

## Community Sports Coach Scheme Case Study

### Case study profile

This case study focuses on the impact of multi-skills coaching delivery, particularly by Community Sports Coaches (CSCs) in primary schools within the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP). CSCs have been instrumental in the delivery of a range of linked programmes, including the DASH programme (Do Activity Stay Healthy).

### Area

Somerset

### Project description

The Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) set up a pilot project in April 2003 to provide multi-skills curriculum sport within primary schools across the County. The main objectives of the project included:

- supporting teachers with delivery of the curriculum
- supporting NGB Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) models using the multi skills approach
- developing school club links.

The need for such an approach was identified through the LTAD philosophy, which suggests that young people need to establish basic movement literacy skills and be given the opportunity to experience a wider range of sports at an early age.

SASP reviewed each of the five stages of the LTAD model, particularly the FUNDamentals stage, to determine what was happening within schools and sports clubs, both locally and nationally, at each stage. This research also informed how best to promote LTAD principles, in order to engage people in physical activity and have the greatest impact on increasing community participation. The contribution towards the targets set out in Sport England's Framework for Sport relating to increased participation and wider agendas of health and cultural change were also highlighted. Hence, the opportunity was identified to develop curricular multi-skills coaching in schools.

The Active Communities Manager at SASP described the project's vision:

*“to deliver multi-skills at all stages of the player pathway, specifically focusing on facilitating the transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3... also targeting pupils at Key Stage 1 so that they have the skills to lose the ‘can’t catch won’t play’ mentality”*

In order to effectively deliver multi-skills coaching in schools, SASP identified a need for the employment of full-time coaches. This was because many voluntary coaches have to combine coaching with employment, which restricts their capacity to deliver quality coaching during curricular time. Since the

*“multi-skills is vital... you can deliver across the complete spectrum from reception to high performance players... it’s the core skills of speed, balance and agility”.*

**Senior CSC**

*“multi-skills brings alive the theory, you see long term athlete development happening”.*

**Senior CSC**

*“multi-skills opened my eyes and made me look at practices in new ways”.*

**Senior CSC**

*“it’s a job from heaven... it’s all the nice bits of teaching and what I love doing, all rolled in to one”.*

**Senior CSC**

*“it’s a dream come true. I can’t believe what I was doing as a volunteer is now a full-time job”.*

**Senior CSC**

establishment of the pilot in 2003, the number of CSCs has increased from 3 to over 50, including 17 full-time and 35 part-time positions.

All CSCs have been recruited in line with SASP’s Coach Minimum Operating Standards (MOS) and have received appropriate coach education, support and training. All CSCs have a predominantly multi-skills focus in their delivery combined with a sports specialism, including basketball, athletics and hockey.

Multi-skills coaching delivery is seen as invaluable by CSCs, not just because of its impact in schools but also for CSCs own continuous professional development (CPD). It provides CSCs with variety to their daily role and transferable skills that can be developed at all stages of the player pathway. For example, one CSC commented how initially she had been slightly sceptical of multi-skills, as she wanted to be an athletics coach rather than a multi-skills coach. However, she now acknowledges that it is not just sport specific knowledge that makes a good coach but overall coaching skills, which has provided a greater understanding of the player pathway and the LTAD model.

### **Key achievements**

The multi-skill coaching programme has proven highly successful. There has been positive feedback from all involved and as a result, the project has been expanded and additional funding secured. CSCs have worked with a range of partners within the Tone SSP to deliver a multi-skills coaching programmes including:

- Specialist Primary Link Teacher Tone Project
- establishment of multi-skill clubs
- links to the Gifted and Talented programme.

### **Specialist Primary Link Teacher (SPLT) Tone Project**

Senior CSCs have visited all 46 primary schools within the Tone SSP, teaching lessons and providing high quality PE in curriculum areas of multi-skills and gymnastics, key target areas identified through the School Sports Coordinator audit. Each CSC tailors their programme of coaching delivery to meet the individual needs of the school.

Visits take place on a rolling programme. In week one, the CSC teaches 4-8 lessons within a school; class teachers shadow these lessons and lesson plans are left for the class teacher for weeks two and three. The CSC returns to deliver lessons in weeks four, seven and ten and provides further mentoring and upskilling for class teachers. These four full day visits provide primary school staff and pupils with high quality coaching material, to be delivered across a 12 week term.

This project was reported to have been very well received within the Tone SSP:

*“the feedback from all schools, PLTs and headteachers has been overwhelming. Primary staff who have had limited specialist PE training at college have become more motivated, with increased knowledge and confidence. PE is becoming more high profile.”*

### **Multi-skills clubs**

*“it’s fantastic, a massive area... you can invent games, drills and exercises and relate back to how it fits the sport”*

#### **Senior CSC**

As a result of the CSCs delivering the multi-skills programme in schools or linked feeder schools in the Tone SSP area, a number of multi-skills clubs have been established at all seven secondary schools. These multi-skills clubs run at lunchtime or after school and are led by either CSCs or teachers and attended by primary school pupils. Based at secondary school sites, these clubs are seen as key to facilitating the transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 by introducing children of Key Stage 2 age to a secondary school site before the new school year.

Initial feedback has been very positive with several primary schools indicating support for the programme. Pupils from these clubs attended the multi-skills festival at Millfield held in summer 2005. This festival, organised by SASP and delivered by CSCs, involved over 900 children over one weekend.

### **Summary of CSC impact within Tone SSP**

In summary, the recruitment of and use of CSCs within the Tone SSP has resulted in the following:

- multi-skills delivery in 43 primary schools within Tone SSP and 240 schools across Somerset. Of these, over 30% were reported to want further CSC coaching
- 17 multi-skills after school clubs have been used to effectively bridge the gap between transition stages Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3
- multi-skills coaching has helped all pupils to develop and increase their self esteem and confidence, providing a positive experience of sport and activity
- the use of CSCs to work with and develop teachers has helped to support National Curriculum PE, as well as whole school improvement. Feedback through the PDM for Tone SSP, has highlighted that headteachers have seen how *“developing gross and fine motor skill linked to increased self-confidence has had a knock on effect across the school”* and for many pupils has impacted across the whole school curriculum
- teachers have changed their perceptions of what can be achieved through PE and multi-skills coaching activity. CSCs have provided upskilling opportunities for teachers through watching and learning from CSC coaching delivery. This is not only providing primary school staff with the skills and techniques, but also the confidence to deliver, thereby contributing to the long term sustainability
- the provision of templates and high quality lesson plans have ‘empowered’ staff. Support/reference documents continue to be used to facilitate ideas for coaching delivery
- the impact of the CSCs work on schools has been such that the majority of Tone SSP schools are using Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) funding to buy in further CSC coaching support.

*“feedback from all schools, PLTs and headteachers has been overwhelming”*

#### **PDM, Tone SSP**

## **DASH programme**

In addition to programmes within the Tone SSP area, multi-skills coaching has formed an integral part of the Do Activity Stay Healthy (DASH) programme delivered across Somerset, part funded by the Children's Fund.

The DASH programme has been developed by SASP and Somerset Coast Primary Care Trust. The aim of DASH is for:

*“the school and family to work together through physical activity and health education to provide a good platform for those children with weight issues or potential issues in the primary school system to manage their weight”.*

The concept has evolved from multi-skills coaching principles, focusing on improving the coordination and FUNdamental skills of overweight children aged between five and nine. Tracy Milton, a part-time CSC within SASP, developed the programme building on her previous multi-skills work in primary schools in West Somerset.

The project was piloted in Dunster First School, West Somerset in February 2004 and has already proved to be an effective method of providing support for children with weight issues.

The scheme also aims to involve the whole family in encouraging a lifestyle change and essentially consists of early morning sessions to increase their physical activity as well as looking at dietary improvements. Children attending the sessions are encouraged to bring a friend to detract from a 'fat club' stigma.

The CSC delivers three early morning exercise sessions each week (7am until 8am), each lasting at least 40 minutes. In addition, she carries out one health education session of 10-15 minutes each week. The exercise sessions cover different aerobic activities including Fun Circuits, Aerobics, multi-skills sessions, Aquafit and walks.

The DASH scheme has been rolled out to a further three schools in West Somerset - St Michael's First School and Minehead Middle School (both introduced in January 2005) and Wiveliscombe School (introduced in February 2005). A total of 71 pupils have benefited from the scheme to date.

Systems have been put in place to monitor the progress of DASH attendees through tests every six weeks, pre and six weekly questionnaires, parental feedback and an end of year evaluation report. Results have indicated the following:

- all of the 71 children tested after six weeks, had improved levels of fitness
- all participants exercise frequency had improved
- 55% identified that the whole family were more physically active, more often
- 31% had increased from no activity to two to three times a week

- 24% had increased their activity from once a week to two to three times a week
- feedback from Dunster School highlighted increased self esteem by those attending the DASH programme
- DASH will be rolled out to another 8 to 15 schools in September 2005. The focus will not just be on children with weight issues but also on children with behavioural issues.

Involving families through arranging home visit meetings has been a key factor in the successful delivery of the programme. This has helped to get the support and 'buy in' from parents, which is essential if the health benefits and good practices introduced by the DASH scheme are to be sustainable. In addition, including friendship groups within the activity sessions was also considered key to the success of the scheme.

*"kids enjoy having a younger person delivering, it's invigorating and enthusing and has a positive knock on effect"*

### **Key success factors**

A number of factors were highlighted as contributing towards the successful impact of the multi-skills project in Somerset:

#### **Quality delivery**

Feedback received from the Tone SSP and SSCo/Step in To Sport Manager highlighted that the high quality coaching delivered by CSCs has been fundamental in ensuring coaching sessions are enjoyed and valued by young people.

The development of CSCs - through support for their own continuous professional development (CPD) has also been key. The sports coach UK Coach Development Officer (CDO), has provided support for CSCs through training and coach education to ensure they have the appropriate skills to deliver high quality coaching.

Minimum Operating Standards are in place and the CDO ensures that all CSCs undertake Training Needs Analysis (TNAs) and develop Personal Development Plans (PDPs) to ensure that, by addressing priority training needs, they have the appropriate skills and are "fit for purpose", a factor particularly pertinent when working in primary schools.

**SSCo and Step in To Sport Coordinator**

*"there will be a much greater impact and a much greater influence if time is spent on coach education"*

**sports coach UK CDO, Somerset**

#### **Senior CSC**

The fact that the CDO is based within the Partnership and therefore has the opportunity to liaise with coaches on both an informal and formal basis was considered a particular benefit.

In addition, CSCs can access further support through mentoring and work shadowing. CSCs are buddied up according to individual strengths and weaknesses. This process supports coach development by not just providing practical coaching support but a focus on 'horizontal' areas of development, in line with 'how to coach' not 'what to coach' principles.

CSCs are also supported through SASP training days, which take place approximately ten times a year to address training needs.

*"it's (TNAs and PDPs) a useful process because you look back and re-focus"*

**Senior CSC**

High quality coaching was also seen as key to the success of the DASH scheme. Multi-skills coaching delivery by CSCs has helped children who currently lack the skills to enjoy sport, learn and master the fundamentals and core skills. This has meant that these children then have a more positive experience and will subsequently enjoy and participate more in physical activity.

***Team and partnership working***

The success of SASP and the multi-skills coaching programme has also been attributed to a positive team ethic. There is a high level of both formal and informal communication within SASP, with all CSCs working together and supporting each other.

SASP has a clear management structure, strong leadership and good support systems. The vision of the SASP Manager, is considered key to success, in terms of his leadership and credibility. The positive team ethic has also been attributed to successful recruitment of staff:

*“The SASP Manager is a genius at bringing people together to marry up individual skills. He picks out strengths of individuals and is always involved and informed.”*

***Active Communities Manager, SASP***

There is a strong partnership network in Somerset, including all three School Sport Partnerships (SSPs), the Primary Care Trust (PCT), Somerset Healthy Schools and sports coach UK. Good communication and support between partners is seen as a major factor contributing to the success of the CSC scheme, with all partners driving towards the same ultimate aims and outcomes. A strong partnership with the PCT and local schools has been key to the success of the DASH programme. The CSC had established good relationships with the schools through her CSC multi-skill delivery in West Somerset and previous work with the Somerset Coast PCT, which have been developed further through DASH involvement.

### ***Cascade training in schools***

The CSC multi-skill coaching programme has played a valuable role in upskilling primary school teachers to enhance their knowledge of coaching, as well as their confidence to deliver coaching sessions to young people. For many teachers, the extent of their previous training will have been just four hours of PE training within their PGCE course. The CSC interventions have added to this considerably.

This upskilling has increased the number of pupils receiving multi-skills coaching, contributing to the longer term sustainability of school PE.

The CSC is looking to implement a similar cascade training approach within four schools where DASH is in operation. The aim is to gain increased involvement from teachers and classroom helpers. Through upskilling and coach education, teachers will be better equipped with the appropriate skills to continue to run the DASH scheme and enhance its long term sustainability.

### **Lessons learnt**

Despite progress to date, there are concerns within SASP about the future sustainability of coaching activity. Funding through the CSCS is coming to an end and individual NGBs may also be reducing their funding grants, although this will be determined as NGB One Stop Plans develop. SASP is therefore looking at future funding options across the wider agenda ie education, health, community safety, adult learning etc.

A key lesson learnt is that multi-skills principles are generic and can be transferred. SASP are looking to use the multi-skills approach to access new funding streams, for example, via the Primary Care Trust. DASH is currently part funded through the Children's Fund and SASP is looking for individual school's to contribute in recognition of the scheme's benefits.

There are also further ideas for development around using multi-skill coaching principles to deliver workshops on adult numeracy and literacy through physical activity.

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