



APRIL 2022

SPORTS

DEVELOPMENT

**INTERIM EVALUATION
SUMMARY**

About Sports Development

The Sports Development programme at London Youth includes a range of programmes that aim to support young people to take part in sport or physical activity in order to increase their activity levels and achieve wider outcomes such as improvements to their wellbeing, confidence and skills. The programme also aims to increase the capacity of youth organisations to deliver diverse and accessible opportunities for young people.

Overall, London Youth aims to support youth organisations to develop and embed good quality sport and physical activity into their delivery. Although the programmes focus on participation and physical activity outcomes, many members use sport as part of a more holistic programme of support for young people, focusing on achieving wider personal development and wellbeing outcomes. In recognition of this approach, London Youth have created a new 'Sport for Development Learning Grants' pilot programme in 2021/22, which aims to capture learning around how youth organisations can deliver wider wellbeing and skills development outcomes, using sport/physical activity as a hook. Learning from this programme is being used to inform a larger funded programme, which is currently in development.

The programme includes:

- * **Getting Active:** funded by Sport England (pan-London), London Marathon Charitable Trust (outer boroughs) and the John Lyons Charity (target boroughs). The programme aims to engage a total of 120 member organisations to deliver up to a 30-week programme of sport or physical activity to a total of 3,000 young people per year.
- * **NGBs:** funded by British Fencing and the Golf Foundation and aims to work with up to 15 member organisations supporting 180 young people aged 8-25 years across London. These programmes have yet to start delivering.

- * **Jack Petchey Foundation:** a 12 month programme of festivals and tournaments, training for young leaders and a weekend residential experience.
- * **Sport for Development Learning Grant:** a pilot programme to provide additional funding to members delivering Getting Active. The aim of the programme is to test ways of delivering Sport for Development programmes, with a focus on wellbeing and skills development, and to capture learning to inform a larger S4D programme, currently in development. A total of 30 youth organisations are delivering this programme.

All programmes aim to reach inactive or less active young people from specific target boroughs or young people who are from traditionally under-represented groups, such as young women/girls, ethnic minority groups, lower socio-economic groups or disabled young people.

This report just considers data from the Getting Active programme; the annual report will include findings from the NGB and Jack Petchey Foundation programmes, with a separate report covering Sport for Development.

Who took part?

Recruitment for the programme started in September 2021 and to date 121 Getting Active grants have been issued to 119 unique organisations. 27 different London Boroughs are represented by these organisations and of these, 55 members are working in outer London boroughs.

The programme also continues to be popular with youth organisations that have not delivered Getting Active recently; 44% did not deliver Getting Active in the last 12 months.

So far, 82 youth organisations have started to deliver sessions and have provided data for their delivery; 27 more than had started at this point last year.

As at end February 2022, a total of 1,965 unique young people have been engaged in the programme. This is 724 more young people than at this point last year, demonstrating that organisations have been able to start delivery and engage young people more quickly this year than last, which is likely to be due to the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions and organisations being able to deliver in person since the start of the programme.

The demographic data collected for young people shows that the programme is successfully reaching young people from the target groups:

- * 42% are female
- * 60% of young people are aged 8-13 years, and 34% aged 14+
- * 83% are from ethnic minority groups and 72% are young people of colour
- * 15% have a disability
- * 57% live in the top 30% deprived communities in the country

Overall the demographic data collected for young people shows that the programme continues to successfully reach young people from the target groups; namely young people

from ethnic minority groups, women/girls, disabled young people and lower socio-economic groups. Almost half the participants are female, the majority are from ethnic minority groups, over half live in the top 30% most deprived communities in the country and 15% have a disability. There is little change to the demographic profile of young people taking part in Getting Active this year.

The most common reasons for Getting Active being needed include; high levels of inactivity amongst target groups, the need to provide safe opportunities for young people to socialise and be active in familiar environments now Covid-19 restrictions have relaxed, physical health, mental health and wellbeing challenges, limited free opportunities for families living in poverty, lack of appropriate activities for specific groups, and lack of confidence or motivation to take part in organised sport/activity. The programme also provides an opportunity to build skills of youth workers and capacity of youth organisations.

“They are often bored and frustrated at the lack of opportunities to be active, develop sports skills, and have fun outdoors with friends. This is especially important post-pandemic, when many young people lost out on organised outdoor activities, increased weight and becoming more sluggish and less motivated.”

The programme is also successfully reaching young people who are inactive, with 40% of young people taking part in Getting Active being inactive prior to signing up and 80% of participants being active for fewer than 3 days per week.

“Many of the young people coming to us are inactive, We see our largest participation from ethnically diverse communities particularly of a South Asian background, a community which sees some of the highest indices of health related issues caused by inactivity.”

What was delivered?

With the relaxation of the Covid-19 restrictions, most members have reverted back to delivering in-person sessions, recognising the need and benefits that come from young people being able to connect and socialise with each other again.

“The sessions have re-embedded the importance of giving young people the space and time to interact with their peers: giving each other peer to peer support. This is something that was missing during the pandemic when all of our sessions were online, and the young people were at home.”

However some are continuing to deliver virtual sessions, in combination with face to face, recognising the fact that for some young people, these are more accessible than in person delivery.

“We have a combination of face-to-face and online sessions so that all young carers can be involved - those who would like respite from their caring role can attend face-to-face, and those who cannot leave the person they care for can attend online”

Some organisations have also started to build in more unstructured or discussion time around sessions, facilitating reflection and peer support.

Members continue to deliver a range of different activities, from traditional sports, to less common and other forms of physical activity. Some organisations focus on a single sport or activity, whereas others allow the young people to choose what they take part in.

“[It is important to] offer activities that the young people have asked for. This included dodge ball and warm-up exercises from other sports such as football, netball and tennis”

So far, a total of 15,881 attendances have been achieved over a total of 907 sessions delivered with young people benefiting from 19,648 hours of support. On average young people taking part in the programme have benefited from an average of 10 hours of support to date,

compared to 7 hours at this stage last year.

On average, each young person has attended 8.1 sessions. Engagement rates have also increased, with 65% of young people taking part in more than 6 sessions so far, compared to 48% this time last year.

“Some of the more inactive members began attending sessions regularly, massive achievement for them, sessions have begun to have more regular attendees”

“So far we have had a consistent amount of participants, many who have attended the first session have continued to attend the following weeks. Those who attend the sessions on a regular basis are seeing massive improvements in their overall wellbeing and stamina, and this has had a positive impact on them outside the basketball court”

What difference has the programme made?

Through the programme, London Youth aims to build the capacity of youth organisations to deliver and embed high quality sport/physical activity into their delivery. Although the programmes focus on participation and physical activity outcomes, many members use sport as part of a more holistic programme of support for young people, focusing on achieving wider personal development and wellbeing outcomes. As well as increasing physical activity and health outcomes youth workers report are also reporting improved confidence, skills, wellbeing and resilience amongst their young people. This will be explored in more detail in the annual report, once outcome surveys have been completed.

“The weekly dance sessions have motivated our children to become more active and involved in extra curricular sporting activities. After enjoying StreetzAhead dance so much, some of our children have taken up ballet where they practise after school with the London School of Ballet.” (youth worker)

“Besides being more agile and active, I have gained a certain confidence in myself since I have started becoming more active. It's an amazing feeling.” (young person)

Although there is not currently sufficient data to draw strong conclusions about the impact of this year's programme, a short survey carried out with young people who took part in the 2020/21 programme helps to understand the longer term impact of taking part. The results are extremely positive, with 79% of young people reporting that that they are now more active since taking part in Getting Active last year.

“Getting Active helped me think about the benefits and joy I was missing out, the true potential I had that I didn't see. It wasn't about if I could be the best but to put in as much work as the best that would make me a more confident character to stay healthy and focus on being on the right path not for others but myself.”

82% of young people have continued to take part in physical activity sessions at their youth organisation and around half are spending more time being active with their friends or family. Almost half have jointed a sport club at their school or college. These results are positive as it shows that taking part in a relatively short-term intervention such as Getting Active is having a longer term impact on young people, both within and outside their youth organisation.

“I now play Basketball as a regular sporting activity. I understand the importance of regular sporting activity and also how it helps my mental health and well being.” (young person)

“It made me think differently about fitness; it made me think more about countering food with exercise and I've joined my school football team.” (young person)

There is also emerging evidence of how being involved in Getting Active is helping members to develop new ways of working, skills and confidence around both delivering sport and physical activity programmes. Again, the outcomes for the youth organisations and the learning associated with this for London Youth's programmes going forward will be explored in more detail in the annual report.

“I believe that the project has allowed us to try new ways of reaching out to young people.”

“This is the only physical activity session we offer as we have no statutory funding and no qualified staff to lead the sessions. Without this funding, we wouldn't be able to offer a physical activity session, which is crucial for our young carers who are often unable to leave their homes regularly.”

“The programme has helped the team think more creatively about our existing programme and ways to enhance our weekly offer”