SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE & KNIFE CRIME
INTRODUCTION

With concern growing among the general public, and at Government level regarding the rise in serious youth violence and knife crime, Sport England announced a new Small Grants fund aimed at helping community organisations to tackle these issues.

Targeting the expansion and/or further development of several relevant programmes and interventions, these funds would be allocated to a number of hot-spot areas over the 2019 summer holidays.

Sport England worked in collaboration with a variety of partner organisations, including StreetGames; Sported; Access Sport; England Boxing; Basketball England; Fight for Peace; and Double Jab, to identify appropriate community organisations and support them with Small Grant applications.

The following report provides an overview of the activities undertaken, impact made and learning gathered from the 39 projects within the StreetGames network that were successful in securing this funding.

BACKGROUND

A recent study undertaken by Loughborough University on behalf of StreetGames, involved the creation of a new literature review, drawing together all relevant information and evidence on the topic of serious youth violence. This study highlighted many observations of particular relevance to this project, such as:

1. Young people’s involvement in serious youth violence and crime is complex and contested:
   - Moffitt [1993] suggests that there are two groups of young people who typically engage in serious youth violence. The first group of young people start their involvement at an early age and this persists into adulthood, resulting in patterns of violent behaviour. The second group are only involved in serious youth violence during adolescence, usually on an occasional basis.
   - McAra and McVie [2016] state that young people involved in violence are often highly vulnerable and display high levels of victimisation. Poverty experienced at both household and neighbourhood levels is a shared characteristic of both groups.

2. Prevention of youth violence through early intervention of offending is important as contact with the youth justice system can encourage re-offending. Early intervention can include both universal and targeted programmes.
   - Positive activities play a useful role in the development young people’s resilience and in the enhancement of protective factors. For example, they provide opportunities for:
     - Young people to access activities in a safe place, build a routine and a sense of belonging, pro-social identity
     - Pro-social friendships
     - Interaction with positive adult role models.
   - The literature review also suggested that sport could make a positive contribution to targeted early intervention programmes, namely by providing opportunities for personal development and ‘relationship building’ - particularly when delivered by supportive, experienced staff.

THE PROJECT

SPORT ENGLAND SMALL GRANTS: SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE & KNIFE CRIME

SUMMER 2019

18,711 ATTENDANCES

85% MALE

15% FEMALE

2,278 YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED

85%

15%

60% BAME

£333,872 SMALL GRANT FUNDING

39 LTOS

27%

32%

28%

9%

Under 14s

14 - 15 years

16 - 19 years

20+ years
FUNDING SUPPORT
Between the months of June and July 2019, StreetGames provided regional support for Locally Trusted Organisations (LTOs) operating in the North West, Yorkshire, London and Midlands areas. This support was primarily designed to help LTOs to apply for Sport England Small Grant funding.

This support included running regional workshops, attracting groups of LTOs from each of these areas to pool their knowledge and develop their skills to create more effective grant applications. This was followed up with one-to-one support to ensure that all applications were submitted on time and to a high standard. Upon receiving their grants, all successful LTOs were provided with further support from StreetGames DSAs. This was done to help ensure that the delivery of interventions remained on track and that monitoring data was being collected and recorded.

This support helped 39 LTOs to successfully draw down a small grant from Sport England - the total value of which added up to over £330,000, across the targeted locations of London, Manchester, Oldham, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Doncaster and Coventry.

ACTIVITIES PROVIDED
Securing these grants enabled the LTOs to expand, scale up, and/or further develop their programmes over the summer holidays (with the option to extend beyond this period). These improvements included:

- The provision of a range of informal sports, including: multi-sports, football, basketball, dance and fitness;
- Opportunities to take part in informal local tournaments;
- Informal educational advice and awareness-raising relating to the development of healthy lifestyles, and/or serious youth violence;
- Workshops provided by local youth workers to help build interpersonal skills, confidence and resilience amongst attendees; and
- Opportunities for young people to receive training, gain qualifications and take on leadership/volunteering roles.

Illustrative examples are provided below:

**ACTIVITIES PROVIDED**

| Activities provided by Young Foundation in London included: weekly evening sessions that included football, fitness and inspirational talks, as well as a group meal held at the half-way point of the programme. A friendly football match was also held between the participants, gym staff and Young Foundation staff. |
| Activities provided by LED Community Foundation in Leeds included: two activities per week, as chosen by the group themselves, including – boxing, trampolining, multi-sports, Lazerzone plus talks provided by inspirational speakers. |
| Activities provided by Transform UK in London included: weekly sports activities (including box fit, dance and multi-sports), healthy lifestyle workshops, sports trips, 1-2-1 mentoring with Youth workers and on-site mentors, and a summer residential. |

**MONITORING DATA**

In order to monitor the impact made by the LTOs, and to gather as much relevant learning as possible, all 39 projects were required to record data outlining the number and profile of their participants, including attendance figures. LTOs were also provided with the option of:

- Undertaking a survey with a sample of participants towards the end of the programme.
- Capturing case study information.

To support this work, StreetGames provided LTOs with an M&E guide, participant questionnaire packs and a case study template.

Sport England also commissioned Loughborough University to undertake case study research with 10 funded organisations, including five from the StreetGames network.

The following information helps to summarise the key findings gleaned from this M&E data.

**IMPACT**

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**MONITORING DATA**

LTOs provided the relevant data through the online monitoring tool – ‘Views’.

This data showed that in total, over 2,200 young people were engaged by this project comprising 2,278 young people engaged.

- 85% Male / 15% female
- 27% Under 14s / 32% 14-15 years / 28% 16-19 years / 9% 20+ years
- 60% BAME

These participants collectively generated 18,407 attendances – meaning that on average each participant attended circa 8 times.

**Participant Engagement Levels**

LTOs were also given the option of recording participant ‘engagement’ levels at two different points utilising the ‘Engagement Ladder’ function on Views.

The Engagement Ladder was developed by Substance and originally used in relation to the Positive Futures programme. It includes five different ‘levels’ of engagement: (1 – Disengagement, 2 – Curiosity, 3 – Involvement, 4 – Achievement, 5 – Autonomy) and includes descriptors to help coaches and mentors assign a level to their attendees.

Staff at two LTOs (West Ham and Transform UK) used the tool recording engagement levels of over 100 young people. The results, which are set out in table one below show that 39% of attendees moved up at least one level, while 45% maintained their level and 16% decreased their involvement.

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- 39% of attendees moved up at least one level
- 45% maintained their level
- 16% decreased their involvement

The data also showed that the proportion of participants considered to be at the level 3 stage or above, increased from 77% at baseline to 97% at the follow up.

**Participant Engagement Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Levels</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintained</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Participant Engagement Levels
PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

Participant surveys were developed by StreetGames to gather feedback from young people across a range of aspects, including: their motivations for attendance, the parts of the programme they enjoyed most, its impact on their lives, as well as any suggested improvements that they might have. This feedback was then assessed in relation to a range of key outcomes, including: wellbeing, participant attitudes/behaviours, and personal development milestones – all of which link to ‘protection factors’.

The questionnaires were largely comprised of ‘tick-box’-style questions to ensure ease of completion. They were also designed to be undertaken as a single ‘snap-shot’ towards the end of the programmes. Accompanying guidance materials made it clear that completion was optional and that any project and/or young person could choose to opt out, if they so wished.

In total 220 completed questionnaires were returned – with respondents comprising: 85% males and 75% BAME.

Sport is an important hook

Respondents were asked what aspects had motivated them to attend. As Figure 1 below demonstrates: sport provided an important ‘hook’ in terms of their engagement; with 69% of respondents saying that they attended sessions because they ‘like sport’.

Discussions with project staff also emphasised the importance of being able to promote the sessions positively – through sport rather than with a focus on tackling violence or gangs.

![Figure 1: Why do you come to these sessions?](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like sport</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have fun</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet up with friends</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be more active</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get healthier</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do new things</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn new things</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet new people</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to do new things</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To stay safe</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep out of trouble</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The location suits me</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Right Style and The Right People

The ‘right style’ of session was also important to attendees, with feedback highlighting a number of key motivations to this effect, including the desire ‘to have fun’ and ‘to meet up with friends’.

When asked what they had liked best about the sessions, many participants chose to emphasise the importance of a relaxed and informal atmosphere, as well as the opportunity to socialise with friends:

- A lot of friends come and I have fun with people who live in the area
- They are fun and I feel included
- It’s fun!
- Chill out
- Love riding bikes, it was good to do stuff outside
- I like the coaches and the sessions they put on
- They are inclusive, there isn’t restrictions and you can learn and meet new people
- They’re open to everyone and the coach is good
- I like playing sport and learning new skills
- [I like the tournaments rotation]

Providing a Safe Haven

Some respondents also specifically mentioned that they had attended in order to ‘stay safe’ (29%) and ‘to keep out of trouble’ (23%) – with case study feedback also highlighting how valuable these sessions had been for some young people in regards to providing a safe haven – see below.
Providing a Safe Haven

Some respondents also specifically mentioned that they had attended in order to ‘stay safe’ (29%) and ‘to keep out of trouble’ (23%) – with case study feedback also highlighting how valuable these sessions had been for some young people in regards to providing a safe haven – see below.

Personal Development

The survey data also provided important feedback on the impact that these sessions had had - relating to a number of different outcomes. They included:

- Health & Wellbeing: Many of the young attendees felt that the sessions had had a positive impact on their wellbeing and levels of physically activity, as evidenced by the figures below – see figures 3 & 4 below.

**Figure 2: Since attending this sessions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Agree A Lot</th>
<th>Agree A Little</th>
<th>Do Not Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I get on better with adults now</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get on better with other young people now</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more confident now</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am better at working in a team now</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a better leader now</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to communicate better now</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more motivated to engage in activities now</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can be relied upon more now</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more tolerant now</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learnt things that will help me at school</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learnt things that will help me prepare for getting a job</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learnt things that will help me be more employable</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3: Since attending this sessions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Agree A Lot</th>
<th>Agree A Little</th>
<th>Do Not Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy this session</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel better about myself</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe and cared for here</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel healthier now</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more active now</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am treated with respect here</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel part of something here</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more motivated to engage in activities now</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey data also demonstrates an increase in physical activity, as a result of participation - see figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Number of days in the past week physically active for 30 mins or more

In terms of supporting participants to increase their activity levels across ‘activity thresholds’, the survey results demonstrate that:

- The proportion of attendees who were ‘inactive’ (0-1 days) reduced from 23% to 10%
- The proportion of attendees who were ‘active’ (5-7 days) increased from 28% to 38%

Additional feedback from delivery staff and young people also highlights how the sessions helped attendees to become more active and to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

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The survey also included a number of validated ‘marker’ questions - enabling benchmark comparisons to be made between this data and national studies, particularly those relating to mental wellbeing, social trust and self-efficacy.

In terms of wellbeing-related questions, results show that attendees reported higher levels of happiness, life satisfaction, and self-worth than data for teenagers at the national level – see figure 5.

Figure 5: Mean Scores on Happiness, Worth & Life Satisfaction

The results also showed that participants reported higher levels of social trust than teenagers at the national level.

Figure 6: Social Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% THAT AGREED: ‘IF I FIND SOMETHING DIFFICULT I KEEP TRYING UNTIL I CAN DO IT’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTICIPANTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATIONAL DATA (14-16 YEARS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Self-efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% RESPONDENTS THAT SAY THEY TRUST OTHERS A LOT/A BIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTICIPANTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATIONAL DATA (14-16 YEARS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following case studies serve to highlight additional evidence of impact:

Learning

Participant ‘L’, who is a 14 year old male attended sessions provided by Flying Futures in Doncaster, is one of seven children who lives near to the youth centre. Previously, ‘L’ had been in trouble with school, police and community members due to his anti-social behaviour. As a result of the sessions ‘L’ has accepted that his behaviour may have caused distress to some local people. He is now very much of the opinion that he does not want to brand himself a criminal: he has always felt his behaviour was just loud and fun but over the last few months has acknowledged that he needs to change in order to lose the image / notoriety that he has gained in the local area. ‘L’ is hoping to use his natural leadership and communication skills differently, and is now planning on becoming a volunteer leader in the community.

Transform UK in London shared information about a young female they engaged with. Before engaging in this project the young person was NEET - unable to access her Sixth Form place after being arrested along with family members for attempted murder. Despite being on bail and still under investigation the team from Transform UK were able to engage with her and support her into volunteering. She initially started by assisting one of the experienced sports tutors to deliver box-fit sessions and from this, she has gone on to shadow and assist delivery at an elders keep fit drop-in project ‘Chill and Chat’, before eventually being able to lead the chair-based exercise session herself. Through this project she has also accessed one-to-one support and identified that she would like to take up a career in sports and fitness. Moving forwards, and despite the project coming to an end, this young person is involved in multiple positive programmes run by Transform UK and is now working on a weekly basis with their tutors in one-to-one sessions where it is hoped she will transition into higher education.

Burk Gravis from Haringey Sports Development Trust was travelling on the tube one day when a young man recognised him from a programme run 15 years ago when he was in school. The young man ‘P’ who is now 29, was unemploy ed at the time with a criminal background. He explained that he was looking to get into a career in sport but was struggling. Burk invited him to come down to the summer sessions – he did this and went on to volunteer throughout the summer. ‘P’ is still involved with Haringey Sports Development Trust and is planning to undertake a Level 2 Coaching course. Burk said that ‘P’ is “now more confident, reliable and becoming a very competent coach who is able to communicate well”.

Participant ‘R’ who attended sessions provided by the Hunslet Club in Leeds typically spent most of his spare time hanging around with his mates on the streets of Beeston. He decided to come down to the summer sessions and to give it a go with some friends as “they had nothing else to do.” By attending our summer programme he has improved his fitness, skills and gained self-confidence. Although he has never been in trouble with the police, his older brother is in prison for “doing stupid things that are gang-related and being involved in knife crime.” He shared that he wants to “impress his mum and keep away from that lifestyle.”

CASE STUDIES

Key Success Factors

Feedback gathered from staff and participants help to paint a fuller picture of the programme’s success, with both groups mentioning several common factors. These include:

- The activities being provided by locally trusted community organisations – because they:
  • Are embedded in the local area
  • Know what ‘works’ with the target group
  • Are trusted and can engage the right young people
  • Don’t just provide sessions – they create a sense of ‘family and community’ – they know the young people, the area and their families.

- Having an experienced and dedicated staff – individuals with a strong understanding of the local area and its issues, who are able to create the right environment for attendees, and to empathise with them in order to build relationships.

- Providing an attractive and varied offer – some sessions focused on one particular sport, such as boxing or football, while others included a range of sports and activities. Sessions typically involved informal ‘turn up and play’ opportunities, featuring lots of social interaction.

- Being able to provide “tailored” support – including one-to-one assistance and mentoring in some instances. Some organisations included detached youth workers in their project, while others included peer-to-peer outreach workers.

- Local partnerships and multi-agency approaches – LTOs worked with a range of local partners including: the Police, ASB teams, Children’s Social Work Services, Youth Justice services, mental health charities and local residents.

- Being able to provide young people with development opportunities and/or pathways into year-round provision.

Many of the organisations involved also stated that the support provided by StreetGames, in helping them to prepare their funding applications and delivery was very welcome:

‘StreetGames has empathy with people that just want to get on and do...’
**CHALLENGES**

The most commonly mentioned challenges related to the project timeframe, in particular:

- The short lead in time for application and between application and delivery – which led to some challenges in relation to: project planning, engagement and staff recruitment.
- The time-limited nature of project delivery – with most organisations emphasising the need for longer-term engagement / sustained delivery over longer periods to build relationships and impact.

It should also be noted that while many of the organisations viewed StreetGames’ M&E support as helpful and welcomed the inclusion of case study templates, participant questionnaires and access to Views, others were less positive about the need for participant surveys – citing issues which included:

- Young people with low levels of literacy struggling to complete them
- Young people not wanting to write down how they feel about themselves / their community in front of others
- Young people feeling that they were being ‘assessed’

Some of these organisations suggested that it would be preferable to enable attendees to choose how they provided feedback and the inclusion of alternative methods, such as: vox pop videos or peer-to-peer discussions.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Overall, the learning and information from these projects lend further support to the idea that appropriately-designed sports-based interventions can play an important role in helping to prevent / reduce involvement in serious youth violence.

Additional information is also available on the StreetGames website to support organisations from both the community sport and youth justice sectors that are potentially interested in undertaking work in this area, including:

- A literature review compiled by Loughborough University which reviews key evidence in relation to youth offending, early intervention and the role of sport in promoting desistance. Plus a second literature review which focuses on the role of sport in addressing serious youth violence and crime.
- Learning from an initial pilot project led by StreetGames in 2015-17 which included an evaluation undertaken by Loughborough University which identified 10 critical success factors underpinning effective sports-based interventions.
- A youth justice and community sport referral pathway toolkit for practitioners – which includes a step-by-step guide and checklists.

**SUMMARY**

Information gathered during the course of this project effectively demonstrates how the 39 LTOs were able to attract large numbers of young people from their target areas, before engaging them in positive activities. Information gleaned from these monitoring efforts, including survey data and case studies helped to share evidence of this positive impact, at both the organisational and individual levels – particularly in terms of supporting personal development and improved protective factors such as: self-esteem, resilience, feelings of belonging, and access to pro-social peers and adults.

However, it should be noted that this area of work is not without its challenges. For example, it requires dedicated support over sustained periods of time, and is not necessarily an area of work that ‘fits’ with the remit of all sports providers - requiring instead that organisations and their staff have relevant expertise and resources.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that while appropriately-delivered sports activities can contribute in a positive way, there are many other external factors that can impact on a young person’s life (either positively or negatively). As such, sports organisations alone should not be expected to keep young people safe or to provide them with all of the support that might possibly need. Instead, a holistic multi-agency approach is needed.

**FINALLY**

StreetGames would like to say a massive thank you to 39 community organisations that delivered these projects and collectively engaged over 2,200 young people with opportunities to take part in activities in their local communities during the Summer holidays and beyond. The hard work, enthusiasm and commitment of their staff and volunteers is hugely appreciated – thank you.

We would also like to offer a special thank you to Sport England, who provided investment for this project via their small grants programme.

Thank you