

Sporting Communities Places For People



WHY

Working with StreetGames and Places for People, Sporting Communities identified the need for this project to act as a vehicle to establish relationships with young people residing in the area, by providing hyper local and detached Doorstep Sport activities. The project aims to build trust, gain insights into the barriers to participation, and understand the motivations of the young people. The project is particularly crucial because of budget cuts and the redirection of funding from other youth projects in the area. As a result, the young people in the community have been facing a lack of local provision and opportunities to stay active.

HOW

To initially engage with young people in the local area, staff employed various strategies. They conducted 3-4 weeks of Doorstep Sport within the focus areas, allowing them to interact with the young people and gain an insight into their needs, interests, and motivations. This period also served as an opportunity to recruit and promote the upcoming sessions. The engagement methods included taster sessions, face-to-face leafleting, and direct interactions.

Referrals were received from local youth groups, as well as through family and youth services, further increasing participation in the sessions. These referrals played a role in expanding the reach of the project and attracting young people who may not have been initially aware of the opportunities.

To retain participants, the project would focus on building relationships with the young people. This would be achieved by ensuring consistent staff members were present during the activities, fostering familiarity and trust. By having the same staff members engage in specific activities, a sense of continuity and connection would be established.



Hobson Drive and
Oakfields Grove
in Spondon.



Weekly
90 minute sessions



35
Young People
attended in total



20%
Of participants
were female



8-16
Participant
Age Range

WHAT

Sporting Communities have delivered a range of activities as part of this project. Firstly, they delivered weekly multi-sport sessions that focused on play games and football. The sessions were facilitated by experienced youth engagement workers and coaches who had expertise in play, youth work, and football. While football was the main focus of the sessions, the young people also had the opportunity to participate in new games such as Island Tag, swim fish swim, and more, particularly during the summer months.

In addition to these regular sessions, three trips were organised for 22 young people who attended the sessions, accompanied by some of their parents. These trips aimed to keep the cohort engaged during the winter months while providing them with new experiences alongside their siblings and parents. The first trip, held in November, involved 20 young people participating in 60 minutes of Free Jumping at Oxygen. The second trip, conducted in December before the Christmas break, consisted of two games of Laser Tag at Willows Sports Centre. Lastly, in January, the young people visited Willows Sports Centre for 60 minutes of football on the 3G pitch.

These activities, including the weekly multi-sport sessions and the organized trips, provided a diverse range of experiences and opportunities for the young people involved. They not only engaged in their preferred sport of football but also had the chance to explore new games and enjoy outings with their peers and parents, creating a sense of excitement and involvement throughout the year.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED

The main benefits for the participants who took part in this project include the opportunity to stay engaged in sport and physical activity, specifically targeted at young people aged 8-16. The project provides them with positive role models and experienced youth workers to support their continued involvement. This is particularly significant given the reduced number of alternative provisions within the area, making the project an important resource for the community.

The impact of this project on participants has been significant. Firstly, it has facilitated the engagement of young people in healthy habits and the promotion of positive behaviours, largely influenced by the dedicated session staff. Additionally, the project has fostered collaboration and the building of relationships among local young people, helping to keep them actively engaged. Staff members have also reported an increase in participants' confidence levels as a result of their involvement in the project.

Moreover, the community has benefited from the project as it has provided a platform for young people to stay positively engaged. By offering structured activities and support, the project contributes to the development of relationships within families and respect for the communities they live in.

LEARNING

One of the key factors contributing to the project's success has been the solution found by staff to keep the young people involved all year round. This consistent provision of activities has allowed young people to rely on the project and build trust, as they know that the same staff members will consistently show up and deliver the activities they have requested or suggested. This reliability and continuity have created a sense of stability and reliability for the participants.

A key learning from the activities and approach was the significance of maintaining consistency in staff members and youth workers. By ensuring that the staff members had experience in various sports, with a specific focus on football, they were able to effectively engage the young people over a sustained period. The establishment of strong relationships between the staff members and participants played a vital role in fostering trust and facilitating the adoption of positive behaviours and actions.

Another factor that has contributed to the project's success is the emphasis on creating opportunities for long term participation. By allowing young people to lead their own play games and activities, the project has empowered them to take ownership and responsibility. This approach not only enhances their engagement and enjoyment but also builds a level of autonomy and empowerment.

On the other hand, some aspects of delivery proved more challenging.

Winter session delivery was adversely affected by inclement weather conditions and the shorter, darker nights, resulting in lower attendance and participant retention. Concerns regarding safety from families also contributed to this challenge. Difficulties were also encountered in finding suitable and affordable indoor venues in the area due to waterlogged green spaces over winter.

In response to these challenges, Staff organised three trips spread across November, December, and January to maintain engagement. Additionally, on days with particularly bad weather, staff members provided hot chocolates and conducted small activities within the park's playground.



HOW HAS THE FUNDING HELPED

The funding received has had a significant impact on Sporting Communities in several ways. Firstly, it has facilitated the growth of the provision into a new area that had not been served previously, allowing valuable insights into the specific needs of the local residents here, and what activities they want to do.

Additionally, the funding has enabled Sporting Communities to introduce new sessions tailored for young people in Spondon. Families have expressed appreciation for these opportunities, particularly during the summer months, as they help keep their children active and engaged after school.

Furthermore, the provision of these sessions has addressed a gap in the local community, as there was limited access to such activities previously. Families have shared how happy they are with having nearby provision where they can send their children, or even participate themselves. This feedback has also been useful in shaping future provision, with a focus on increasing participation among young girls and addressing concerns related to safety, unpleasant weather conditions, and preferred activities.

Moreover, the sessions have played a significant role in fostering community integration. Many of the young people who attended the sessions did not know each other beforehand, despite living in the same area or attending the same school. The sessions have not only facilitated lasting integration among the young people but have also connected families and parents. This connection has extended beyond the sessions, with families going on to engage in activities together outside of the organised sessions.

SUSTAINABILITY

Plans for the young people to help keep them active into the future include several main strategies. Staff have signposted participants to alternative Sporting Communities sessions that are run nearby, ensuring that the young people have access to other opportunities to stay active. Additionally, they have referred some young people into their youth support services, providing them with additional support and resources.

To sustain the current provision and address the ongoing challenges related to local provision and funding, Sporting Communities intends to apply for repeat funding in recognition of the positive reception and impact of the project, and they hope to secure funding to continue providing these valuable activities and support to the young people in the future.