



OUR STRATEGY FOR CHANGING THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

2022-2027

Registered Charity 1115222
Registered Company 05664605



OUR VISION

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

OUR MISSION

Delivering sports-themed personal development services to support young people's journey through education and employment.

OUR VALUES

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

This is our North Star and guides everything that we do.

We are a TEAM

We are a conscientious, approachable and trusting group with a common goal. We do our roles effectively, share in the success, and take responsibility in the failures.

QUALITY runs through the core of the organisation

We aim to be a beacon of good practice in all we do. We are data led and evidence based, dependable for all those we support and work with. Most importantly – we do what we say we do.

We do not stand still – we are a PROGRESSIVE organisation

We are a group with a growth mindset, leaving our egos at the door. We are curious, take feedback constructively, have a continuous approach to learning and embrace change.



FOREWORD

By Tom Clarke-Forrest, Founder & CEO

My passion for sport, young people and social change is very personal and very real. And so I'm incredibly proud to present Sport 4 Life UK's 5-year strategy, as we continue to work towards our mission and vision. I make no apologies for our scope and scale, nor our ambitions for the short-term and long-term in delivering real and lasting change.

The inequality gap continues to rise across many aspects of life. Young people continue to face a disrupted labour market, a volatile economic climate and significant mental health challenges. But despite these challenges, we continue to 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 on their journey. Using sport and physical activity as the vehicle, and through the key activities of mentoring and qualifications as part of our award-winning delivery model – we know we can be this helping hand.

This new strategy is the most co-produced in our history. I want to thank the many stakeholder groups who directly fed into its priorities and themes – including staff, volunteers, funders, commissioners, partners and most importantly – young people.

Over the next 5 years, we will continue to expand our services – growing financially and geographically to significantly increase the number of young people we support. This will be achieved through a new structured schools offer, new support for 'in-work' and 'underemployed' cohorts, an innovative new delivery partnership model, and continued transformational improvements in our delivery model. Sport 4 Life UK will continue to diversify its income streams, increasing its ability to deliver on key contracts and through providing agile and collaborative solutions to a range of partners.

As a people-focused organisation, we will honour our commitments in equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as workforce wellbeing, explore the best post-pandemic way of working and ensure incremental investment in our staff's learning and development. And as a socially responsible organisation, we will also make key contributions to our society and community – including commitments in Levelling Up and sustainability. Through the whole strategy, we will be truly data-led – following key insights and evidence, as well as youth-led – being guided through our exciting new 'Youth Voice' approach.

Whilst we are incredibly proud of the many things we have achieved since our inception 16 years ago – and grateful to all those who have played a part in our journey – we are not finished. There is more to do, and we are unwavering in our desire, sense of responsibility and purpose to achieve these strategic priorities – and as the leading sport for employment charity in the West Midlands, we are well positioned – strategically and operationally – to do this.

Our values are in the DNA of Sport 4 Life UK, and it's through this lens that we will continue our ongoing journey of development, learning and growth – in providing life-changing opportunities and impact for those young people who need it most.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom Clarke-Forrest".

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.

There have been some positive signs of recovery after a tough few years for the employment market, however the cost of living crisis, continued disparity between the most disadvantaged and their peers and a competitive job market is affecting young people. We are determined to be part of the solution.

MORE THAN ONE IN FOUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE WORRIED THAT POOR MENTAL HEALTH IS AFFECTING THEIR ABILITY TO FIND WORK POST PANDEMIC.¹

IN BIRMINGHAM AND THE WEST MIDLANDS 42.2% AND 31% OF CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY; ABOVE THE UK AVERAGE OF 27%.²

43% OF BIRMINGHAM'S POPULATION AND 28% OF WEST MIDLANDS POPULATION LIVE IN THE TOP 10% MOST DEPRIVED AREAS NATIONALLY.³

75% OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NEET FOR THREE MONTHS HAVE BEEN NEET FOR 12 MONTHS.⁴

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DISPROPORTIONATELY EFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC.⁵



PARTNERSHIPS

We are always seeking partnerships with inspirational individuals and game-changing organisations who want to build a better community and change the lives of disadvantaged young people. 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 essential to 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 change the lives of young people, develop your own internal staff and promote your organisation's social and societal impact.

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



“ONE OF THE THINGS WE REALLY LOVE ABOUT SPORT 4 LIFE UK IS THE WAY THE CHARITY USES NON-TRADITIONAL METHODS TO ENGAGE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE SO THAT THEIR WORK WILL BE EMBEDDED INTO THAT PERSON’S LIFE FOREVER.”

Sophie Warren

Birmingham Trainee Solicitor's Society

OUR KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2022-2027

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. Over the next 5 years, our strategic priorities are;

To grow and expand our services;

- Embed our career support for schools
- Develop our support for young people 'in-work' and 'underemployed'
- Support more than 5,000 young people a year
- Grow our revenue to £4m
- Grow regionally (and nationally) through partnerships

To drive through transformational improvements in our services;

- Being truly data-led
- Be awarded a Quality Assurance kitemark to ensure quality standards and continually improved curriculum
- Technological advancement in systems, digital and infrastructure

To be the 'go to' youth employment charity for the region;

- Be distinctive leaders in our sector and beacons of good practice

- Be able to deliver on key contracts as sub-primes and lead consortiums
- Continue to be a thought leader
- Realise the further potential benefits from collaborative working

To be one of the best places to work in the West Midlands;

- Be a truly inclusive workforce
- Prioritise wellbeing
- Explore ultra-flexible ways of working
- Have a relentless focus on our values, and our learning & development

To make key contributions to our society and community;

- Progress towards net zero
- Lobby, influence and deliver on 'Levelling Up'
- Contribute to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals



THIS YEAR'S PRIORITIES 2023/24

To work towards our five year priorities, this year (2023-2024) we will;

- Extend our services 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

This year we aim to reach the following targets;

PROGRESSION

197

IMPROVED EDUCATION PERFORMANCE

960

CRIME REDUCTION RELATED OUTCOME

339

GAINED A QUALIFICATION

44

PROGRESSED INTO EDUCATION OR TRAINING

22

COMPLETED A WORK PLACEMENT

88

ACHIEVED A SUSTAINED JOB OUTCOME

ENGAGEMENT

1322

SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED THEIR LIFE SKILLS

1247

SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

170

COMPLETED A MOCK INTERVIEW

155

COMPLETED A SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT

993

IMPROVED THEIR MENTAL HEALTH/WELLBEING



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

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



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