



# IMPACT REPORT

2021

Registered Charity 1115222 | Registered Company 5664605



# OUR MISSION

**Sport 4 Life UK believes in a level playing field where every young person has the opportunity to create a better future for themselves.**

We are proud to provide the opportunity for young people (aged 11 to 29) to prepare for and move into sustained education, employment or training by improving their employability and key life skills, through our sports-themed personal development services.

# WELCOME

**We are pleased to present our 2020/21 impact report which demonstrates the journey of 1,015 young people who have taken the opportunity to create a better future for themselves.**

We have seen unprecedented demand for our services over this past year where young people have faced disrupted education, a shrinking jobs market, and isolation from their loved ones. As ever, it is the unemployed, disadvantaged, and those with fewer qualifications and lower confidence who suffer the most - increasing the disparity between the most disadvantaged and their peers.

Young people now account for more than two-fifths of the total fall in PAYE employment, with employment for young people down to 9.6% compared with 1.8% for other age groups. As a result, long-term youth unemployment is growing at its fastest rate in a decade and has reached its highest level in five years.

It's therefore clear to see why so many young people are losing hope for the future. A remarkable one in four young people now feel "unable to cope with life" since the start of the pandemic, increasing to 40% for those who are not in employment, education or training. An estimated 78% have sought professional mental health support (with only 54% receiving some form of assistance). The pandemic has taught us that self-esteem and mental health can quickly take a turn for the worse.

Therefore, sport and exercise must continue. Without it, the impact on physical and mental health will have long-term ramifications for people's future wellbeing and life prospects. This applies to both the young people we support, our team members and our partners across the community.

Supporting the future generation has never been so important. We know that if young people continue to engage with education, gain new skills, and stay physically and mentally healthy, it will increase their chances of progressing through life successfully. Throughout 2020/21, we've been proud to meaningfully support 1,015 young people to achieve 592 combined tangible outcomes (pages 8 and 9 reflect our full impact figures).

**THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED, ENGAGED, AND PARTNERED WITH US OVER THE LAST YEAR. WE LOOK FORWARD TO BUILDING ON OUR RELATIONSHIPS IN THE YEAR AHEAD AND FURTHER DEVELOPING OUR SERVICES SO THAT WE CAN BETTER SUPPORT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE SO THEY CAN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.**



**Tom Clarke-Forrest**  
Founder & CEO



**Hitesh Patel**  
Chair of Trustees



# WHY WE EXIST

**Young people who are born into disadvantage and live in the most deprived areas are playing catch up with their life prospects.**

- 41% of Birmingham's children live in Poverty and 31% across the West Midlands.
- 43% of Birmingham's population and 28% of West Midlands population live in the top 10% most deprived areas nationally.

**The COVID-19 Pandemic has increased the disparity between the most disadvantaged and their peers.**

- School closures widen the disadvantage gap with disadvantaged pupils having less access to technology, and are therefore spending less time learning and receiving less support from parents and carers compared to their peers (UK Parliament Post).
- The learning gap between rich and poor pupils at primary schools grew by almost 50% between March and July 2020, with the gap unlikely to narrow without intervention (National Foundation for Educational Research, The Education Endowment Foundation).
- Young people have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis when it comes to jobs. By January 2021, almost 19% of 18 to 24 year olds were no longer working compared to 4% of 25 to 54 year olds.
- Black and Asian young people are even harder hit, they are significantly more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts (17% and 10% now compared to 8% and 1% pre pandemic).

**This is leaving young people with the very real prospect of being long term NEET, growing mental health issues and being unable to bridge the gap between themselves and their peers.**

- The decline in working hours for young people with no qualifications (34%) has been five times higher during the COVID crisis than for those with a degree-level qualification (7%).
- More than one in four (27%) of 18 to 24 year olds said they were worried about finding a job in the coming months because of their mental health (Guardian).
- Young people (aged 16 to 29) claiming out of work benefits was on the rise in Birmingham (9%) and the West Midlands (14%) even before the pandemic hit the UK.
- 14,990 18 to 24 year olds are claiming out of work benefits.

**This leaves young people significantly more likely to be welfare dependant into later life.**

- 18- to 24-year-olds are two and a half times more likely at the end of May to be out of work or still on furlough than any other age group.
- More than one in four young people are worried that poor mental health will affect their ability to find work after the COVID-19 pandemic.



**95%**

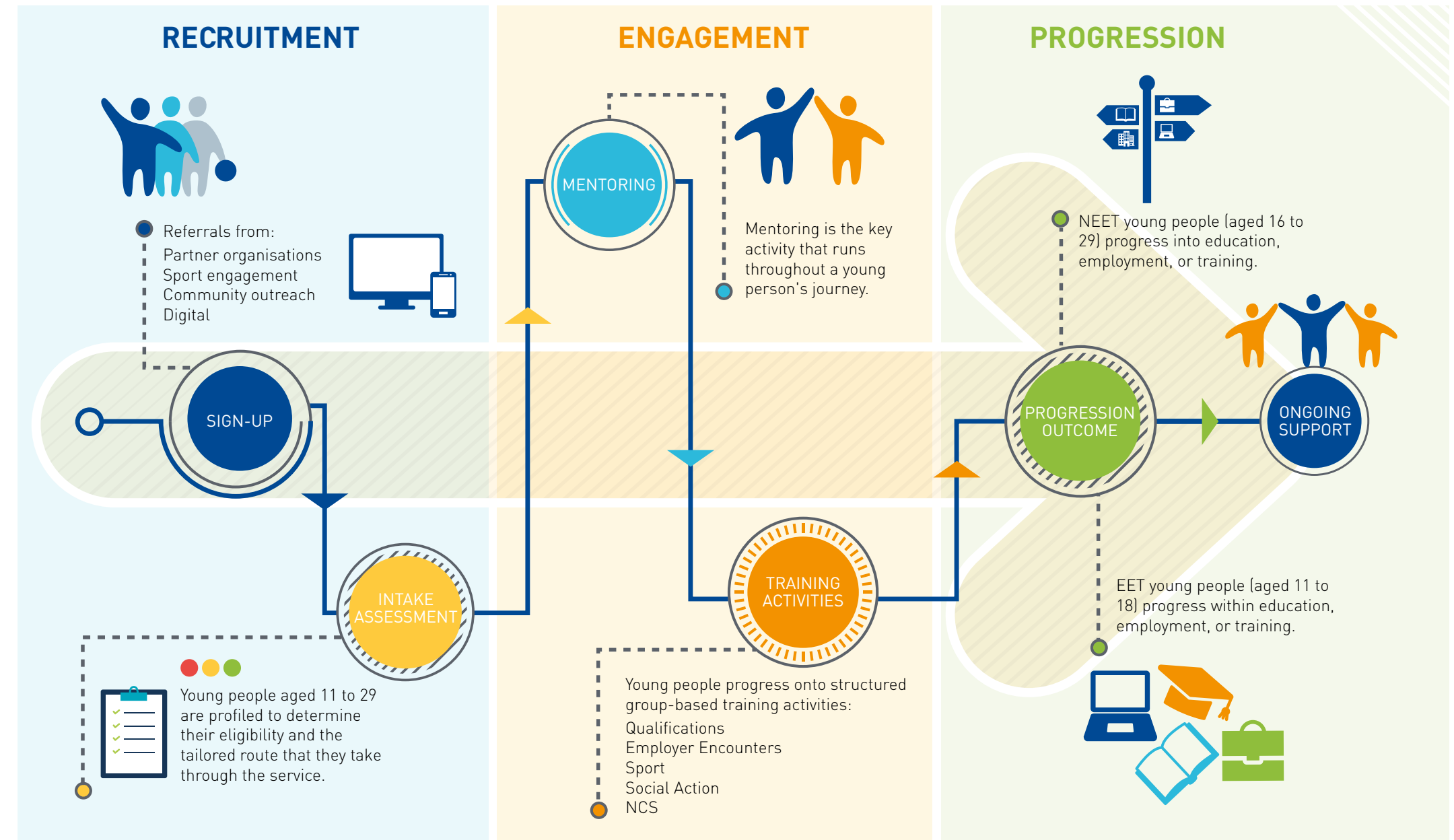
**OF YOUNG PEOPLE  
SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED  
THEIR EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS.**

# WHAT WE DO

Our sports-themed personal development services are designed to bring out the best in young people by providing them with high-quality sessions, mentoring, and guidance.

Our youth-led delivery model allows young people to sign-up to our service through a range of recruitment pathways including partner referrals, sport engagement sessions and community outreach services. Each young person will work one-to-one with a mentor to create a tailored support programme to help move into sustained education, employment, or training.

**WE'VE DELIVERED OVER 1,972 HOURS OF SPORT, TRAINING AND MENTORING SUPPORT.**



# OUR IMPACT 2020-2021



This impact is a snapshot of our 2020-21 year, as of 30/06/21.

**1,015**

**YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED**

**FROM ETHNICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS**

**78%**

**414**

**YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENGAGING IN  
STRUCTURED SPORTS SESSIONS**

**STARTED A QUALIFICATION**

**354**

**75%**

**OF YOUNG PEOPLE SIGNIFICANTLY  
IMPROVED THEIR LIFE SKILLS**

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**946**

**MALE**

**399**

**FEMALE**

**1**

**TRANS  
GENDER**

**78%** from ethnically  
diverse backgrounds

**37%** Asian (Pakistani,  
Indian, Bangladeshi,  
Chinese, Afghani)

**22%** white British

**6%** Other (European,  
Arab, Irish, Welsh)

**35%** Black African  
and Caribbean

## ENGAGEMENT

**1,015**

**YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE  
BEEN MEANINGFULLY  
SUPPORTED**

**424** received 1 to 1  
mentoring support  
(266 NEET and 158 EET)

**266** attended  
employability activities  
(148 NEET and 118 EET)

**354** started a  
qualification  
(46 NEET and 308 EET)

**207** attended multiple  
areas of the service  
(104 NEET and 103 EET)

**138** meaningfully  
supported through  
Sport Sessions

**110** completed NCS

## RECRUITMENT

**1,406**

**YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED  
WITH SPORT 4 LIFE  
(ONE ATTENDANCE)**

**881** young people have  
entered the service  
(EE, Quals, Mentoring)  
(309 NEET and 549 EET)

**414** young people are  
engaging in structured  
sports sessions

## PROGRESSION

**184**

**GAINED AN ACCREDITED  
QUALIFICATION /  
COMPLETED  
ACCREDITED TRAINING**

**114** progressed into  
EET (76 into employment,  
26 into Education and 12 into  
Training)

**360** are still enrolled in  
services (159 NEET and 201 EET)

**75%** of young people  
significantly\* improved  
their life skills (of 259).  
\* 50%+ improvement

**96%** of young people  
improved at least one  
life skill

**95%** of young people  
significantly improved  
their employability  
skills. \* 50%+  
improvement



# CHANGING LIVES

## Zekarias' story Age 24



When Zekarias (Zak) first entered the Sport 4 Life service, his motivation and self-belief were low. Zak was unsure how to apply his skills, having graduated from university with a degree in sports therapy with no immediate job opportunities.

Zak worked with his Sport 4 Life mentor to create a 6-12 month plan to help give him structure and keep him motivated.

Zak's continual involvement with Sport 4 Life helped him build on his CV and interview technique. This included attending mock interviews, completing First Aid Training, a Sports Leaders Level 1 and Level 2 course; and volunteering at Sport 4 Life and with a local football team.

**"SPORT 4 LIFE IS A GREAT ORGANISATION. SINCE WORKING WITH THEM I'VE BECOME MORE CONFIDENT AND PRODUCTIVE. I'VE REALLY COME OUT OF MY SHELL."**

Today, Zak is a valued, employed member of our very own Sports Coaches team at Sport 4 Life. His enthusiasm for sport and determination to improve himself professionally made him the perfect candidate for the role. And with all his mock interview experience, he nailed the interview!

## Zoe-Jane's Story Age 23



Zoe graduated from university in 2019 with a sports therapy degree. However, almost overnight, the covid pandemic closed the hospitality and leisure industry and Zoe's career opportunities became seriously limited.

Zoe began working in a role she didn't enjoy, and which seriously impacted her work-life balance. As a result, Zoe felt stuck.

Wanting to increase her chances of obtaining a meaningful career, Zoe reached out to Sport 4 Life UK and attended several employability workshops.

During these sessions, Zoe began to feel safe and supported again. Soon she felt able to speak freely and rebuild her lost self-esteem. As a result, Zoe opened up about her passion for coaching and enrolled in the Sports Leaders qualification.

**"I AM HAPPIER. I AM STRONGER. I AM MORE CONFIDENT IN MYSELF; I HAVE DOUBLED MY CONFIDENCE SINCE JOINING SPORT 4 LIFE. I FEEL TRUSTED AND RESPECTED."**

Before joining Sport 4 Life, Zoe was nervous about quitting her job and felt like her generation is not allowed to fail. Now, Zoe works as a Recruitment and Delivery Officer for NCS - an affiliate partner of Sport 4 Life UK. Since joining the NCS team, Zoe has become very driven, outgoing and lively. She feels a part of a community!



# PARTNER FOCUS

We were delighted this year to bring on board 2 new partners in JDX and Tickd.



The team at JDX have supported with the delivery of mock job interviews, workshops and site visits when coronavirus restrictions permit, as part of Sport 4 Life's employability programmes.

**“WE CAN ALL PLAY A PART IN DIVERSIFYING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE OF THE FINANCIAL INDUSTRY, AND SUPPORTING THE VITAL WORK OF SPORT 4 LIFE UK IS ONE OF MANY STEPS THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO.”**

Seamus Smith  
CEO JDX



As part of our new 'Gamechanging Partners' initiative which aims to attract business community involvement in our mission to help 11 to 29-year-olds move into sustained education, training and employment through sports-themed personal development we partnered with B2B digital energy switching and comparison platform Tickd.

**“SPORT 4 LIFE'S WORK REALLY RESONATES WITH OUR VALUES, BOTH AS A BUSINESS AND INDIVIDUALS AND SO WE'RE DELIGHTED TO SET UP THIS PARTNERSHIP.”**

Richard Price  
Tickd Managing Director

# THANK YOU

We have been extremely grateful for everyone's support and contributions throughout 2020/2021, especially during COVID-19 and various lockdowns.

In these uncertain times, young people need us now more than ever, and the support of our partners has helped us adapt and explore new ways to engage with and support young people remotely and digitally.

Thank you.







**“WHERE YOU  
START FROM ISN'T  
NECESSARILY WHERE  
YOU'LL END UP”**

– Casey Bailey, Sport 4 Life UK Ambassador

# THE YEAR AHEAD

2020-2021 has been another year of significant change, both for Sport 4 Life UK and for the world. The road ahead is challenging and uncertain, but we will work tirelessly to support young people most in need and ensure that their futures are not defined by their present.

As the leading sport-for-employment charity in the West Midlands, we are well-positioned to be bold and ambitious over the next year. In the coming year (2021-22), we commit to:

## **EMBED A YOUTH-LED AND YOUTH-VOICE CULTURE**

**CONTINUE TO VALUE, SUPPORT AND  
DEVELOP OUR TEAM - SO WE ARE  
EXPERTLY EQUIPPED TO SUPPORT  
OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE BEST  
OF OUR ABILITIES**

**FULFILL OUR ONGOING COMMITMENTS  
TO NORMALISE EQUALITY AND  
IMPROVE DIVERSITY**

**CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT AN  
INSIGHT-LED AND TRANSPARENT  
APPROACH TO OUR IMPACT**

**CONTINUE TO GROW THE ORGANISATION  
- OPERATIONALLY, FINANCIALLY  
AND GEOGRAPHICALLY**

**MAKE TECHNOLOGICAL AND DIGITAL  
STEP-CHANGES AND ADVANCEMENTS  
TO ENSURE OUR SYSTEMS AND  
PROCESSES ARE EFFICIENT AND  
FUTURE-PROOF**





Supporting the future generation has never been so important. If young people continue to engage with education, gain new skills, and stay physically and mentally healthy, it will increase their chances of progressing through life successfully.



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Sport4LifeUK

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