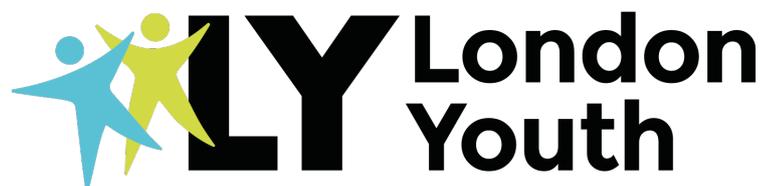


London Youth

# Sport for Development Learning Grants

Evaluation Report July 2022



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## Executive Summary

In 2021, London Youth pilot a Sport for Development programme, which provided more funding than the core sports participation programme (Getting Active), and was designed to better understand how members can use sport and physical activity as a hook to achieve wider personal development and wellbeing outcomes. The Sport for Development Learning Grant programme provided up to £3,000 per member to deliver a programme of physical activity which included interventions to achieve either skills development or wellbeing outcomes. As well as delivering the programme, the purpose of the Learning Grant was to capture learning around how these programmes can work, and use this learning to shape future programme design and development.

This short evaluation report provides an overview of what has been achieved through the S4D Learning Grants programme, delivered between September 2021 and July 2022, and captures the key learning to help inform programme development going forwards.

## Programme design

Overall, youth workers liked the open and flexible nature of the programme which enabled organisations to tailor delivery to meet their needs and complement existing programmes. Youth workers also appreciated the ability to innovate and test new approaches, as well as the opportunities to come together to network and learn from each other. The programme also provided important opportunities to invest in staff and workforce development, including the development of youth leadership pathways.

Youth workers agreed that the application process was straightforward, that the reporting requirements were fair and proportionate, and the support from the London Youth team was helpful.

## Reach

30 Youth Organisations were selected to participate in the programme, of these 14 focused on achieving skills development outcomes, and 16 focused on achieving wellbeing outcomes. Although most organisations already deliver sport/physical activities as part of their offer, a small number of organisations delivering the S4D programme are new to delivering sport or physical activity sessions, so are incorporating this into their existing personal development support offer.

Overall, youth workers agreed that the programme was relevant to their organisations, and came at a time when this type of intervention was needed. Youth workers felt that the programme met their organisational needs, as it helped them to deliver more holistic support using sport or physical activity as the 'hook', but with resources to support the wrap around work that most members provide their young people.

Overall, a total of 582 young people were engaged in Sport for Development sessions, an average of 21 per youth organisation. Demographic data collected shows that:

- 66% of young people taking part identify as male, and 34% as female
- Over a third (38%) are aged 11-13, with 39% aged 14+ and 23% aged 10 or younger (see chart below for age profile)

- 78% are from minority ethnic communities, and 67% are young people of colour (see chart below)
- 21% have a disability or limiting health condition
- 56% live in the top 30% most deprived communities in England

The gender profile, and percentage of people from ethnic minority and lower socio-economic communities is broadly the same across both S4D and Getting Active. However, S4D has tended to engage older young people than Getting Active, as well as a larger percentage of young people with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

Although organisations are taking a range of approaches, most are targeting a specific group with S4D, rather than the more universal approach taken with sports participation programmes. Most organisations are also working with a smaller number of young people, providing more intensive support rather than a focus on mass participation.

## Delivery

Most organisations incorporated additional structured activities alongside the physical activity, rather than personal development outcomes occurring as a consequence of the physical activity.

Although many are using the skills of existing staff, some organisations used the S4D grant to buy-in specialist skills; in sports coaching or personal development coaching. Skills to deliver S4D mirror those required by all youth workers, namely the ability to listen, develop a positive relationship, be empathetic, be a positive role model and make sessions enjoyable. However, many organisations point to the need for specific (personal development) coaching skills; helping young people identify goals, assess their strengths and weaknesses and develop actions to progress. One of the main learning from the S4D programme is the need for more time, space (and therefore resources) around session delivery for planning, reflection and staff supervision and support

As at end June 2022, the S4D Learning Grants programme had delivered a total of 7,157 attendances over 472 sessions and 773 hours of activity. On average, each youth organisation has delivered 17 sessions and 28 hours of support to young people. Overall, young people benefited from 11,894 hours of support, and on average, young people took part in 12 sessions and 20 hours of support each. Although Getting Active is achieving more throughput (attendances) on average than S4D, and delivering more sessions, young people attending the S4D programme are (on average) benefiting from more hours of support.

Youth organisations also recognised the importance of retaining young people through the S4D programme, rather than the more voluntary 'drop in, drop out' nature of sports participation programmes. Although the S4D programme is delivering fewer sessions than Getting Active, the retention rates are broadly the same; around a quarter take part in 5 or fewer sessions, a third take part in 6-16 sessions, and 41% take part in 20 or more sessions.

## Impact

The inclusion of structured personal development activities alongside the sport/physical activity, means that the achievement of wider outcomes is an intentional part of all the S4D programmes, rather than just a consequence of being physically active.

The main ways (drivers) for how organisations are achieving the programme outcomes are:

- Opportunities for socialising/making new friends
- The structure of the sessions, for example sport then a talking circle to cover a range of topics.
- Building in time for conversation/discussion/Q&A sessions
- Providing pathways for young people to be young leaders
- Providing food at the sessions
- Ensuring coaches are role models
- Using sporting terms and applying these to life skills
- The importance of building trust, which takes time

The young people's survey results show high levels of satisfaction with how enjoyable the programme was, but also the extent to which they had a choice and a voice:

- 93% enjoyed taking part
- 87% felt they had a choice over what they did or didn't do
- 91% felt their views, ideas and opinions were listened to

One of the biggest outcomes that youth workers observe is increased confidence of the young people, both in terms of their confidence to take part in the sport/physical activity, but also in general in their everyday lives. This is backed up by the young people's survey, where 88% agreed that they feel now more confident as a result of taking part in the programme.

87% of young people agree that as a result of taking part in S4D, they are more physically active. By making the activities fun, providing a range of different opportunities and activities, with a focus on socialising and forming connections with other people, young people are enjoying being active and are wanting to do more.

The workshops, coaching pathways and opportunities for young people to take the lead in delivering sessions have helped to improve social and leadership skills. The young people's survey results show that 84% agree their social skills have improved and 78% agree their leadership skills have improved.

The young people survey also explored how participants' wellbeing has improved as a result of taking part. The results show that:

- 81% feel closer to other people
- 86% have a better understanding of where to go if they need help or support with their mental health
- 81% better understand how to live a healthy life
- 61% reported that their wellbeing had improved 'a lot' and 33% a 'little bit'

Prior to taking part in the programme, young people on average rated the extent to which they had a healthy lifestyle as 6 out of 10. This increased to 7.6 out of 10 as a result of taking part, and 59% of young people increased their scores. And they scored the extent to which they had a positive attitude towards themselves as 5.4 out of 10 before taking part, and 7.5 out of 10 after taking part, with 75% of young people increasing their scores.

Outcomes for the youth organisations include:

- New connections created within local communities and more awareness of what organisations provide.
- Creation of leadership pathways and a clear pathway from participant to staff
- Improving young people's involvement approaches
- Empowering staff to deliver new things and try new things
- More enthusiastic staff which improves their wellbeing
- A greater focus on how to measure the impact of their interventions

Overall, youth organisations were clear about the added value of the S4D Learning Grant; in most cases organisations are delivering something very different to Getting Active or traditional sports participation programmes, and are using the grant to enhance their offer, rather than delivering more of the same.

## Learning

Overall, the Sport for Development Learning Grants programme has had a successful pilot year. The learning captured from S4D which should be incorporated into future programmes is:

- Focus on organisations that reach disadvantaged young people; they don't necessarily need to be inactive, but many are
- Being very clear about the intentional nature of achieving wider outcomes in the application form; providing examples of how organisations have done this might be useful
- Having a clear, but manageable set of outcomes to achieve; splitting the programme into wellbeing and skills development focused organisations worked well
- Keeping the programme flexible, but also providing some guidance on expectations around number of sessions delivered etc
- Being clear about the opportunities for staff/workforce development
- Build on the opportunities to share learning and good practice; organisations want more and would welcome London Youth's support in brokering relationships between organisations.

## Introduction

London Youth deliver a range of Sports Development projects for their member organisations. The current programme includes projects to increase participation (including the core programme Getting Active) as well as a number of specialist projects targeted at specific sports (e.g. NGB projects) or specific outcomes for young people (e.g. Jack Petchey). The projects are funded by a range of organisations including Sport England, London Marathon Charitable Trust, NGBs or charitable trusts and have different start and end points.

This short evaluation report provides an overview of what has been achieved through the S4D Learning Grants programme, delivered between September 2021 and July 2022, and captures the key learning to help inform programme development going forwards.

It has been produced using evaluation data collected by the team; registers showing attendance and demographic data, young people's outcome surveys, case studies and insights captured by youth workers. Alongside this, Shephard & Moyes Ltd supported the sports development team to facilitate a series of focus groups with grantees, in order to capture learning around what has worked, and the challenges of delivering the programme.

## About Sport for Development

There is no single agreed definition across the third sector of what Sport for Development is or does. However, UNICEF define it as;

*Sport for development (S4D) refers to the use of sport, or any a form of physical activity, to provide both children and adults with the opportunity to achieve their full potential through initiatives that promote personal and social development<sup>1</sup>.*

What is common across the definitions is:

- **Intentionality** – there is an intention to use sport and physical activity to achieve more than an improvement in performance. This goes beyond the intrinsic value of being active and is specifically looking at achieving something more
- **Personal development** – there is a focus on outcomes that are about people's personal and social development
- **Tool** – sport and physical activity become a tool that can be used to support people in their personal and social development

Sport for Development therefore encompasses a wide range of activities, approaches and organisations. It is a broad spectrum with a wide variety of different organisations able to clearly demonstrate how they deliver sport for development outcomes.

London Youths' Sports Development Team already uses sport and physical activity as a tool to support personal development by using sport and physical intentionally. This includes:

- Advocating for sport and physical activity as a tool to engage young people

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unicef-irc.org/getting-into-the-game>

- Focusing on outcomes that are about personal and social development (e.g. improved peer relationships, expanding young people's social circle, improving wellbeing etc)

And although previous programmes such as Active Talent have followed the principles of Sport for Development, the Learning Grants have been the first dedicated S4D programme.

In 2021, London Youth spent time designing a pilot Sport for Development programme, which provided more funding than Getting Active, and is designed to better understand how members can use sport and physical activity as a hook to achieve wider personal development and wellbeing outcomes. The Sport for Development Learning Grant programme provided up to £3,000 per member to deliver a programme of physical activity which included interventions to achieve either skills development or wellbeing outcomes. As well as delivering the programme, the purpose of the Learning Grant was to capture learning around how these programmes can work, and use this learning to shape future programme design and development.

One of the key things that London Youth wanted to understand was what was the added value of an S4D programme, compared to Getting Active or more traditional sports participation programmes, which also achieve wellbeing and personal development outcomes, but as a consequence of the physical activity, rather than being an intentional part of the delivery model. This topic was explored with youth workers during the focus groups, in order to understand how S4D is different to Getting Active/sports participation, and what the additional uplift in funding can achieve.

## Programme design

In the focus groups, we discussed with the youth workers the elements of the delivery model that worked well for them, and anything that they would advise London Youth could change to the design of the S4D programme in future.

Overall, youth workers liked:

- The open and flexible nature of the programme; organisations were able to tailor delivery to meet their needs and complement existing programmes
- The freedom to plan sessions and delivery around the needs of the young people
- The target around the number of sessions to be delivered, as that helped provide some guidance on what was expected
- The focus on sharing learning; in particular the share and learn sessions as opportunities to network have been extremely valuable
- The ability to innovate and test new approaches, and being funded to do this
- The opportunity that the programme provided members to partner with a range of different and new organisations
- The ability to work within schools
- The opportunity to invest in staff and workforce development (including young leaders)

Suggestions for how the delivery model could be improved for future programmes included:

- More guidance and some examples of delivery elsewhere provided at application stage; although members like the open nature, some examples would be helpful to understand the wide range of activities that could be supported
- A bit more clarity over the differences in reporting for members delivering both Getting Active and S4D
- More opportunities for joint working and peer support between youth organisations, with London Youth helping to broker these relationships
- Longer lead in time to allow more time for planning

### ***Application process and support from London Youth***

We explored with youth workers how easy or difficult the application process was, and the value of the support provided by the team at London Youth. Youth members liked:

- The straightforward application process
- Ability to align what they wanted to deliver to the application form
- Reporting expectations being fair and proportionate
- The helpful support from the team at London Youth, in particular the team visiting sessions and speaking directly to young people
- Check-ins and reminders from the team are helpful to keep on track with the monitoring

Suggestions for how the process could be improved in future included:

- More guidance (and possibly examples) around the question on 'need' in the application form; being clear that the expectation is around understanding the local needs and issues, rather than the national picture
- Provide more details on what would be an appropriate budget for MEL

Generally it was felt that London Youth provide a good balance of trusting organisations to deliver, with helpful reminders and support around reporting requirements and opportunities to share learning.

## Reach

This section of the report considers how youth organisations and young people were engaged in the programme, who took part and the extent to which the programme reached the target audiences.

### Engaging youth organisations

30 Youth Organisations were selected to participate in the programme, of these 14 focused on achieving skills development outcomes, and 16 focused on achieving wellbeing outcomes. Although most organisations already deliver sport/physical activities as part of their offer, a small number of organisations delivering the S4D programme are new to delivering sport or physical activity sessions, so are incorporating this into their existing personal development support offer.

#### ***Strategic fit***

At the focus groups, we explored with the groups how relevant and timely the S4D Learning Grants programme was for their organisations, and how the programme is helping to achieve wider objectives.

Overall, youth workers agreed that the programme was relevant to their organisations, and came at a time when this type of intervention was needed. Youth workers felt that the programme met their organisational needs, as it helped them to deliver more holistic support using sport or physical activity as the 'hook', but with resources to support the wrap around work that most members provide their young people. Some organisations reported that the Sport for Development approach was entirely consistent with their whole organisational culture.

***“This is our culture at the club – we prioritise social and psychological wellbeing, challenging yourself, working with young people dealing with pressure/trauma and providing a space to talk about things that are important to them. We help young people to identify themselves as other than just a footballer. We are giving them tools to start to articulate self value, when they take the football shirt off”***

Many felt that the programme helped provide a pathway for young people to access other opportunities, such as volunteering, leadership programmes, access to employment etc. In particular, this has been useful for organisations looking for opportunities for older young people. As well as supporting them to achieve mental health and wellbeing outcomes, which are hugely relevant for youth organisations post the pandemic.

***“It was directly relevant as it’s part of our remit, trying to use football as a vehicle for holistic change”***

***“We don’t deliver sport for sport’s sake – we always have wider aims, so fits really well with organisational goals.”***

Other youth workers reflected on the fact that this type of programme is something they were keen to start delivering, and the learning grant provided them with the resources to start something new.

For example, one organisation has had a specific focus on improving young people’s mental health following the pandemic, but historically has used art as the intervention; this programme has enabled them to employ specialist sports coaches and develop physical activity programmes as an alternative tool to bring people together and improve their mental health and wellbeing. This organisation also reflected on the fact that it was not just the young people who were reluctant to be physically active, and that the programme has helped build the confidence of their staff team to incorporate physical warmups in all their other programmes.

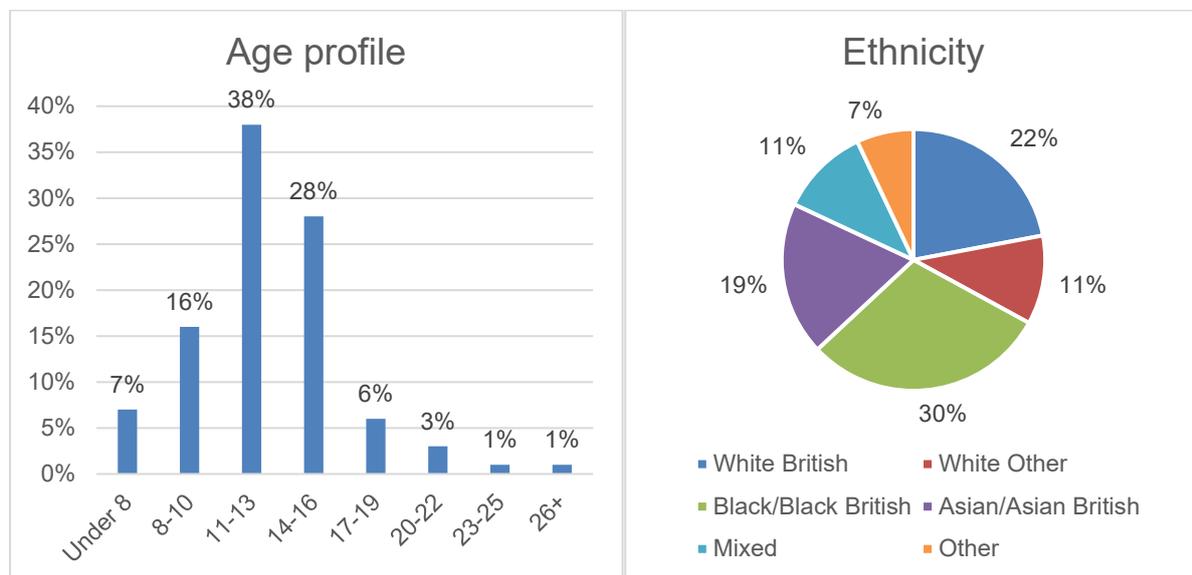
## Engaging young people

Overall, a total of 582 young people were engaged in Sport for Development sessions, an average of 21 per youth organisation (that submitted data – 28 in total).

### Young people profile

Registration forms collected by members provide useful data on the demographic profile of young people, helping to understand who is involved in the programme and what groups of young people are being reached. The data shows that:

- 66% of young people taking part identify as male, and 34% as female
- Over a third (38%) are aged 11-13, with 39% aged 14+ and 23% aged 10 or younger (see chart below for age profile)
- 78% are from minority ethnic communities, and 67% are young people of colour (see chart below)
- 21% have a disability or limiting health condition
- 56% live in the top 30% most deprived communities in England



The table below shows how the demographic profile of the S4D programme compares to Getting Active (the 2020/2021 programme). It shows that the gender profile, and percentage of people from ethnic minority and lower socio-economic communities is broadly the same across both programmes. However, S4D tends to engage older young people than Getting

Active, as well as a larger percentage of young people with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

	Getting Active	S4D
Gender	64% male 36% female <1% transgender/other	66% male 34% female
Age	38% 8-10 years 43% 11-13 years 13% 14-16 years 6% 17+	16% 8-10 years 38% 11-13 years 28% 14-16 years 11% 17+
Ethnicity	81% ethnic minority communities	78% ethnic minority communities
Disability	11% disabled	21% disabled
Economic status	58% in top 30% most deprived	56% in top 30% most deprived

### Learning

Although organisations are taking a range of approaches, with some targeting specific age groups, focusing on a particular gender, ethnicity or working with young people they haven't worked with before, most are targeting a specific group with S4D, rather than the more universal approach taken with sports participation programmes. There has been more thought given to which groups should be targeted through this programme. Most organisations are also working with a smaller number of young people, providing more intensive support rather than a focus on mass participation.

Some examples of the different ways in which YO's are targeting different groups of young people include:

- Organisations that select a sample of young people who are taking part in Getting Active, and invite them to 'progress' onto the S4D programme; particularly those that are focusing on skills development and leadership opportunities. Youth organisations are creating progressive pathways from sports participation onto leadership and volunteering opportunities
- Some are targeting young people who are already physically active, to become young leaders and support delivery of Getting Active to less active young people
- Others are targeting less physically active young people, who are not already engaged on another programme, or from groups that lack opportunity (e.g. YP from lower socio-economic communities), motivation (e.g. young people from areas of high childhood obesity) or safe spaces to be active (e.g. LGBTQ) and may have low levels of wellbeing or mental health issues (e.g. through a social prescribing model)
- Some groups are targeting specific age groups; for example young people transitioning from primary to secondary school
- Some groups are mixed gender whereas others are targeting specific genders; setting up new female only or male only groups that haven't existed before

Although many organisations are working with young people who are already engaged on one of their other programmes, those that are targeting new young people are often working

through other organisations (e.g. schools) to engage them. For example, one organisation is working alongside the PE teacher at the local school in order to target the young people who would most benefit. Working through existing local networks and referral partners has been an important part of engaging new young people. Having a trusted person (either an adult from another organisation or a friend) is also important to encourage young people who are not already attending the YO to sign up to the programme. Some organisations are using young people previously engaged on Getting Active (or other programmes) to help recruit new young people, by describing how it has benefited them.

Many YOs are using the sport element of the programme as the hook to engage young people as this tends to be more attractive. Then once they are signed up they are introduced to the personal development aspects of the programme. Others are promoting the skills development or accreditation aspects, to appeal to young people who want to improve their CVs/employability. And some are explicitly promoting the wellbeing support element of the programme.

## Delivery

This section of the report considers what has been delivered, what has worked well and the challenges faced by London Youth and member organisations.

### Delivery models

Youth organisations are using a range of different sports and physical activities; for some these are the same as what they use in Getting Active, for others they are different. Types of sport or physical activity delivered included:

- Traditional sports such as football, tennis, boxing, cricket
- Less popular/accessible activities such as gymnastics, dance,
- Physical activities that have a specific wellbeing focus, such as 'mindfulness walks', yoga or swimming
- Games and activities rather than competitive sports

Youth organisations used a range of different delivery models and interventions in order to deliver the wider wellbeing and skills development outcomes, including:

- Combining physical activity with other activities aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles, including nutrition workshops, cooking, discussions around healthy choices etc
- Inclusion of relaxation and stress reduction activities in sessions, including mindfulness techniques, yoga, breathing exercises etc
- Wellbeing workshops on a number of different topics, including body awareness, self-care, reflection, social media awareness etc
- 'Talking Circles' and other opportunities for young people to share how they are feeling and discuss issues they are experiencing in their lives with their peers and youth workers
- Workshops and educational sessions around communication and leadership skills
- Coaching opportunities and skills and personal development training for young volunteers

It is clear that most organisations are incorporating additional structured activities alongside the physical activity, rather than personal development outcomes occurring as a consequence of the physical activity.

Although many are using the skills of existing staff, some organisations are using the S4D grant to buy-in specialist skills; in sports coaching or personal development coaching. Some are finding that using external providers to deliver some elements of the programme means that young people take the sessions 'more seriously', are more engaged and are benefiting from being exposed to new people or role models.

Skills to deliver S4D in many ways mirror those required by all youth workers, namely the ability to listen, develop a positive relationship, be empathetic, be a positive role model and make sessions enjoyable. However, many organisations point to the need for specific (personal development) coaching skills; helping young people identify goals, assess their strengths and weaknesses and develop actions to progress.

Many organisations also recognise the need and value of time for reflection and evaluation at the end of sessions, for both staff and young people. One of the main learning from the S4D programme is the need for more time, space (and therefore resources) around session delivery for planning, reflection and staff supervision and support.

## Sessions

As at end June 2022, the S4D Learning Grants programme had delivered a total of 7,157 attendances over 472 sessions and 773 hours of activity. On average, each youth organisation has delivered 17 sessions and 28 hours of support to young people.

Overall, young people benefited from 11,894 hours of support, and on average, young people took part in 12 sessions and 20 hours of support each.

This can be compared to the Getting Active (2020/21) programme as per the table below. It shows that although Getting Active is achieving more throughput (attendances) on average than S4D, and delivering more sessions, young people attending the S4D programme are (on average) benefiting from more hours of support. This backs up what we heard from youth workers around S4D being a more intensive programme than Getting Active.

	Getting Active (91 YOs)	S4D (28 YOs)
Average throughput per organisation (attendances)	320	255
Sessions delivered (average per organisation)	23	17
Hours attended (average per YP)	17	20

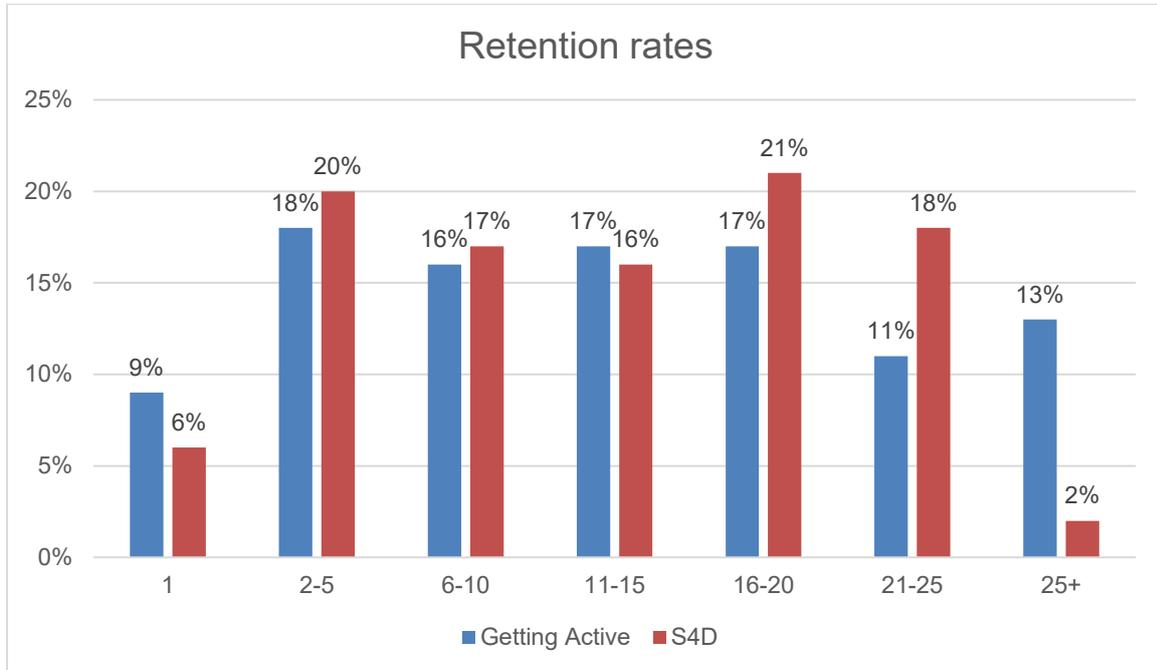
## Retention rates

Most youth organisations recognised the importance of retaining young people through the S4D programme, rather than the more voluntary ‘drop in, drop out’ nature of sports participation programmes. And some are building in new methods of monitoring and reviewing attendance to better understand who is attending regularly and what is working to encourage this. Examples of what has worked to retain young people include:

- The nature of the programme itself – e.g. working towards an accreditation, the mentoring/support provided, doing something different
- Asking young people (and in some cases, their parents) to sign a ‘commitment’ at the start to regular attendance
- Setting expectations from the start
- Having a mix of ‘compulsory’ and ‘optional’ sessions
- Providing pathways or opportunities to take part in other programmes in the organisation (e.g. volunteering at residential etc)
- Tournaments and competitions to work towards
- Listening to young people and taking their feedback onboard which makes them feel valued and more invested in the programme
- Ensuring young people feel safe, supported and comfortable

- Considering timing of sessions (days of the week, times of the day, length of session etc)

The chart below compares retention rates for the S4D programme to Getting Active in 2020/21. Interestingly, although the S4D programme is delivering fewer sessions than Getting Active, the retention rates are broadly the same; around a quarter take part in 5 or fewer sessions, a third take part in 6-16 sessions, and 41% take part in 20 or more sessions.



## Impact

This chapter considers what difference the programme has made to young people and youth organisations. It shows *what* outcomes have been achieved, taken from young people's surveys, along with insights into *how* youth organisations have achieved these outcomes, taken from conversations with youth workers and reports produced.

Overall, 180 young people's surveys were completed – 90 from wellbeing clubs and 90 from skills development clubs. The majority of the questions in the two surveys are the same, so the results have been combined where appropriate.

## Drivers for Change

For many organisations taking part in the S4D programme, the delivery models used means that the achievement of wider outcomes such as wellbeing or skills development is an obvious part of the programme; young people sign up because they want to develop their leadership skills, gain a qualification or receive support with their mental health or wellbeing. For others it is less obvious to young people at the start; particularly programmes that use sport as the 'hook' to participation. However, it is clear from the inclusion of structured personal development activities alongside the sport/physical activity, that the achievement of wider outcomes is an intentional part of all the S4D programmes, rather than just a consequence of being physically active.

The main ways (drivers) for how organisations are achieving the programme outcomes are:

- The importance of providing opportunities for socialising/making new friends; creating teams, groups and support networks
- The structure of the sessions, for example sport then a talking circle to cover a range of topics. Talking circles are a natural extension to how sessions end and helps youth workers understand what areas young people want to focus on and needs/issues
- Building in time for conversation/discussion/Q&A sessions
- Providing pathways for young people who have taken part in more traditional sports participation programmes (e.g. Getting Active) to be young leaders
- Providing food at the sessions (as a way of connecting healthy eating and physical activity, but also for many young people, this may be the only healthy meal they eat)
- Ensuring coaches are role models; e.g. female leads to encourage more young women and girls to participate
- Using sporting terms and applying these to life skills; e.g. goal setting and skill development can happen on and off the pitch
- The importance of building trust, which takes time

***“The youth workers make you feel like family instead of just being here for a youth club. All the trips we do are very fun and I am made to feel a part of it” (young person)***

## Enjoyment and Empowerment

The young people's survey results show high levels of satisfaction with how enjoyable the programme was, but also the extent to which they had a choice and a voice:

- 93% enjoyed taking part

- 87% felt they had a choice over what they did or didn't do
- 91% felt their views, ideas and opinions were listened to

***“Having opportunities and having freedom of choice to take part. It was nice to have that choice and feel great by making it.” (young person)***

***“I enjoyed the free sessions because it gave me a chance to go out, have fun and explore new things” (young person)***

***“What I enjoy about this programme is that it brings people together and helps me to become a better footballer and person” (young person)***

## **Increase in confidence**

One of the biggest outcomes that youth workers observe is increased confidence of the young people, both in terms of their confidence to take part in the sport/physical activity, but also in general in their everyday lives.

***“2 young people who are extremely withdrawn and introverted have started to come out of the shell and is showing better levels of personal confidence and interaction with others.” (youth worker)***

***“Through various programmes, the Trust engages a large number of females, however these tend to be at Girls Only sessions. Most mixed sport based sessions are male dominated. In the weeks following the first CPD event, 3 girls from our Dance session approached the staff saying they wanted to start attending Youth Club and Football sessions on Monday evenings. Usual activities would include indoor football and PS4 – however the Youth Workers and Coaches have now been given more responsibility to plan and deliver a range of fun activities to encourage more young people to get involved in physical activity. The girls have absolutely loved the sessions to date, and are now regular participants on Mondays. Through their new found confidence of being around other young people, they have asked to start volunteering at junior sessions on a different night – which we will definitely support them with!” (youth worker)***

***“It has been great to see the young females involvement in sport grow, but also in confidence during this programme. Whether improving football skills with the coach from Goal Diggers FC, or tackling new outdoor gym equipment, the participants continued to challenge themselves, both mentally and physically.” (youth worker)***

This is backed up by the young people's survey, where 88% agreed that feel now more confident as a result of taking part in the programme.

***“The variety of stuff we covered. It wasn't just all about sport but the stuff we did do meant I wanted to do the sport stuff more as I felt more confident.”***

***“I enjoyed trying new things as it allowed me to become more confident.”***

***“It helped me be confident in who I am and how I express myself.”***

***“It's helped me to use my own voice and feel powerful in doing so”***

***“It has helped me feel more confident about my future with work and general life”***

***“I have become a positive person and believe in my abilities and been able to apply my skills all around my life”***

### **Physical activity levels**

Youth workers reported that young people are more active, and enjoying participating in sport/physical activity more, as a result of taking part in the programme.

***“The boxing small group sessions have continued to be a big hit with members and our boxing group for four Year 7 boys has been a particular highlight (especially as two of them have additional needs and were not really engaging in exercise before taking part). Despite all four boys being completely new to boxing, they have really got into it. They attend every week and have been so engaged with the sessions that they have been training at home to improve their skills (e.g skipping, shadow boxing etc). Each of these boys is supported by our young leaders and it has been great to see the young leaders themselves train harder so that they can improve their own technique and teaching” (youth worker)***

***“The main aspect of the project was taking young people who never to rarely join in to sporting activities and they learnt the importance of doing exercises. They felt fulfilled and happier. They went from coming late to sessions to coming on time and physically enjoying themselves. They are stimulated and doing these exercises more eagerly. The key element is to teach them the importance so that they understand the background and start practicing together in a group. Once they get to know the workouts they worked harder and invested more into themselves. They are fit young people and shaping up!” (youth worker)***

**Case study: Masbro Youth Club**

Most of the young people participating in the project were inexperienced footballers and were inactive in sports in general. The youth club environment however gave them the confidence to at least participate and give things a try, and they were regularly observed by Youth Workers on the football pitch at times when in their own words they were 'just bodies on the pitch'. This observation prompted the premise for this project, to see if further engagement with this group using accreditations to gauge development of skill would see their skill level and thus confidence rise and increase the likeliness of theme participating long term.

After 10-12 weeks of sessions both in this project and in general youth club sessions, marked improvements were noted as participants all completed their accreditations and spent time with the coaches, and learned from the very basics up what was needed to gain and develop their football skills.

This led us to the most profound sporting highlight from the programme, travelling to St Andrews Youth Club to play football vs girls in their youth club of the same age as our group. This felt like the culmination of all of hard work and confidence building and although we wanted to win, coaches made sure to remind participants that their personal development and putting into practice what they had learned in training sessions is what would really help them improve their skill levels in the long run.

The game ended a draw and really taught the group about determination and hard work as much as it did about skill. However, they realised that with a higher skill level they would be more confident and less anxious about participating and playing in front of people at St Andrews Youth Club.

Young person MS was a huge example of this. Previously she had commented about being 'just a body on the pitch' at Masbro Centre in youth club sessions but continued to try to get involved because her brother (who is a good footballer for his age – 1 year younger than her) took part and she wanted to be with him. In the match at St Andrews MS took to the pitch as striker and was unlucky not to score hitting the crossbar with a shot – something she commented after she never thought she could kick the ball that powerfully.

87% of young people agree that as a result of taking part in S4D, they are more physically active. By making the activities fun, providing a range of different opportunities and activities, with a focus on socialising and forming connections with other people, young people are enjoying being active and are wanting to do more.

***"I like that doing sports is healthy and fun . I like trying different sports and how they change my attitude also my team spirit."***

***"Getting to know the other people better and being able to hang out with my mates and become more active and be in a happy and positive environment."***

***“Learning new ways to be active and gaining bonds with new people who I am now close with”***

***“I never really did any moving before so the exercise is good for me.”***

***“The program has helped me massively, improving my overall activity levels on and off the pitch and helping me gain confidence when talking to others through sport.”***

***“I am now more active and I have better pathways into football as well as people to guide me who can understand how I feel”***

## **Skills Development**

The workshops, coaching pathways and opportunities for young people to take the lead in delivering sessions have helped to improve social and leadership skills.

***“We have seen ALL participants grow and shine in a different light. Because they have been given responsibilities, they have changed attitude towards their involvement in Capoeira classes and in the school and behave more like young adults than children. It has also been refreshing to see some of them step forward to lead the team, show natural creative talents or simply practical sense. They have all grown in confidence and have been inspired to use their newly learned skills.”*** (youth worker)

***“We supported a young boy, who is currently 15, preparing for his GCSE. This person and his family were significantly effected by COVID and further exasperated by personal family issues which had a huge impact on his mental health and wellbeing. Initially he joined with his friend but was reluctant to partake and also very reserved, clearly showing how he felt and holding emotional barriers, whilst on the programme he really improved his temperament, engaged in the sessions and support the coaches deliver sessions across the borough volunteering. He also completed his Junior Sports Leadership award and Community Sports Leadership award, enrolled onto our mentoring programme.”*** (youth worker)

The young people’s survey results show that:

- 84% agree their social skills have improved
- 78% agree their leadership skills have improved

As well as the skills that are developed as a direct result of playing sport, young people also recognised the 1-1 sessions, training and educational elements, and the opportunities to mix and socialise with a range of different people as reasons why their skills are improving.

***“I enjoy playing matches as it improved my communication and helped me play better”***

***“The one to one sessions helped to improve personal skills and good advice was given on how to improve on skills that needed improvement.”***

***“I enjoyed how we socialised with different people while learning about different sports”***

***“I enjoy working with others my age and being a girls captain gives me the experience of managing and organising”***

***“I’ve never been part of another type of learning other than school, It’s super high quality, like I feel like I’m at a real court some times.”***

***“I loved learning all about the different life skills and important topics which would help me a lot in the future. It was really amazing to have the opportunity to learn about the topics which I would have never know about without the programme.”***

***“It helped me improve my social skills and my leadership skills especially as in the programme they kinda set me the role as the leader and guide in my friendship group.”***

***“I have been more willing and eager to take leadership roles elsewhere in my life.”***

### **Case study: Pro Touch SA**

We have created a haven where likeminded SEND participants can build social relationships and gain confidence by participating in youth and sporting activities. Many new friendships have been founded, and breaking down any stigma amongst any other youth and sports club members.

There’s a clear development in social and communication skills in our participants they have grown in confidence and ability. We have also ensured that our programmes can potentially lead to employment opportunities in youth work, community or sports coaching for the members of our programmes like we have demonstrated elsewhere such as Camden and Westminster.

We had Kickstarters from our SEND Teams and 2 former volunteers now employed as SEND Sports Coaches working in our programmes, inspiring and mentoring former team mates. i.e. TD working in Southwark every Wednesday for 16+ training session working towards his FA level 1 in Football and KM assisting in working in our operations team as well as gaining his FA level 1 in Football and closely assisting our the head coach of our U8's Academy Team. These two inspiring stories are examples of how this programme has paved ways for our participants who love football to have the opportunity and close support to work towards and achieve their dreams and cementing their stance in the football and turning a hobby/ extracurricular activity into career.

It teaches lessons that the players carry with them for life. Teamwork, discipline, perseverance, goal-setting, handling success and failure, time management. The funding meant it was possible to make a commitment to our participants in supporting them with their physical and nutritional education through group and individual interventions, that would be young person centred. They were able to create new routines and even those with autism who struggle to create new routines or have to adapt over time have been getting calmer at handling change and uncontrollable situations.

## Wellbeing

The survey explored a number of indicators of wellbeing; connections with others, understanding where to go for help or support with mental health, and understanding of how to live a healthy life. The results show that:

- 81% feel closer to other people
- 86% have a better understanding of where to go if they need help or support with their mental health
- 81% better understand how to live a healthy life

Prior to taking part in the programme, young people on average rated the extent to which they had a healthy lifestyle as 6 out of 10. This increased to 7.6 out of 10 as a result of taking part, and 59% of young people increased their scores.

***“I enjoyed looking at food as fuel. I looked at food as the enemy, I didn't want to eat as I thought it would make me fat. I learnt to do the things I want to do and need to do I need fuel to do it well. I would fall asleep in class and now I don't. I feel I am even enjoying food a little and really enjoyed the session where Coach Louise and Dee brought in a variety of different fruits, I hadn't tried Sharon fruit before and now it's one of my go to's. “***

***“How we all supported each other that was nice.”***

***“It's made me understand that in order to progress in certain parts of my life I have to change the decisions that I make. I now go to bed earlier, I use less media stuff and I'm aware of the music I play.”***

***“Mentally they have taught me what to do in a situation where I felt like I needed help now I know what to do.”***

The survey also explored the extent to which young people's wellbeing and self-esteem has improved. 61% reported that their wellbeing had improved 'a lot' and 33% a 'little bit'. And they scored the extent to which they had a positive attitude towards themselves as 5.4 out of 10 before taking part, and 7.5 out of 10 after taking part, with 75% of young people increasing their scores.

***“Being able to discuss my mental health without having to worry what other people will say or do. Discovering I am not alone.”***

***“They always ask me how I am and I feel like they care.”***

***“It helped me get eager and more aware of my health”***

***“I feel happier”***

***“I have changed, I am calmer and my mum has noticed a lot. I can speak to my mum more and she listens. I have shown her some of the things I am doing and now we both journal and share. I now go home after school whereas I would not before. I***

***understand my mum is human she makes mistakes and sometimes what she does is not about me it is about her."***

***"It's made me confident in using my pronouns and telling people who I am and how they should address me."***

Youth workers also observed changes in young people's ability to talk about their feelings and express themselves.

***"The majority of the boys are very physically active and were not able to associate the physical with the mental health / wellbeing aspect. As a group they were not in the habit of talking about their feelings openly, this took a while to get used to, but once engaged they were able to talk openly and honest, without the fear of being judged. We are going to be using their skills and knowledge to co-create an event with the mental health school ambassadors, so they can disseminate what they have learned to their peers" (youth worker)***

#### **Case study: Unique**

10 year old male of Bangladeshi & Pakistani heritage. First introduced to us by attending Kidstime, a service for young people who have a family member with a mental illness. They have a history of domestic abuse at home which has lead to trauma and some anger problems.

When this young person came to us they were very reserved and had a tendency to avoid joining groups. They joined our programme in the Summer 2021. This young person has taken part in the Summer and Half Term projects, and regularly attends movement sessions as well as all of our other classes. During these sessions, through 1:1 support, they have been learning and have been encouraged to create movements and choreography and explore and express their own ideas and thoughts.

They have been growing more comfortable in performing, coming up with ideas and are actively engaging with the group and in sessions. In rehearsals this young person has been dancing and practicing their characters' physical movements confidently and are enjoying themselves. This young person is now more sociable in the group and has visibly grown in confidence, they are less angry and have made good friends. They have said that the best thing about joining these sessions is the friends that they have made and that they are "not afraid to be an individual".

They will be performing in the musical "Hope Road" on the 9th July at WAC Arts this year. These sessions have also inspired this young person to get involved in digital art and they feel confident about their future.

**Case study: Start Easy**

Start Easy work with the younger age group; mainly 6-10 year olds, who attend weekly after school clubs on Thursdays and Fridays. They developed a curriculum based on a holistic approach to wellbeing, including nutrition workshops to explore how to make healthy food choices, understand food safety and advice on a healthy lifestyle.

Alongside the nutrition sessions, the group take part in a range of different sports and games, as well as creative activities. At the start of the session, healthy snacks are provided, and at the end the young people take part in a talking circle de-brief, where they get to share what they have learnt and enjoyed.

Many of the young people they work with are inactive, and not confident playing sport.

***“We have children from very different backgrounds. For some of them it’s the first occasion to play some sports. They are not active because some families are really poor, they cannot afford it. Even school clubs, for these families that is expensive. Some families have 6 children, so even £20 per club is too much for them.” (youth worker)***

To build their confidence they work in small groups, with volunteers on hand to support people on a 1-1 basis if needed. They also use equipment that is easier for them to manage.

***“We build their confidence by having a lot of support; volunteers mean they can have 1-1 support. Some children will be unsure so we can have to encourage them, start with easy exercises. We use soft balls so they are easy to catch and they are less scared. We divide the group in two, so one group will do nutrition first and the other sport first. With smaller groups we can focus more on them.” (youth worker)***

There is also a focus on fun, and incorporating a range of different activities per session, as well as introducing them to a range of different sports.

***“We try to make it fun. We will have an introduction to the session, then use fun activities to learn. So we have been doing scientific experiments to learn about nutrients. We also do creative activities, they have been doing art work. Lots of games. We also do lots of different sports – boxing, rounders, tennis. We do three sessions on each sport – the first session is about introducing the sport, the rules, where it’s played. And if they are interested in it and wanted to pursue it, how they could do that, and how much money they could earn. We also talk about sports celebrities they might have seen on TV. So they can think about sport as a career.”***

The youth workers have noticed big changes in the young people; their confidence and willingness to participate. Giving them 1-1 support so they feel heard is important to building confidence.

***“The changes have been massive. One boy didn’t really communicate, he sometimes gets frustrated with himself. But over time I was able to talk to him and engage with him on a personal level. Doing some 1-1 with him away from the group. I’ve noticed a big change in him. He’s more relaxed. He’s smiling a bit more. Maybe he thinks that he’s been listened to. And he’s said to me, that sometimes he gets a little bit upset or annoyed, but doing this has actually helped him calm down.” (youth worker)***

***“The majority said in our last group circle that most of them now understand that it’s important to be healthy. And they’ve learnt different sports – one is interested in doing more boxing now. They’d never done boxing before and just loved it. I think he’s been given a negative view of boxing at school, but here it’s all just positive.” (youth worker)***

***“It’s helping them calm down a bit and focus. they really seem interested in learning about food and nutrition” (volunteer)***

Feedback from the young people demonstrates how much they are enjoying learning new sports that they haven’t tried before, and what they are learning about healthy eating and nutrition:

***“I enjoy it. I like the activities the most. My favourite one was the obstacle course and the racing. I’ve never done it before, it was the first time. I didn’t really like doing sport before [coming here], because it wasn’t really that fun. But here it’s fun, so I enjoy it!”***

***“I’ve learnt a lot [about nutrition]. I’ve learnt about cooking, what recipes to use. It’s important to eat healthy food, so you can stay healthy and not get sick”***

***“I enjoy it. I enjoy the interesting science experiments. They aren’t really experiments, but we learn how to cook food, how to eat healthily. It’s important so your body stays fit. I like the sport – we are doing golf at the moment, and that’s good. I’ve not done that before. I do like sport, I’m not a really a big fan of football, but I really like hockey. Here there are children I don’t know, so I get to know new people.”***

***“I enjoy playing the games outside. I like the golf. It’s fun because I like to hit the ball and get it in the hole, and I’m good at it! I like the fruit and vegetables – it’s important to eat them so you can get strong.”***

***“I enjoy coming here. I enjoy everything, the sport is my favourite bit. I like playing football at school. I enjoyed the golf, it’s different to football. I like the food and the nutrition. It’s important so you can grow up healthily, and be able to play football”***

***“I like playing the sport and learning about food. I like playing games. I’ve learnt about the nutrients in different food, and what is healthy and what is not. I like bananas! If you eat sugar all the time it’s not good for you; you might end up going to the doctors all the time when you are older”***

## Added value

We asked the young people how the S4D programme was different to other sport or physical activity they do elsewhere. Reasons cited were:

- It's more fun/interesting
- Opportunity to try new/different sports than done before, at difference venues and with a range of coaches
- Learning about nutrition alongside sport
- Being listened to, cared about and treated differently to contact with other adults
- Incorporating mental health support/learning
- Supportive environment that allows YP to express themselves
- Free
- Having a choice
- More inclusive and welcoming to all
- Opportunities for pathways and progression, especially into volunteering or coaching/sporting careers
- Opportunities for competitions
- Team work/connections/community
- Relaxed and less pressured environment
- More educational/focused on skill development and leadership opportunities

***“That it gives us what we need at that present time, listens to how we feel and what we are thinking”***

***“I don't know if other clubs do all the mental health stuff we did. But if they don't they should”***

***“Being able to express when I am angry or sad and not feeling ashamed to do so but learning how we can manage them and put ourselves in a positive place. I've never learnt that anywhere.”***

***“I'm able to hang out with my friends doing fun things and learning new skills for free. Isn't that great?”***

***“This is different because it is not just learning about sports but its also about how to improve your wellbeing and having a healthy lifestyle”***

***“It is different to other sports activities for a few reasons. Firstly the opportunity to begin volunteering and coaching. Secondly the coaches are very sociable and helpful compared to at school where you don't really talk to them much. Thirdly the group of people that attend are really nice.”***

***“It challenged me to think and plan rather than just take part in the activity”***

***“The organization and leaders/teachers really care about us and our development. Amazing”***

***“We have to lead the games instead of take part so that's how it affects me”***

## Outcomes for youth organisations

Outcomes for the youth organisations include:

- New connections created within local communities and more awareness of what organisations provide.
- Creation of leadership pathways and a clear pathway from participant to staff
- Improving young people's involvement approaches
- Empowering staff to deliver new things and try new things
- More enthusiastic staff which improves their wellbeing
- A greater focus on how to measure the impact of their interventions

***“This grant has given us the opportunity to put more staff in our rooms for movement & physical theatre sessions - this has allowed us to give the children & young people in the rooms more opportunity to move freely in a way that is accessible for them. A lot of our young people are vulnerable and/or at risk due to their personal circumstances, this has made them shy and reserved which has meant that previously we struggled to get them to engage in physical activities. With more staff in the room we have been able to give more young people a personal approach”***  
(youth worker)

### **Added value**

Overall, youth organisations were clear about the added value of the S4D Learning Grant; in most cases organisations are delivering something very different to Getting Active or traditional sports participation programmes, and are using the grant to enhance their offer, rather than delivering more of the same.

The grant has provided youth organisations with:

- New opportunities or avenues of support
- Enhanced offer
- The ability to try new things and innovate
- Improved skills of coaching/youth worker staff
- The opportunity to buy-in complementary skills

***“Our Youth Workers and Sport Coaches have been provided with fresh content to make their sport-based sessions more engaging and exciting for the young people. Our staff are all qualified to deliver football sessions, however the CPD sessions have encouraged them to think outside the box to provide a range of activities during Youth Club sessions. This includes different sports but also teambuilding and evasion games. The YW's and Coaches are now seeing the benefit to the young people, as they are exercising for 45-60mins each week without realising it and enjoying themselves at the same time.”*** (youth worker)

In addition to the tangible benefits of the additional funding, youth organisations also felt that the programme was also providing a number of intangible benefits; the opportunity to reflect, share experiences with others, and learn how to improve delivery. The development aspect of the programme for youth organisations has been as valuable as the additional funding; both of which ultimately help to provide better services to young people.

## Conclusions

Overall, the Sport for Development Learning Grants programme has had a successful pilot year; not only has it engaged a large number of young people, who have achieved a number of outcomes related to skills development and wellbeing, but it has also captured considerable learning which will benefit both youth organisations and London Youth going forward in this space.

From our conversations with youth workers, it is clear that the programme is different to traditional sports participation models; there is a focus on 'quality' rather than 'quantity'; i.e. more structured, intensive programmes of support for smaller groups of young people that are able to benefit from 1-1 support. S4D organisations have delivered fewer sessions and seen smaller attendances than Getting Active, however young people on average benefit from more hours of support.

It is also clear that youth organisations have built in intentional interventions that relate to the skills development or wellbeing outcomes; they are delivering other activities in addition to sport, which sets the programme apart from other sport or physical activity young people have taken part in previously. Feedback from young people shows that this is clear to them; they recognise that the purpose is not just being active, but also achieving wider outcomes.

That said, there are elements of the programme that are similar to Getting Active; given the profile of London Youth members and the reach they already have into disadvantaged communities, the demographics of young people taking part are broadly similar (although S4D has generally reached slightly older young people). And interestingly, despite focused efforts on retaining young people through the programme, the retention rates are broadly the same as Getting Active.

It is clear that the S4D programme has achieved the outcomes it intended to. Young people feel more confident, are more physically active, their wellbeing and self-esteem has improved, along with their communication and leadership skills.

This has been achieved firstly by good quality youth work; empathy, listening, and creating an environment where young people can have fun whilst learning. But the added value of the S4D funding means that youth organisations have been able to buy-in specialist support, incorporate qualifications and training for young volunteers, pathways and progression opportunities, as well as providing organisations opportunities to try new things and innovate.

Learning from the programme can be used to shape future similar delivery models. The learning captured from S4D which should be incorporated into future programmes is:

- Focus on organisations that reach disadvantaged young people; they don't necessarily need to be inactive, but many are
- Being very clear about the intentional nature of achieving wider outcomes in the application form; providing examples of how organisations have done this might be useful
- Having a clear, but manageable set of outcomes to achieve; splitting the programme into wellbeing and skills development focused organisations worked well

- Keeping the programme flexible, but also providing some guidance on expectations around number of sessions delivered etc
- Being clear about the opportunities for staff/workforce development
- Build on the opportunities to share learning and good practice; organisations want more and would welcome London Youth's support in brokering relationships between organisations.