



STRATEGY FOR CHANGING THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

2021-2022

Registered Charity 1115222
Registered Company 5664605



OUR VISION

We believe in a level playing field where every young person has the opportunity to create a better future for themselves.

OUR MISSION

Sport 4 Life UK is proud to provide the opportunity for young people aged 11-29 to prepare for, and move into, sustained education, employment, or training, by improving their employability and key life skills - through its sports-themed mentoring and training services.

OUR VALUES

All that we do is focused on **CHANGING** the LIVES of young people

We are committed to empowering and inspiring young people to unlock their true potential through our sports-themed personal development services. We embrace diversity, offer unconditional support, and provide tangible opportunities for them to make a positive change in their lives.

We are a **TEAM**

Our staff are proud to work for Sport 4 Life UK and be part of its family. We are loyal, honest, transparent and trust each other. We are united in working to achieve the organisation's vision and mission.

QUALITY runs through the core of the organisation

Our youth-led, bottom-up approach ensures our services are of the highest standard and successfully address the needs of our young people. We have invested heavily in our ability to evidence our impact effectively to partners and stakeholders. We are professional and have strong governance, structures, policies and processes in place.

We do not stand still – we are a **PROGRESSIVE** organisation

We are a forward-thinking, dynamic organisation which operates both proactively and responsively. We push through and break down barriers so we can always go above and beyond for our young people.

SUCCESS

Success is...meaningfully and sustainably supporting over 2,000 young people throughout the West Midlands by 2022.

FOREWORD

By Tom Clarke-Forrest, Founder & CEO

This last year's pandemic has brought the plight of young people into the spotlight. They have faced a disrupted education, a shrinking jobs market, and isolation from their loved ones. It has negatively impacted their economic security (to a greater extent than for older age groups) and has had a disproportionate impact on their mental health and wellbeing. Too many are losing hope for the future. And - 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 since the start of the crisis, with employment for young people now at 9.6% compared with 1.8% for other age groups. Long-term youth unemployment is growing at its fastest rate in a decade and has reached its highest level in five years.

And 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 NEET (not in employment, education or training). An estimated 78% sought professional mental health support (with only 54% receiving some form).

However, there is renewed hope for the future. With restrictions being lifted, young people are increasingly optimistic about their mental health and wellbeing. More and more firms are reporting increased vacancies that are suitable for young people, and certain sectors are showing signs of robust employment growth in the aftermath of the pandemic. And we believe in young people. We believe they intrinsically have the passion and motivation to create a better future for themselves, and just need a helping hand in their journey.

Whilst the road ahead remains challenging and uncertain, we are certain in our responsibility and desire to support our region's young people, ensuring this support reaches those most in-need. Our mission at Sport 4 Life UK is to provide the opportunity for young people aged 11-29 to prepare for, and move into, sustained education, employment, or training, by improving their employability and key life skills - through its sports-themed mentoring and training services.

This strategy provides us with a clear direction over the next year:

Through the lens of our seven workstreams (Finance & Governance, HR & workforce, Operations, Funding, Marketing & Digital, Business Development and Impact), we have a clear Action Plan for achieving our ambitions and targets in the year ahead.

I'm delighted to share our strategy, our partnerships, our targets and our key priorities.

Key actions over the next 12 months within our strategy include:

- Embed a youth-led and youth-voice culture
- Continue to grow the organisation - operationally, financially and geographically
- 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
- Make technological and digital step-changes and advancements to ensure our systems and processes are efficient and future-proof

As the leading sport-for-employment charity in the West Midlands, we are well positioned - strategically and operationally - to meet these ambitions for the year ahead.

Our new 2021/22 year marks an incredible 15 years since our inception. And whilst our journey has been full of successes, learning, development and growth - this milestone brings a renewed thirst to do more, learn more and be more.

Here's to the year ahead.



Tom Clarke-Forrest

WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGY

Our strategy responds to changes both internally at Sport 4 Life UK, in society and the sector more generally.

THE NEED

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.

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 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%).

14,990 18 TO 24 YEAR OLDS ARE CLAIMING OUT OF WORK BENEFITS.

OUR APPROACH

As the West Midlands leading sport for employment charity, we want to connect with other youth organisations and industry leaders to provide the best support to young people.

Now, more than ever, young people feel their voices aren't heard - and they want a platform and a place at the table. We want to stand with young people to ensure their voices are heard and their knowledge and experiences are shared.

To achieve this, we will continue to invest in and prioritise impact management. This evidence-led approach will continually encourage us to understand what works well and change what doesn't work. Additionally, we are committed to understanding the ever-changing social and political landscape and what bearing this has on young people. For example, the 'welfare-to-work' agenda and the needs identified in the West Midlands Combined Authority 'Regional Skills Plan' will play a critical role in shaping young people's futures regionally and nationally; therefore, we will align our funding and impact support strategies to match. Sport continues to be a key element of our delivery and the vehicle, tool and conduit to engage and develop our young people. Sport and physical activity directly impact

mental wellbeing, making learning and improving key life skills easier. We believe in its power to change lives.

In line with Sport England's Uniting the Movement, their 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity, we want to contribute to 'more people from every background regularly and meaningfully engaging in sport and physical activity.

Key priorities within their strategy include (i) recovering from the coronavirus pandemic, (ii) connecting communities (iii) creating positive experiences for all children and young people, (iv) Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, and (v) Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active. As a result, our sports offering will shift away from more 'traditional' sport and focus on providing a diverse range of physical activities and active wellbeing.

Although many of these sector landscapes are uncertain and difficult to navigate, much of which is out of our control, our actions and targets will always hold young people at heart.

PARTNERSHIPS

We are always seeking partnerships with inspirational individuals and game-changing organisations. Invest your time, resource and expertise in our cause, and together we can enable young people to lead fulfilling, rewarding lives.

Working in partnership with organisations and individuals is an essential means of achieving our mission. These strategic partnerships make a real difference in improving the lives of young people. Strategic partnerships are a brilliant way we can work together to build a better community by improving the lives of young people, develop your own internal staff and promote your organisation's CSR.

It is important to us that our partnerships are mutually beneficial, this is one of the reasons we have such deep and warm relationships with our existing corporate partners.

We are delighted to have been awarded United by Birmingham 2022 in recognition for our positive impact on the community and how we align to the mission and values of the Games. Why not join us as a strategic partner on our journey to the 2022 Games, helping to put our vibrant region on a global stage and creating a valuable Games legacy in local communities.



"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

TARGETS

2021-22

ENGAGEMENT

832

**SIGNIFICANTLY
IMPROVED
THEIR LIFE
SKILLS**

[75% of those
conducting a OS]

682

**SIGNIFICANTLY
IMPROVED
EMPLOYABILITY
SKILLS**

[75% of those
conducting a OS]

112

**COMPLETED
MOCK
INTERVIEWS**

[25% of 280
NEET YP
+ 4 schools]

520

**COMPLETED
A SOCIAL
ACTION
PROJECT**

[12%
of 1,100 YP]

647

**IMPROVED
THEIR MENTAL
HEALTH/
WELLBEING**

[75%
of those who
complete
WEMWBS]

PROGRESSION

90

**IMPROVED
EDUCATIONAL
PERFORMANCE**

75%
(of those
conducting
an OS)

720

**CRIME
REDUCTION
RELATED
OUTCOME**

65%
(of those
conducting
an OS)

395

**GAINING
QUALIFICATIONS**

50

**PROGRESSED
INTO
EDUCATION
OR TRAINING**

24% (of 210
outcome
eligible
NEET yp)

40

**COMPLETED
A WORK
PLACEMENT**

19% (of 210
outcome
eligible
NEET yp)

74

**ACHIEVING
A SUSTAINED
JOB
OUTCOME**

35% (of 210
outcome
eligible
NEET yp)

OUR KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2021-2022

- Embed a culture of wellbeing lead by the Trustees and revise our approach to working flexibly
- Continue to invest in our people and in particular our Management team as we look to grow and move the organisation forward
- Fulfill our commitments to normalise equality and improve diversity
- Embed a youth led culture across the organisation: delivering a quarterly youth forum, Youth Voice training for Trustees and Leadership team and to engage young people in decision making
- Improve planning culture and process amongst the operations team
- Continue to ensure good governance: Implement policy framework, prepare finance dept for audit
- Advance our digital tools for engagement: review the use of api's across our platforms, research the use of an app and create a portal of resources for young people to easily access
- Work with key partners to create clear pathways into employment and education
- Improve insights and impact: research underemployment and inwork support, implement new outcomes measures for crime and mental health opportunity for networking and more central location





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.

0121 456 1818
contact@sport4life.org.uk
sport4life.org.uk



Sport4LifeUK



Sport 4 Life UK marketing and design supported by **WONDROUS.**