

street  
games  
case study

43

**Report Subject:**  
**Co-operative StreetGames  
Young Volunteer Programme**

**Title:**  
**Everybody Sport and  
Recreation Volunteer  
Programme**



**Everybody Sport and Recreation  
Volunteer Programme**

*'Providing each volunteer with a safe, suitable and rewarding opportunity'*

The Everybody Sport and Recreation Volunteer Programme plays an integral role in the delivery and development of sport, play and leisure activities within Cheshire East. Providing volunteers with the platform to contribute, develop and excel.

**StreetGames Events, Residentials and  
Training**

The Everybody Sport & Recreation Volunteer Programme regularly accesses support from StreetGames including the Residential, Volunteer Conference, Volunteer Awards and the wider Social Action Fund (SAF) and Co-Operative StreetGames Young Volunteer (CSYV) offers. The Residential gives Volunteer Programme staff that are not in full time or paid positions the opportunity to attend and develop their skills.



The 3 day Residential that Everybody Sport & Recreation Volunteers attended at Brathay, Cumbria in 2013 gave volunteers the opportunity to take part in outdoor pursuits and activities aiming to improve teamwork, confidence, raise aspirations, give volunteers opportunities to build relationships with other projects around the country. Other training and CPD opportunities accessed through StreetGames by staff and volunteers in 2013 included workshops in mentoring volunteers and managing challenging behaviour, with a view to utilising further sports specific training through 2014.



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## Key Statistics

- 5242 volunteer hours were completed in 2013
- 91 new volunteers joined the Volunteer Programme in 2013
- 127 volunteers completed training through the Volunteer Programme in 2013
- 2 volunteers led on community projects in 2013

## How did it start?

The Everybody Sport & Recreation Volunteer Programme expanded from a small community scheme to a nationally recognised project within 36 months, beginning in 2007/2008 to support community programmes being delivered across Crewe and Nantwich. *'Parents wanted the opportunity to support and be involved in community sport sessions that their children were participating in, which was happening on an informal basis, therefore a need was established for a more structured formal volunteer programme.'* Volunteer Development Officer. To meet this need a policy was developed for the Volunteer Programme which including safeguarding, training, development and

recognition and volunteer pathways, exit routes for education and employment were also considered and the official Volunteer Programme was launched was in May 2008.

## Funding and Partners

The Volunteer Programme works with a number of key partners to ensure the strength, sustainability and continued growth of the programme. Examples include support from Everybody Sport & Recreation, Sport England and StreetGames, who offer support through their Social Action Fund (SAF) and Co-operative StreetGames Young Volunteers (CSYV) Programmes in areas such as training, education, employment and youth action. Employment opportunities within the Everybody Sport & Recreation Leisure Development Team occur on the back of successful placements on the Volunteer Programme, providing motivation and raising the aspirations of every volunteer that joins the programme.

Strategic partnerships are in place with numerous local Colleges and Universities, the strongest and most successful partnership being with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). The links at MMU are entwined within their academic programme structure. The Volunteer Programme - in partnership with MMU - provides the lead on measuring the soft outcomes of volunteering with the results generating invaluable knowledge and insight ensuring the programme continues to grow and strengthen year on year.

Other partners include a variety of organisations offering a plethora of volunteer opportunities giving volunteers a



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# Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

platform to exercise and develop their skills relevant to their interests. The volunteer model is now used by Childrens Centres, Community Clubs, Libraries and the Youth Support Service to name but a few.

## Who does the programme engage and how?

The Volunteer Programme engages and provides volunteer opportunities for anyone aged 14+ wanting 'to improve their skills or give something back to their local community.'

Historically the Volunteer Programme has engaged mostly students from high school, college or university, who wanted the opportunity to gain work experience, develop their skills and improve their employability within the sports sector.

On average 20-25 MMU students join the Volunteer programme across an academic year. With links with MMU firmly in place, the Volunteer Programme will look to pursue the relationships in place with Buxton, Chester and Staffordshire Universities to ensure it is at the forefront of the latest news within academia. Providing more opportunities for more students to gain experience within the industry - developing employability and opening potential career pathways.

Off the back of 2012 and delivering the highly publicised Olympic Torch Relay event through Cheshire East, the Volunteer Programme received an influx of a new generation of volunteers. '2012 had inspired people - not only the amount of people but also quality and range of



volunteers.' Volunteer Development Officer. This included a variety of different types of volunteers including:

- People in full time employment who want to support their local communities and local events
- Retired or more mature people who want to give something back and support their local community
- A continued steady flow of students and young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS)
- People who are not necessarily interested in sport and physical activity

## Training, Education and Employment

Partnerships have also been developed with Total People (an organisation that works with young people who are struggling to gain employment offering them training support, vocational courses and apprenticeships) and the Youth Offending Service. These partnerships give young people that are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), Prison Leavers or young people who have previously offended, appropriate and safe opportunities to



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volunteer. Continued support from StreetGames through 2013 particularly through their Social Action Fund Programme has enabled the Volunteer Programme to increase their training offer for NEET volunteers having a direct result on their employability skills, life skills and integration back into society.

## Volunteer Opportunities

The Volunteer Programme initially offered only sports specific and coaching orientated volunteer opportunities through the Leisure Development community sports programmes as well as one off sports specific and inclusion events. As a result of the growth and expansion of the volunteer programme, and the development of partnerships with internal and external organisations, the Volunteer Programme is now able to offer *'diverse and varied opportunities to meet the needs and interests of each individual volunteer.'*

The Volunteer Programme now offers roles including office

administration (internally and externally), marshalling at events, supporting childrens centre and library activities, fitness classes and gym programmes. As expected the community sport and volunteering strand is still strong, and has now expanded to include disability volunteer opportunities, as well as sport specific volunteering within an amateur club setting.

## Retention, Rewards and Incentives

The Volunteer Programme aims to engage new volunteers each year but recognises that *'if you have great volunteers then it's important to retain them.'*

As well as rewards and incentives, at Everybody Sport & Recreation they find that recognition is a key factor in driving retention of the volunteers. There are several strands of this:

- Recognition scheme - Here you receive a bronze award for 50 hours of volunteering, a silver award for 100 hours, a gold award for 150 hours and a platinum award for 500 hours! These awards are certified and recognised by Everybody Sport & Recreation and awarded by the Mayor of Cheshire East.
- Volunteer of the month - Each month there is a Volunteer of the Month award, voted for by Leisure Development staff. Each volunteer that wins this award receives a certificate, which is presented to them at their session and also received a voucher towards a workshop or training of their choice.
- Cheshire East Sports Awards - This provides a pathway to the Cheshire East Sports Awards which happen every year. Each volunteer who wins the volunteer of the month

# Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

award is nominated for Volunteer of the Year Award at the Cheshire East Sports Awards.

- StreetGames Young Volunteer of the Year - If the winner of the Volunteer of the Year award is eligible and meets the criteria they will then be nominated for the StreetGames Young Volunteer of the Year award.
- CPD and Training - Each regular volunteer (volunteering at least once per week) is eligible for £150.00 worth of CPD and training within each calendar year. How they want to use this is down to the volunteer and their personal preferences. It is the job of the project leader to manage the process and source appropriate training and CPD to offer each volunteer relevant to their interests.
- Volunteer Day - Everybody Sport & Recreation Volunteer Programme also runs an annual Volunteer Day. This consists of in house CPD and training for volunteers, providing volunteers and staff a variety of leadership activities. All the volunteers are also provided with a Subway lunch/ picnic, and the day acts as a social event and thank you to the volunteers as well as fulfilling the main training objectives.
- Social Networking and Testimonials - The Leisure Development Team use Facebook and Twitter as a way to say 'thank you' to volunteers regularly. In addition to this, after 6 months on the Volunteer Programme each volunteer is asked to provide a testimonial account of their volunteering experience. This goes onto the Everybody Sport & Recreation Leisure Development Website and is also used as a good news story, recognising the volunteer's commitment on the programme, and as a promotional tool too.

- Kit -The volunteers are given kit (consisting of a t-shirt and hoody) at their first session. Giving them kit straight away will welcome them and make them feel part of the team, and also helps around safeguarding issues at sessions. At one off events, every volunteer who supports is issued a volunteer t-shirt which can be worn on the day and is also used as a memento for their contribution to the event.

## The Recruitment Process

A prospective volunteer can contact the team via the website, email or phone. Once contact has been made the prospective volunteer is issued with a basic application form which can be a 'full' or 'micro-volunteering' form. These are also available in Polish due to there being a high Polish community within the Crewe area.

Following the submission of their application form, this will then be processed into the volunteer database by a voluntary member of the team. The Volunteer Co-ordinator will then make contact with the volunteer and set up an initial meeting to have an informal discussion on why they want to join volunteer programme and what they want to achieve through volunteering - this in an informal interview although some volunteers can take invaluable interview experience away from this. Within the meeting the Volunteer Co-ordinator will establish what the volunteer wants from the programme, explain the policy and code of conduct and then issue the volunteer agreement. They will then be given the agreement to take away with them, read in their own time and discuss it with



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StreetGames  
Young Volunteers



# Background Facts for Doorstep Sport



others close to them. If they are then happy they will return the agreement and are officially enrolled with the programme.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator will then discuss volunteer opportunities and match the new volunteer with the right opportunity in the right locality to fit in with their availability. The Volunteer Co-ordinator will meet the volunteer at their first session, requesting that they arrive 15 minutes early to meet the coach and the rest of the volunteers, and to go through a short induction to the session. Experienced volunteers will then take on an informal mentoring role for new volunteers. The following day the volunteer co-ordinator will see how the session went and if they want to continue volunteering here. It is crucial that contact with the volunteer is maintained on a regular basis via phone/text/email or meeting to see how the Volunteer Programme can support them and maximise volunteer opportunities.

## Overcoming Challenges

After the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay event the Everybody Sport & Recreation Volunteer Programme expanded dramatically at an exceedingly fast rate. The Volunteer Programme staff at the time consisted of a lead officer (full time) and a co-ordinator (part time).

To cope with the influx of volunteers and dramatic increase in workload a 'voluntary management system' was implemented. An 'Assistant Volunteer Co-ordinator' and two 'Community Engagement' volunteers (who go into the community and promote the programme, recruit and support new volunteers) were recruited, (all being voluntary roles) which spread the work load for staff and offered volunteers invaluable sports development experience working on the Volunteer Programme.

In addition to this, as the programme continued to grow a Volunteer Development Officer, two part time Volunteer



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Young Volunteers



# Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Co-ordinators and a part-time Voluntary Programme Assistant also came into post. There is now far more 'man power' on the programme. *'It was crucial to maintain the quality of the programme as it grew to meet the aim of the programme - providing each volunteer with a safe suitable and rewarding opportunity.'* Volunteer Development Officer.

## Where do you see the programme going forwards?

Going forwards the Volunteer Programme aims to continue to grow year on year. Off the back of the

resounding success of the Olympic Torch Relay, Cheshire East Council have been awarded the privilege of the Commonwealth Games Queens Baton Relay travelling through Congleton, one of only 12 towns selected to host the relay. The Everybody Sport & Recreation Volunteer Programme plans to recruit, train and deploy 150 volunteers by the end of April 2014, to be ready to support the event on 31st May 2014. *'The Volunteer Programme is vital to the community and will continue to push on through 2014 and beyond.'* Volunteer Development Officer.

## StreetGames

StreetGames is a national partner of Sport England and a centre of expertise for developing doorstep sport in disadvantaged communities.

The charity supports community based sports projects that deliver sport and volunteering opportunities to young people living in the 20% most deprived wards in the UK.

StreetGames works with National Governing Bodies of Sport to establish and develop links between community and mainstream sport. Recognised by the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games Inspire Mark, StreetGames is creating a lasting legacy of doorstep sport in the UK.

