

Community Sports Coach Scheme Case Study

Case study profile

This case study focuses on the impact of holiday activity programmes delivered by Community Sports Coaches (CSCs) on the Malabar Estate in Truro, Cornwall. The 'Sports Week' programme was established in response to an identified need for activities for young people in an area of high deprivation where incidences of anti-social behaviour were increasing.

Area

Cornwall

Project description and background

The Malabar Estate is the largest housing estate in Carrick District, comprising approximately 600 properties and is one of the most deprived areas in Cornwall and the South West.

With rising levels of anti-social behaviour on the Estate, New Beginnings, the recently established Malabar Estate Tenants and Residents Association, the Community Beat Officer and Carrick Housing met to discuss how best to tackle this problem. The main reason for increased anti-social behaviour was considered to be the lack of facilities and activities for young people. There were no community recreation facilities, indoor or outdoor, suitable for 9 to 16 year olds and only one small play area for younger age groups, which was frequently littered with needles and posed a significant health and safety issue.

It was noted that there were a range of facilities at Treyew Primary School situated at the centre of the Estate - an indoor hall, hard courts and playing fields. Following subsequent discussions with the Headteacher, it was agreed that a holiday activity programme run at the school would address the identified need to provide young people with something to do in their spare time. It was considered essential that facilities and activities were within walking distance of the Estate as transport was a major issue – both in terms of poor public transport links to and from the Estate and the cost of public transport.

The six Community Sports Coaches (CSCs) employed by Cornwall Sports Partnership offered a team of high quality, experienced, full-time professional coaches to assist with delivery of the holiday activity programme. The involvement of the CSCs was facilitated by strong links between Carrick Leisure and Cornwall Sports Partnership as well as the fact that one of the CSCs had already delivered curricular coaching sessions at Treyew Primary School.

Carrick Housing provided funding for the pilot 'Sports Week' half term holiday programme in May 2004, offering young people the opportunity to take part and receive coaching in a variety of different sports such as touch rugby, basketball and rounders. All coaching sessions were run by the CSCs. Two subsequent holiday programmes have also taken place in August 2004 and

"I love sport and love Cornwall. I want to see Cornwall and kids progress and play sport."

CSC

April 2005. Although Carrick Housing funded the programme in August 2004, New Beginnings, the Malabar Estate Tenant and Residents Association, funded the programme directly in April 2005.

The overall aim of 'Sports Week' was to promote a sustainable activity programme that will *"empower tenants and increase community involvement"*, by helping the young people of the Estate to interact with their peers and adults and giving them something to do. For many of the young people on the Estate, it is a rare opportunity to experience and benefit from high quality coaching and to participate in formal sport. With a formal constitution in place, New Beginnings will be able to apply for grant funding to continue delivery of the 'Sports Week' programme and other schemes.

Key achievements

The 'Sports Week' programme delivered by CSCs has proven highly successful. There has been very positive feedback from all involved and the holiday programmes have made a significant impact:

"It was great, kids went from watching to playing They wanted to be there rather than had to be there."

CSC

- there were a total of 40 children taking part in each session in April 2005, a mix of boys and girls ranging from 9 to 15 years, with the most common age group participating being 11 to 13 years
- during 'Sports Week' there have been no complaints of anti-social behaviour, whereas typically it was noted that incidences would increase during half term and holiday periods
- there has generally been a gradual increase in numbers attending 'Sports Week' and young people have been keen to start and be involved – not only have children come back on a daily basis, they have brought friends with them and have turned up earlier and stayed later
- some children have attended all three 'Sports Week' programmes that have been run to-date
- attendance at 'Sports Week' has been beneficial for social development as well as sporting development by encouraging integration, shifting social groups and re-educating young people's behaviour – the children have visibly "learnt social values through sport" during the week. For example, the CSCs witnessed a change in attitudes throughout the week, with children who would not initially engage in the session becoming increasingly interested and involved. In addition, CSCs noted positive changes in behaviour, such as adhering to sporting rules and learning to accept winning and losing without a fight.
- the programme has achieved the aim of engaging with the local community on the Estate. For example, having met the Tenant Participation Officer (Carrick Housing) at the most recent 'Sports Week' programme (April 2005), a group of local skaters approached him to ask how they could get involved with New Beginnings.
- following 'Sports Week', a number of children have asked how to join local clubs to continue their participation in particular sports

"It is important to build up relationships with kids to help make a sustainable community."

Tenant Participation Officer, Carrick Housing

"The CSCs buzz with enthusiasm, they love what they do."

Cornwall Sports Partnership Manager

- the programme has raised the profile of New Beginnings across the Estate and the association is looking at ways to introduce new sports and clubs
- the success of 'Sports Week' has demonstrated a proven need and a strong case for provision of enhanced community recreation facilities – with Treyew Primary School recently relocated to an adjacent site, the potential for development of the old school building into a community centre has been identified
- there are proposals to deliver holiday activity programmes in other areas, such as the Trelader Estate, Truro – a direct result of the success of the programmes at the Malabar Estate which is being used as a model of good practice.

Key success factors

"It's important that they (the CSCs) are properly educated on how to deal with issues, and the need to be flexible and creative."

sports coach UK CDO, Cornwall

A number of factors were highlighted as contributing towards the success of the 'Sports Week' programme. These are detailed below:

Strength of the skills and experience offered by the CSCs

Coaching delivery to facilitate 'sport for all' in a community setting is very different from meeting National Curriculum requirements in a school environment as there is a greater need for flexible delivery and techniques to engage participants. This emphasises the value of CSCs as a team of professional qualified coaches trained on the principles of 'how to coach' as well as 'what to coach'. The sports coach UK Coach Development Officer (CDO) has helped the CSCs develop Personal Development Plans (PDPs) to ensure that, by addressing priority training needs, they all have the appropriate skills and the *"ability to adapt in any environment."*

The CSCs have delivered high quality sports specific coaching during the 'Sports Week' programmes and have shown strong communication skills. They have engaged with the young people by finding out what they have liked and disliked and giving each attendee an opportunity to have their say. This has enabled the CSCs to provide appropriate activities by responding to what is most popular and working well. It has also helped them to develop trust and build confidence by providing reinforcement that the young people's opinions are respected and valued. The young people reportedly looked up to the CSCs as role models and almost immediately gave them a level of respect sometimes not afforded to teachers.

Continuity and progression from curriculum coaching sessions

The 'Sports Week' scheme has built on programmes already delivered by one of the CSCs in curricular time at Treyew Primary School. This helped to attract high attendance at the pilot holiday programme due to the fact that the pupils had an established relationship with one of the CSCs and had enjoyed the sessions they had taken part in previously.

Low children to coach ratio

Due to the behavioural difficulties and demanding nature of the young people attending the 'Sports Week' sessions, the CSCs maintained a ratio of approximately six children to one coach. This approach ensured that they

"The kids look up to coaches as mini icons."

Tenant Participation Officer, Carrick Housing

"The best thing about being a CSC is to see a kid get it and the light go on."

CSC

were able to closely manage group dynamics (by age, ability, family groups, etc), identify potential cliques and give each member of the group a high level of attention. Social development was visibly apparent over the course of the week with for example increased mixing between groups.

Good relationship between all key partners

The strength of the relationship between Treyew Primary School, New Beginnings, Carrick Housing and Cornwall Sports Partnership has contributed greatly to the successful establishment of the 'Sports Week' initiative and its continued growth.

"It's important to get to know all around you and as a CSC it is important to sell yourself and explain what a CSC does."

Treyew Primary School has provided the venue for the holiday programme and the Headteacher recognises the value of the school site *"in the heart of the Estate and as a resource for the community."* It is hoped that if young people start to use the school facilities they will develop pride and respect for the site.

CSC

In addition, the Community Beat Officer has been an integral part of the project, which has helped to raise his profile and provided him with an opportunity to interact with young people in a different environment and on a different level.

Session structure

For children exhibiting a low attention span and undeveloped social skills, it is important to use fast paced activities to ensure that they are constantly moving and have limited opportunities to become distracted. Once the participants are engaged, the CSCs were then able to slowly introduce rules and parameters to each game. This approach resulted in a shift in emphasis from challenging 'why' questions from the group to 'can', 'if' and 'how' questions. CSCs also sought to build trust with identified 'leaders' and strong characters in the group. The intention was for the CSCs to engage these key individuals in the session so they would in turn positively influence others.

"It's (the job) not what I expected it or wanted it to be, it's better. I would recommend it, it's fantastic."

CSC

Lessons learnt

Although the 'Sports Week' programme is still in its relative infancy, a number of lessons have been learnt through the three courses delivered by CSCs to-date.

It's a very good scheme that's delivering but it needs to be sustainable it would be such a shame if momentum is lost."

Cornwall Sports Partnership Manager

- the programme was run over five mornings and the timings of the sessions were amended slightly between the May 2004 and August 2004 scheme, being changed from a 9.00am to an 11.00am start since this was thought to encourage better levels of attendance
- there is believed to be scope to better publicise the holiday programmes within Treyew Primary School through posters, letters to parents etc to attract increased numbers of participants
- Carrick Housing provided funding for the first two holiday programmes but it was considered important that New Beginnings take over responsibility for project funding from April 2005 onwards to ensure longer-term scheme sustainability

- developing links and overlaps with clubs and other agencies is also considered vital in ensuring sustainability for the programme.

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