



West Kent Housing Association

summer 2019 project report

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The Project

West Kent and Kent Sport teamed up to deliver fun, free activities for young people in Medway throughout the summer of 2019.

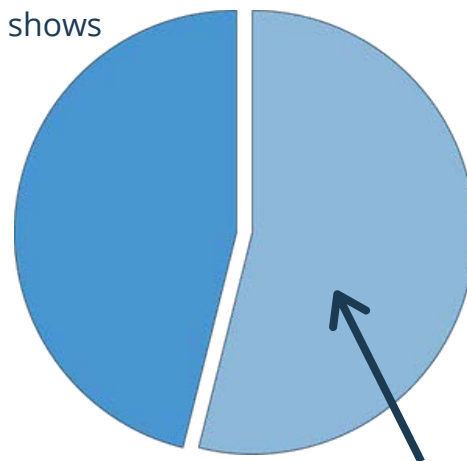
This followed on from the success of the previous Easter and summer 2018 programmes that encouraged 119 local young people to be active across 6 different sports.



Places to live. Space to grow.

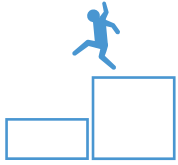
The 2019 programme took a slightly difference approach, which saw West Kent and Sport England Satellite Clubs come together to jointly fund the activities. Deliverers were asked to apply for funding to deliver 18 weeks of activity within specific postcodes highlighted as areas of high deprivation, and/or areas of high West Kent Housing stock. This approach enabled funding to go further and put the onus on the deliverer whilst Kent Sport could collate marketing and co-ordinate distribution and data collection.

Monitoring data shows the community sports sessions successfully engaged 398 young people from lower socio-economic groups (LSEGs).



Of these 398 young people, 215 were between the target age of 14-19 years old.

Activities



Parkour



Cheerleading



Football



Boxing



Tennis



Multi Sport

Eleven sessions took place per week within a one mile radius of both Luton Road, Chatham and The Vineries, Gillingham. They were hosted by six different sports providers.

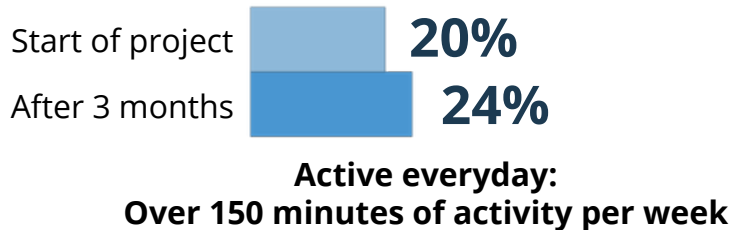
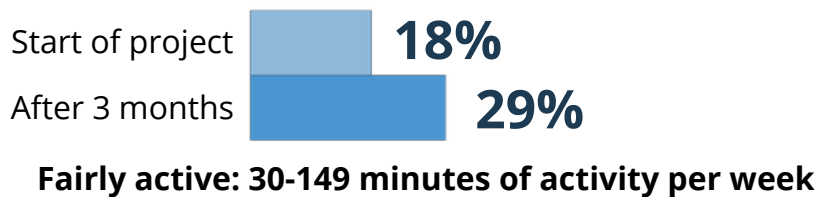
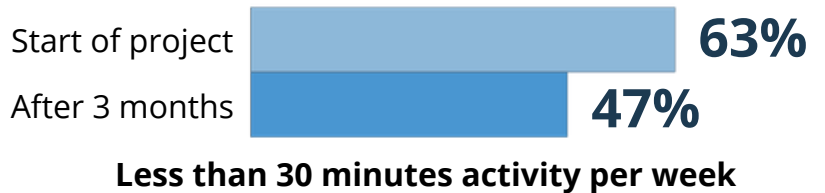


£1000

Sports providers were awarded £1000 for each of the 11 weekly sessions and asked to run them for a minimum of 18 weeks. Two ran longer, one for 23 weeks and another 26.

£38-£55

This meant sessions created real value for money at a cost of £38-£55 per week.



Understanding the Environment

Young People's Perceptions of the area, prior to the project

There was a general feeling of:

- lack of support for job opportunities
- stigma/prejudice over the fact that they move around on BMX bikes
- perception of being drug users/gang members – when this is not typically the case.

The main issues spoken about by young people in the area related to drugs and addiction. They were identified as the main causes of any experience they had/have with relation to crime and violence, and create real concerns over safety.

Young people identified that whilst there are some activities in the area, they mainly hang out with their friends rather than doing formal activity. Quite a lot of young people said they would be interested in doing more and complained there isn't enough on offer. Lack of money is clearly an issue for young people, and if activities are put on that are not free, or heavily subsidised, then many will predictably not take part.

For a more detailed perspective of this report see **'Conversations with Young People in Medway' (Kaizen Partnership, 2019)**



Project Findings



Kent Sport commissioned Spear, at Canterbury Christchurch University, to conduct an independent evaluation of the community sessions. The evaluation captured insight around young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds in Medway. The full report '**Engaging young people from deprived backgrounds in community sport sessions**' is available on our website, www.kentsport.org.

The perceptions of anti-social behaviour within the report overlap with young people's perceptions of the local area. Conversations helped to gain insight into why the sessions created a safe, positive intervention in the community.

We can draw on 3 key areas of interest and learning from the project:

- **Community Cohesion**
- **Anti-Social Behaviour**
- **Life Skills.**

When the gangs were all there, sometimes I'd still come down because there were police patrolling the area and it made me feel a little safer.

Participant,
Saunders Street

It gives them something to do instead of sitting indoors or getting into trouble, it's something positive for them to do and gives them a focus.

Local Police Officer

We do boxing and a mixture of sport because the idea is that we are trying to give diversionary projects to young people to keep them away from anti-social behaviour and gangs.

Coach,
Saunders Street

There's been a big improvement since last year. Not so many incidents going on, facilities are getting used for their proper use rather than undesirables hanging around and this is obviously better for us as well.

Police Community Support Officer,
Saunders Street



Community Cohesion

All participants interviewed provided examples of how the programme has supported the local community. The clubs are reported to have enhanced community cohesion by providing a platform for local friendships to be built in a safe environment, overseen by an experienced coach.



It gives you a new sort of community.

Participant, The Strand

Young people vote with their feet, if they didn't like it, they wouldn't be here. They come because they want to.

Volunteer, Saunders Street

I didn't know any of these people before. Now we are a big group.

Participant, Saunders Street



Participants from two community site visits described the clubs as feeling 'like a family'. The positive non-judgemental atmosphere was referred to throughout interviews, with survey responses indicating that the clubs are seen to encourage young people to convey their thoughts and ideas confidently.

Creating a safe and supportive environment facilitated opportunities for young people to create meaningful friendships, with the chance to make new friends consistently noted by participants as a highlight of the community sessions.

The community sport sessions have impacted positively on the perceptions of community cohesion and social trust.

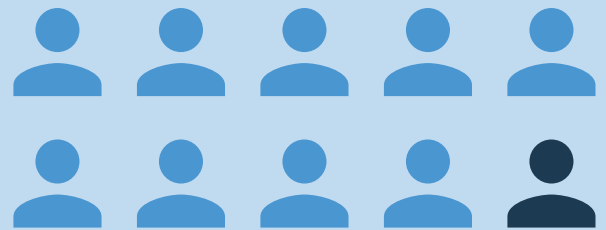
Anti-Social Behaviour

Reducing anti-social behaviour was a key aim of the programme as this is seen as a significant issue by local residents and organisations. Providing safe and friendly environments for young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds to get involved with sports has ignited positive, noticeable change.

Reduced anti-social behaviour was a recurring response from adult stakeholders and participants when speaking about the impact of the programme. Qualitative data included various accounts of local crime incidents that participants and stakeholders spoke of openly, discussing how 'drug dealers' and 'gangs' often inhabited the areas surrounding some of the community sport session locations. This was initially a barrier for some participants as parents were not encouraging attendance and expressed concerns about their child's safety. The positive influence of community sport sessions led, in some areas, to the cessation of these behaviours during session times with participants reporting they felt safer coming to the clubs now the 'usual gangs' have moved on from the area.

At the Saunders Street celebration, PCSOs spoke positively about the impact of the community sport sessions on anti-social behaviour. They felt the number of incidents had decreased and the sport facilities were now being used for their intended purpose. Seeing young people appropriately using sporting facilities was also highlighted by participants who explained how the sessions gave them a goal and something to focus on.

The connection of sessions with local agencies like PCSOs was seen to positively affect both participant engagement and their behaviour within their community. PCSOs interacting with young people can signpost them to activities like these community sport sessions. This partnership has played a key role in outreach and engagement to collaboratively reduce anti-social behaviour.



After three months of engagement, nine in ten young participants reported that they were 'willing to take on new challenges'. Stakeholders interviewed believed that getting young people involved in new positive activities could help steer them away from anti-social behaviour or gang activity, and that the community sport sessions have a key role to play in this endeavour.



Life Skills

After three months of programme engagement, four in five participants said they felt confident when exercising and playing sports.

Participants explained their increased confidence was not limited to the sport context and extended to everyday life.



I'm a lot stronger in my body, and more confident in myself

I'm definitely more confident in my capabilities

I've improved in my confidence in loads of things

I'm more confident when talking to people.

Before this I didn't really like talking to people, I got nervous, but now I seem confident when talking.

Participants reported a positive impact on mental health stating how sport helps to clear their minds, reduce negative thoughts, relieve stress and help with anger...



It sounded fun and boxing sounded like it would probably help with my anger and calm me down.

Participant, Saunders Street

Saunders Street community sport sessions presented more than just physical activity opportunities, with qualified volunteers running first aid training for participants alongside the usual sports sessions. One of these volunteers explained how rewarding he found delivering the training, because he could see first hand the positive impact on participants and this was reflected through the feedback received. All participants interviewed found the training enjoyable and beneficial, stating it gave them new and valuable life skills.

If you require this publication in another format or would like further information about this project then please contact us:

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