



StreetGames becomes nationwide social prescriber in local communities

Sports charity funds link workers in four UK cities to tackle social issues among young people

London, (30/01/2019) – National sports charity StreetGames has funded four link workers to support young people accessing local sources of support in four cities across the UK. The programme will allow young people to have access to free counselling, sport and volunteering opportunities, and will support with literacy, training or employment.

These appointments follow StreetGames being selected as one of 23 new schemes across the country to share in £4.5 million of funding from the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC). The grant means StreetGames will be able to support local partners in Brighton & Hove, Luton, Sheffield and Southampton, to work with vulnerable young people, aged 5-25, helping them to get extra care and support in their local neighbourhood.

StreetGames has partnered with YMCA DownsLink Group in Brighton & Hove, No Limits in Southampton, Sheffield Futures in Sheffield, and Active Luton in Luton, who will provide physical hubs from where the service will be coordinated.

Talking on the announcement, Paul Jarvis-Beesley, Head of Sport and Health at StreetGames, said: “Social prescribing refers to the process of helping patients to improve their health, wellbeing and social welfare, by connecting them to a range of local, non-clinical, community services which might be run by the council or a local charity. This is something StreetGames is very passionate about. Through the programme, a dedicated link worker will spend time with each young person finding out what they need and make the connection to the menu of local activities and services on offer. This intervention can be crucial in ensuring young people succeed as they grow in to adulthood.”

The programme will provide for over 2,100 young people, who will have 4-6 sessions each with their link worker before being directly referred into local services. Each service will be open to all, but additional resources will be allocated to making it accessible to young people who experience social exclusion through poverty or protected characteristics.

The initiative follows the launch of the Government’s Loneliness Strategy in October, which noted the value of social prescribing. In a recent speech to The King’s Fund about the benefits of social prescribing, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock MP, said he saw social prescribing as “becoming an indispensable tool”, adding, “social prescription is about making better use of what we already have – making the arts and social activities more accessible”.

Cat Pritchard, Brighton & Hove CYP Wellbeing Services Manager, said on the news: “We’re delighted YMCA DownsLink Group is one of the organisations awarded a proportion of this funding. We will be setting up a social prescribing scheme within our Brighton & Hove Children & Young People’s (CYP) Wellbeing Service. This service works with young people aged 4-25, offering a range of innovative mental health interventions and is a local collaboration with YMCA DownsLink Group, Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust, Mind in Brighton and Hove and HERE. This funding gives us the opportunity to improve the transition between services for children and young people locally. We are excited about the positive impact this new link worker role could have on the lives of children, young people and families in Brighton and Hove.”

Dr Christa Beesley, a GP for Wellsbourne Healthcare CIC in Brighton and Hove, added: "I am delighted to have the support in social prescribing now being offered in Brighton. The gap between what is needed for young people experiencing mental health difficulties and what is available is huge, and waiting times for specialist therapy are very high. Social prescribing helps us to fill this gap and to get the whole community involved in supporting our children and young people."

Sports and music have long been associated with supporting people through conditions including diabetes, dementia, loneliness, anxiety and depression. Activities offered under social prescribing are varied, and are already having a great impact on the lives of the UK's young people. Jenny, a participant of the programme led by Sheffield Futures, said of the initiative: "The social prescribing programme has really opened my eyes to see what is available for me in Sheffield. I've been writing music since I was nine and now my Health and Wellbeing Worker has helped me to access studio time through the programme, which is mind-blowing! I recently moved to Sheffield and this service has helped me to gain confidence, it's helped with my mental health and taught me to be more open-minded. I've been looking into song-writing with a community group, and social prescribing has shown me that there are so many opportunities out there."

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About StreetGames

StreetGames (www.streetgames.org) is an award-winning national sports charity launched in 2007. A delivery partner of Sport England, and a national centre of expertise for developing sport in disadvantaged communities, the charity helps to make sport accessible to all young people, regardless of their income or social circumstances. It does this by supporting and establishing locally trusted organisations around the UK that deliver doorstep sport. Doorstep sport sessions include positive activities and sport provided to young people when they want it, where they want it and how they want it. Over 2.4 million attendances have already been generated by StreetGames' programmes.

Since its launch, StreetGames has won over 20 awards for its innovative programmes including being recognised by The Chief Medical Officer's Public Health Awards, The Charity Awards, The Business Charity Awards and Beyond Sport. These commendations demonstrate StreetGames' effectiveness in sport and wider impact on crime, health and community development.

StreetGames has now grown to support over 1,000 locally trusted organisations across the UK, 200 of which are in London. 530,000 children and young people living in the UK's poorest communities are enjoying a more active lifestyle and the opportunity to volunteer within their local community because of StreetGames.

About Active Luton

Active Luton (www.activeluton.co.uk) is an innovative, community-focused charity committed to making a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the local community through inspiring, motivating and offering opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn and take action to improve their life chances.

The charity provides a wide range of high quality programmes, activities and facilities, enabling local residents to participate in physical activity; improve their health and wellbeing; enhance their education and skills through training; and create career opportunities. Operating across three main areas of Leisure Centres, Fitness, Health and Wellbeing and Education, Training and Development, they strive to work closely with partners locally, across the region and nationally to provide inclusive, accessible and affordable services, providing services to around 1.4 million people annually.

About No Limits

No Limits (www.nolimitshelp.org.uk) is a charity which offers free and confidential information, advice, counselling, support and advocacy, for children and young people under 26 who live in Southampton and Hampshire. The charity's services are confidential and free to young people, relying on the support of volunteers, local partnerships and dedicated staff, who help thousands of young people every year.

No Limits aims to help young people holistically, offering them support 'under one roof' through promoting rights based information, advice and support, offering quick and easy access to specialist help through drop-in provision, backed up by specialist services.

To date, the charity has won several awards for its work, including the 'Advice and Guidance Award' in the Children and Young People Now Awards and a prestigious GlaxoSmithKline IMPACT Award for its outstanding contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of young people in Southampton.

About Sheffield Futures

Sheffield Futures (www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk) is a young people's charity, providing mentoring and specialist support for those who need it the most. The charity works with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged to ensure they are given the same start in life as those from safe and supportive backgrounds.

Sheffield Futures delivers a range of services and activities to support local people across four key areas: sustained progression into employment, education and training; improved life skills and independence; improved health and wellbeing and improved community participation and belonging. Last year alone Sheffield Futures had over 13,000 engagements with young people and communities, providing a range of support that aims to help them on their journey towards more positive outcomes.

About YMCA DownsLink Group

YMCA DownsLink Group (www.ymcadlg.org) is a registered charity working to transform communities across Sussex and Surrey so that all young people and families can belong, contribute and thrive. The Group particularly focusses on the needs of young people who find themselves on the fringes of society and need support.

The charity's work covers a wide range of areas including accommodation, general advice, sexual exploitation, mental health, housing advice, youth clubs, childcare, counselling, mentoring, alternative education and apprenticeships. They provide a place and space for young people to feel safe through accommodation, training, learning, support and advice, counselling and mediation, that will lead to better life chances and a positive future, reaching over 3,000 children and young people a year.

Media queries

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