Welcome to the Lessons of StreetGames Young Volunteers, in which we share over 12 years of learning about ‘what works’ when encouraging disadvantaged young people to volunteer and to take social action. This document draws upon the experiences of some 20,000 young people, each from a disadvantaged area, whose volunteering efforts have made their neighbourhoods healthier, safer and more successful.

Young people tell us they are keen to join in when volunteering opportunities are ‘FABS!’

FABS! is all about providing volunteering opportunities that are:

• Fun
• Altruistic
• provide a sense of Belonging
• and offer Self-Development

BACKGROUND TO STREETGAMES

StreetGames is the nation’s largest sport for development charity, harnessing the power of sport to improve the lives of young people living in disadvantaged communities throughout the UK. Our work helps young people and their communities to become healthier, safer and more successful, and to break down the inequalities of access that prevent disadvantaged young people from reaping the benefits of sport. In short, StreetGames’ work:

• changes sport
• changes communities, and
• changes lives.

The skills, experiences and connections that volunteers gain help to make them more successful, increase their employment prospects, and improve their overall ‘life chances’.
Locally Trusted Organisations

We work in partnership with over 1,000 Locally Trusted Organisations (LTOs). Together, these organisations make up the StreetGames network. Each LTO is self-determining, independently managed and independently funded. Most are charities, legally-constituted community groups or Community Interest Companies. LTOs have multiple primary purposes and very few exist solely to promote sport: they are youth clubs, community safety projects, housing associations, local authorities, and community centres.

Each LTO enjoys an enviable reach into its neighbourhood, with many acting as the ‘lifeblood’ of their community. They have ‘earned their spurs’, won the right to make a difference and are able to reach both groups and individuals that others find ‘hard to reach’. They understand what works and what’s still needed to create further change on their patch. Together with these LTOs, StreetGames works to establish effective practice and replicate these successes, both at scale and at pace.

The collective power and credibility of the network enables unparalleled access to young people in over 4,000 communities. Each organisation in the network upholds industry standards for safeguarding, insurance, health and safety, as well as equalities and diversity.

StreetGames utilises an approach known as ‘Doorstep Sport’, a largely non-competitive take on physical activity that prioritises fun - as opposed to a more ‘skills and drills’-based approach often encountered at mainstream sports clubs.

About 70% of Doorstep Sport participants are not involved in organised sport or physical activity outside of school or FE College.

StreetGames Young Volunteers

Many Doorstep Sport participants choose to ‘step up’ to become young volunteers, with nearly 20,000 individuals having done so since the programme began, contributing an incredible 400,000 collective hours so far. Some volunteers opt to pop along now and again, while others choose to volunteer week in and week out. Typically, these volunteers may not be ‘super sporty’: their motivations are less about sport and more FABS!-based.

FABS! Is all about providing volunteer opportunities that are

• Fun
• Altruistic
• provide a sense of Belonging
• and offer Self-Development

These efforts demonstrate how given the right opportunity, disadvantaged young people can grow to become highly skilled within a number of different areas, including assisting with the administration of their LTO; promoting the group via social media; planning and executing personal mini-projects; and performing sports leadership work.

Volunteers effectively co-produce these Doorstep Sport clubs, thereby making their communities happier, healthier, and more cohesive places to live. Critically, these volunteers also make it their business to generate a tolerant, egalitarian atmosphere within their clubs: ensuring that all participants have a good time by discouraging cliques and emphasising cooperative, non-aggressive behaviour.

Both StreetGames, and the LTO leaders responsible for hosting these opportunities take great pride in seeing their volunteers grow, sharpen their skills and improve their self-confidence. It is enormously rewarding to see them becoming more experienced and approaching new training offers with greater enthusiasm. The skills, experiences and connections that volunteers gain help to make them more successful, increase their employment prospects, and improve their overall life skills.

Continued investment into 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.

Over the last 12 years, StreetGames’ FABS! programme has benefitted from working with numerous generous funders and creative partnerships. The Co-op, BT, Sport England, Sport Wales and the Cabinet Office have all been exceptionally generous. Appendix 1 details this development.

About 70% of Doorstep Sport participants are not involved in any other organised sport or physical activity outside of school or FE College.
STREETGAMES YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

**Key Facts & Figures**

- **18,941** young volunteers
  - NEET 20%
  - BAME 33%

- **215** full time volunteers

- **112** young advisors

- **11,312** new qualifications

- **399,234** volunteer hours

- **1,135** young volunteers have attended SYV leadership residencies

- **778** young volunteers have attended SYV conferences & award events

- **875** young volunteers have attended summer camps

- **215** full time volunteers

- **112** young advisors

- 64% female, 36% male

**Young people develop personally**

- Increased confidence
- Raised aspirations
- Improved communication skills

**Young people improve their health & well-being**

- Feeling happy
- Increased friendships
- Improved wellbeing
- Being more active and connected

**Young people gain skills & experiences**

- Gaining transferrable skills such as teamworking, problem-solving and leadership
- Gaining new qualifications and attending training
- Opportunities for paid work

**Young volunteers help to develop their local communities**

- Building local capacity and resources
- Helping to reduce community safety issues

**WHO VOLUNTEERS?**

National Surveys demonstrate time and again, that people from lower socio-economic groups are under-represented in the world of volunteering. This is true of both genders, however amongst sports volunteers the situation is even more pronounced amongst women from lower socio-economic groups. In this respect, sport bucks the trend. Across all sectors, females are more likely to volunteer than men but this trend is reversed when it comes to sport. Females are less likely than males to take part in sport, and are less likely to volunteer in sport.

- 32% of affluent young people (aged 9-16 years) have volunteered in some capacity
- 14% but just 14% of young people growing up in low-income families volunteer.

- 46% of adults from the highest socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 1-2) have done so
- 12% only 12% of those from lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 6-8) have volunteered

- 59% of all sports volunteers are male
- 41% of all sports volunteers are female

In this respect, sport bucks the trend. Across all sectors, females are more likely to volunteer than men but this trend is reversed when it comes to sport. Females are less likely than males to take part in sport, and are less likely to volunteer in sport.
The importance of volunteering for young people living in disadvantaged areas

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 years¹. 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.

Rates of social mobility in the UK have also declined over the last decade². Recent research suggests that investment in adult skills may not be the most efficient way to combat this issue. The more successful solution remains a focus on improving young people’s educational attainment during their time in full-time education³.

Through qualifications, training and life experience, volunteering provides participants with plenty of CV-enhancing material; whilst also influencing them to return to education. Critically, volunteering also provides volunteers with the skills, confidence and know-how to strike out on their own and to take advantage of new opportunities.

The StreetGames Young Volunteers Model

The SYV Offer provides young people from lower socioeconomic groups (LSEGs), living in areas of high deprivation with new and exciting opportunities to volunteer at their local sports projects - as well as at exciting national and international events, such as the London 2012 Olympics, Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, and assorted Great Run events.

The ‘Participant-to-volunteer Transition’

StreetGames’ Young Volunteers are typically drawn from existing groups of participants in LTOs. The LTO coach or session leader may begin this process by asking a young person to ‘help out’ with a variety of small tasks - perhaps by helping to set up, or to put away session equipment. Then, depending on the young person’s interests and motivations, organisers will casually support these individuals to embark upon a ‘volunteer journey’. This means that:

• Young volunteers can help out in a variety of ways, assisting with or even leading group sessions - by mentoring others, providing administrative support, or by helping to promote these sessions and activities to their peers (either face-to-face or via social media).

• The extent to which a young person gets involved in volunteering/social action is also flexible. Some young people may want to help out for a number of hours each week, or whenever they can. Others will only be interested in doing so at larger, one-off events, tournaments and competitions.


For those young people who do want to progress in the role, there are many chances for them to do so. These opportunities may take the form of attending a training workshop; earning a new qualification; taking up a holiday-time volunteer placement; a full-time placement for NEETs and/or volunteering within other settings/roles to gain experience.

Making Volunteering FABS!

The FABS! model was first identified by Sandy Craig of Leisure Futures, in his evaluation of the Co-op StreetGames Young Volunteer programme. This was the very first iteration of StreetGames’ young volunteer programme, with the resulting FABS! model continuing to underpin the approach used by more than 300 LTOs.

In the Lessons of Doorstep Sport, StreetGames outlines the 5 rights of Doorstep Sport as the foundation upon which good, locally-based sport and physical activity provisions are developed. FABS! represents the volunteering equivalent of these 5 Rights.

What is FABS?!

At its core, FABS! is all about providing volunteer opportunities that are: Fun, Altruistic, provide a sense of Belonging, and offer the opportunity for Self-Development.

**KEY CHARACTERISTICS THAT MOTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER**

**Fun**
This is all about enjoyment – smiles, laughter, and feeling good in your own skin – while challenging yourself and mirroring other people’s enjoyment (feeling good in doing good!).

**Altruism**
Giving back to the community, doing good and feeling valued by the community.

**Belonging**
Being a member of a group, team, club or family (of your own volition, not through any external compulsion or peer pressure); being affiliated with, allied to, associated with this team; increasing friendship networks; feeling valued by the community, having a place in that community, having people around you that you can trust and who will support you when times get tough (helping and being helped).

**Self-Development**
Maturing and developing through life as an individual, increasing your stock of ‘life-skills’ i.e. confidence; resilience; communication; empathy; growth in aspirations and ambitions; self-improvement; and so on. This may include extending and challenging yourself; increasing ‘technical’ skills e.g. sports, leadership, work experience and qualifications etc., boosting personal contentment and opening up new career options.

Source: SYV Evaluation 2008, undertaken by Sandy Craig – Leisure Futures

---

**DESIGNING A SUCCESSFUL YOUTH VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVE**

Through the StreetGames’ approach of testing, evaluating and replicating our work, we have refined our youth volunteering programme into a flexible and successful model - one that can now be applied across a number of different initiatives, to meet the needs of different groups of young people.

Using a children’s climbing frame as an aid to understanding, the following diagram helps to illustrate our unique approach. Abandoning the traditional rigid or ‘structured pathway’, the SYV Offer instead allows for movement across styles and directions. This inherent flexibility both allows for and encourages individuals to gain new experiences and skill sets. StreetGames knows that one size does not fit all.

---

**Multiple entry points for youth volunteering and social action**
- StreetGames offers many ways to begin your volunteering journey - at Doorstep Sport, Us Girls, Parklives and CLUB1 sessions, or at one of the organisation’s numerous national events.

**Multiple routes and opportunities**
- To move up and around the frame, young people first need the opportunity to stop, change direction, and to try out new opportunities.

**Getting to the top**
- Not every young person wants to lead, or commit many hours to volunteering, but the opportunity to do so should be made available.

**The foundation of youth action is a wide activity base**
- Generating a vibrant and varied volunteering offer. This is the start of the transition from a participant to a young volunteer: finding the right place to get on board and give it a go!
This model or approach is built upon 2 key foundations:

Given that every young person’s ‘volunteering journey’ is unique, our approach must therefore involve plenty of flexibility.

Just as we know that young people are attracted to FABS! volunteering opportunities, our evaluations also tell us how best to set up and manage a successful youth volunteering scheme. Evaluators employed a wide variety of research methods in order to squeeze out every last drop of useful information from this work, including ‘on the ground’ feedback; analysis of volunteer and participant monitoring data; surveys; interviews; project visits; and the ‘Youth Outcomes Star’ tool; along with in-depth ‘life grid’ interviews with young volunteers.

We have taken all of the learning gained from this evaluation and research, and packaged it into the following seven areas for management action:

1. Flexibility and choice
2. Varied volunteer roles
3. National support for locally-owned volunteering
4. Volunteer opportunities outside the neighbourhood
5. Youth-led social action
6. Engaging females
7. The value of networking & collaboration

The diagram on the next page summarises the critical ingredients in each of these seven areas.

In the Lessons of Doorstep Sport report, we outlined many of the lessons learned over the previous 12 years of StreetGames’ youth volunteering work, as well as how this linked in to the delivery of local sport interventions for young people. To read the Lessons of Doorstep Sport, please visit here:

Scan QR code or type the following in your web browser: https://network.streetgames.org/insight-into-action

Participate TO Voluntary

FABS!

Flexibility and choice
New opportunities and the chance to try new things are both appealing to young people, encouraging involvement through flexibility of choice
One size doesn’t fit all and a structured pathway isn’t preferred

Youth-led social action
Enables young people to take the lead in shaping their local offer, which may involve a mini project that offers a new activity or tackles a local issue
This helps to motivate and encourage others to be more active

Networking and collaboration
Regional and national opportunities help organisations to share learning and experiences
LTOs collaborate to provide new and exciting experiences that encourage volunteers to grow and operate outside of their local community

Engaging females
A different approach is needed to encourage females to take on a leadership/volunteer role
Women and girls often prefer roles where they can volunteer on a more casual/informal basis

Wider Opportunities
Providing opportunities for young volunteers outside of their local neighbourhoods is really important in terms of supporting personal growth and enjoyment.
Opportunities may include: event volunteering, residential training or placements outside of their local area

Variety of roles
Offer roles that develop a range of skills and qualities
Link these offers to the interests and motivations of young people
Young people often see what needs to be done and come up with suitable roles themselves

National support for locally-owned volunteering
Local organisations value the support of a national programme through training, learning and resources
Local young volunteers are mentored by the appropriate mentor
The national programme supports these mentors
Case Studies

Joe, 21 from the Wirral on Merseyside volunteered with his local project over a number of years. He initially became involved in volunteering through his interest in sport; he loved taking part and wanted to carry on his involvement.

Joe’s volunteering role at his local project involves: helping to set up the equipment for sessions, leading activities and motivating others to take part.

Through his involvement in volunteering, Joe has achieved a range of qualifications, including the: FA Level 1 Coaching Award, Level 2 Doorstep Sport Coaching Award, First Aid, Safeguarding, Activator workshops in rounders and tennis, and also a drug & alcohol awareness peer educator course.

Through his volunteering experience and qualifications, Joe has been able to secure paid sessional work as a coach at a number of after-school sports sessions.

Joe previously acted as a Young Advisor at the StreetGames Volunteer Residential at Brathay, which boosted his confidence and inspired him to apply for a Young Advisor post at Camp Glasgow. He undertook a wide range of duties whilst on the camp, including leading a number of evening and Pop Up Games-related activities, whilst also helping to set up and to take down equipment.

For Joe:
• The key things he gets from volunteering are: “Experience and fun”
• The three words which describe volunteering best are: “Amazing, Experience and Friends”
• He feels rewarded for his volunteering efforts, including: “opportunities to lead and [gain] qualifications”
• Challenges faced during volunteering have included: “Speaking in large groups and on a microphone [...] but it’s good to get outside your comfort zone”
• The best thing about Camp Glasgow was: “Last night, we did Glasgow’s Got Talent and everyone was involved with that”
• The key things he’s learned at Camp, and which he will use elsewhere: “loads of activities and loads of ice-breakers”
• The three words which describe camp are: “Amazing, Fund and Awesome”
• Dream for the future: “Get back into judo again”

Young Advisor - Joe
Young Advisor - Michelle

Michelle grew up in Kenton in the North End of Newcastle. As a child she was shy, and didn’t socialise much with other children in her area. As such, sport would play an important role in Michelle’s life and development.

A former participant at the local Hat-Trick project, Michelle would later volunteer with the group on a casual basis. When the opportunity to take on a full time volunteering placement came up she saw it as an opportunity to gain some experience in sports coaching - an area of study that she had become increasingly interested in.

Due to her shyness, Michelle’s journey to becoming a full time volunteer wasn’t always easy, but thanks to the support of the team at Hat-Trick, she has since developed much greater self-confidence. So much so in fact, that Michelle subsequently went on to lead a 10-week programme of female multi-sport sessions with other young people: inspiring them to make similarly transformative changes in their own lives.

This was a huge step up for Michelle, who now takes great pride in developing other young people, many of whom had initially lacked the confidence to take part, just like her. She has since gone on to become both a great leader and role model to those young people who attend her sessions, with volunteering playing a central role in Michelle’s development. She now relishes the opportunity to make a similar impact on other young people: inspiring them to make similarly transformative changes in their own lives.

Young Advisor - Chloe

Chloe, 21 from Leeds got involved in volunteering as she was keen to gain experience of working with young people with Special Educational Needs whilst studying Sports Coaching at college.

Through her volunteering, Chloe has supported six different groups that meet weekly to take part in sports activities including: volleyball, boccia and curling. She really enjoys her role saying: “[…] you feel good about yourself, because it’s off [your] own back. It gives you a buzz: [...] making someone’s day, helping someone learn something new. It’s rewarding”.

Chloe decided that she’d like to become a Young Advisor after attending a StreetGames Leadership Residential the previous year - saying: “I saw the Young Advisors last year and saw the effect they had. [Then] my project got an email and [I was] asked if I wanted to do it”.

Whilst at the Residential, Chloe supported the StreetGames team to plan, set up activities and help with presentations. Through her Young Advisor role, Chloe now feels “[…] that you can push yourself further than you think you can, […] that I can do things I thought I couldn’t do - for example: talking on a microphone to over 100 people”.

For Chloe, the best thing about being a Young Advisor is: “Working as a team. Everyone pulls together, [so] you never feel alone: there’s always someone there”.

She also reflected on her personal growth: “When I first started, I was shy with new people [but] as the weeks have gone by, I’ve come out of my shell: […] it’s more natural now. I feel like through this, I’ve really gained in confidence and in being able to talk to and meet new people, […] to start a conversation, [but] without being nervous”.

Young Advisor - Ellie

Ellie, 23 from Stratford in East London initially started volunteering at the age of 11.

Over the past 12 years she has undertaken a wide range of volunteering roles, both for her school, as well as several sporting organisations including the Essex FA, Youth Sport Trust, and StreetGames.

At Essex County FA, Ellie was the only female volunteer, where she undertook roles including: Chair of the Youth Council, young mentor and head coach. Through volunteering, Ellie has gained a wealth of valuable experience and new skills - skills she now employs in assuming the role of a StreetGames Young Advisor. Ellie, together with three other Young Advisors helped to organise the 2018 StreetGames Youth Conference in London, an event that was attended by over 90 young volunteers from across London.

Through their work to plan and deliver the Youth Conference, the Young Advisors reflected that they had learned a huge amount about event planning, public speaking and about being creative. It has also helped them to build personal confidence, teamwork and communication skills.

In describing her time as a Young Advisor, Ellie said that she had found it: “Inspirational because I feel the team all have a way of inspiring others. Belonging because I feel together we are a unit and I’m proud to be in this unit. Progressive and encouraging because in our last meeting we decided a lot of things and looked more at how we can make a huge encouraging impact on others. Interesting to work with a young group and giving each other’s perspective”
SECTION 2

LESSONS LEARNT
Research undertaken within SYV evaluations also found strong evidence that FABS! is a key reason why young people continue to volunteer. In a survey of over 300 StreetGames Young Volunteers, results showed that three-quarters had been volunteering at their Doorstep Sport project for over six months, including 50% that had been volunteering for over one year. Table 1 illustrates the main reasons why young people continue to volunteer – factors that all help to demonstrate FABS! powerful appeal for young people, offering them a positive, and potentially life-changing experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Reasons for young people continuing to volunteer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The sessions are fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Feeling a ‘sense of belonging’ at the sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To help their CV/ future job prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The quality of the project’s coaches and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Training and qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. They enjoy sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The opportunity for paid casual work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Incentives and rewards, e.g. T-shirts and hoodies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. FLEXIBILITY & CHOICE

Data presented in: ‘Youth social action in the UK – a face-to-face survey of 10-20 year olds in the UK’ - published by the Cabinet Office in 2015 – identifies many reasons why young people fail to take part in social action. These include: 30% stating that: “never occurred to me”, 28% “not having enough time”, 17% who “don’t know how to get involved” and 11% claiming “few/no opportunities to take part in my local area”.

In order to address these issues, it is essential that volunteer opportunities are both appealing and valued. StreetGames understands that young people choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some young people, volunteering is a stepping stone to qualifications and employment. For others it is a way to be involved in a friendly support network. As a result, the SYV offer does not feature a ‘structured pathway’ that all young volunteers follow.

It is understood that their involvement and pathways will vary. This means that:

- Young volunteers can help out at their local Doorstep Sport project in a variety of ways, assisting with or even leading group sessions, by mentoring others, providing administrative support, or by helping to promote these sessions and activities to their peers (either face-to-face or via social media).
- The extent to which a young person gets involved in volunteering/ social action is also flexible – some young people may want to help out for a number of hours per week, or whenever they can. Others will only be interested in doing so at larger, one-off events, tournaments and competitions.

Initially, StreetGames attempted to log volunteer hours through certificates. However, this approach didn’t function as intended with volunteers having little appetite for this method.

As a result, the organisation no longer requires that volunteers formally log their hours.

For those young people who do want to ‘progress’ in their role, there are many opportunities for them to do so. These may take the form of attending a training workshop, earning a new qualification, taking up a volunteer placement, and/or volunteering in other settings and roles to gain experience (see below for more information).

The important point to remember here is that there are a variety of roles and tasks available to suit the diverse wants and motivations of each young person.

Using a children’s climbing frame as an analogy, the following diagram helps to illustrate this unique approach. Lacking a more rigid or ‘structured pathway’, the SYV Offer instead allows for movement in a variety of styles and directions. This inherent flexibility both encourages and allows for participants to gain new experiences and skill sets – generating growth by supporting delivery and people.

---

**ALTRUISM**

Young volunteers enjoy making a difference and ‘giving back’ to other young people at their LTOs. This sense of altruism is especially strong if the individual has previously been a participant themselves. Most enjoy getting to know other young people and watching them develop and progress. In doing so, these young volunteers help their LTOs to expand not only upon their volunteering offer, but the number and variety of sports sessions and/or events that they are able to provide to the local community.

“Sport was the attraction - I needed to get out of my house - the first session felt good, helping kids out”.

**BELONGING**

Young volunteers talk about a sense of belonging at a project, i.e. enjoying their time there and ‘feeling like part of the family’. They value the opportunity to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships. LTO staff work to ensure that all young volunteers feel this sense of belonging and are valued by the team.

**SELF-DEVELOPMENT**

The SYV Offer is structured to provide young people with many different ways to develop their skills. These may include: knowledge and experience gained from volunteering at their local project; via training opportunities and qualifications; by being challenged in their work, or from the opportunity to visit new places, meet new people and gain new experiences. These achievements can help them to view themselves differently, or to change the perceptions of others towards them, i.e. family, friends and teachers - thereby smoothing the transition into adulthood.

This section features an in-depth analysis of the lessons learned over the first 12 years of StreetGames’ volunteering work, utilising information gathered from independent evaluation and research.

It features a detailed breakdown of the central FABS! model, as well as seven key areas of study identified over the past 12 years.

---

**1. MORE ABOUT MAKING VOLUNTEERING FABS!**

Why ‘FABS!’? - Volunteering opportunities that are Fun, Altruistic, create a sense of Belonging, and offer opportunities for Self-development all help to motivate young people to volunteer.

**FUND**

Being involved in sport and having fun is the core attraction. Therefore, the SYV offer is designed to make it easy and fun for young people who are already playing sport to start volunteering, thereby creating a ‘natural progression’.

The fact that they can volunteer locally within their own community, with people they know, and on a flexible basis helps to make it even more fun. LTOs provide the options, encouragement, and support so that young volunteers can still enjoy being involved in sport whilst volunteering. From playing sport and demonstrating skills to leading a warm-up at the start of a group session, there are so many ways for young volunteers to have fun while volunteering.
3. VARIED VOLUNTEER ROLES

To provide young people with a flexible and varied approach to volunteering, it is important that StreetGames enable them to undertake different ‘functions/roles’ – depending on their interests and motivations. This variety means that there are different ways - for those who are interested - to gain new experiences and to ‘grow’ their skills, as Table 2 below illustrates.

Table 2. Illustration of range of SYV Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Within a Doorstep Sport Session</th>
<th>Outside a Doorstep Sport Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young Leader</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supports session delivery</td>
<td>Young Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– helps to run and lead</td>
<td>• Support event planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities and/or officiate</td>
<td>• Help to run events, festivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Youth input/ feedback to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>help shape new sporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mentor new volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer Promoter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote sessions to peers</td>
<td><strong>Young Leader</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motivate and encourage peers</td>
<td>• Support sport session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buddy ‘newbies’</td>
<td>delivery in wider community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sets up new sessions and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>events in their community. i.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘independent volunteering’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant</strong></td>
<td><strong>Peer Leader/Champion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help to set up equipment</td>
<td>• Organise and support peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support fundraising</td>
<td>to try new activities and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help with admin</td>
<td>move to new places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help to shape the sessions</td>
<td><strong>Assistant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• General support at local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>community events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support at sporting events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. through marshalling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. the above list illustrates common roles undertaken by StreetGames Young Volunteers. Please note that this list is intended as a guide only, and is not exhaustive.

Through the SYV Offer, there are opportunities for young people to take on ‘traditional’ sports-based volunteering roles, including helping coaches and leaders to deliver sessions; officiate games; take registers; run events and welcome new starters, as well as other, less traditional roles, including acting as peer buddies, motivators and promoters.

A StreetGames Peer Promoter is someone who helps to raise awareness of group activities and to motivate, engage and to retain other young people (i.e. their peers) within these activities. This type of volunteering role was originally introduced into the SYV Offer following learning gained through StreetGames’ Us Girls work, and further expanded upon within the CLUB1 programme (see section 7).

The concept of Peer Promoters and Motivators is one that Project Leaders have found to be particularly effective, as they provide a key connection between volunteers and other young people, in a number of different ways. These include:

- Face-to-face methods – i.e. by talking to friends or sharing information at school/college, at youth centres or through faith groups etc.
- Online platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter
- Promoting rewards and incentive schemes to encourage attendance
- Planning social time and refreshments at the end of the sessions as a way to encourage group bonding and peer-to-peer support.

By contributing in these varied roles, the young volunteers help to increase the resources and capacity of their local communities - thereby providing more young people with the opportunity to participate in sport. At the same time, the young volunteers gain the opportunity to develop their confidence, self-esteem and community leadership skills, as well as valuable experience in pursuing nationally-accredited awards and qualifications.

4. NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR LOCALLY OWNED VOLUNTEERING

To support local organisations to engage and up-skill young volunteers, StreetGames maintains a small national team, as well as a network of Doorstep Sport Advisors (DSAs) - on hand to provide practical support, advice and resources, including:

- Training courses for project staff to support volunteering, including volunteer recruitment, mentoring and management
- One-to-one support, advice and mentoring to new organisations to support their volunteer development work
- In addition to the one-to-one support provided, StreetGames also offers opportunities for LTOs to work collaboratively - enhancing and supporting their work with young volunteers. This includes opportunities for:
  - LTOs to attend regional and national events - to come together with other similar organisations to share their learning and experiences
  - LTOs to come together collaboratively to provide young volunteers with new and exciting experiences outside of their local communities - opportunities that they could not normally provide alone
  - LTOs to provide joint training sessions for their young volunteers and volunteer mentors – which they may not have been able to host individually
  - their young volunteers to feel part of something ‘bigger’, i.e. through opportunities to meet other young volunteers from different parts of the country

To compliment this, StreetGames also provides a package of practical resources to support young people in their volunteering experience. This package has previously included items and opportunities including:

- Branded hoodies and T-shirts: to help volunteers to demonstrate that they are part of the SYV national initiative
- Opportunities to access training workshops and qualifications
- The chance to attend leadership residential programmes
- Opportunities to volunteer outside of their local communities – for example at events, summer camps and residential
- Opportunities to work with wider sports partners such as NGBs to help co-create new sporting offers and initiatives
- Opportunities to attend StreetGames Young Volunteer Conferences & Awards
- Opportunities to act as a Young Advisor
- Opportunities for full-time volunteer placements based at local projects.
- Opportunities to take part in exchange visits
- Opportunities to become a member of the ‘StreetGames alumni’

Volunteers value the opportunities to learn, gain knowledge, skills and confidence.

Volunteers also value the opportunity to access formal training and qualifications in the local area. By providing them with these sorts of opportunities, StreetGames and its partners can help to support volunteers to become fully-qualified coaches and leaders in their own right. This, together with mentoring from existing coaches, can help young volunteers to better understand how to be a good leader, with coaches dispensing crucial advice on areas such as: how to be more ‘professional’ at sessions - including the use of acceptable language and adherence to appropriate ‘dress codes’.

The most effective volunteer mentors tend to be those who are able to provide personal support during and outside of sessions. This might involve providing regular briefings and/or feedback, both before and after sessions; through certificates and awards or by dispensing advice, e.g. on how to write CVs and job applications etc.

Volunteers tell StreetGames that the support and opportunities they gain are extremely valuable. As Figure 1 (below) demonstrates, young volunteers greatly value the opportunity to learn and gain leadership skills; attend training courses/qualifications; and attend camps and residential.

![Volunteering](https://example.com/volunteering.png)

**Volunteer Support from Local Staff – The Right Mentor**

Providing direct support for volunteers is also a key ingredient. Coaches and managers are often critical in providing young people with the encouragement needed to take their first step into volunteering. They can also be key in encouraging a young person to stay involved, typically by fostering a sense of belonging and helping the young person to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence.

![Volunteering](https://example.com/volunteering.png)
5. VALUE OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Being able to volunteer locally and to ‘give back’ to their own communities has been a key factor in the successful engagement of many young people in the SYV Offer. However, StreetGames also recognises that providing opportunities for young volunteers outside of their local environment is crucially important in terms of promoting personal growth and enjoyment.

Therefore, a key component of the SYV Offer has been the provision of opportunities for young volunteers to take part in activities outside of their local area. This has included:

- Taking part in training workshops and courses
- Attending leadership residential programmes
- Attending Summer Camps & Festivals
- Attending StreetGames Young Volunteer Conferences & National Awards
- Acting as a Young Advisor

Taking part in exchange visits. See examples below.

Leadership Residential

StreetGames has typically provided at least one leadership residential for young volunteers per year. Residential opportunities are held at outdoor activity centres, over a three day period, with the aim of supporting young people to develop their:

- Leadership, communication and teamwork skills;
- Personal skills, such as confidence and self-esteem;  
- Social skills, including communication

Residents typically bring together between 60-100 young volunteers, gathered from Doosport Sport projects and across the country. A key focus of the activities is to encourage leadership skills in participants, and a group to complete a series of outdoor activities, team-based challenges and evening events (such as: raft building, canoeing, high challenges, abseiling, mountain hikes, orienteering and and evening events).

Evaluations have shown that residential experiences can play an important part in helping young volunteers to develop across a range of areas - areas including self-confidence, which is often expressed as a newfound sense of personal belief, e.g. the ability to take on activities that were previously considered daunting. For some young volunteers, these trips can also serve to broaden their horizons, providing them with the opportunity to travel outside their own communities and into parts of the country that they had never previously visited. The emotional factor is perhaps best illustrated by the participants’ own feedback:

“In Hackney, there is a gang culture and young people won’t go to any other areas. Here, they get away to a safe environment and realise the world is bigger than just their estate... it helps their minds to open up. For some – this is their only holiday”. (Project manager)

“Meeting new people and making friends, trying new activities and having fun in an unfamiliar outdoor environment are highlights for the young volunteers”. (Project manager)

“Meeting new people was really nice. Being separated from the city you can’t help with was a good thing and once I got into it, everything was a lot of fun. I really enjoyed the ghyll scrambling - you get a real adrenaline rush from it. The whole experience was unexpected and I definitely do it again”. (Young Volunteer)

“After attending the residential I got more into sport. I also developed leadership skills and am able to compromise more easily than before, as the residential had a lot of activities like this. I also feel my leadership skills improved massively and I am much more confident now to lead activities in my area”. (Young Volunteer)

“Volunteering with StreetGames has helped me to meet new people from all over now my friends. My confidence has grown as we are challenged to speak in front of people”. (Young Volunteer)

“My leadership skills have improved throughout, as I have been leading quite a large group and trying to engage them”. (Young Advisor)

European Opportunities

Another example of wider volunteering opportunities is StreetGames’ European-funded work. Through a combination of Erasmus+ funding, and joint work conducted with a series of European organisations, StreetGames has been able to offer young volunteers the opportunity to take part in innovative projects, both inside the UK and abroad. These opportunities help to open up the world to young volunteers from other countries - thereby encouraging self-development, new friendships and heightened aspirations.

Examples of this work have included:

Youth Leaders Across Borders

YLAB brought 38 young people together from across the UK, Germany, Sweden and Poland, for a seven day residential at Brathay Trust in the Lake District. This ‘blended mobility’ event involved five days of training, aimed at helping the young people to become youth leaders. Eight young people from across the StreetGames network took part and were also involved in planning and delivering the event. Young volunteers from a range of cultural activities including language games, traditional food and group-based activities designed to share experiences from different countries.

“My confidence has grown so much through YLAB! I’ve made friends for life and even successfully applied to do Camp America as a result! Thank you!” (Heather - StreetGames Young Advisor)

European Us Girls

Ten female Peer leaders from across the UK were involved in the European Us Girls Young Volunteer Offer, working with ten peer leaders in Italy. The 20 young leaders took part in a five day residential event, one at Brathay Trust in the Lake District and one in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Their role was to develop the European Us Girls online learning platform and provide online resources and training for organisations wanting to improve female peer leadership offers. The project also included designing an app for leaders to use in their communities, and two workshops to showcase their work and share best practice.

American Opportunities

The European Voluntary Service

Two alumni from the SYV Offer have been successful in gaining European Voluntary Service placements with a partner organisation in Germany. These 12-month placements have been together as a group residential event, one at Brathay Trust in the Lake District to test and develop new leadership development opportunities in an international context. Nine young people from across the StreetGames network took part, and six were also involved in shaping the activities for the week. As with the YLAB residential, training activities are complimented by a variety of cultural experiences, involving language, food and other themes designed to promote understanding.

“My engagement with European work has changed my life! I’ve made connections and have been given opportunities I never expected!” (Kenya - SYV Volunteer)
International Youth Exchanges

StreetGames has developed partnerships with a range of international organisations, many of which offer opportunities for young people to take part in international youth exchanges. International youth exchanges are funded by Erasmus+ and are designed to bring together groups of young people from two or more countries, providing them with an opportunity to discuss and confront various themes, all while learning about each other’s countries and cultures. Six Young Advisors have now taken the opportunity to participate in these youth exchanges.

Two alumni from the SYV Offer also joined 40 other young people from the UK, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland and Turkey to attend an ‘Entrepreneurial Lab’ in Hungary, held in 2018. This unique event included a ‘Start-Up Safari’ with talks, advice and networking opportunities with local and international start-ups, offering practical advice about the work and skills needed to set up your own business.

“The opportunity was fantastic. They were an insuring bunch of people who made this experience memorable and life changing! Looking to the future, I would love to use the skills that I have learnt to plan a project.” (StreetGames alumni)

Four other alumni from the SYV programme traveled to Bulgaria to take part in the ‘Greatest Wealth is Health’ Youth Exchange, alongside other young people from the UK, Bulgaria, Turkey and Romania. The exchange included debates around topics such as sports, mental health, and the potential link between wealth and healthy lifestyles.

“It was amazing to share this experience with other past Young Advisors. The experience has reignited my love for sport and coaching; it has been very memorable and life changing”. (SYV Alumni Member)

6. YOUTH-LED SOCIAL ACTION

A key facet of Doorstep Sport is its youth-led approach, which the young volunteers play an important part in. Over the years, many young people involved in the StreetGames network have been supported to undertake youth-led social action - doing so in a variety of different ways. These activities have encouraged the volunteers to:

• take the lead in influencing their peers to get more involved, and to help shape their local sporting offer
• motivate and encourage others to be more active
• take the lead in setting up new activity sessions, or one-off events within their communities, such as a sport-based festival or tournament.

Delivering on a social action project is a key part of the full-time volunteer’s placement – and has led to the creation of many exemplary successes, including sport events, group trips, festivals and entirely new sessions.

“Being a Young Advisor has helped me to develop teamwork skills, confidence, patience, listening skills, and I now feel as though I have developed into a skilled, well-rounded person.” (Young Advisor)

“I enjoy meeting all these new people and the opportunities this brings. I love volunteering and have decided that I want to go into youth work, so all of these volunteering events have helped me to put myself in that position. Hopefully it will give me a head start!” (Young Advisor)

“One of the best experiences of my life”. (Young Advisor)

7. ENGAGING FEMALES

National survey data1 demonstrates that while females are more likely to volunteer in general, this trend is reversed when it comes to sport, meaning that females are not only less likely than males to take part in sport, but they are also less likely to volunteer in a sporting capacity. ActivityLives 2018 Survey data shows that just 41% of all sports volunteers are female - a trend that is also mirrored amongst young people.

In 2018, young volunteers at 15 Doorstep Sport projects were asked to complete a questionnaire that would motivate a group of friends/ local young people to become more active together. Their ideas included:

• A group of 12 young people going running in their local park, with run lengths progressing all the way up to a planned 5k ‘Colour Run’ obstacle course
• Young people taking part in six different activities: including hiking, fishing, football, bowling, rock climbing, and basketball
• Taking part in group exercise, walking and jogging in the local park, as well as using an outside gym in the lead up to the 5K
• Working with a group of young people with autism and learning disabilities to help them experience a range of different sports
• Buying fitness memberships to a gym and going swimming together

This youth-led approach not only ensures that activities are demand-led, but also provides ideal opportunities for young volunteers to be creatively challenged and to take ownership of a specific initiative.

With Us Girls, StreetGames found many girls that were reluctant to commit to roles where they were required to attend every week and/or where the role was highly structured. Many girls were also worried about how their friends would react if they were to take on a leadership role within the group.

Girls can inspire and motivate their friends, peers and other young women in a variety of ways. For example, some are great at organising and encouraging their friends – e.g. by finding out event times or venue availability before texting others to join them. This informal volunteer role assumes the double benefit of not only encouraging more females to volunteer but also encouraging more females to participate.

A number of StreetGames/ Us Girls projects use volunteers and motivators, aka ‘Peer Motivators’, to do exactly that. At least in some instances, a different approach is needed to encourage females to take on a volunteer or leadership role. While there are young women who are keen to take on these sorts of roles within a traditional Doorstep Sport setting, for others this position simply doesn’t appeal.

Learning generated by the SYV Offer and Us Girls programme has shown that, at least in some instances, a different approach is needed to encourage females to take on a volunteer or leadership role. While there are young women who are keen to take on these sorts of roles within a traditional Doorstep Sport setting, for others this position simply doesn’t appeal.

Insights gained from the Us Girls programme have also demystified, all that many young girls are simply uninterested in pursuing a formal ‘sports volunteer’ pathway - with its end goal of becoming a coach or instructor. StreetGames found many girls that were reluctant to commit to roles where they were required to attend every week and/or where the role was highly structured. Many girls were also worried about how their friends would react if they were to take on a leadership role within the group.

Us Girls Motivators

Young female volunteers, aka ‘Peer Motivators’, were at the heart of the ‘Us Girls Alive’ Young Volunteering Offer created 31 new clubs in 19 locations across England. Funded by the Department of Health, this initiative saw volunteers developing opportunities for physical activity involving young women - alongside other health improvement work around healthy cooking, weight management and sexual health. Their approach placed an emphasis on fun and social opportunities for young women, within the context of their existing friendship groups. This role was designed to be flexible, so that participating volunteers could get involved on a much more casual and informal basis.

The Us Girls Motivators often inspired and encouraged girls in their own friendship groups to get involved in sport and physical activity. This approach ensured a positive experience for the peer motivators, who were encouraged to contribute without feeling uncomfortable within their friendship groups.

A key facet of Doorstep Sport is its youth-led approach, which the young volunteers play an important part in. Over the years, many young people involved in the StreetGames network have been supported to undertake youth-led social action - doing so in a variety of different ways. These activities have encouraged the volunteers to:

1 DCSM Community Life Survey 2017-18

For example, some are great at organising and encouraging their friends – e.g. by finding out event times or venue availability before texting others to join them. This informal volunteer role assumes the double benefit of not only encouraging more females to volunteer but also encouraging more females to participate.
The information below summarises the key areas of impact.

Personal Development
Volunteering can play an important role in supporting young people to make a positive transition to ‘young adulthood’. In many cases, volunteers develop new reflexive skills, supporting their personal growth and self-development across a range of areas, including:

- Increased confidence and self-esteem – seen as the most important benefit of volunteering - acknowledged by both the young volunteers themselves and the mentors who support them:
  "I used to be really shy and wasn’t confident to speak in front of groups of people. [...] I am now very positive and more confident in meetings and in sessions. I have also done a presentation about my social action project". (Young Volunteer)

- Aspirations – the wide range of volunteering experiences and the accompanying sense of achievement showed young people what might be possible in the future.
  "He had no aspirations, [but] the activities and training have really helped him. He now knows he wants to work in sport and is getting paid work as a casual coach. Plus, he used to be very shy and reserved, [with] low self-confidence and he has come on leaps and bounds". (Project manager)

- Friendships – Volunteers regularly tell us that they have made lasting friendships through volunteering - always with other volunteers, often with project staff and coaches, even sometimes with their peers at sessions.
  "I have met friends for life who are like family. We’re all had life-changing experiences". (Young Volunteer)

8. NETWORKING & COLLABORATING

Feedback provided by LTOs over the years has consistently highlighted the value they see in being part of a network. In terms of the SYV Offer, this has meant that:

- LTOs have benefited from both regional and national opportunities to come together with other similar organisations to share learning and experiences
- LTOs have been able to come together collaboratively to provide their young volunteers with new and exciting experiences outside their local community, something that they could not provide alone
- LTOs can join together to provide training sessions for their young volunteers and volunteer mentors – which they may not have been able to host individually
- Young volunteers feel part of something ‘bigger’ and get opportunities to meet other young volunteers from other parts of the country

THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

Since 2007, over 18,000 young volunteers have been engaged. The majority of these have been young people aged 16-25, from low-income households in disadvantaged areas - often within urban settings that reflect the general make-up of their local community.

StreetGames’ monitoring and evaluation data - together with research studies and external evaluations - have evidenced the enormous positive impact of this volunteering work, both in terms of the young people themselves and within their local communities.

Better communication skills – Learning how to talk to groups of young people - and vice versa - has been appropriate to the role; negotiating with young people about topics such as the activity choice and talking to their peers.

- "When I was a Young Advisor at the residential, I got to make new friends and organise the event too. [...] I had to talk in front of a large group of people – it improved [my] public speaking skills and communication skills". (Young Advisor)

- Better listening skills – Many young volunteers report that they hadn’t been able to listen to instruction prior to becoming a volunteer, but that they now knew how important this skill was. Volunteers were now much better at listening to both their coaches and to their young participants.

- Being a role model – Volunteers recognised that they were role models to the young people at the sessions and this gave them a sense of responsibility. This recognition of being a role model also extended outside of the sessions, especially if they lived locally and met up with the same young people who attended their sessions.

- "Kids know who you are and look up to you. They feel they can talk to you. I enjoy working with kids. [...] My family are proud of me". (Young Volunteer)

Feeling ‘part of the team’ – The young volunteers enjoyed feeling a sense of belonging – like being ‘part of the team’. Volunteers told StreetGames that they had learnt to work better as part of a group – or as one volunteer put it:

- “to succeed, you have to work as part of a team at a session”. (Volunteer)

Better leadership and coaching skills – Their training and experience as volunteers helped those involved to develop their skills and to change their coaching style. One young volunteer who had been coaching their sport in a club setting for several years described how they had now become more relaxed in running a session for their self-defined young people. They also stated that the experience had made coaching more fun for them, as well as better at listening to what young people actually wanted to do at their sessions. Volunteers also learnt how to behave more professionally, and about the importance of time-keeping and reliability.

- “I’ve picked up loads of skills, like time-management and improved confidence. [...] I didn’t used to lead sessions, as I didn’t have the confidence or the patience". (Young Volunteer)

- Others see them differently – The majority of young volunteers agreed that this had been a benefit of volunteering and often described how proud their families and friends were of them. They were surprised by what they had achieved. Some volunteers described how some of their former teachers had even been surprised by their achievements.

Taking the initiative – Volunteers were able to set up new sessions by themselves, and take responsibility for parts of an event or festival (with the support of their mentors, who were always there for them).

More information and evidence of the above can be found here.

Increasing participation in sport and improving health

Young volunteers often report how much they enjoy volunteering, connecting with others through "giving back", learning new skills and being active in general. In doing so, these volunteers have been engaged in four of the ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’:

- Improved self-esteem.
- Increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Better communication skills.
- Improved leadership and coaching skills.

In line with other volunteer survey data, SYV surveys results have shown a strong positive association between volunteering and wellbeing, with those involved in the SYV Offer reporting levels of wellbeing that are consistently higher than average. For more information on this topic, please click here.

Many of the young people involved in the SYV Offer have told StreetGames that sport represented the main initial attraction behind volunteering, and that this has helped them to remain active and involved during their adolescence – a time when many young people tend to drop out of sport.

Staying in sport – Volunteering helped young people to continue playing sport and having fun, whilst helping to run the sessions.

Better sports skills – Attending StreetGames’ Activator courses and NGB sports coaching courses helped volunteers to learn new sports skills and tactics, thereby improving their playing ability.

Playing new sports – Volunteering provided young people with the opportunity to play new sports and to learn the rules.

*Surveys of StreetGames Young Volunteers have shown above average scores of: happiness, life satisfaction and self-worth when compared with non-volunteers, using the ONS Wellbeing scale.
Improved mental health – Volunteering helped the young people to improve and to maintain their positive mental health, due in part to the ‘fun factor’ associated with volunteering and playing sport. Many volunteers also gained memorable experiences, including taking part in residential trips, helping to run events, winning volunteer awards, volunteering abroad and even carrying the London Olympic Torch in the summer of 2012. The case study example below highlights the story of one such young person, who cites volunteering as a key element in helping to improve his mental health.

Increased physical activity – The additional resources provided by the young volunteers enable thousands of other young people to take part in sport/physical activity at Doorstep Sport sessions within their local communities. For many LTOs these sessions would simply not be possible without the additional support provided by volunteers. On average, there is typically a ratio of 1 volunteer to every 8 participants.

**Volunteering**

**Improving Mental Health**

**Case study: Jack**

Jack had been struggling with depression for a number of years. "I’ve had it since I was seven and nobody really knew of any signs until I was about fifteen. At 15, I did something that drew attention and then people started working things out and watching me more. Towards 17, I did actually go to a doctor multiple times and asked for help. At the time I had one of them tell me it was just my personality; there was nothing wrong with me.

Eventually I did speak to one GP who referred me to a psychiatrist at CAMHS but they didn’t give me any help. By the time I left school, I’d gotten a lot better and she [the CAMHS psychiatrist] said: ‘you’re not abusing substances or anything so far as I can see, you’re fine’. Eventually I left those sessions. Two weeks after that everything just started again and I knew I wasn’t fine. They (CAMHS) were just terrible.

I then started doing all the volunteering stuff and it got a bit better then because there were more people around to cheer me up and support me*.

The start of Jack’s journey as a volunteer

Jack’s journey as a volunteer started by chance at the age of 17, “I left school before the start of A-levels, I was then unemployed for quite a while, looking around, couldn’t find any work, didn’t know what to do either and then I went to a Job Fair one day and I came across IT stuff and I started volunteering that day, doing IT teaching”.

The project manager at the IT project eventually became Jack’s mentor and his spare time project manager was also a volunteer at a youth club and asked Jack if he would like to help out. Jack stated that he knew that "something was kind of stuff that I wanted to do. I took up the offer and did the NCV level in youth work and ever since then I’ve worked at events with young people and I help out at a local club*.

Although Jack had started volunteering to get the skills and work experience needed to get a job, he soon found that volunteering was having an unexpected impact on other areas of his life. “As I started doing volunteering, I then found that I preferred doing it so I got to meet new people. Then I turned to youth work and volunteering for that - it’s literally the most fun thing ever. It’s great meeting all the young people from so many different backgrounds and it’s great being able to help them develop skills and overcome problems. It’s great […] to go out, do all the activities, it’s really good. Volunteer funded had started to have a positive effect on Jack’s life and his depression: “one of the main factors was loneliness. Of course by doing youth work, you’re not lonely at all so that also raises [your self-esteem] quite high”.

Jack’s Full-Time Volunteer placement

Jack took up his full-time volunteer placement and described his role as “helping out with various projects, in all ways - helping to run activities and workshops for the projects, looking after and supporting the young people involved, and trying out the staff with whatever they need”. In addition to the work experience, Jack also took up other opportunities such as given "employability day", an ‘expedition leadership course’ and had even taken part in a German exchange project as a youth leader - in addition to several residencies.

Jack described how his confidence had benefited from overcoming the challenges faced at the recent StreetGames residential at Brathay in the Lake District. “It was really good. I didn’t know what to expect. I did actually have a fair bit of water-based activities and I can’t swim, so I wasn’t particularly looking forward to it as a thing that I would do. On the first activity, I was leading for a little bit and I quite enjoyed that – that was ghyll scrambling, the canoeing and I never would have imagined doing the stuff I did, never imagined it, ever. It’s taught me that I can do these things. Sometimes I might think, ‘oh no’, or I’ll put it off for a little bit but I shouldn’t do that, you can do it and it’s given me the confidence that I can do everything rather than shy away”.

Jack’s mentor watched him develop as a volunteer - playing an important role in supporting Jack, through shadowing and giving him the opportunity to shape his life and learn the skills needed for working with young people. His mentor described Jack’s progress: “If you’d asked me when I first met Jack about getting him involved in a sports volunteering project, I would have laughed because that’s how far away he was. But obviously, he’s just completed it now, he’s got a host of different awards and qualifications with it. He’s more willing to try things, which is great. The Lake District residential was just fab, absolutely brilliant!”

The volunteer placement had given Jack the opportunity to get involved in sport through the training opportunities offered by StreetGames. In Jack’s own words: "It has helped me really change my opinion of sport, which has definitely changed now".

His mentor’s experience as a youth worker enabled him to build a strong working relationship with Jack, as he too had experienced mental health issues in the past. He explained how he understood the challenges faced by Jack: “I can totally relate to him in as much as we’re both big guys, I’ve had my fair share of teenage dodgy haircuts and when I was younger, I suffered quite badly from mental health issues”. That experience had even shaped his approach to mentoring, stating: “I know the deal. It is what it is. I can either do it, or I’ll put it off for a little bit but it you know, you can’t. I think it just kind of worked from both sides, you know and the other big thing with Jack is that he’s just consistent, you know I was consistent with him so he knew we would be doing this or we wouldn’t be doing that and that’s okay, there was no pressure there for him”. As he had been working with Jack for almost three years, his mentor reflected that this had helped him to develop a sense of trust about his mental health: “[Jack] has opened up on a few occasions on his depression and that, not feeling anything and just having a downer on himself, that’s what depression is”.

This supportive approach to volunteering has provided Jack with a constant figure that he could rely on: “He’s always around. It’s not just one thing. If I needed, I could phone and send him a message, he’s approachable just like things with my CV and I even tried setting up a business at one point with friends and he helped with that”. Jack recognised that volunteering had had a positive effect on his mental health, “it has helped develop confidence in something to aim for. That is one of the reasons that I was depressed in the first place because I didn’t really have any aims. I’d always say, I can’t do it anyway, so what’s the point. It’s given me the opportunity to meet new people, make friends and hang around with people that are actually nice”.

The positive environment and his mentor’s support have allowed Jack to develop and his self-esteem: “It’s just an environment where it definitely helps with mental health issues. Even though it can be demanding with volunteering or having expectations placed on you, sometimes it can be a good thing, it gives you something to aim for – you work towards it and build up rather than think that you can’t do anything”.

Jack wanted to focus on a future as a youth worker but needed to find paid employment: “I would love to do youth work as a full-time job but the lack of funding in the youth work sector, I’m not sure [that’s possible], but it’s something I still don’t want to give up. I’m getting to the point where money is everything. Unfortunately the house is breaking, my family need the extra money and I have friends everywhere now and in order to be able to go and see them, I need money for travel”.

Jack was determined to build on his volunteering experience whilst looking for paid work and thinking about whether to study at College or not. Most importantly, Jack has used volunteering to change the way he thinks about himself and his future. He has taken up the volunteering opportunities that he has been offered, taken advantage of the opportunities he has been given and has also given himself the opportunity to follow a number of different pathways for the future.

---

*Page 30 | Lessons of StreetGames Young Volunteers

#Volunteering | Page 31
Supporting young people out of a crisis situation, and towards stability

Volunteering has also succeeded in providing young people with a structure on which they can build and move beyond the various crisis points in their lives, such as being homeless. Volunteering opportunities often provide emotional and practical support, as well as a foundation of positive experiences upon which participants can build their positive aspirations for the future.

Case study: Joel

Joel wasn’t spotty when he was younger. He had avoided going to PE classes all through secondary school. However, he achieved the GCSE grades for college and studied Horticulture and Catering. Whilst at college, his relationship broke down, and he moved away from Leeds, dropped out of college and became homeless for a while. He subsequently volunteered for StreetGames and was employed as an assistant Team Leader on the NCS during the summers. Joel also took on the role of a sessional community leader at a local Healthy Living Centre. The first step in Joel’s volunteering journey was when he was signposted to the local Young People’s Centre after becoming homeless. The staff were very supportive, and gave him the opportunity to volunteer, firstly in their kitchen and secondly with StreetGames.

The second point in Joel’s journey was when he was given the opportunity to attend his first StreetGames residential in the Lake District. This was his first experience of taking part in outdoor adventure activities, which helped him to overcome his fear of water and heights, and begin changing his self-identity. This was reinforced by several team-building activities offered at the residential, which helped Joel to increase his confidence, thereby making it easier for him to talk to new people.

The next stage of Joel’s journey took him to the national StreetGames Volunteer Leadership Programme, where he took part in several Activator training courses, strengthened his teambuilding skills, and developed greater social skills. He then volunteered at Camp Birmingham where he worked alongside other young volunteers to organise and run the camp for the young people in attendance. This combination of volunteering experiences led him to want to work with young people.

Recently, Joel has been offered a summer job as an Assistant Team Leader on the National Citizen Service (NCS), followed by paid session work as a community leader at the Healthy Living Centre. This was an important boost to Joel’s self-esteem and helped to shape his view of the future as a youth worker.

Case study: Gabby

Gabby is in her final year at university studying community sports coaching. In September, she intends to start working as a PE Volunteer Assistant. Gabby explained how volunteering at a StreetGames project had helped her to achieve this ambition.

“[Volunteering] helped me build the confidence that I needed to be able to pursue my career as a PE teacher. It helped broaden my experience, which has enabled me to be successful in job interviews and my application to university. Before StreetGames, I had very low self-esteem and felt like I didn’t belong but meeting new people who had the same difficulties as me and having fun at the same time put a constant smile on my face. I have met friends for life who are like family. We’ve had life changing experiences with StreetGames, such as being a Young Advisor for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014, something I will never forget, as well as being a paid member of staff for Birmingham British Athletics.”

Supporting their College education

Supporting their College work – Those young volunteers who were supporting their College and work were able to use their qualifications, skills and volunteering experience to support their educational applications. These experiences helped to demonstrate the sorts of qualities that colleges and universities were looking for, including ‘commitment’, ‘ability to learn’, ‘reliability’ and ‘passion for sport’.

Case study: Ryan

Ryan had been a participant at a local Doorstep Sport project for a few years before he was encouraged to start volunteering by one of the session’s coaches. He had started by helping out at a football and multi-sport session. He had been unemployed when he found out about the opportunity to apply for an apprenticeship at the project and had been successful with his application.

Case study: Tom

“I dropped out of school, didn’t fit into Connexions and went in there, went to Barnados and met with Positive Futures and started volunteering”. Tom says that “sport was the attraction. I needed to get out of my house and the first sessions felt good, helping kids out who aren’t so well-off. It’s a small project, so there aren’t loads of helpers and every bit counts”. Tom had volunteered before but felt that this was a place where he could make a difference and feel comfortable.

He now volunteers at two football sessions, helping out with the coaching, helping to set up the sessions, keeping score, taking the registers and helping to organise events. Tom has now done his SLUK Level One and his PA Level One coaching certificate. “I had to persevere, but it was okay”.

“Tom said that he “got a kick out of StreetGames by UK Coaching set out to explore the true value of developing coaches with the capability to deliver high quality coaching. For more information on this study, please see here. Volunteering as a building block for employment

Apprenticeships – Volunteering experience helped young people to apply for apprenticeships. Previous volunteering experience at a StreetGames project proved to be enormously helpful when making applications to college or the workplace to become an apprentice. For some young people, apprenticeships had supported their transition to adulthood as they were looking to “have some money for the first time” and were able to do things that their unemployed mates weren’t able to do.

The Journey from participant to volunteer to Young Apprentice

Case study: Ryan

Ryan had been a participant at a local Doorstep Sport project for a few years before he was encouraged to start volunteering by one of the session’s coaches. He had started by helping out at a football and multi-sport session. He had been unemployed when he found out about the opportunity to apply for an apprenticeship at the project and had been successful with his application.

An SROI study undertaken on behalf of StreetGames by UK Coaching set out to explore the true value of developing coaches with the capability to deliver high quality coaching. For more information on this study, please see here.
When asked what he thought of his apprenticeship at the project, Ryan said, “I liked attending; it’s better than staying at home, [...] and I’m interested in everything”. Ryan completed his SLUK Level One and Two, which he described as “very helpful, especially the Level Two” and had also done his FA Level One Coaching award. Ryan reflected that the training and qualifications were “very important in helping me to get into coaching in schools, [which is] something I’m interested in”.

Ryan also said that his communication skills had improved, as he was now more vocal, and more confident, a result of the different experiences he had enjoyed at the project. Ryan stated that the apprenticeship was definitely helping his CV and that “when it ends, I’m going to come back – if I had my way, I’d be here forever”.

Paid work – Volunteering has led to paid casual work, as many young volunteers become project coaches. Young volunteers confirm that their volunteering experience and the associated qualifications had helped them to get into this paid part-time work, not only in sport, but in other sectors too.

“It has made me realise where I want to go – that is, into a sports development role – creating initiatives for different groups [...] I have also been able to get a job in London over the summer as an activity leader for nine weeks. In the long-term I would like to be a Sports Development Officer”.

“I’ve got a job at JD Sports. I think volunteering helped me get the job because the confidence I’ve gotten from volunteering brings me out of my shell. I did well in my interview - she actually said it was a really good interview - and I didn’t come across as shy or anything, so that’s all through the conference and from StreetGames”.

Improving their local communities

The StreetGames Young Volunteer Offer places great emphasis on social action and volunteering within the network of UTOs, helping young volunteers to make a positive difference in their local community.

The role of volunteering in supporting the local community

Case study: Gary

A full-time volunteering opportunity was perfect for Gary as he had dropped out of college and wasn’t sure of his next step. He was a keen cyclist and saw volunteering in sport as a way to gain experience and qualifications. Gary volunteered for 30 hours a week for 20 weeks at Active East and used this time to push himself out of his comfort zone. He attended a StreetGames residential, gained new qualifications, attended training courses and volunteered at the StreetGames mass participation festival in Glasgow. Back in his local community, he ran a regular ‘Dr Bike’ session to maintain and repair bikes, organised regular canoeing, basketball and cycling sessions for local young people, and even created a cycling groups for adults.

Gary’s social action benefitted his local community in a number of ways, and even resulted in the creation of a volunteer recruitment day. Gary recruited 15 new volunteers to the Active East Young Volunteer Offer, supporting local activities and events in the community. Although Gary was planning to return to College, he was still continuing to volunteer and mentor new volunteers and making a difference to his local community.

Community safety

One of the most important benefits of volunteering to local communities has been in the improvement of community safety - as StreetGames often works with young people who were at risk or had previously been in trouble for ASB/youth crime. Some of the best volunteers and role models were those from this latter, but who were now taking a more positive role at the sessions.

Positive, regular activities – Volunteering at weekly sessions or being a full-time volunteer has provided positive activities for young people to look forward to, as well as the opportunity to build new friendships.

“Before I started volunteering I was a rebel, would get into fights, hang around streets, get arrested and cautioned. […] My mind thinks differently now – positively. I deal better with anger management, I’ve grown up and matured a lot. […] My family support and help me with so that’s encouraging and motivating”. If I didn’t have this [apprenticeship], I would have been a delinquent with the police”. (Young Volunteer)

Structured routine – Regular volunteering helped to provide a structure to the young person’s day, giving them a positive reason to get up in the morning.

New friendship groups – Volunteering offered young people the chance to meet peers with ‘pro-social behaviour’ - to build new friendships that supported their efforts to change and to improve their self-identity.

“I’ve changed my life. […] I used to drink and smoke a lot, but being active has made me make healthier choices. […] I was involved in anti-social behaviour – trespassing and vandalism but I’ve steered now, and moved away from that group of people”. (Young Volunteer)

Opportunities for personal development – Improving confidence, building skills, problem solving, and gaining new qualifications all have the potential to act as ‘hooks for change’, influencing young people’s decisions by providing a positive pathway into education, training and employment.

Project staff as role models and mentors – One young man from project staff who were also role models provided the young people with the support needed to make better decisions and to take steps towards changing their lives.

Stuart’s Story

Stuart, a teenager from the Wirral, would often find himself getting into trouble at school for ‘fooling around’ in class, with his disruptive behaviour eventually resulting in him being expelled from school in Year 10 and being referred to the Wirral Alternative Schooling Programme (WASP). This severely affected his prospects – leaving school with no academic qualifications. This had a negative effect on his confidence and self-esteem, with his behaviour outside of school starting to have a disruptive impact on his home life, ultimately leading to Stuart being referred to the Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team by Merseyside police due to problems he was causing in the Grange Road/Charing Cross area of Birkenhead.

Due to the concerns documented by Merseyside Police, Stuart was formally interviewed by Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team with regard to his behaviour. During the interview, Stuart expressed an interest in joining the Army and getting involved in sports-related activities. As a result, a referral was made to Wirral Sports Development Unit, in order for Stuart to be given the opportunity to explore his interest in sport further. Colin Hunt (Wirral Positive Futures Officer) went to meet Stuart and his family and provide information about the type of activities he could get involved with.

Stuart took up the opportunity and met with Colin at Europa Pools to have a one-to-one session, gym induction and to receive a gym pass. Over the next 18 months, Stuart would attend these activity sessions on a regular basis. Over time, Stuart also started to get involved in volunteering at Sports Development events - providing nearly 400 volunteer hours for various different projects, including StreetGames-funded Doorstep Sport Clubs and CLUB1 sessions.

He also attended the StreetGames Young volunteer Leadership Residential at Brathay in the Lake District and started to volunteer on the NCS programme. Some of the duties he carried out included roles such as site management, setting up the ‘Camp Thurston Project’, health and safety responsibilities; cooking and food preparation, and assisting open day events for dignitaries and VIPs.

Stuart has also gone on to enrol himself on a sports college course and has gained a City and Guilds Level 1 qualification. Stuart was named ‘Young Volunteer of the Year’ by the Wirral Sports Forum due to his outstanding and ongoing commitment to his work. Stuart’s change in attitude and newfound outlook on his future aspirations has been really positive. The key in all of this is his interest in sport and sport-related activity, particularly boxing, mountain biking and running. The Positive Future team was able to use his interests to motivate and encourage Stuart to engage in things he thought he would never be able to achieve.

In particular, the mentoring programme has suited his ‘wants and needs’ and helped him focus on his future aspirations. Stuart’s progress has also inspired some of his other friends to enquire how they can get involved in such schemes and shows that they are looking to Stuart as a role model. Stuart says: “I’ve taken every opportunity that I have been offered and I have taken them with both hands and really tried my best to make a difference [...] Before I got involved in the programme I didn’t have much to talk about, but now I feel I have a focus on what I want to do with my life and where I want to be. I also think I have gained a better footpath and I really take my fitness training seriously and have gained some qualifications on the way. I want to continue with my development. [...] When I look back, I think about all the things that were getting me into trouble and it was only because at the time I felt I had nothing better to do with my time. Now, I have lots to keep me motivated and occupied and I look forward to the next challenge. [...] I know I feel a lot better about my outlook on life, I get on much better with my parents and feel a lot more positive about things in general – I am so glad that I started doing stuff with Colin and that I didn’t follow the same route as most of my mates around Birkenhead, who have either been given ASBOs or will end up with criminal records”.

Callum Hughes and Stuart Smith
“...I first met ‘Stuey’ as part of our StreetGames Young Advisor day with British Cycling - who were looking to gather some insight on cycling from our young people. In all honesty, he was nothing but a pleasure to be around and a huge help on the day, from openly sharing his knowledge and ideas with the group, to encouraging others who were not as confident to do the same. Stuey was not an overpowering voice in the group, but a spark of energy when needed to keep the group motivated. In addition to this, he came across as a polite, respectful and well-mannered young man. [...] His contribution as a Young Advisor was invaluable and we at StreetGames thank him for his time and effort as a volunteer in sport”.(Samantha Loveridge - StreetGames)

“It is to his credit that since his referral and his engagement with the process, he has not come to our attention in any negative way. In fact, to the contrary, he was instrumental in a successful Police-led project in February this year, where we invited the Army to come and engage in a recruitment day with young people from across the Borough. [...] Credit goes to all the agencies involved, but mostly to him”. Sergeant Michael Lawrence, Merseyside Police.

Feedback from partner organisations also highlights Stuart’s enthusiastic and positive progress:

“[...] he worked in a team, motivating and encouraging them throughout every activity. Each day Stuart took the lead on all activities, proving himself as a role model for the other young people to aspire towards. Staff members also commented on Stuart’s approach to the activities and how his enthusiasm rubbed off on them, even in an intense and tiring residential environment. [...] He truly is an inspiration for other young people”. (Paula Baker - NCS Co-ordinator)

The table below illustrates how FABS! manifests in the differing young volunteer roles.

Table 3 – FABS! Approach in differing Volunteer Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF VOLUNTEER</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLE</th>
<th>FABS! (Fun, Altruism, Belonging, Self-Development)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Micro Volunteers’</td>
<td>Micro-volunteers typically volunteer as part of stand-alone, one-off opportunities – e.g. during events and festivals, in roles such as marshalling, assisting the delivery of activities, and through social media interaction.</td>
<td>Contributing to the event, feeling the ‘buzz’, helping others, getting to know new people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Volunteers</td>
<td>Regular volunteers commit to an ongoing role as a volunteer. This includes helping out at activity sessions, mentoring other volunteers, providing admin support, social media coordination and the delivery of youth-led activity.</td>
<td>Having fun whilst helping out, making new friends, gaining experience, new skills and knowledge, feeling confident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time volunteers</td>
<td>Full-time volunteers are those young people that are involved in more intensive social action opportunity, contributing 25 - 30 hours per week, for 13 - 24 weeks.</td>
<td>Planning and running projects to benefit other young people in their own communities, building up their CV, establishing a routine, timekeeping, reliability, sense of achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Advisors</td>
<td>Young Advisors are regular volunteers who step up to work on the design and delivery of Young Volunteer Offers at their LTOs and support the development of national StreetGames Young Volunteer Offers.</td>
<td>Sense of pride, making new friendships, travelling to new places, more confident, new skills, decision-making, sense of achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>Young volunteers who graduate from StreetGames activities.</td>
<td>Sense of belonging, Self-development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 01: STREETGAMES YOUNG VOLUNTEERS TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event/Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>The StreetGames Young Volunteer initiative is launched, with the Co-op as its lead sponsor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>The first Young Volunteer residential takes place in Wales. The first full-time volunteer placement takes place in the North East.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>The StreetGames Young Volunteer offers further funding from V-Inspired. The first national winner of the Young Volunteer Award is announced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>The first annual Young Volunteer conference is held in Walsall. StreetGames launches its Young Advisors initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Funding is received from the Cabinet Office to develop the Young Volunteer Offer - linked to the London 2012 Olympics. The “VTwentyFour:24” initiative further increases the growth of this full-time volunteering work. Five part-time Regional Doorstep Sport Advisors are put in place to support the growth of StreetGames Young Volunteer work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>StreetGames’ work with young volunteers expands with links to the London 2012 Olympics. The organisation launches the event volunteering project, with 75 StreetGames volunteers running with the Olympic torch and a further 45 young volunteers working with Coca-Cola GB at the Olympics. StreetGames’ Young Volunteer Offer receives the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Award for volunteering. BT sponsors the growth of the full-time Young Volunteers in Scotland and Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Further funding is received from the Cabinet Office for StreetGames Young Volunteers. Young Advisors take part in the first European Youth Exchange programme in Belgium, as part of the ‘Sport me up’-funded project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>StreetGames Young Volunteers reaches 10,000 young people total. StreetGames runs the ‘Camp Glasgow’ residential - linked to the 2014 Commonwealth Games. StreetGames’ young volunteers travel to Brazil with Lions Raw for the FIFA World Cup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Cabinet Office funding is received for the third time, enabling the continued growth of StreetGames Young Volunteers. The first London and South East residential Young Volunteer Offers are funded by the Berkley Foundation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>StreetGames Young Volunteers reaches 15,000 young people total. StreetGames runs its first ever international youth leadership residential, working with young people from six different countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>The total number of young volunteers involved in Doorstep Sport club programmes reaches 3,300. StreetGames delivers its first Youth Health Champions training residential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>StreetGames delivers the European Youth Health Champions residential with four European partner countries. StreetGames receives Sport England investment to deliver a Volunteer Action Research Project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
StreetGames would like to thank the many organisations that have provided vital funding to support the StreetGames Young Volunteer Offer, both in the past and today. These include: