



IMPACT REPORT

2023



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.

OUR VALUES:
CHANGING LIVES
QUALITY
TEAM
PROGRESSIVE

WELCOME

We are proud to present Sport 4 Life UK's impact throughout 2022/23, and showcase the journey of 2,256 young people who have been supported to create a better future for themselves.

The inequality gap continues to rise across many aspects of life for young people. The ongoing impact of the pandemic, the cost of living, and uncertain political tensions (both here and abroad) - mixed with disrupted education and social pressures - are making it eminently difficult for them to navigate their future. This challenge is shared by young people during and after education, and is more acute for those facing additional barriers. Young people's early years affect their ability to leave school without good qualifications, and in the absence of quality careers information, advice and guidance - as well as wrap around support - they face the very real prospect of being long-term NEET, developing mental health issues, and being unable to bridge this gap between themselves and their peers. 11.3% of all young people aged 16-24 in the UK are currently NEET.

This national picture echoes our own research ('Understanding the Realities Faced by Disadvantaged Youth') in the West Midlands - with over 67% of young people (not in full-time employment) worried about future job prospects, 89% worried about the cost of living crisis, and a concerning 48% reducing their socialising since the pandemic.

We understand that behind these stats are real people, lives, and stories. We see the real-world impact this situation has on the young people we work with daily. Their stories drive us in continuing our work to support them during their journey through education and into work - towards better futures.

In 2022/23, we were proud to have meaningfully supported 1,393 young people towards better futures. 8 out of every 10 young people reported improvements in life skills, employability skills, improved mental health and increased educational performance. In addition, 249 young people completed an accredited qualification, and 147 moved into employment, education or training.

Partnerships are central to how we achieve impact. By working collaboratively with schools, delivery partners, businesses and employers, we can create a compelling, structured and life-changing service that puts young people at its heart. In the year ahead, we look forward to supporting more young people, further developing this service, and enabling impact through game-changing delivery partners - as we embark on an exciting journey outside of the West Midlands.

THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE ENGAGED, SUPPORTED, AND PARTNERED WITH US OVER THE LAST YEAR. WE HOPE YOU CAN BE PART OF THIS CONTINUED AND EXCITING JOURNEY.



Tom Clarke-Forrest
Founder & CEO



Mike Gahir
Chair of Trustees

“SPORT 4 LIFE HELPED ME WITH WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR. MY MENTOR WAS WORKING ALONGSIDE ME TIRELESSLY AND PROVIDED ME WITH CONSTANT ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT WHEN APPLYING FOR JOBS”

- Shahid



WHY WE EXIST

More children and young people are living in poverty and disadvantage than before

- 4.2 million children live in poverty in the UK
- 48% of young people from black and minority ethnic groups live in poverty
- The West Midlands has the highest rate of child poverty in the UK, with 38.4% living in poverty compared to 29.2% nationally
- 43% of Birmingham's population and 28% of West Midlands population live in the top 10% most deprived areas nationally
- People from diverse ethnic backgrounds are more likely to live in the most deprived areas

By the time they reach school they are already behind their peers and significantly more likely to leave without good qualifications

- Disadvantaged pupils are on average 18 months behind the rest of the class in academic achievement by the age of 16
- Around a third of disadvantaged pupils fail key GCSEs (Maths & English), nearly twice as much as their peers
- 60% of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds don't have a level 2 qualification by age 19, compared to 30% of their better off peers
- Nearly 1 million children that live in poverty nationally miss out on free school meals - a significant barrier to learning

Young people face the very real prospect of being long term NEET, developing mental health issues, and being unable to bridge the gap between themselves and their peers

- Although the unemployment rate is slowly falling, for young people it still remains higher than before the pandemic
- 11.3% of all young people aged 16-24 in the UK are currently NEET
- 11,455 young people in Birmingham and 33,070 across the West Midlands are claiming out of work benefits
- Young people without a Level 2 qualification or from disadvantaged backgrounds are over twice as likely to be long-term NEET than their peers
- 75% of young people who are NEET for three months have been NEET for 12 months
- Most NEET young people are NEET for the long-term

This leaves young people more likely to be welfare dependent as they grow up, experience wage scarring, develop mental health issues, and be unable to afford basic necessities

- Long periods of unemployment make young people 7.9 times more likely to become NEET again
- Less than half of young people report that their mental health is good, and over a quarter are facing fears that their poor mental health will mean they are unable to find a job at all

Reference: The Resolution Foundation (2022), Child Poverty Action Group (2022), Impetus (2020), End Child Poverty Coalition (2022), Office of National Statistics (2023), Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019), House of Commons Library (2023)

WHAT WE DO

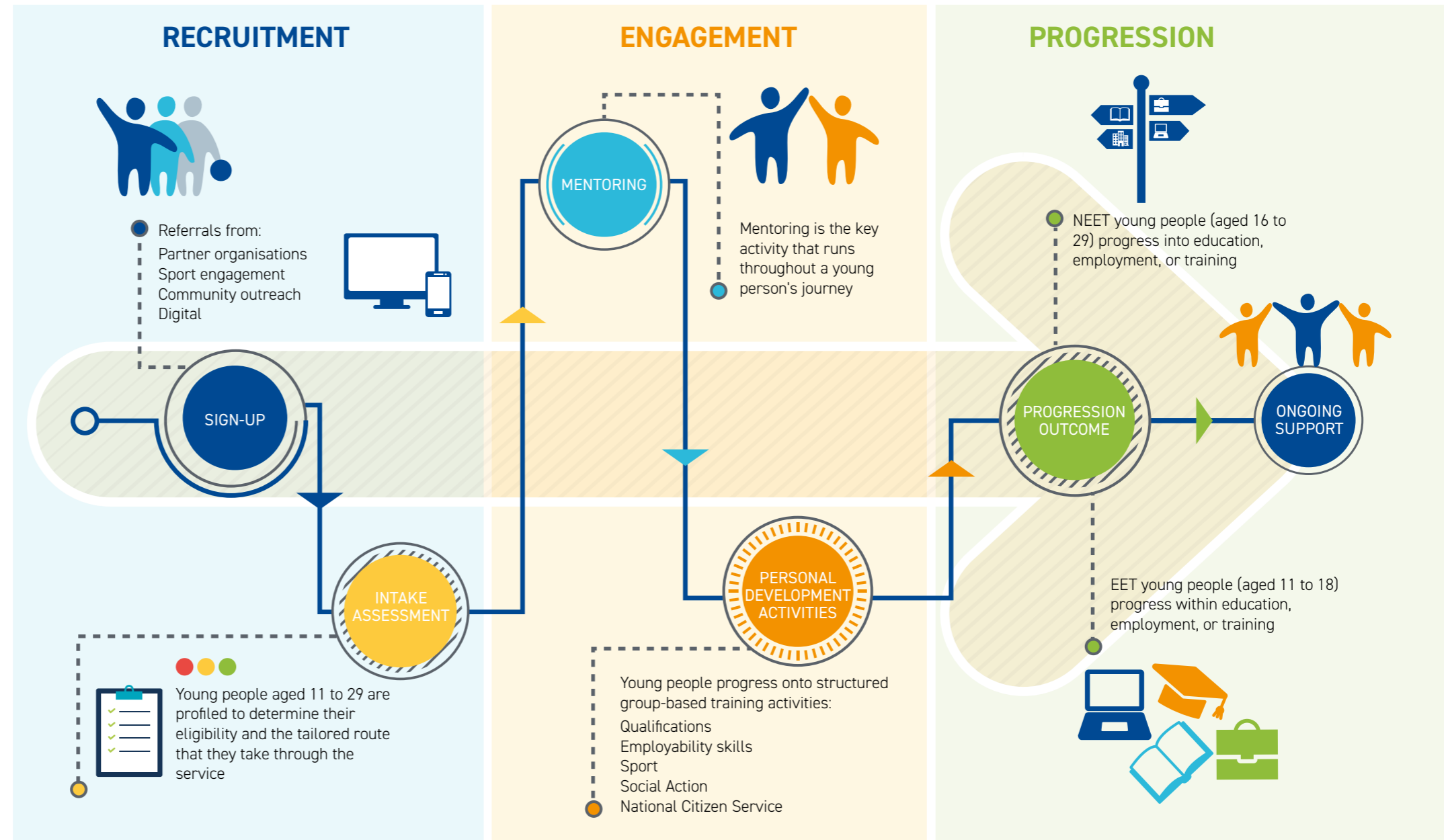
Our sports-themed personal development services are designed to bring out the best in young people by providing them with high-quality sessions, mentoring, and guidance.

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 has a tailored support programme to help move into sustained education, employment, or training.

Our services include:

- One-to-one mentoring
- Employability skills and workshops
- Accredited qualifications and training
- Sport and physical activity sessions
- Youth led social action projects

WE'VE DELIVERED OVER 3,510 HOURS OF SPORT, TRAINING AND MENTORING SUPPORT.



OUR IMPACT 2022-2023



Here is a snapshot of our 2022-23 Impact:

2,256

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED

74%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ETHNICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

3,510+

HOURS OF SPORT, TRAINING AND MENTORING SUPPORT

147

YOUNG PEOPLE MOVED INTO EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING

74%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED THEIR KEY LIFE SKILLS

ENGAGEMENT

1,393

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MEANINGFULLY SUPPORTED

302 NEET AND 1,091 EET

432 received 1 to 1 mentoring support
(269 NEET and 163 EET)

752 completed National Citizen Service

634 attended employability activities (92 NEET and 542 EET)

796 attended sport
(72 NEET and 724 EET)

475 completed a social action project
(28 NEET and 447 EET)

DEMOGRAPHICS

1,377

MALE

722

FEMALE

2

TRANS
GENDER

155

NOT
RECORDED

74% from ethnically diverse backgrounds

35% Black African and Caribbean

30% Asian - (Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Afghani)

26% White British

9% Other (European, Arab, Irish, Welsh)

PROGRESSION

147

PROGRESSED INTO EET

(79 INTO EMPLOYMENT, 68 INTO EDUCATION AND TRAINING)

249 gained an accredited qualification/completed accredited training

222 are still enrolled in mentoring services
(119 NEET and 103 EET)

74% significantly* improved their life skills (630 of 846 that completed surveys)

61% significantly* improved their employability skills (339 of 558 that completed surveys)

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS



THIS COMPANY YEAR, SPORT 4 LIFE HAS ENGAGED WITH **15** SCHOOLS AND SUPPORTED **705** PUPILS. **163** THROUGH MENTORING, AND **572** THROUGH OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.

“BEING PART OF THE COUNCIL’S EMOTIONAL WELLBEING PROGRAMME HAS MEANT A LOT TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE GAINED A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT FROM THE SESSIONS, IN TERMS OF BOTH THEIR PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING.”

“THANK YOU TO MENTORS FROM SPORT 4 LIFE WHO HAVE MADE A REAL POSITIVE IMPACT TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THESE SESSIONS”

Lindsay Mason, Assistant Principal at Bristnall Hall Academy



SPORT 4 LIFE HAS DELIVERED **19** EMPLOYABILITY WORKSHOPS TO **542** PUPILS.

SCHOOLS HAVE REPORTED BACK THAT **OUT OF 141 THAT RECEIVED MENTORING SUPPORT AND COMPLETED SURVEYS, 81% OF THEIR PUPILS HAVE IMPROVED IN AT LEAST ONE OF ATTENDANCE, ENGAGEMENT, OR ATTAINMENT DURING THE COURSE OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME.**



SPORT 4 LIFE UK HAS BEEN AWARDED THE MIDLANDS “**EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE PROVIDER OF THE YEAR**” TITLE AT THE EDUCATION AWARDS 2023. THIS SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNISES OUR COMMITMENT TO OFFERING OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO THOSE WORKING WITHIN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION.

WE SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE TO IMPROVE ATTAINMENT, ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOUR, ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE AROUND THEIR OPTIONS POST EDUCATION.

59% OF STUDENTS IMPROVED **ATTAINMENT**

51% OF STUDENTS IMPROVED THEIR **ATTENDANCE**

78% OF PUPILS HAVE DEMONSTRATED A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR LIFE SKILLS AND **79%** HAVE REPORTED INCREASED AWARENESS OF WHAT THEY WANT TO DO NEXT IN EDUCATION.

78% OF STUDENTS IMPROVED THEIR **BEHAVIOUR AND ENGAGEMENT** IN LESSONS

81% OF STUDENTS IMPROVED AT **LEAST ONE OF THE ABOVE**

PARTNER FOCUS

These are just some of the game-changing organisations we have worked in collaboration with to support young people.

Delta Capita



COMMON GOAL



HAYES COLLINS / MEDIA



STEP TOGETHER

This year, we once again served as a delivery partner on Step Together, a Home Office funded national pilot programme with local implementation led by the Violence Reduction Partnership.

This collaborative project aims to increase safety and reduce violent crime towards young people along designated school routes at the start and end of the school day.

Due to the success of our work in the previous year, we experienced an increase in staff and were granted two additional new school routes. As a result, we now have Step Together staff across the following areas: West Brom, North Solihull, Cape Hill, and Oldbury. This expansion allows us to support 7 schools, where our Youth Engagement Officers effectively help reduce anti-social behaviour while simultaneously building positive relationships with the young people. Their efforts help motivate and guide the young individuals to make positive decisions in their lives.

THANK YOU

We are very grateful to all our partners, funders and supporters for your continued drive to change the lives of young people.

"I started cycling when I was five and I've learnt so much from sport that has benefited me in my day-to-day life - it helps build confidence and self-esteem, teaches you to take feedback and work as a team. So, what Sport 4 Life UK is doing goes way beyond simply improving football or basketball skills: they're equipping young people with tools that will enable them to navigate the real world with strength and self-belief."

-Emily Kay, Sport 4 Life Ambassador and International Cyclist

Following the appointment as Business Ambassador, Professor Paul Cadman said **"With 40% of young people in Birmingham living below the poverty line, there's a massive need for this charity's services. I want to do everything I can to draw attention to its incredible work as fast as possible and encourage the business community to get involved and make a difference to the futures of so many people in our region who might otherwise struggle to move forward with their lives."**

CHANGING LIVES

Liam's story Age 22



Liam's journey is an inspiration for anyone facing similar challenges, reminding us that with the right support and determination, success is within reach.

After finishing college, Liam felt he had limited opportunities and began to doubt his future prospects. He had struggled with education and left with less-than-ideal grades. As a result, his self-confidence hit an all-time low, and he found himself lacking motivation and direction.

Liam was guided towards Sport 4 Life UK's employability and mentoring programme through his local job centre. Here, Liam met his mentor, Lincoln, and together they devised a plan to address Liam's challenges and enhance his skills. With guidance, Liam bravely stepped out of his comfort zone and enrolled in a number of courses, including those provided by the NHS.

“WORKING FOR THE NHS WAS SIMPLY A CAREER I THOUGHT I WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH TO ACHIEVE, THEREFORE IT WASN'T SOMETHING I EVER THOUGHT WAS WORTH ENTERTAINING”

Prior to Sport 4 Life, Liam struggled to find motivation to accomplish any task. Working with his mentor, Lincoln, Liam was able to improve his concentration, social skills and discovered the importance of routine, persistence, and planning ahead. **“Lincoln pushed me and showed me that nothing is out of reach once you start taking the steps towards it.”**

After completing three courses and experiencing a boost in confidence, Liam applied for a position as a NHS Hospital Porter, a role he once believed was beyond his capabilities. Thanks to the newfound skills and confidence, Liam successfully secured the job!

His advice to any other young people struggling with low self-esteem is **“If you don't find the answer straight away then don't worry, you're only one step closer to narrowing down exactly what you want. Also don't be ashamed to ask questions, if you need help and support, go out there and find it - I did exactly that and Sport 4 Life helped me in the best way possible.”**

OUR PRIORITIES

All that we do is focused on CHANGING the LIVES of young people. This is our North Star and guides everything that we do. This sits central to our priorities for the next year and our 5 year strategic plan.

As the West Midlands leading sport for employment charity, we want to continue to be bold and ambitious. Our strategic priorities are;

TO GROW AND EXPAND OUR SERVICES

TO DRIVE THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR SERVICES

TO BE THE 'GO TO' YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CHARITY FOR THE REGION

TO BE ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO WORK IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

TO MAKE KEY CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY



This means that over the next year (2023-2024), we will;

- Extend our services to cohorts of the workforce who are underemployed (young people in-work who are undervalued and/or underused and ultimately disengaged)
- Increase the accessibility of our services to attract new cohorts of young people
- Review of our 'Theory of Change'
- Upgrade many of our internal digital systems to become more efficient and effective
- Fulfil our commitments to normalise equality and improve diversity
- Continue to prioritise wellbeing for our team which enables the recruitment, retention, education and development of the best talent within the sector
- Continue our growth as an organisation - operationally (supporting more young people), financially and geographically
- Embark on an exciting new journey to expand nationally through game-changing delivery partners.

ALL THAT WE DO IS FOCUSED
ON CHANGING THE LIVES OF
YOUNG PEOPLE



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Sport4LifeUK

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