lead up to the voting process is difficult and confusing and should be put into a more accessible format for everyone to understand. They also shared that they feel that information can be skewed by social media and become very biased, so a single method of sharing the correct facts and details to vote would be beneficial, allowing them to make informed decisions on who to vote for. Overall, most respondents tended to feel that 16 is too young to vote, with the majority stating that 17 would be a better age to make impactful decisions.

In Wales and Scotland, the voting age for the Senedd elections and Scottish Parliament elections has already been lowered to 16; however it remains at 18 for UK General elections. This creates a confusing system for 16- and 17-year-olds living in both Wales and Scotland to engage with. There is however scope to use the learning from both countries in how to educate and engage young people to vote, creating a clearer understanding for all young people on how to engage in the political system.



The ask

- **Include information about the voting system and how to get unbiased information in the education curriculum.**
- **Increase the availability of easily accessible and credible information on politics to aid engagement.**

ACCESS TO SPORT

Of the young people who completed the survey, 59% indicated that they believed there are not enough affordable and accessible opportunities for young people to participate in sports or physical activities within their local area. A further 15% stated they were 'not sure' on the availability of such opportunities.

Facilities

A lack of suitable facilities to engage in sport or physical activity was identified as a key factor that contributed to inadequate opportunities within local communities. Many young people believed that the existing facilities could be upgraded or utilised more effectively. This involved designing facilities that could be used in winter, so they could be accessed during colder months when insufficient lighting and a lack of indoor spaces hinder the provision to outdoor activities. One participant shared:

“

During the winter months I struggle with sport as my local youth club is only small and we use grassed area mainly in summer.

”

Additionally, there was a consensus that many facilities and their equipment needed to be modernised.

The accessibility of facilities emerged as a crucial concern, with many emphasising the need for increased opportunities to access facilities for free or at discounted rates. This was seen as essential to preventing exclusion due to cost; a critical barrier to increasing participation amongst disadvantaged young people. Beyond cost considerations, the geographical location of facilities was also identified as a key factor contributing to inaccessibility, particularly if they were only reachable by car. Opening school facilities outside of school hours for young people to engage in sport and physical activity for free or at subsidised rates is considered a good way of providing more inclusive and accessible sport. Increasing the availability of sports facilities is also perceived as a means to mitigate crime and anti-social behaviour by diverting young people away from involvement in such activities.

Increasing funding streams targeted at community sport was considered crucial for making sport more accessible, as it could lead to improving/opening facilities, expanding opportunities for free sports engagement, offering a broader range of sports, and providing more inclusive offers.

The ask

- Improve facilities and provide more equipment so more can be offered e.g. multi-sport sites, all year round.
- Improve access to existing facilities e.g. how do we gain increased access to school sites for free or low cost.



Opportunities & People

The young people we heard from expressed the need for increased opportunities to engage in a more diverse range of sports and physical activities. Some mentioned there were lots of opportunities to play traditional/mainstream sports such as football in their area but there was a lack of alternatives. Having a wider variety of sports on offer was deemed likely to help engage more young people who are currently inactive, as people would have more chance of finding an activity that suited them. Additionally, they also emphasised the need for more free or subsidised opportunities to improve engagement in sporting activity.

Sport sessions targeted to specific groups, including female-only sessions and sessions for young people with special educational and disability needs was highlighted as important. It was felt non-targeted sessions can often lead to people feeling or being 'excluded'. However, it was emphasised the 'right' coaches and volunteers leading sport sessions can mitigate the risk of anyone feeling excluded. The importance of having the right individuals involved in sports was a recurring theme throughout the survey, emphasising the necessity for proper training, development and support to enable effective delivery.

The ask

- Increase funding to provide more free or low-cost sessions including more targeted sessions.
- Provide funding for small kit and equipment bags to provide more flexibility in delivery.

MENTAL WELLBEING

Education and training for more people

The survey shed light on the pressing need for appropriate mental health training in roles that directly interact with young people. The survey emphasises the challenges young people face in opening up about their mental health because of the perceived weakness of doing so. Many young people expressed the need for more 'understanding' adults who genuinely listen and engage in dialogue with young people.

Several respondents emphasised the necessity of incorporating mental health education into school curriculums, addressing the taboo surrounding the topic. They suggested the implementation of specialised lessons on the significance of mental well-being for all pupils. There is also a need for this to be implemented in the wider community, including youth workers, coaches, police and trusted adults in the community.

The ask

- Specialist mental health training for those in youth facing roles.
- Training and support for coaches and volunteers as well as role models in the community – outside of school as it is about support not related to school space.
- More counsellors in schools as volume of demand is high, as well as out of school support via trusted adults and youth workers to support the gap in provision.

Access to Help & Support

The young people we spoke to advocated for creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable discussing their feelings without judgment. This involved promoting open communication channels through workshops, discussions, and mentorship programmes. They emphasised genuine dialogue between adults and young people, recognising the value of shared experiences. Additionally, there was an emphasis on community engagement, with suggestions for more social clubs, events, and safe spaces where young people can interact, share their thoughts, and build a sense of belonging. The need for positive role models and mentorship to guide and support young people through their challenges was also emphasised.

There was a strong emphasis on making mental health services more accessible, including face-to-face support, counselling, and drop-in centres. Suggestions for discounted or free therapy sessions, along with community-based support groups, highlight the importance of financial accessibility. The need for face-to-face support, as opposed to online was also highlighted:

“

Face to face mental health support. It's all gone online, and I can't access that.

”

Integrating mental health discussions into school curricula, reducing stress associated with exams, and offering extracurricular opportunities were also highlighted as being important. Furthermore, the young people stressed the significance of physical well-being, encouraging activities like sports, being active outdoors, and creative outlets to improve mental health.

The ask

- Improve facilities and provide more specialist equipment so more can be offered e.g. multi-sport sites.
- Improve access to existing facilities e.g. how do we gain increased access to school sites for free or low cost?
- Increase funding to provide more sessions.
- Provide funding for small kit and equipment bags – this will provide an opportunity for flexible sessions to be delivered and increase range of what is offered.
- Improve the amount of multi-sport offered – key help would be more kit to try different things.

IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE TO TELL THE PRIME MINISTER/FIRST MINISTER ONE THING TO CHANGE/IMPROVE OR DO DIFFERENTLY TO IMPROVE YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

“

More funding for youth services is needed! Young people need a place to come after school and to socialise with other people.

”

“

Make everyone feel like they can be included, and not leaving people out just because of a quality they have. Qualities are unique and should be accepted, so why should people feel left out when we should embrace who we are.

”

“

To have local community centres available as we have to travel further afield now to access the nearest community centre. In addition, to have better health services for young people. More mental health support for young people, e.g. support groups.

”

“

I would say to have more accessible places for people to access so they can improve their skills and boost their confidence, also while having fun doing something they enjoy.

”

“

Wider range of zero cost opportunities.

”

“

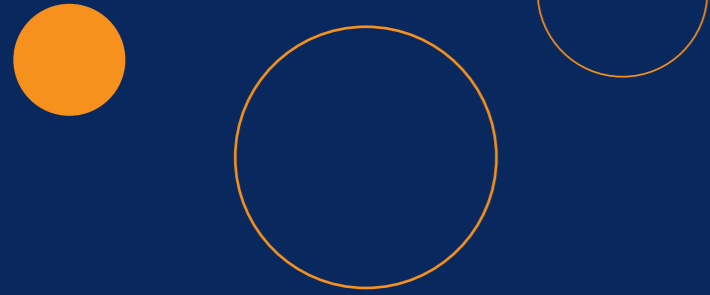
Help fund for a better education and better future for the children and teens who have been impacted by poverty in their areas.

”

“

Put more funding into sports facilities so that everyone is able to join in with some sort of physical activity.

”



MORE SUCCESSFUL

Doorstep Sport helps the young people we work with, and the communities that they live in, to become healthier, safer, and more successful.

Effective Doorstep Sport ensures that young people are empowered and offered both challenging and developmental opportunities as they progress to help build key social and life skills. Effective Doorstep Sport provides opportunities for personal development both within the sports participation itself together with opportunities for youth leadership and youth social action – a concept which stretches traditional ideas of volunteering to include young people having a large say in running the activities. The ideal is that Doorstep Sport grows a generation of young people who lead sport as volunteers, coaches, organisers and leaders within their own neighbourhood.

Put simply the 'More Successful' element of the StreetGames Strategy can be described as using Doorstep Sport to support and develop the next generation where all young people from low-income, underserved communities can access a pathway to become volunteers and future community leaders.

NextGen is the conscious "plus" element to Doorstep Sport, where young people can access a progressive pathway of support into, and from, Doorstep Sport which enables them to take part in a range of developmental opportunities to raise their aspirations, become empowered, trained and developed with skills for life and employment, and take on youth action opportunities in their communities or alongside their peers.

Young people from low income and underserved communities are less likely to leave school with the qualifications that set them up for further education or employment. They are less likely to have a social network which provides routes into places of employment. And they are more likely to have a negative view of learning and education. These factors, along with others, mean that young people from low income and underserved communities do not have the same opportunities to develop human and social capital and therefore they are at a disadvantage in the workplace and in multiple areas of their lives.

When it comes to volunteering, there is no level playing field. Data from Sport England's Active Lives survey shows that people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are under-represented in volunteering, comprising just 10% of all weekly sport volunteers but 30% of the adult population.

As the lives of disadvantaged young people get tougher, the benefits of volunteering become ever more important. Volunteering can, and does improve life chances, so harvesting these benefits is crucial. Currently, almost a third of all UK children live in poverty, and this figure is expected to rise over the next few years. The effects of this poverty on a young person's growth, wellbeing and levels of attainment can be debilitating. For instance, sixteen-year-olds from poorer backgrounds are a third less likely to achieve good GCSE results than their wealthier peers. Continued investment in these sorts of young volunteering opportunities is key to the future of StreetGames and to the health, safety and success of the young people themselves, as well as the communities in which they live. The benefits of volunteering include increased confidence, raised aspirations, improved communication skills, improved wellbeing, opportunities for paid work, and gaining transferrable skills such as teamwork, problem solving and leadership. [Lessons of StreetGames Young Volunteers - StreetGames](#)

A key strand of the work we do at StreetGames includes the development and empowerment of Young Advisors, a programme which provides opportunities and support to help enhance their skills, personal attributes and employability. Young Advisors are highly valuable to our work; they are a voice for young people to inform and co-design our work and through mentoring roles, they become role models/leaders for other young people in their communities.



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