



Implementation Resource

Sports Programmes





Sports Programmes

This sports implementation resource is designed to inform thinking on how to commission and implement quality sports programmes targeted at reducing the risk of involvement in violence for children and young people. The resources should be used alongside existing [YEF toolkit](#) evidence and local knowledge to effectively meet the needs of children and young people. This resource includes five sections:

This resource is designed to inform thinking on how to commission and implement quality Sports programmes. It provides:

- 1 Commissioners' checklist
- 2 Guidance resources
- 3 Practice examples with evaluations
- 4 Monitoring and evaluation
- 5 Theory of Change examples



1. Commissioners Checklist

This has been developed from findings of UK-based process evaluations included in the YEF Sports Programmes Toolkit [Technical Report](#). The findings are based on voluntary participation in sports activities. Activities may also be designed to build pro-social behaviours in young people. This doesn't include "sports plus" models in which sports participation is a platform for an additional intervention, such as providing access to services, education support, or mentoring. It is important that local context and the needs of the target cohort are considered when developing programmes.

Programme design

- ✓ Provide a variety of sports to appeal to different interests and needs.
- ✓ Identify which sports children are interested in prior to referral and match needs of children to the programme. Take-up rates are higher when children have expressed an interest in the activity rather than just being referred.
- ✓ Ensure identity-based factors are considered during design and delivery to reach groups underrepresented in sport (for example, young women and girls, LGBTQ+, Muslim girls, disabled children).
 - For example, adjust session times for girls to ensure the session ends before dark, ensure sessions don't overlap with iftar during Ramadan, make sure the venue has accessible toilets.
- ✓ Create multi-agency partnerships and include a plan for post-programme activities to maintain programme benefits. This may include continued participation in sports activities but could also involve help with engagement of services, for example youth justice, social services, education, employment, and housing.
- ✓ Include rewards, recognition, and incentives to maintain engagement. This could include celebrating successes, paid-for training courses, access to fitness centers, and coaching programmes for accreditations.
- ✓ Avoid cash incentives as they may create the wrong motivation for children.
- ✓ Provide consistency of activity. Programmes are typically delivered over 12-24 weeks but some are longer.



Programme delivery

- ✓ Prioritise delivering sports programmes in underserved areas where there is typically much less provision of sports and other positive activities than in more affluent areas.
- ✓ Deliver sessions at times when children are most at risk of involvement in violence. This tends to be 4–8pm on weekdays after school has finished.
- ✓ Align delivery with wider commitments of children, including school exams, key term dates, and whether the child is engaged and attending school.
- ✓ The venue should be a place children can easily access, and are happy to attend, it should include indoor and outdoor sporting facilities.
- ✓ Provide transport to the venue where necessary.

Staff

- ✓ Ensure staff have soft skills and can develop a good relationship with the child, which acts as the basis for developing trust and respect.
- ✓ Staff should have previous experience delivering to children and young people at risk of violence, can understand and respond to needs.
- ✓ Staff should take a child-first approach and focus on supporting the child's development, as opposed to seeing the child as a player or athlete.
- ✓ Focus on retention and ensure adequate numbers of staff to provide consistency of staff and support trusting relationships to develop.
- ✓ Provide appropriate training to staff, the level of training should match the experience and expertise of the staff. This could cover:
 - Safeguarding, which may include complex safeguarding, contextual safeguarding, understanding of adverse childhood experiences, and trauma informed practice.
 - Information about the children
 - Knowledge of local services available to children
 - Communication and listening skills
 - Rules, goals and expectations
 - Relationship development



2. Guidance Resources

Here we provide links to existing external documents that may provide helpful guidance on how to design, set up, deliver, and monitor Sports programmes.

[Loughborough University and StreetGames: Theory of Change](#)

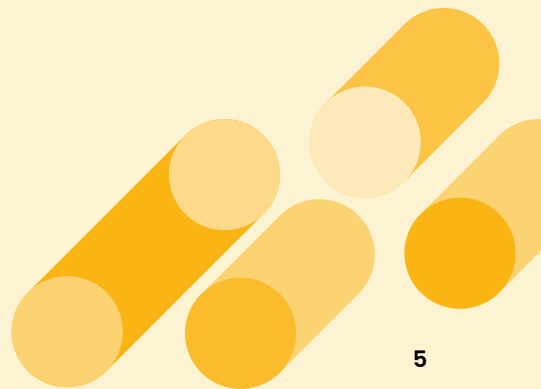
Loughborough University and StreetGames developed a Theory of Change in relation to using sport to enhance positive outcomes for young people in the context of serious violence. It outlines how and why sport can impact on enhancing positive outcomes for vulnerable young people within the context of youth offending and serious youth violence. In addition to the Theory of Change, this document includes information on matching the needs of the young person to the sports programme as an intervention, safeguarding and risk considerations, and designing and implementing sports-based programmes.

[Loughborough University and StreetGames: Referral pathways for sports interventions](#)

Loughborough University and StreetGames also produced guidance and a toolkit on how to put in place a referral pathway for sport interventions for young people at risk of or already involved in offending behaviour which includes serious violence.

[Sport England and UK Sport: Code for sports governance](#)

Sport England and UK Sport have developed a Code for Sports Governance. The Code sets out the levels of transparency, diversity and inclusion, accountability and integrity that are required from those organisations who seek – and are in receipt of – UK Government and National Lottery funding from Sport England and/or UK Sport. Many of the principles set out in the Code are widely accepted as being elements of good practice in corporate governance and can be found in most models of governance, both within and out of the sporting sector. This tool should therefore support sporting organisations to improve governance structures more generally.





3. Practice Examples

This section includes practice examples from YEF funded programmes. The examples include sports only and sports plus models.

Street Games, Towards Sports is a multi-site trial across 50 Delivery Partner Organisations (DPOs).

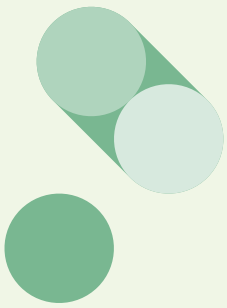
The DPOs are delivering sports sessions with a set of agreed core components to 10–17-year-olds. The programme is available on a weekly basis for 24 weeks, including group-based sessions fostering pro-social relationships with other young people.

Empire Fighting Chance combined physical activity sessions with one-to-one or group mentoring support focused on personal development points for young people.

Interventions varied from 12 to 20 weeks. The programme aimed to reduce anti-social and criminal behaviour amongst at risk young people.

Rugby Football League delivered the Educate Mentoring Programme, in a school setting over 12-weeks to young people with poor behaviour and attendance, and an interest in sport.

The programme aimed to improve children's wellbeing, resilience, social relationships and confidence, and lead to a long-term reduction in offending.



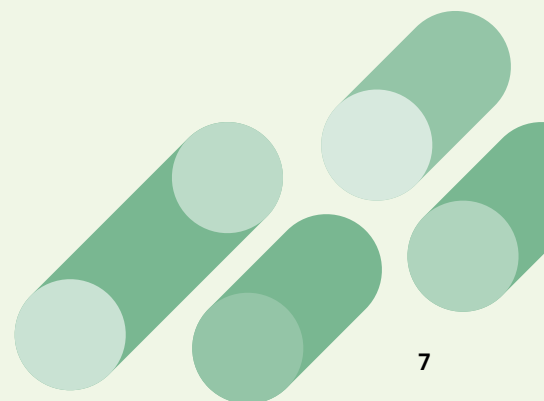
4. Monitoring And Evaluation Framework

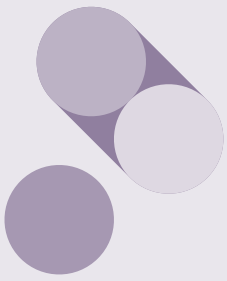
All violence prevention programmes should be supported by a monitoring and evaluation framework.

The [Sport England evaluation framework](#) is a legacy tool from Sport England's 2016–21 strategy. The evaluation framework aims to support the design and delivery of effective evaluation for sport and physical activity projects. It provides easy-to-follow guidance and resources that can be used or adapted alongside local tools to develop the right approach. The Framework is based on three phases - Design, Implementation, and Learning. Within these are six steps to help build measurement and evaluation into projects from the very start, and throughout.

The [Violence Prevention Evaluation Toolkit](#) provides guidance on:

- ♦ What evaluation is, why it's important and the different types of evaluations;
- ♦ Key steps to consider when developing an evaluation plan, collecting and analysing data, and reporting evaluation findings (including an accompanying checklist); and
- ♦ Examples of outcome indicators, measurements that can tell us whether an intervention is achieving its aimed outcomes.





5. Theory Of Change Examples

This section provides examples of theory of change for sports to get you started on designing or reviewing the theory of change that underpins your programme. The theory of change should illustrate how and why this programme will lead to reductions in children and young people involved in violence.

Sports Programmes YEF Toolkit technical report:

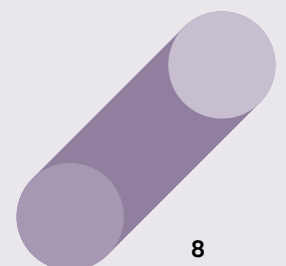
Page 10 of the toolkit technical report provides a theory of change for sports and sports plus programmes. .

Street Games: Theory of Change: Sport, youth offending and serious youth violence.

Page 6-7 of this report provides a theory of change example.

Alliance of Sports: Exploring the role of Sport for Development in the prevention and desistance from crime.

This report provides a theory of change example, which was co-designed by key stakeholders including individuals with lived experience. It was developed in response to the need to identify the role of sport in the prevention and desistance from crime.





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