

# LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

# THE PLAYBOOK



#TogetherWeDid

## ABOUT LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

Launched in 2020 thanks to a record £1m grant from the London Marathon Foundation, Levelling the Playing Field uses the power of sport and physical activity to engage and improve health and life conditions for ethnically diverse children who are more likely to enter, or are already involved with, the Criminal Justice System.

**The project** – which is delivered by a network of specialist delivery organisations (SDO's) in Gwent, London, South Yorkshire and the West Midlands and in six secure youth establishments – has two **common goals**:

- **Increase the number of ethnically diverse children taking part in sport and physical activity**
- **Prevent and divert ethnically diverse children from being involved in the Criminal Justice System**



Levelling the Playing Field augments its partners' impact by fostering multi-agency partnerships, offering extensive staff training including mentoring qualifications, sourcing and distributing funding (including over half a million pounds through multiple funding streams) and raising their profile through case studies and regional and national awards events.

The project's impact is being evaluated by the research team from the University of Birmingham's School of Sport, Exercise & Rehabilitation Sciences. This Playbook accompanies their academic research (published autumn 2023).

This Playbook is for those working in sport and physical activity, statutory services, criminal justice, local government, police, Police & Crime Commissioners, specialist community organisations; equality, diversity and inclusion, commissioners or funders – in fact, anyone looking for examples of good practice in using sport and physical activity to reduce inequalities and crime and improve life chances.

On a daily basis, our wonderful community and custodial partners are showing 'how it's done' - achieving profound, positive impact on ethnically diverse children.

*This Playbook tells their stories...*

**#TogetherWeDid**

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Click the hashtags at the bottom of each specialist partner's page to read more about their work. Click on their logo to visit their website.

## WHY IS LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD NEEDED?



### Inequalities in sport and physical activity (LtPF common goal one)

- **Sport England's** Sport for All? report (2020) shows "deep rooted" inequalities in physical activity levels between white children and young people and those from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

It also investigates activity levels when ethnicity, gender and socio-economic affluence are considered together and finds even further inequalities in access to sport.

- Research by **Sport Wales** (2020) shows lockdown further widened the activity gap between children and young people from higher and lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Sport Wales Chief Executive Brian Davies said: "It unfortunately appears that many of the inequalities which already existed in sports participation have been intensified during lockdown."



### Inequalities in the Criminal Justice System (LtPF common goal two)

- **The Lammy Review** 2017 highlights disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System, including over-representation of ethnically diverse children.

The Review shows that the proportion of ethnically diverse young people offending for the first time, reoffending and incarcerated all rose significantly between March 2006 and March 2016

- **The Youth Justice Board's** Exploring Racial Disparity report (2020) shows ethnically diverse children make up over half the population in youth custody.

Amongst the report's many findings was the fact that black children are over four times more likely to be arrested than white children.

## WHY IS LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD NEEDED?



### Further insight from our own experts

- **Dr. Hannah Baumer**, Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham and lead researcher on Levelling the Playing Field, compiles statistics on the inequalities and barriers faced by ethnically diverse children – including lower physical activity and affluence levels and higher likelihood of becoming involved in the Youth Justice System
- Fellow Levelling the Playing Field researcher, **Morgan Mitchell**, offers a personal view of why diversity is linked to ambition, confidence and attainment for ethnically diverse children. She says: "In simple terms, you can't be what you can't see!"



### How Levelling the Playing Field can address these issues










- When London Marathon Foundation pledged record £1m funding (2019) to launch the project, their Strategic Grants Lead, **Olu Alake**, said:

*"With its connectivity of issues and blend of stakeholders from across sectors, this project can, and will, get things done. It was quickly clear to our board that this project could result in change of policy and impact across the whole country."*

- **Keith Fraser**, Chair of the Youth Justice Board, said: "[Levelling the Playing Field] presents a significant opportunity to have a huge positive impact on the lives of many children. This initiative is building on past work and entering new ground in a focused and evidenced way."



## IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

-  **6** cities, **1** town, **6** secure establishments
-  **49** specialist partners (in the community and secure estate)
-  **22,518** ethnically diverse children engaged (and counting!)
-  **100+** different ethnicities (as self-described by over 4,500 children in UoB research)
-  **1003** multi-agency/sector staff engaged in training
-  **£514,644** funding sourced and distributed to specialist partners\*
-  **4** regional and **2** national awards events
-  **187** case studies and articles showcasing the work and impact of our specialist partners
-  **7** young leaders who represented the project at Include Summit in Manchester and YJB Youth Justice Leaders Summit in Birmingham

\*Funding through Levelling the Playing Field itself, the Tackling Inequalities Fund, the Together Fund and the Ministry of Justice Youth Justice Sport Fund

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR SPECIALIST DELIVERY PARTNERS AND TRADITIONAL SPORTS CLUBS

### Our partners offer:

### Traditional sports clubs offer:

**Freedom and choice:**  
over 700 different activities

Single-sport focus

**Understanding and connection:**  
community-centred, EDI role models

Achievement within the particular sport or physical activity

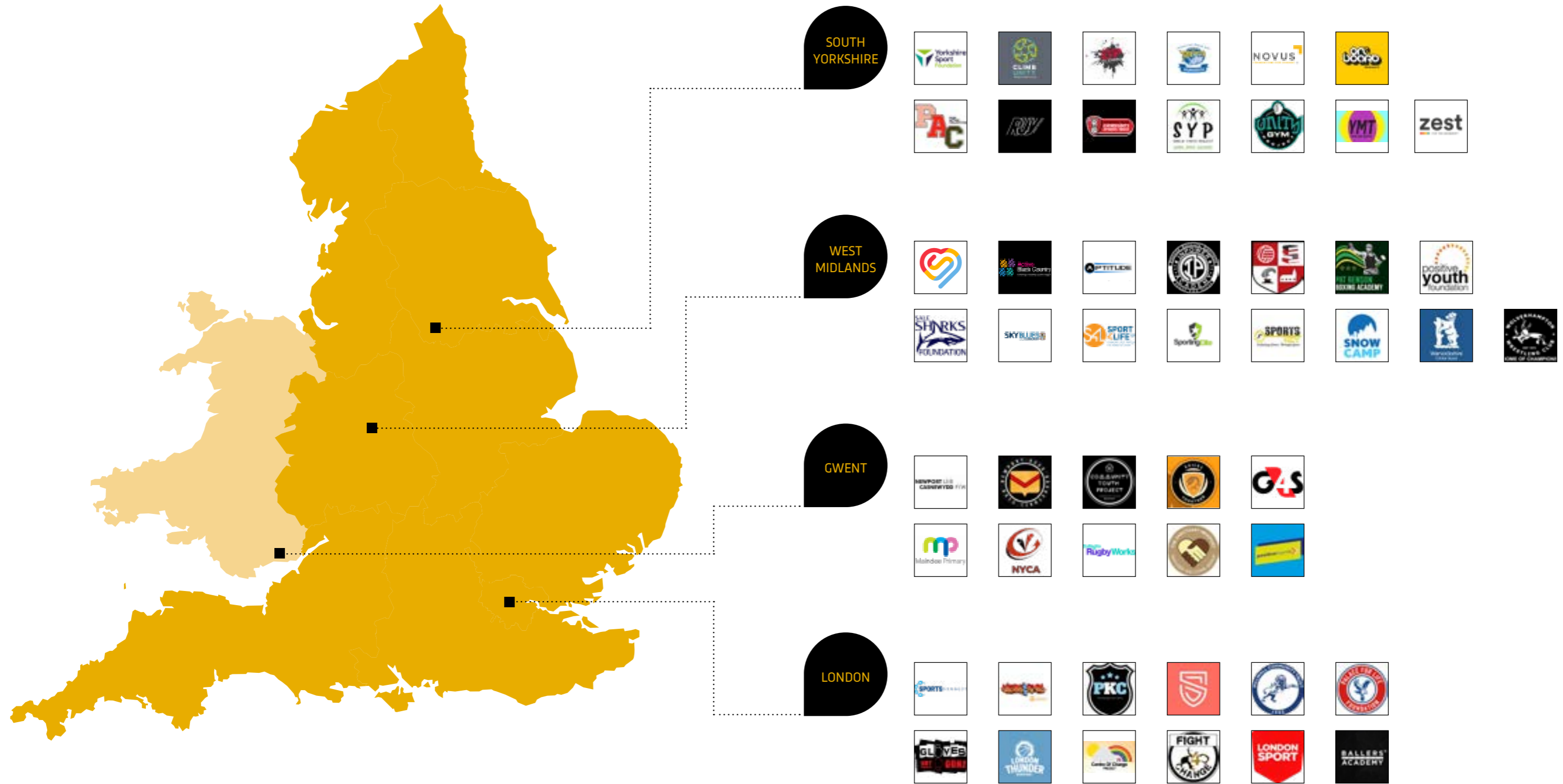
**Safe faces and safe places:**  
free and open access

Safe faces and safe places:  
paid-for access

**Sport for development:**  
wraparound care via multi-agency support and child-first philosophy

Sport-specific development

# PROJECT MAP



NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER

2022  
2023

# NEWPORT LIVE / POSITIVE FUTURES



Newport Live is Levelling the Playing Field's Strategic Partner in Gwent, south-east Wales.

Its award-winning Sports Development Team is highly regarded locally and nationally for making a difference in communities by delivering sport and physical activity that is appropriately tailored to local need.

Positive Futures is Newport Live's sport-based social inclusion programme, linking up with partners to deliver accessible and affordable activities to positively engage children in targeted communities.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

-  **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2023**
-  **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2022**
-  **REGIONAL YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR 2022**
-  **REGIONAL COHORT OF THE YEAR 2022**
-  **REGIONAL SPECIALIST PARTNER OF THE YEAR 2022**

### Read more about Newport Live's work:

- [#RoleModels](#)
- [#SportForDevelopment](#)
- [#Mentoring](#)
- [#Partnership](#)
- [#Safeguarding](#)

# NEWPORT ACES BASKETBALL CLUB



Founder, Asa Waite:

*"Socio-economic circumstances that people find themselves living in, plus racism and oppression, lead to them having very low self-value. I think it's important we try to snap that mentality."*

*"That process starts with simply offering them something as simple as an organised basketball game as an alternative to just hanging around. For young people, it's an opportunity; something they are rarely offered elsewhere in their lives."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### Read more about Newport ACES basketball club's work:

- [#SportForDevelopment](#)



NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER

2022  
2023

# COMMUNITY YOUTH PROJECT



# EXILES TOGETHER



Youth empowerment and social cohesion are the aims of Community Youth Project, based in the ethnically diverse community of Maindee in Newport.

Sarah Miller, Lead Youth and Community Worker:

*"Bringing young people together is so important. We want to break down the many barriers that exist between different communities in this area. Then on an individual basis it's about empowerment, supporting them to overcome challenges, grow in confidence and reach their full potential."*

 **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2023**

 **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2022**

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Exiles Together is a partnership between Newport County FC and the ethnically diverse community right on the club's doorstep. Their activities promote diversity, inclusion and diversion from crime through the power of sport.

Jalal Goni, Exiles Together founder:

*"These communities are most vulnerable to crime. There are big problems with kids selling drugs. We need to work with kids before they get into serious trouble and go to prison. They need role models and someone to give them love, respect and attention."*

*"Apologies if this sounds a bit cliched, but I'm from this community and I just want to give something back to it. We want to bring children together and help take positive routes in life."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Read more about Community Youth Project's work:

[#Partnership](#)

[#Mentoring](#)

Read more about Exiles Together's work:

[#Partnership](#)



# HMP & YOI PARC



HMP & YOI Parc have teamed up with our specialist partners Dallaglio RugbyWorks, using rugby to improve participants' physical and mental health, wellbeing and life skills and preparing them for release into the community. The sessions include one-to-one mentoring and contribute towards Sports Leaders qualifications and Duke of Edinburgh awards.

HMP & YOI Parc Enrichment Officer, Jamie Williams:  
*"From 23 years in the prison service, there's no doubt in my mind that sport and physical activity is the key to reduce reoffending. Working with outside agencies and educating by using the power of sport is such an important tool."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### Read more about HMP & YOI Parc's work:

- #Training
- #Partnership
- #YouthLeadership
- #SecureEstate

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER

2023

# MAINDEE PRIMARY SCHOOL



With 42 languages spoken by children at Maindee Primary, it is incredibly ethnically diverse. The school is a key partner in a tight circle of organisations in the city who have come together to support local ethnically diverse children, giving them 'safe places and safe faces' to enjoy sport on their own doorstep and divert them from negative influences on the streets.

Martine Smith, Maindee Primary School's Equity Lead,  
*"It's very evident that the work we're doing in the evenings is working. Lots of my older boys are right on the edge of anti-social behaviour, exploitation and other issues. They need someone to reach out to and we're providing that support."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

- NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR 2023
- REGIONAL ROLE MODEL OF THE YEAR 2022

### Read more about Maindee Primary School's work:

- #Mentoring
- #Partnership
- #Families



NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER

2022  
2023

# NEWPORT YEMENI COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (NYCA)



# DALLAGLIO RUGBYWORKS






NYCA put on sporting activities for children from a hugely diverse range of ethnicities and backgrounds in the community of Pillgwenlly in Newport.

NYCA Chairman Reggie Al-Haddi:

*"I've grown up in this area and unfortunately I've seen good friends die or go to prison. That's the biggest reason why we do what we do, to stop that cycle. We want to see the next generation given more opportunities."*

*"We try to give them alternative positive opportunities from an early age where they have access to sport, friends, mentoring and a wider world view."*

-  **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2023**
-  **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2022**
-  **REGIONAL ROLE MODEL OF THE YEAR 2023**

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Read more about Newport Yemeni Community's work:

#FemaleEmpowerment

#Partnership

Dallaglio RugbyWorks deliver rugby-based sessions to improve the physical and mental health, wellbeing and life skills of participants inside HMP & YOI Parc and Oakhill Secure Training Centre.

Dan Ley, Senior Regional Coordinator – Wales at Dallaglio RugbyWorks:

*"One boy had suffered a family bereavement, got himself sentenced and was engaging in violence. [In HMP & YOI Parc] RugbyWorks quickly became the favourite part of his week. His behaviour and attitude become more positive and he took on leadership roles with the group."*

*"He is now really keen to get involved in RugbyWorks when he gets out and has developed a much more positive attitude towards his future. He's realised he doesn't have to be stuck in that cycle of reoffending."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Read more about Dallaglio Rugbyworks' work:

#Mentoring

#SecureEstate

#Partnership



NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER

2022  
2023

# THE GAP WALES/THE SANCTUARY





Young refugees and asylum seekers often arrive in Newport having experienced conflict and trauma in their homelands, so when The Sanctuary project engages them in sport and physical activity, it's to achieve two very simple outcomes: get them sweaty and smiling!


Manager, Mark Seymour:

*"What we provide is crucial. We give young people access to sport amongst their peers, with good role models and trusted adults in a community setting, giving them a sense of belonging and security which will help prevent them ending up in the Criminal Justice System."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

 **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2023**

 **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2022**

 **REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR 2023**

Read more about The Sanctuary's work:

#Partnership

#Faith



NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER

2022  
2023

# POSITIVE FUTURES NEWPORT



Positive Futures is a sport-based social inclusion programme which forms part of the tight partnership of LtPF organisations across Newport.


Lucy Donovan,  
Senior Development Officer, Positive Futures:


*"This partnership is inspired by Levelling the Playing Field. It's created a unique referral process."*

*"A lot of these children simply aren't on the radar of statutory services – or by the time they are, it becomes much more difficult to reverse their lifestyles and patterns of behaviour."*

*"By engaging with the children at a younger, 'preventative' age, our frontline team can highlight individuals or families who need extra support and guidance. Through sport, the children can form positive relationships with trusted adults and have someone there to support them."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

 **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2023**

 **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WINNER 2022**

Read more about Positive Futures' work:

#Training

#Partnership

#Mentoring

#RoleModel





London Sport is LtPF's strategic partner for London. Together, we help provide more opportunities for ethnically diverse young people to be active and live a positive life, free from crime.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Ballers Academy use football and other sports as a vehicle to engage local young people who may otherwise get caught up in crime and anti-social behaviour. Their coaches and mentors build relationships with local young people and guide them towards opportunities such as volunteering, education, training and employment.

Richard White, Community Director, Ballers Academy:  
*"For me, there's no such thing as 'hard to reach' young people. That just means you're not working hard enough to engage them."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Read more about London Sport's work:

[#RegionalEvent](#)

[#NationalEvent](#)



# CENTRE OF CHANGE



Centre of Change has 18 counsellors and mentors working with young people in Croydon who are referred by schools, social services, the NHS and other agencies.

Diane Rouillon, Assistant Director, Centre of Change:

*"The concept of mentoring through sport is new to us, so we were very much looking forward to adding it as a new element to the bespoke packages we already offer."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### Read more about Centre of Changes work:

- #Training
- #Mentoring
- #Partnership
- #MentalHealth
- #Faith

# FIGHT 4 CHANGE



NATIONAL  
ROLE MODEL  
WINNER  
2023



Rebecca Donnelly MBE, Founder of Fight 4 Change, Lambeth:

*"Boxing is just the hook - it's the way of getting young people in the door and building relationships with them."*

*"Boxing builds their resilience so when they're out in the world they are able to process challenges, manage their emotions and react in the right way."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

- [National Role Model of the Year 2023](#)
- [Regional Role Model of the Year 2023](#)

### Read more about Fight 4 Change's work:

- #Mentoring
- #FemaleEmpowerment
- #RoleModel
- #PandemicRecovery
- #SportforDevelopment
- #YouthLeadership



# GLOVES NOT GUNZ



Adam Ballard, Co-Founder, Gloves Not Gunz:

*"The magic comes from combining the boxing and martial arts with the opportunity for young people to speak; giving them a voice and a platform they might not get at home or school. It sounds like a cliché, but we are building a family."*

*"A lot of young people in this area are looking for purpose. If there's a club they can go to at the same time every week and build that routine into their lifestyle, almost without realising it, they find that purpose."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### Read more about Gloves Not Gunz's work:

- #Mentoring
- #PandemicRecovery
- #MonitoringAndEvaluation
- #YouthLeadership
- #Safeguarding
- #MentalHealth
- #Investment
- #Families

# LONDON THUNDER



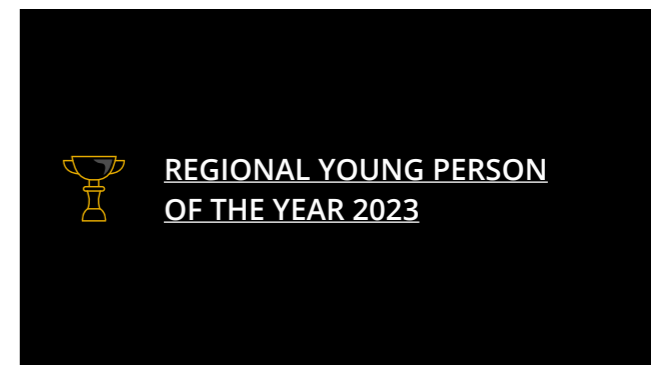
Dejan Paunovic,  
Head Coach, London Thunder:

*"Our community sessions are not just to take kids off the streets, but also to provide a safe environment for physical exercise and social interaction. We're there to provide a service for boys and girls of all ages and ability. These sessions are totally inclusive."*

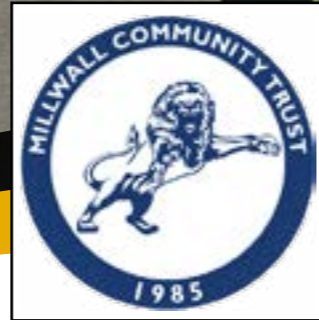
[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### Read more about London Thunder's work:

- #PandemicRecovery







The charitable arm of the famous Championship football club has been using sport to achieve positive social impact in Southwark and Lewisham for over 35 years.

Richard White, formerly Community Development Manager, Millwall Community Trust:

*"We work with local partners and the community to engage young people by providing free weekly football sessions in safe spaces. We believe all young people deserve an equal chance and opportunity so it's important to invest time in them."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



The charitable arm of the Premier League club uses sport to positively impact on the lives of young people in its local community.

Raya Ahmed, female coach and mentor, Palace for Life (pictured above):

*"I have seen with my own eyes the young people's confidence increase... There are barriers, but [we show them] you can be that leader and take that next step into coaching or join a grassroots football club, or whatever their ambition may be."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Read more about Millwall Community Foundation's work:

#Mentoring

#SportforDevelopment

#RoleModel

Read more about Palace for Life Foundation's work:

#SportforDevelopment

#Mentoring

#FemaleEmpowerment

#MentalHealth



# PREVENTING KNIFE CRIME (PKC)



PKC nurtures local young talent and promotes social mobility in the ethnically diverse boroughs of Croydon and Sutton.

Marlon Williamson, Academy Director, PKC:

*"We aim to give kids an opportunity to achieve great things in sport and get the youth off the streets, making it a safer place for everyone."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

# STREET SOCCER LONDON






Jack Badu, Coordinator, Street Soccer London:

*"It's not about us changing people's lives, it's about the young people changing their own lives but using us as the mechanism to do that."*

*"We want to put a smile on young people's faces, give them hope, experiences and opportunity, then what we class as success for each young individual will follow."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

-  **REGIONAL YOUNG COHORT OF THE YEAR 2023**
-  **REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR 2023**
-  **NATIONAL ROLE MODEL OF THE YEAR 2022**

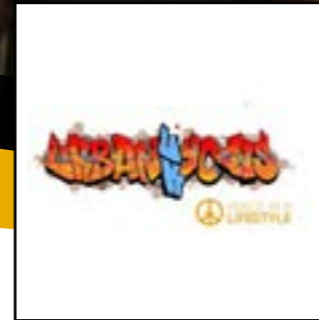
Read more about Street Soccer London's work:

#YouthLeadership  
#PandemicRecovery

#SportforDevelopment

#Investment





Sports Connect use sport in youth custody and post-release to support young people's successful reintegration into society and prevent reoffending.

Forming partnerships with community sport organisations who can carry on their good work and positive relationships formed whilst in custody is vital.

William Lee, Director, Sports Connect:

*"The key to these partnerships is achieving as a collective and sharing the same vision. Through Levelling the Playing Field, we've built relationships with Physical Education Instructors and strengthened their vision of the role community sport can play."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Urban Yogis works in the community and in custody (HMP YOI Cookham Wood and HMP YOI Feltham), using yoga to improve young people's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Ben Eckett, Founder, Urban Yogis:

*"Yoga is an excellent tool for helping young people who have experienced trauma and might be living that experience daily. It has a great impact on them mentally and physically."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



**Read more about Sports Connect's work:**

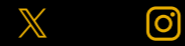
#Mentoring #Partnership #SecureEstate

**Read more about Urban Yogis' work:**

#SportforDevelopment #Mentoring #PandemicRecovery  
#Investment #MentalHealth #SecureEstate



YORKSHIRE SPORT



CLIMB UNITY



Our strategic partner Yorkshire Sport Foundation is an Active Partnership - a Lottery-funded charity supporting organisations across the nine districts of South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

The Foundation believes in the power of sport and physical activity to change people's lives. Its vision is to create a vibrant, healthy and prosperous Yorkshire through sport, supporting the work of local, regional and national organisations.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Levelling the Playing Field linked with ClimbUnity, the British Mountaineering Council and prison education provider Novus to give Wetherby YO1 residents the opportunity to learn climbing.

The partnership was part of a wider project to engage young prison residents in sport and physical activity, then link them up with relevant local opportunities to develop that positive engagement after their release.

ClimbUnity lead coach and GB coach, Rachel Carr:

*"The principle behind Climb Unity is to get young people from ethnically diverse communities interested in climbing and get them experienced enough to qualify as coaches, so it starts a cycle of other ethnic minorities being attracted into the sport."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Read more about Yorkshire Sport Foundation's work:

#RegionalEvent  
#RoleModel  
#Safeguarding

#Training  
#YouthLeadership

#Mentoring  
#Partnership

Read more about Climb Unity's work:

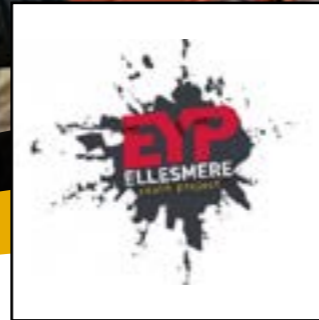
#Investment

#SecureEstate



## ELLESMERE YOUTH PROJECT

## LEEDS RHINOS FOUNDATION



Passion, lived experience, in-depth local knowledge, loyalty, relatability and genuine concern for children's welfare are all part of Ellesmere Youth Project's magic recipe. Sport is their key engagement tool.

Imran Ali, former Youth Engagement Manager (pictured above):

*"Our staff here are part of the community, born and bred. We represent the diverse racial, cultural and religious backgrounds of this area. We understand what they're going through and the barriers they face. What we're doing is not guesswork."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Leeds Rhinos Foundation run a sport and education programme with children and young people in HMPYOI Wetherby.

Dane Weatherill, Education Project Officer, Leeds Rhinos Foundation:

*"Staff really appreciate that we provide an alternative outlet for the young people to be active and talk openly. They know we're not here to judge them and the power of the Rhinos badge helps us build a rapport with each individual."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### Read more about Ellesmere Youth Project's work:

- #Mentoring
- #YouthLeadership
- #Investment
- #PandemicRecovery
- #Families

### Read more about Leeds Rhinos Foundation's work:

- #MentalHealth
- #Mentoring
- #SecureEstate





Novus – Foundation for Change are the Youth Secure Estate Strategic Partners for Levelling the Playing Field. They help us support LtPF Specialist Delivery Partners into the Secure Estate and report progress back to the LtPF Steering Group.

James Thomas, Sport & Enrichment Manager.

*“The ethnically diverse community organisation links provided by Levelling the Playing Field across the country are amazing for us. Setting up community resettlement plans is often difficult when young people are leaving one prison and returning to a different area of the country. With access to Levelling the Playing Field’s network, that job becomes much easier.”*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

OnBoard is a fun, friendly and supportive 8,000 sq ft skatepark which is home to a variety of learning and enrichment programmes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Amy Cooper, Founder, OnBoard:

*“Sport is the hook. We make sure they get a sense of achievement in their first session. That’s a way to kickstart that bond in which a trusted adult mentor gives them a sense of belonging.”*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Read more about Novus' work:

[#SecureEstate](#)

[#Partnership](#)



# PEER ACTION COLLECTIVE

# REACH UP (BIG BROTHER BURNGREAVE AND SISTERHOOD PROJECTS)



NATIONAL SPECIALIST PARTNER WINNER 2022



PAC is delivered in Yorkshire in partnership with Sheffield Wednesday Community Programme, Bradford City Community Foundation and the EFL Trust. They unite young people with lived experience of violence, crime and anti-social behaviour to do peer research, create community projects and seek solutions.

Peter Walker, Project Manager, EFL Trust:

*"The young people got so much from it. They were able to draw information out in an informal way. Young people selling the idea that they're trying to benefit the community breaks down any barriers straight away."*





[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Reach Up Youth run two projects - Big Brother Burngreave (for boys) and Sisterhood (for girls) that provide positive opportunities for youngsters in the richly diverse Sheffield community of Burngreave.

Safiya Saeed, Founder, Reach Up Youth:

*"Sport is very, very important. We use it as the 'hook.' It's how we get their attention - everything after that is decided by their needs. But without sport, we just won't get them in the doors."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

-  **NATIONAL SPECIALIST PARTNER OF THE YEAR 2022**
-  **REGIONAL YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR 2022**
-  **REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR 2023**
-  **REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR 2023**

### Read more about PAC's work:

- [#Mentoring](#)
- [#RoleModel](#)
- [#YouthLeadership](#)
- [#SecureEstate](#)

### Read more about Reach Up's work:

- [#Training](#)
- [#Mentoring](#)
- [#FemaleEmpowerment](#)
- [#RoleModels](#)
- [#YouthLeadership](#)
- [#Partnership](#)
- [#Investment](#)
- [#Families](#)



# ROTHERHAM UNITED COMMUNITY TRUST




Rotherham United Community Sports Trust run a boys' football and girls' boxing project to get local children active and address wider issues happening in local ethnically diverse communities.

Ant Bayou, Youth and Inclusion Manager, Rotherham United Community Trust:

*"Levelling the Playing Field has really enabled us to target the diverse areas of the town where support is needed the most."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



**REGIONAL YOUNG COHORT OF THE YEAR 2023**

### Read more about Rotherham Utd Community Sport Trust's work:

- #Mentoring
- #Investment
- #PandemicRecovery
- #SportForDevelopment

# SAALIK YOUTH PROJECT







Saalik Youth Project is like a 'second family' to youngsters mainly from the Pakistani community in Burngreave, Sheffield.

Imran Ali, Founder, Saalik Youth Project:

*"Our staff here are part of the community, born and bred. We represent the diverse racial, cultural and religious backgrounds of this area. We understand what they're going through and the barriers they face. What we're doing is not guesswork."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

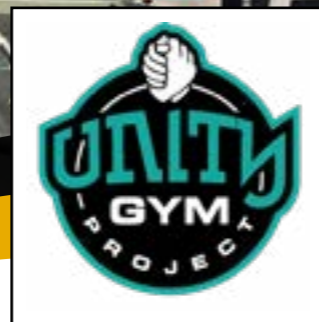
-  **NATIONAL ROLE MODEL OF THE YEAR 2023**
-  **REGIONAL YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR 2023**
-  **REGIONAL ROLE MODEL OF THE YEAR 2023**
-  **REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR 2023**

### Read more about Saalik Youth Project's work:

- #Mentoring
- #YouthLeadership
- #Partnership
- #Faith
- #YouthLeadership
- #Families



# UNITY GYM

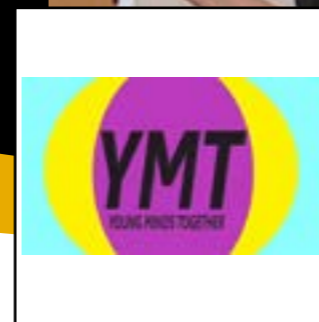


Our specialist partners in Sheffield are so much more than a city-centre gym. Transforming lives - one rep at a time.

Saeed Brasab, Project Founder, Unity Gym: *"We offer them a space where they feel a sense of belonging, but more importantly identify their abilities and offer support in a way that's consistent and gives them hope."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

# YOUNG MINDS TOGETHER



Self-expression and social cohesion are the buzz words at Young Minds Together in Rotherham where girls from local ethnically diverse communities enjoy dance, acting, singing and poetry.

Young Minds Together founder Sithule Mguni: *"Our young people are mainly of African heritage. When they come to us they feel like they don't belong. They want a place where they feel welcome and part of a majority. That's what we can provide."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### Read more about Young Minds Together's work:

#Mentoring  
#Partnership

#FemaleEmpowerment

#RoleModels





Zest is an award-winning community enterprise delivering high quality, responsive services to local people, tackling local inequalities and improving wellbeing.

Lloyd Samuels, former Youth Coordinator, Zest:  
*"What we see coming through the door is young people who have got issues not of their own making but of the environment where they're from... So sport is massive for us. It's a major part of our mental health and wellbeing programmes."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Sport Birmingham is the lead Strategic Partner for the West Midlands. We work with them to oversee and coordinate our partners' activity across the West Midlands.

Tom McIntosh, Operations Director, Sport Birmingham

*"We believe the power of sport and physical activity has the potential to improve young people's lives and wider social outcomes, and support the reduction of the number of children and young people entering the criminal justice system from diverse communities"*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

**Read more about Zest's work:**

[#Investment](#)
[#PandemicRecovery](#)

**Read more about Sport Birmingham's work:**

[#RegionalEvent](#)
[#NationalEvent](#)
[#Mentoring](#)  
[#FemaleEmpowerment](#)
[#Safeguarding](#)



# ACTIVE BLACK COUNTRY



Active Black Country is one of the Strategic Partners in the West Midlands. We work with them to oversee and coordinate our partners' activity in Wolverhampton, which includes InPower Academy, NPV Football Academy and Wolverhampton Wrestling Club.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

# APTITUDE



NATIONAL YOUNG COHORT  
2022

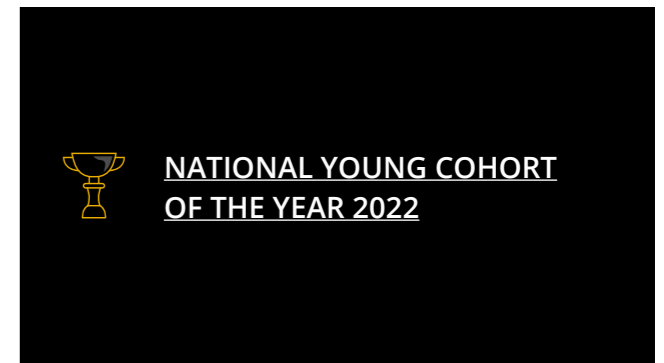


Aptitude gives children in the Radford area of Coventry a 'safe space' where they can engage in positive, life-changing projects, be empowered, improve their lifestyles and wellbeing and focus on a brighter future.

Tara Foster, Founder, Aptitude Youth:

*"It's much more than just playing pool and table tennis!"*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



### Read more about Aptitude's work:

#Training  
#Mentoring

#YouthLeadership  
#Partnership

#RoleModels  
#Investment



NATIONAL YOUNG PERSON AND ROLE MODEL WINNERS

# INPOWER ACADEMY



2022



Changing mindsets and building resilience are the cornerstones of the InPower Academy in Wolverhampton, which uses martial arts to engage children who are at risk of entering, or already involved with, the Youth Justice System.

Daryl Chambers, Founder, InPower Academy:

*"All us coaches, me included, have been through stuff, and there will be things in these young people's lives that come out of nowhere and hit them hard too. In our first session, we'll say: 'Imagine having the inner strength to know that no matter what happens, you can deal with it.'"*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



**REGIONAL YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR 2023**



**REGIONAL ROLE MODEL OF THE YEAR 2023**



**NATIONAL YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR 2022**



**REGIONAL YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR 2022**



**NATIONAL ROLE MODEL OF THE YEAR 2022**

### Read more about InPower Academy's work:

- #Training
- #Mentoring
- #FemaleEmpowerment
- #RoleModels
- #YouthLeadership
- #SportForDevelopment

NATIONAL SPECIALIST PARTNER WINNER

# NPV FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT



2022



NPV's approach mainly centres on intervention – engaging players as young as four before they can be nefariously influenced by older peers, but also unifying parents who are often affected by gang activity themselves.

Joe Jackson, Founder, NPV:

*"We give people skills, abilities, resilience and sense of unity as a 'family', using the tool of football."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



**NATIONAL SPECIALIST PARTNER OF THE YEAR 2022**

### Read more about NPV's work:

- #RoleModels
- #YouthLeadership
- #Partnership
- #Safeguarding
- #Families
- #Faith



# PAT BENSON BOXING ACADEMY



Pat Benson Boxing Academy runs projects with schools, alternative provisions, community groups and individuals to support participants on a journey to achieve their goals inside and outside the ring.

Paddy Benson, Manager, Pat Benson Boxing Academy:  
*"We have a technique, steeped in the boxing culture, of teasing things out. It's very much, 'Great to have you, you're now part of the family, now let's get on with the session.'"*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

## Read more about Pat Benson Boxing Academy's work:

[#Training](#)                      [#Mentoring](#)

# POSITIVE YOUTH FOUNDATION



Positive Youth Foundation run a series of programmes designed around the specific needs of each individual and the communities they serve. Sport plays a huge part as a tool to engage and connect with each young person, as well as music, dance, film-making, fashion, photography and volunteering programmes.

Cormac Whelan, former Programme Manager:  
*"We know that crime and violence are an end product. There's a lot of things along the way that have got young people to that stage. Our aim is to try to challenge and support those factors early on in the process."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

## Read more about Positive Youth Foundation's work:

[#Mentoring](#)                      [#RoleModels](#)                      [#Partnership](#)  
[#Investment](#)                      [#PandemicRecovery](#)                      [#Safeguarding](#)





# SALE SHARKS FOUNDATION



Sale Sharks Foundation ran a project to engage and support young people inside HMO YO1 Werrington and post-release through sport and physical activity.

Des Howlett, Sharks' Education Manager

*"The programme is based around life skills and rugby and gives young people a sense of motivation, purpose, self-esteem and self-worth. This will help them achieve their aspirations once they leave prison, which we'll support by connecting them into our rugby network, giving them opportunities and a sense of family and community."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

# SKY BLUES IN THE COMMUNITY



Sky Blues in the Community run sporting programmes, many of which involve close links with local police and Violence Reduction Units, helping to identify and reach those most in need, breaking down barriers and building trusting relationships.

Craig White, Inclusion Manager, Sky Blues in the Community:

*"Once you've got the right mix – sessions, matches, tournaments, work placements, role models, peer mentoring, showing a genuine interest in their wellbeing – then those conversations really open up and we can offer a great level of support."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Read more about Sale Sharks Foundation's work:

[#Investment](#)

[#SecureEstate](#)



# SPORT 4 LIFE



Sport 4 Life use sport as a 'hook' to engage young people in Birmingham and guide them towards sustained education, employment or training.

Last year, 79% of their beneficiaries were from ethnically diverse backgrounds and 15-20% have an offending history.

Rob Wells, Sport 4 Life's Head of Business Development:

*"Our work is about identifying each individual's barriers and working on their specific needs, whether that's qualifications, introducing them to employers, working on their CVs or simply building confidence."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

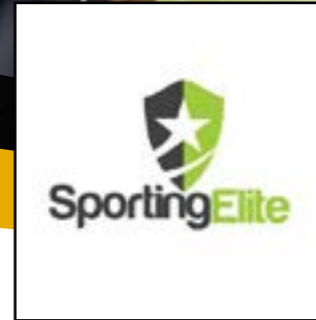
### Read more about Sport 4 Life's work:

- #Mentoring
- #Investment
- #MonitoringAndEvaluation
- #FemaleEmpowerment
- #PandemicRecovery
- #RoleModels
- #SportForDevelopment

# NATIONAL ORGANISATION

2023

# SPORTING ELITE



Every Friday night in inner-city Birmingham, up to 90 young males aged 14-19 gather to play football. Sporting Elite's staff chat, mentor and support the players in numerous ways.

Seb Hamilton, Founder, Sporting Elite:

*"On Friday nights, we have a referee and a coach on the sidelines talking to the young men about how their weeks have gone. Those are the best conversations you can have. It's very hard to capture their impact and put it into a report, but it's real, not forced. These conversations make a difference."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### Read more about Sporting Elite's work:

- #Mentoring
- #SportForDevelopment
- #Partnership
- #MentalHealth
- #Investment

 **2023 NATIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR**

 **2023 REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR**



# SPORTS KEY



Sports Key use sport as a 'magnet' to attract people from their largely disadvantaged but hugely diverse local community, helping to make it more active, healthy and cohesive.

Jeavon Nicely, Co-Founder, Sports Key:

*"We deliberately make our organisation very community-led. We have that local audience on the frontline as volunteers and leaders, so they're very visible when people come in through the door."*

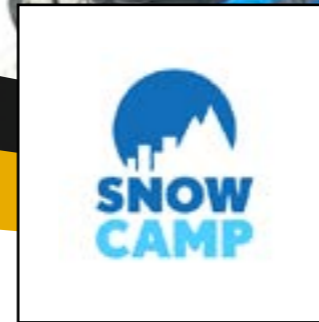
[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Read more about Sports Key's work:

[#PandemicRecovery](#)

[#SportForDevelopment](#)

# SNOW CAMP



Snow Camp takes participants from youth projects and service providers on a journey of personal development using snow sports as a vehicle.

Cormac Whelan, former Programme Director, Snow Camp:

*"We try to make the whole project youth-led. Young people are perfect leaders for their peers as they understand the journey they've been on and are happy to see them leading a session on the slope."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Read more about Snow Camp's work:

[#MentalHealth](#)



# WARWICKSHIRE CRICKET BOARD



Warwickshire CB's ACE Programme aims to reignite the cricketing passion of the Afro Caribbean community, which has seen a huge drop-off in participation over the last few decades.

Eaton Gordon, Cricket Development Manager (Community), Warwickshire Cricket Board:

*"We have the ability to make a change and we are starting this programme with a blank sheet of paper. We intend to break down any barriers that may have affected ethnically diverse children's participation in the game."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

# WOLVERHAMPTON WRESTLING CLUB



Based in an inner-city Sikh Gurdwara, the club is one of the most multicultural sporting environments in the country. Everyone is welcomed - and its impact is incredible.

Ranjit Singh, Project Manager, Wolverhampton Wrestling Club:

*"One group we worked with were very rowdy to begin with, but we gave them so much discipline, direction and belief. The change in their attitudes was amazing. We showed them the effort we were prepared to invest in them, and we got their commitment back in return."*

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

### Read more about Wolverhampton Wrestling Club's work:

- [#Mentoring](#)
- [#YouthLeadership](#)
- [#Faith](#)
- [#FemaleEmpowerment](#)
- [#Neurodiversity](#)
- [#RoleModels](#)
- [#MentalHealth](#)



## VIDEO CASE STUDIES

### GWENT



### LONDON



### SOUTH YORKSHIRE



### WEST MIDLANDS







[levellingtheplayingfield.org](http://levellingtheplayingfield.org)



**#TogetherWeDid**