A SERVES PARTICIPANT STORY: William, 14, Bridlington

How SERVES tennis sessions have given William the confidence to socialise more, take part in regular physical activity and to engage with his peers.

Background

William, 14, started attending the Tennis Foundation’s SERVES programme in Bridlington, run in partnership with StreetGames, just over a year ago. In that time he has transformed into a confident young man who is a role model for others.

When he started at SERVES William had just left a local Bridlington school after experiencing bullying from other pupils. That experience had left William with low self-esteem and confidence. This then had a knock on effect with William struggling to socialise and communicate with others.

William now attends alternative education in Hull, which is an hour away and therefore does not make it easy for him to socialise with any of his peers out of school.

The SERVES Tennis Activator at the session felt it was important to support William to help improve his social skills and start making new friends rather than fall in with the wrong crowd.

Reluctant to go out

Conversations with his Mum revealed that William found it hard to make friends and did not go out of the house very often. Although she did want William to go out more, she was also reluctant due the bullying he had previously faced, and so when William first started attending SERVES his mum walked him to and from the session.

Forming new friendships

As part of attending SERVES, William took part in self-confidence module of the Tennis Foundation’s SERVES Social Change programme. This proved to have a positive impact on Williams’s social skills. Over the course of the module, the Tennis Activator saw Williams’s confidence develop. He is now a big character within the session and has begun to let his personality shine, something which has correlated with him forming new friendships.

Through SERVES, William has shown improvements in different tennis aspects such as forehands and backhands, and has become a lot more confident in his own ability. William has really worked on his tennis volleying and this showed when the SERVES group ran a tournament which he won, saying that had never won anything in his life before.

Contact the SERVES National Team

Email: community@tennisfoundation.org.uk
Web: www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/SERVES
Tel: 0208 4877000
Next steps

William’s Mum doesn't come to pick him up and he walks home from sessions with his friend. As a result of SERVES, the Tennis Activator is now looking into involve William in other sociable activities including the local tennis club.

Overall the SERVES tennis programme has helped William to socialise with other peers on a regular basis and make new friendships. His self-confidence has developed and this has made him become more of a role model to younger participants. The session has also given him the opportunity to access tennis and other sports free of charge.