



Report Subject: **Active East**

Title: **Young Volunteer Case Study**



Gary Penders - Full Time Volunteer Active East (BT)

Gary began volunteering with Active East in August 2013. He had just completed his first year at college doing a course in Sound Engineering, but unfortunately due low grades hadn't been accepted onto the second year of his course. Gary felt that college wasn't the right learning environment for him, and felt a little lost. He was unsure of the direction he wanted to take his education or employment, and really needed additional mentoring and support.

Gary was a keen cyclist and bike enthusiast, and began volunteering within cycling and canoeing sessions as an Active Champion for Active East. Gary worked with partner organisations fixing people's old and unwanted bikes, which provided cycling opportunities for young people from areas of deprivation who didn't own bikes of their own.

At this time, Gary was NEET, and had no income at all.

Although he was keen to increase his volunteering activity, he struggled to independently travel around which limited the options. The Full Time Volunteer Opportunity sounded perfect for Gary. It enabled him to gain qualifications, and also increase his skills and experience. The small amount of weekly expenses meant Gary could travel further. This allowed him to volunteer with other partner organisations, therefore gaining additional experience and overcoming existing challenges.

Within the placement at Active East, Gary completed 30 hours of volunteering for 20 weeks. This mainly consisted of active delivery within sessions, which suits Gary and his preferred style of learning. Tasks that Gary has undertaken throughout his placement have included:

- Dr Bike Club – repairing and maintaining community bikes
- Delivery of Kayaking, Canoeing and Cycling sessions to young people
- Delivery of adult cycling sessions



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Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

- Providing First Aid at large scale events
- Delivering basketball sessions to young people

Gary has overcome many barriers through volunteering. He had a difficult time at school, getting into 'the wrong' crowd and lots of trouble. He managed to distance himself from the group as he got a little older, but when Gary was unable to academically progress through college, and with no support network around him, he lost a lot of confidence and self-belief.

At the start of his placement, Gary was given great deal of support and mentoring. Initially, he struggled with his organisational and time management skills, and would need to have a 'wake-up call' from his mentor every morning to ensure he got out of bed. *'I found the early mornings a challenge – I was used to getting up at 12pm and going back to bed at 12:15.... I never knew there were 24 hours in the day!'* Gary. He would be given a timetable each week so he knew where he needed to be and when, and was told he needed to be at a session 30 minutes before he actually had to be there, just to make sure was arrived on time.

Gary was given a personal development plan which he has progressed through over the 20 week placement, making use of the Outcome Star process, which helped Gary to understand where he was in each of the six areas. Gary and his mentor then developed an action plan to get him to where he needed and wanted to be.

The progression and change in Gary has been huge over the past 20 weeks. As he gained more experience, the Mentor was able to take a step back, encouraging Gary to

use his initiative, and plan his own time and travel effectively. *'The first couple of weeks Rohanna (Mentor) would phone and text to help me get out of bed and always had to remind me what I was doing. She helped me to develop my own organisational skills and I am now more positive'*. Gary. Gary has shown a massive development in his leadership skills and is now independently leading sessions. Gary has also progressed as a first aider and currently plans and delivers introduction sessions in First Aid to his peers, which is a fantastic achievement.

Through pushing himself out of his comfort zone, Gary's confidence and self-belief have increased. He regularly leads groups of young people and adults in cycling sessions. Gary also talks to groups of people about his volunteering journey, and mentors younger, less experienced volunteers at Active East.

Though progressing in all 6 areas of the Outcome Star, Gary's most significant progression has been in, 'Making a Difference'. Full Time Volunteering has not only had a positive impact on Gary's life, but also on his project, peers and local community. His Social Action Project involved Gary independently planning a Volunteer recruitment day for Active East. Gary planned, promoted and delivered activity at the event, which in turn attracted 15 new volunteers to the Active East programme.

Gary is extremely dedicated to his volunteering, delivering a huge amount of activity which otherwise wouldn't be happening. *'He is always willing to go above and beyond, and acts as a fantastic role model to young people through his commitment and professionalism and positive attitude'*.



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Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Mentor, Active East. Gary's experience and opportunity to 'Make a difference' have been enhanced through volunteering with partner organisations across Glasgow.

Gary has attended a variety of training to expand his knowledge, therefore increasing his education and employment opportunities. Gary has benefitted from involvement in development opportunities through StreetGames, volunteering at the StreetGames Mass participation festival in Glasgow in October 2013, attending the Volunteer Conference, the three day Volunteer Residential and StreetGames employability training. *'Gary has taken a lot from the Residential, and learnt and developed a lot as a result of his StreetGames experiences'*. Mentor, Active East. The main qualifications Gary has completed within his placement have included:

- Outdoor First Aid qualification
- Bronze Youth Achievement award
- Dodgeball and Tennis Activator Training
- Bike Maintenance Course
- Working Towards Level Two Doorstep Sport Coaching qualification.

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.

Gary's future is looking bright. As a result of Gary's volunteering experiences and mentoring throughout the placement, he has had a complete change of attitude towards education and is considering going back to college to gain his basic qualifications in English and Maths. He has a clearer path that he wants to follow which enables him to focus more on achieving his goals. Gary will be undertaking some paid management work for a local basketball team, whilst also pursuing his passion in cycling; looking to gain further cycling qualifications. Gary will continue to volunteer with Active East as he is supported into employment, and mentor other Young Volunteers to get to where Gary is today.



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