



STRATEGY FOR CHANGING THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

2020-2021

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.

FORWARD

By Tom Clarke-Forrest, Founder & CEO

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK is experiencing a jobs crisis greater than any we have faced as a nation. We are seeing the biggest rise in unemployment in over a century - on a scale higher than the great depression. And young people always fare worse in a downturn, and the impact of this reverberates through the years. Many have lost their jobs as a direct result, and for others - including those still in education - the prospect of future work and success seems increasingly distant. Interlinked to this crisis is a sharp downturn in young people's mental health and wellbeing, and a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged and ethnic minority communities. The vulnerable and marginalised always suffer worst, and suffer longest.

Supporting young people's employment opportunities - in the immediate and long term - will be key to ensuring that the UK makes a rapid and full economic recovery from COVID-19. As a member of the 'Youth Employment Group', we were proud to work collaboratively with government, policy makers and member organisations to ensure that young people - especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds - are best supported. The results of this were clear to see - with a number of key measures and plans to give young people a better start, to build skills, provide training, and support into employment.

But this is just the beginning, and the hard work starts now. The road ahead is challenging and uncertain, but it is incumbent on us to act now to support our region's young people. We will work tirelessly to ensure this support reaches young people most in-need, and focuses on the long-term. We are determined to ensure that young people's futures are not defined by their present.

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 will provide us with a clear direction over the next year. At the very core of our strategy are three key themes:

We will ADD (+) to what we do: Continue to build on our success, and continually improve and develop

We will MULTIPLY (x) what we do: Make a step change, revolutionise and transform where we can, and raise the bar

We will QUESTION (?) what we do: Always ask why, to be curious, and to question and research our approach.

Through the lens of these three themes, and through our eight key workstreams (HR & workforce, operations, finance, funding, marketing & digital, business development, governance and impact), we're able to take steps towards achieving our ambition over the next year.

Key actions over the next 12 months include:

- Growth - financially, operationally, geographically and through our reach and brand
- Re-introduce our group-based and in-person work (post COVID-19) in a safe, secure and phased way
- Value and develop our team so we are expertly equipped and positioned to support our young people to the best of our abilities
- Fulfill our commitments to normalise equality
- Increase the number of female beneficiaries we engage and meaningfully support
- Achieve our annual targets and KPIs
- Embed an increased youth-led culture in our operations
- Implement an insight-led, transparent and evidence-led culture and approach to our impact

As the leading sport-for-employment charity in the West Midlands, we are well positioned - strategically and operationally - to be bold and ambitious over the next year. We have the foundation, infrastructure, resources and workforce needed to make a step change. And together, as a team, I truly believe we can successfully ADD value to what we do, continually QUESTION our approach to better understand our young people, and to MULTIPLY our reach and impact - towards our upcoming ambitions.

Since our humble beginnings exactly 14 years ago, we've been on an incredible journey to where we are today. And whilst looking back at our achievements and impact fills me with pride, I'm more excited about the journey ahead.

I hope you'll join us for this next chapter.



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

Even prior to the impact of COVID-19, youth unemployment was no longer yesterday's problem. In terms of social mobility, disadvantaged young people are disproportionately likely to be NEET, and too many of these young people are getting stuck NEET. Even when young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have the equivalent qualifications to their better-off peers, they're still 50% more likely to be out of education and employment in early adulthood. And 75% of young people who are NEET for three months have been NEET for 12 months. This means that most NEET young people remain so for the long-term.

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.

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.

SINCE LOCKDOWN (COVID-19), YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN BIRMINGHAM AND THE WEST MIDLANDS INCREASED BY 69% TO 26,920 AND 90% TO 90,805, RESPECTIVELY.

OUR APPROACH

As a youth charity, we want to connect with other youth organisations and the know-how of the sector, to ensure there is the strongest voice possible for young people. Now, more than ever, young people feel their voices aren't being 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 knowledge is shared.

And as an organisation existing to alleviate youth unemployment and increase employability with our beneficiaries, we were proud to recently celebrate National Employability Day with ERSA and partners working in this space. We will continue to invest in, and prioritise, impact management - to better understand our impact, be evidence-led, and continually learn on what works. As the landscape evolves, the 'welfare-to-work' agenda will play a more critical role regionally, and nationally, and so we are aligned to this through our funding and impact support strategies. We will also align our delivery to meet the needs identified in the West Midlands Combined Authority 'Regional Skills Plan'.

Sport continues to be a key element of our delivery, and the vehicle, tool and conduit to engage and develop our young

people. We use sport to increase physical health and mental well-being, but also to transform key life skills - a key outcome and progression we work towards. We believe in its power to change lives. And in line with Sport England's 'Building An Active Nation' strategy, 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) tackling inequality for women, (ii) tackling inequalities for lower socio-economic groups and (iii) children and young people - all of which align closely to key actions we are committing to over the next year. And the future of sport is changing - with an increasing focus on physical activity and active wellbeing. Young people want more flexible, personalised and youth-led offers - a key shift away from more 'traditional' sport as we know it. We need to be part of this movement, review our sporting offer, and make changes accordingly.

Many of these sector landscapes are uncertain and difficult to navigate. But much of this is out of our control, and so we can only control our own approach, and commit to a set of actions that we believe takes us closer to our mission and vision, in a bold and ambitious way - whilst holding young people at the 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.



TARGETS

2020-21

OUR KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2020-2021



- Achieve the organisational funding KPIs (overall target of £1m and increase income through contracts and philanthropy)
- Grow our operational delivery to new areas across West Midlands region, Expand core services, in line with the Business Plan impact/outcome KPIs and financial resources, into 2-4 new areas outside of the city of Birmingham (and research this thoroughly)
- Embed a youth-led culture through carrying out a review and redesign of our youth engagement activities
- Implement an insight-led culture into data and impact and to Increase transparency in impact reporting, covering failures and areas for development
- Grow our brand awareness
- Increase number of female beneficiaries we engage through carrying out a review of our Sport and Physical Activity service, establish and strengthen partnerships and ensure targeted marketing campaigns
- Improve our environmental impact through delivery of our Environmental Sustainability Plan
- Appoint a new 'Equality Champion' within the workforce, to work with the CEO, the Board and the wider staff team in delivering our Equality action plan
- Ensure impact recording is working towards a 'fully evidenced' system and approach, Get external verification of data and impact for 2020/21 impact report
- Review, refine and develop S4L services to maximise quality of provision and service user impact
- Improve the financial processes and increase efficiency and reporting
- Ensure effective communication to our 3 audience types (Young People/Funders/Partners)
- Establish a new income stream through Corporate Partnerships
- Improve the office environment for both staff and beneficiaries we support by moving to new premises in Digbeth, this will include opportunity for networking and more central location





Youth unemployment is not yesterday's problem. 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.

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