

PLYMOUTH PILOT PROJECT

CASE STUDY

MARCH 2022



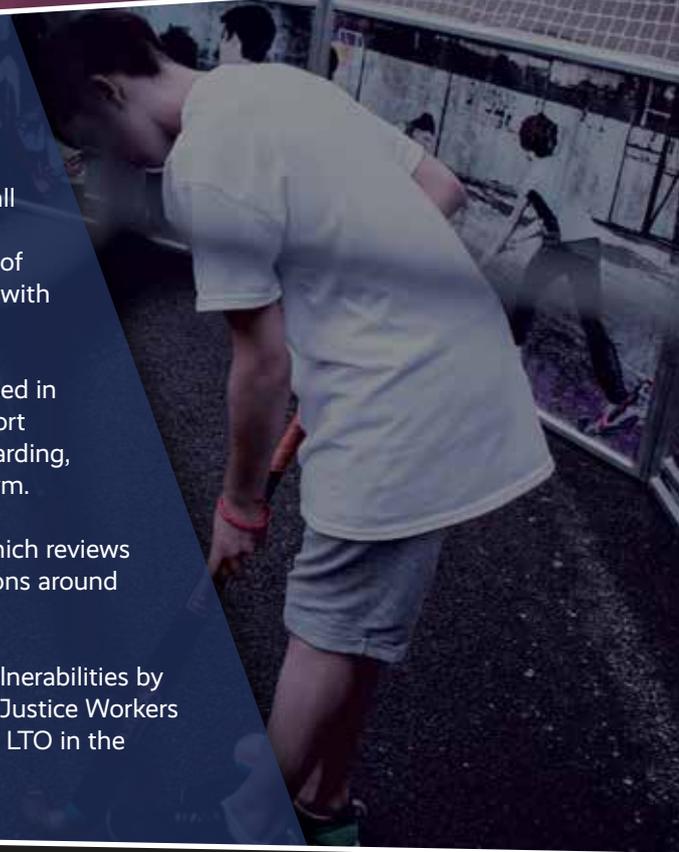
INTRODUCTION

In October 2020 StreetGames was commissioned by the Devon and Cornwall Police Crime Commissioner, to lead a pilot project aimed at offering positive activities and opportunities to vulnerable, or 'at risk' young people as a form of early intervention and diversion from crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB), with the overarching goal of helping to develop pro-social identities.

Working with a group of locally trusted community organisations (LTOs) based in Plymouth, the programme refers 'vulnerable' young people into doorstep sport activities spanning: football, surfing, free running, street dance/arts, skateboarding, mountain biking, trampolining and strength and conditioning work in the gym.

The pilot has established a new multi-agency referral and 'triage' process, which reviews applications and then refers young people into suitable doorstep sport sessions around Plymouth.

Young people are referred for multiple reasons, indicating a wide range of vulnerabilities by organisations such as: Children's homes, Pupil Exclusion units, Police, Youth Justice Workers and other elements of the local authority, or are "self-referred" by an existing LTO in the programme.



EVALUATION

To evaluate the impact of the pilot project, a number of different methods have been used, including: analysing referral data, attendance data, an engagement matrix together with sample surveys and case study interviews with young people and project staff key. As of March 2022, data collection and evaluation are still ongoing, up until the end of the funding period in May.

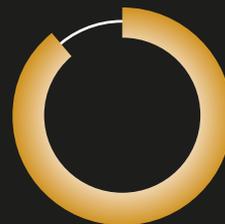
The information below shares the results from these different methods; and although data collection has proved challenging, which although, not uncommon for this type of project, was further hampered by the Pandemic and Lockdown restrictions. However, despite these challenges, the results to date are showing that **the project is engaging vulnerable young people** who could benefit from a referral to sport as a form of early intervention and diversion and that young people's involvement in sport is starting to **make a positive difference, in terms of: behaviours, attitudes and aspirations** for the future.

ATTENDANCE



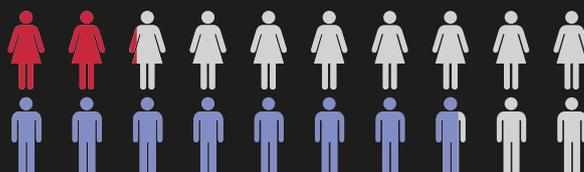
131

young people have been referred into the programme so far



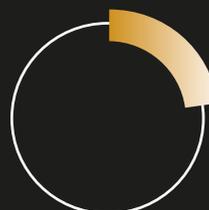
89%

are aged 10-19 years, with over half of these aged 10-13 years



22%

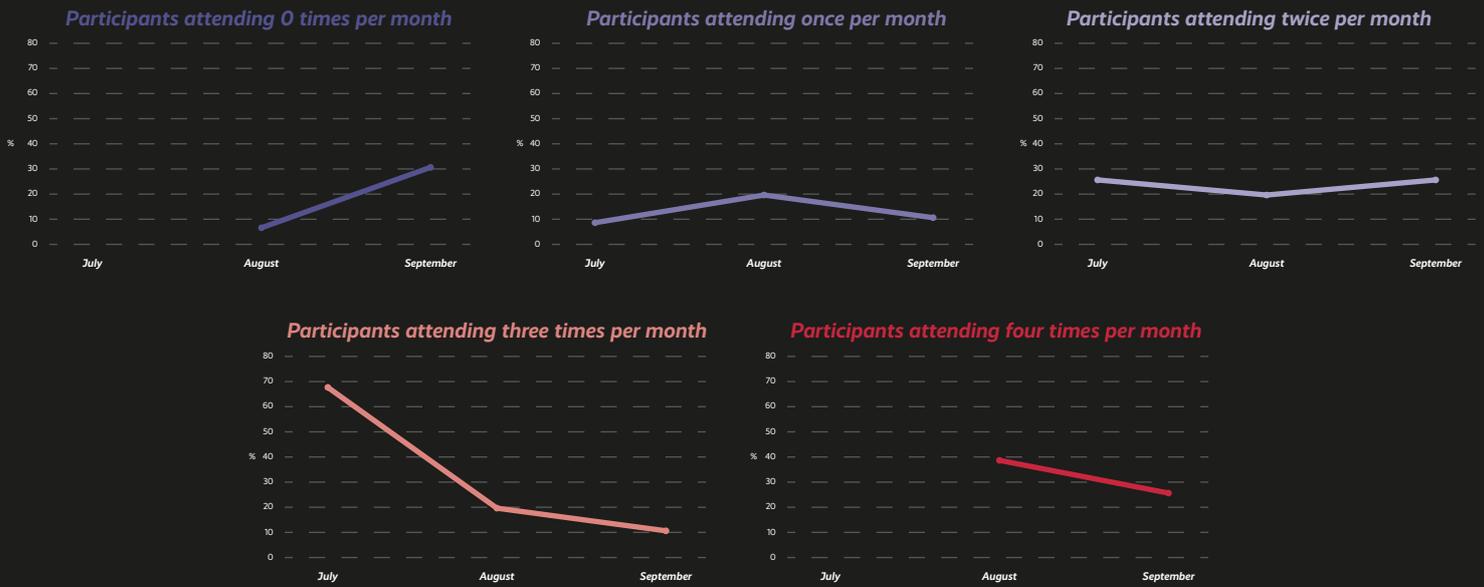
78%



23%

indicated that they have a disability (physical, learning or mental).

The attendance patterns of those referred, were analysed during the project. The results show, that although attendance patterns were varied; with some young people attending every session, whilst others attended 'intermittently', the majority of young people attended at least twice a month – with some attending more frequently (See chart below).



ENGAGEMENT MATRIX

In addition to reviewing frequency of attendance, LTO staff were also asked to use a matrix to review young people's engagement at sessions and how this may have changed over time.

Participant's engagement was reviewed at least twice, once at the initiation of the programme or arrival of the participant, then at intervals until the end of the programme, or departure of the participant, meaning any progress made by a young person could be tracked – using the Engagement Matrix and definitions developed by Substance – see below.

| LEVEL 1 DISENGAGEMENT | LEVEL 2 CURIOSITY | LEVEL 3 INVOLVEMENT | LEVEL 4 ACHIEVEMENT | LEVEL 5 AUTONOMY |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Sit out and ignore activity | Watch activity | Join in with others | Complete tasks | Initiate tasks |
| Encourage disputes | Dip in and out | Respond to instruction | Communicate with staff outside the activity | Help plan and run activities |
| Walk out | Listen to staff and peers | Enjoy good relationships | Celebrate work publicly | Praise work of others |
| Make negative comments | Comment on activity | Share facilities | Make connections beyond the project | Deal with conflict |
| Destroy/damage facilities | Talk to others about activities | Handle conflicts with maturity | Receive accreditation and gain qualifications | Volunteer |
| | | Try on own | Attend regularly | Make 'career' choices |
| | | | | Employment |

As the data below shows, aggregate engagement scores increased amongst young people at four out of five LTOs on the programme, with the young people's engagement transitioning from 'curiosity' to 'involvement' or 'achievement'.

ENGAGEMENT MATRIX – AGGREGATED SCORES

Average Engagement Level at first session
Average Engagement Level at most recent session



PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

Baseline and follow-up questionnaires were also used to capture feedback from young people about how they are feeling, which included questions that act as key 'markers' for aspects, including: well-being, resilience, belonging, self-esteem and social trust.

Although it has proved difficult to generate high response rates (particularly for the follow-up surveys), from the sample of responses received to date, the feedback has been positive, for example showing that for most young people there were: increases in subjective well-being, self-efficacy, trust and feeling more confident.

The graphs below show results relating to subjective well-being, using the ONS well-being questions related to: life satisfaction, happiness and feeling things in your life are worthwhile - showing aggregate scores at baseline, follow-up and compared to young people nationally (ONS well-being scale is 0-10).

Case study interviews also highlighted positive impacts on young people, in other areas of their lives such as enjoyment at school or college, being less likely to get into trouble /feel angry and generally feeling that they have choices and being more positive about their future.

ONS Wellbeing Questions (on a scale of 1-10 - mean scores)

Baseline
Follow Up
National Average



CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS

Case study interviews with project staff also highlighted positive impact on the young people involved; particularly, in relation to their well-being, confidence, behaviours and engagement – see below:

The fact that he's been coming out of his house every week for an hour and engaging and now he's coming out for two hours....and he's been coming along with his carer. Just having that structure in his life.

Before he came, he just wouldn't speak to anyone, whereas now he can have a conversation with staff and the other participants. And now he's actually progressed and gone onto another session. Which is amazing because it shows that that's working.

I was stuck in a bad place and could not see a way out, I thought that everyone was against me. I am so grateful for this opportunity, I have found something that I am good at.

He feels happier within himself, is calmer and takes pride in his well-being now by doing daily workouts at home.... has improved his attitude so much that he has been moved up to top sets across the board in school and has not been given a single detention.

Her confidence has notably increased and she now feels comfortable in a group setting, giving demonstrations in front of the group at boxing. Building on her positive engagement at the sessions, H is now involved in education.

The interviews also highlighted that using sport gave young people the opportunity to participate in an activity in which they could experience success and achievement, which has led to some continuing to take part in sport and progressing. These sessions also led to improved confidence, improved physical health and increased routine and structure in their week.

The success of the pilot can be attributed to a number of factors. All engagement from young people has been voluntary, meaning they could be involved in a way that suited them. The activities enabled young people to engage in supervised, positive activities, connect with positive role models, build friendships and gain personal achievements. Thus providing fun, positive experiences and something that the young people could look forward to.

Allowing the young people to progress in sport, also helped contribute to developing a pro-social identity, with the young people starting to view being a footballer or boxer as part of who they are. The program also signposted young people to exit routes to sport and/or other services, as an attempt to ensure continued development.

The importance of having a coach or leader with empathy and understanding was essential for the program's success, which was highlighted in an interview with a coach, when he described his experience with a female participant, "You have to be careful. One girl had a background of domestic violence. Sparring gave her flashbacks so we adapted it and left it out". The coaches feedback shows the value of having background information about the young person, understanding triggers and being flexible and adaptable.

In terms of challenges and future considerations – learning from the pilot project has highlighted, that the engagement of vulnerable young people is not always easy. At times, some young people displayed disruptive behaviour in sessions, whilst for others there were challenges related attendance. For some young people attendance was impacted by other commitments whilst for others attendance was reliant on a parent or carers' engagement. And for some young people the complexities in their lives meant that the timing of the programme was just not right.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge, that whilst sport can make a hugely valuable contribution, it cannot work in isolation but instead should be seen as part of a holistic, multi-agency approach involving a range of stakeholders.