



**Sports Pathways to Employment
End of AWM Programme Report**

**A Joint report from Sandwell MBC
and Sport Structures Ltd**

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary..... | 2 |
| 1. Introduction..... | 4 |
| 2. Background and impact of the project..... | 5 |
| 3. Pathways Projects | 14 |
| 4. Potential strategic positioning for the future..... | 17 |
| 5. Conclusions..... | 26 |
| Appendix 1: Pathways Case Studies..... | 27 |
| Birmingham Inner City Coaching Programme (BICCS) | 27 |
| Coach Education and Support Programme..... | 31 |
| Dance Mentor Programme | 34 |
| Pre-Volunteer Programme..... | 36 |
| Transitions through Sport | 38 |
| | |
| Figure 1: Level of Training and Skills | 10 |
| Figure 2: Employment Achievements | 10 |
| Figure 3: Coach Role | 20 |
| Figure 4: Coach progression pathway | 21 |
| Figure 5: Emerging Pathways Model | 23 |
| | |
| Table 1: Analysis of participant’s progression..... | 8 |
| Table 2: Participant outputs from the overall programme | 9 |
| Table 3: Leverage | 11 |
| Table 4: Value for Money..... | 11 |
| Table 5: Participation Supported..... | 12 |
| Table 6: Success and challenges of the Pathways projects..... | 15 |
| Table 7: Black Country Workforce and skills strategic themes | 19 |
| Table 8: Relationship with accredited learning and employment opportunities..... | 22 |

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Executive Summary

This report identifies the benefits of the Sports Pathways to Employment programme, from its outset in 2002 to the conclusion of its contract with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) in March 2008. It highlights the benefits realised alongside the challenges of strategic re-positioning, succession planning and scope for broader engagement. It should be considered in conjunction with the Mid-term review¹ which identified the “**exemplary performance of the programme in reaching disadvantaged communities...**” also, the Learner Data Analysis² and Scoping³ reports.

From its conception to the conclusion of its contract “Pathways” embraced a partnership across the voluntary, statutory and private sectors. Designed in response to the PAT10 report⁴, the Regional Economic Strategy (RES)⁵ and the Agenda for Action⁶ it hosted projects collectively addressing employment, skills and training needs for disadvantaged residents of the South Black Country West Birmingham (SBCWB) regeneration zone.

Key Outputs:

- The Commence database records 1,172 participants of which 234 were from Dudley, 397 from Sandwell, 348 from Birmingham and 84 outside the regeneration zone meaning that 92% of the participants resided within the Birmingham, Sandwell and Dudley regeneration zone area. Of those
 - 50.7% were white British
 - 49.3% were from other ethnic backgrounds
 - 29% were female.
 - 55.75% were aged 16-24
 - 68.85% were under 24
- Of the 952 participants able to be tracked (out of 1,172)
 - 930 completed/part completed courses gaining 2,112 qualifications
 - 302 were offered employment assists with only 60 failing to complete
- £867,782 match funding levered

Key Outcomes:

- Of the 952 tracked
 - 565 had no qualifications at their point of entry and 100% have since undertaken training and/or secured qualifications.
- Of 170 unemployed at their point of entry
 - 94 secured employment. A conversion rate of 55.3%
- Of those gaining employment 35.4% did so in sport, 27.3% in leisure and 36.4% outside of the sport and leisure industry.
- Those who gained employment represented 10.3% of all participants with a significant number progressing to coach and/or tutor as a direct result of training and qualifications gained through the programme

¹ Pathways to Employment through Sport Mid Term Review – EKOS Consulting 2005
http://www.wmro.org/displayResource.aspx/1526/Pathways_to_employment_through_sport_mid_term_review.html?&origSearch=sFilter%3DResources%26iStratID%3D20&strHiLite

² Performance Review “Learner Data Analysis” - Sports Structures Ltd 2007

³ Scoping report – Sandwell MBC and Sport Structures 2007

⁴ Policy Action Team 10 – DCMS 1999

⁵ Delivering Advantage – Advantage West Midlands 1999

⁶ Agenda for Action – Advantage West Midlands 2001

Additional Benefits:

Numerous examples emerged where the “hook” of sport engaged individuals with the programme, building confidence levels, facilitating access to employment, providing the motivation to undertake additional training or enabling re-engagement in education or society at different levels. Details are contained within Case Studies at Appendix 1.

Future Development:

Following production of the Scoping report and Learner Data Analysis in 2007, Sandwell MBC committed to sustain four of the five core activities delivered by the Sports Pathways programme in 2008/09. This was achieved by evidencing alignment with its Local Area Agreement also the strategy and targets underpinning distribution of Working Neighbourhood Funds.

Further developments currently being pursued by Sandwell include strategic alignment with the emerging Physical Activity, Physical Education & Sport Strategy for 2009-2014; operational integration with the Triple S project to ensure efficient use of resources; and potential influencing of commissioning and procurement practices with a view to local wealth retention.

However, it remains of merit to record that during production of the Scoping document the Programme Steering group suggested that a new vision for Pathways could emerge with a wider geographical remit establishing it as a vehicle: -

To tackle worklessness, improve basic skills needs and employability by enabling residents across the Black Country to gain qualifications, to access education and employment opportunities in the sport and active recreation sector.

That vision led to the following range of objectives, which remain valid: -

- To reduce worklessness by targeting individuals on benefits or otherwise **not in education, employment or training (NEETs)**
- To develop a broad multi-skill platform for those choosing sport as a career or vocation including access to leadership and first level education in Sport
- To aid individual progression to sustained employment by providing a learning continuum/skills escalator and access to personal support and advice to participants
- To develop a diverse workforce and increase local capacity to raise participation in sport and active recreation
- To provide opportunities for volunteer training, voluntary placements and progression and add value to the development of the Black Country through improved social cohesion
- To support the development of social enterprises
- To improve the quality of the Black Country sports workforce
- To improve links to employers within the sector
- To influence commissioning practices across public sector agencies
- To respond to barriers to growth in the sector and
- To provide a sector led response to the City Strategy, Regional Health and Well Being Strategy, Regional Sustainable Development Framework and Leitch Review

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is intended to report on the five years life of the Sports Pathways to Employment programme. It is principally designed to illustrate the programme performance against AWM contracted deliverables.
- 1.2 This report should be considered alongside the Mid Term Review prepared by EKOS Consulting, which recognised the **exemplary performance of the programme in reaching disadvantaged communities** through a partnership operating across multiple Local Authority boundaries. Comments from that document are highlighted in this report although similar recognition was afforded to Pathways within the Sports Employment Research report⁷ also the Regional Workforce Development Plan⁸
- 1.3 This report has taken detailed account of the Annual Reports for 2005/6, 2006/7 and 2007-8 submitted to Advantage West Midlands also the Learner Data Analysis prepared by Sports Structures Ltd in December 2007 in accordance with design instructions issued by Sandwell MBC to aid objective assessment by the Pathways Steering Group
- 1.4 In forming views on the programmes achievements it should be noted initially that the original grant application to AWM was developed in the absence of baseline data capturing the economic value of sport⁹, also it preceded the establishment of the Sector Skills Council (SkillsActive).
- 1.5 Additionally, it should be recognised that the bid was also promoted in the absence of any strategic framework or any existing governance structure operating within the Sport and Leisure sector remotely reflecting the geographical boundary of the SBCWB Regeneration Zone - latterly merged for administrative purposes with the North Black Country Regeneration Zone under arrangements with the Black Country Consortium Ltd.
- 1.6 The original programme was also developed prior to the formation of the Birmingham and Solihull Connexions Service although strong links were forged with the Black Country Connexions Service, which ultimately aided expansion of the Transitions project beyond the original target area.
- 1.7 The Black Country Sports Partnership (BCSP) and the Birmingham Sports and Physical Activity Partnership also subsequently emerged from Sport England's commitments to develop the Single System for Sport. The former resides within the Black Country Consortium and the latter within Birmingham City Council. Separate Community Sports Networks are soon to be developed albeit a more localised level.

⁷ Sports Employment Research Report – Sport England, Skills Active and Advantage West Midlands 2004

⁸ West Midlands Active Leisure and Learning – Regional Workforce Development Plan - Skills Active 2006

⁹ Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC), Sheffield Hallam University-2003

2. Background and impact of the project

- 2.1 The Sports Pathways to Employment Programme was established in October 2002 with £1.8m secured from AWM through the SBCWB Regeneration Zone.
- 2.2 The programme was conceived within Sandwell MBC following the identification of Sports and Leisure as a growth sector within the RES. It was designed by a sector led task group reporting to the Zone's Heritage and Culture Theme Group and in its developmental phase benefited from support provided by the Birmingham Race Action Partnership and Sport England.
- 2.3 The programme in its original format ran for 5 years and in an operational sense was delivered in partnership with Birmingham City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Black Country Connexions, Pertemps People Development Group, Sandwell Leisure Trust, Sports Structures Ltd, SkillsActive, SPRITO, Ugly Bug World Ltd, West Bromwich Albion FC Community Programme and Wood Green College of Sport. Strategic guidance has been provided through the Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council and Sport England.
- 2.4 Pathways was hosted by Sandwell MBC, which acted as the Accountable Body for the duration of the AWM agreement. This included the administration of grant funds, reconciliation of resources, management of the project manager, development of a commissioning strategy, production of individual service level agreements, also procurement of consultants to deliver an ex-ante review¹⁰ and a mid-term review.

"At an operational level the Programme has been well integrated with the key delivery partners and stakeholders. During consultations the individual Project Managers all reported that they received a high level of support from the Programme Manager."

- 2.5 Resourced primarily through the RES Pillar 2, "Promoting a Learning & Skilful Region", the Programme consisted of a portfolio of projects which aimed to tackle social exclusion by encouraging involvement and employment in sports and leisure activities. It thus aimed to:
 - Reduce disaffection, inequality and exclusion;
 - Encourage people to enter careers in the sector;
 - Tackle barriers to growth within the sector;
 - Nurture increased female engagement in sport; also
 - Contribute to reduced obesity and healthier lifestyles.
- 2.6 The focus on employment and skills, as opposed to the use of sport as an anti-disaffection tool or as a vehicle to improve health and participation rates was a direct response to the priority then afforded to sport as a growth area within the Tourism and Leisure cluster and the need to align with priorities set out within the Agenda for Action and RES.

¹⁰ SPRITO/SkillsActive- 2003

Pathways to Employment through Sport shares common priorities and objectives with the FRESA, RES and RSP especially those relating to skills and workforce development, and engaging and regenerating communities. The Programme directly supports and contributes to addressing a number of the issues identified, namely:

- *Need to ensure **clear routes into academic, vocational and work based learning**;*
- *Importance of measures that **engage 'hard to reach' groups in the labour market**; and*
- *Priority needs to be given to those with **low skills who lack the platform for employability** that basic skills and NVQ2 provides.*

- 2.7 It is notable that the bid was developed prior to the establishment of the present Black Country wide governance structures for the Regeneration Zones, also prior to the production of the first SBCWB Zone Implementation Plan. It was also commissioned in advance of the national Framework for Sport¹¹ and Regional Sports Strategy¹² and consequently preceded establishment of the Single Delivery System for Sport. ,
- 2.8 Shortly following approval being secured the Zones Heritage and Culture Theme Group which championed the application within the Zone was discarded with related activity subsequently channelled instead through pillar groups. It has been acknowledged that the Pathways programme may not have been afforded sufficient priority had it been developed in accordance with priorities and processes established for later Zone Implementation Plans.
- 2.9 Beyond that, and notwithstanding the proactive regional contribution to the successful bid for the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, the status of sport and active leisure within the region was further diminished by a later refocusing of the cluster growth plans, with the outcome that it featured only as a sub set of Tourism strategies. Despite that isolation from broader economic development agendas Pathways developed many training opportunities and continued to facilitate access to employment for participants.
- 2.10 However despite recognised deficiencies in the sector many barriers still exist preventing disadvantaged residents from accessing suitable employment. In addition general practise across the sector, particularly in the lower paid levels, mean employment can comprise of multiple jobs. This may lead to a participant gaining part-time and/or sessional employment in for example reception work, life-guarding and coaching or other combinations. However, employers remain reluctant to take positive action in respect of employment of participants of the programme, although excellent examples exist particularly within the Dance Mentor and coach education projects. However, this issue should prompt debate about the role of strategic commissioning and procurement in the public sector.

¹¹ The Framework for Sport in England: Making England an Active and Successful Sporting Nation. A Vision for 2020 – Sport England 2004

¹² 'Sign up for Sport', the West Midlands regional plan for sport – Sport England 2004

- 2.11 A number of examples exist where the “hook” of sport brought people into the programme building the confidence to move into the employment market at different levels.
- 2.12 Whilst a significant number of participants progressed onto coach and/or tutor as a direct result of training and qualifications gained through Pathways one of the unexpected outcomes was that across the programme participants gained employment in other sectors.
- 2.13 Analysis of the Commence database illustrates the breadth of employment successes achieved a profile with **35.4% in sport, 27.3% in leisure and 36.4% outside of the sport and leisure industry.**

Sport is not specifically mentioned in the Workforce Development Strategy for the whole cluster but the Programme does directly contribute to:

- *Learning packages and programmes that tackle the lack of employability, personal and soft skills of new entrants;*
- *Packages of support for the volunteer workforce to improve skills, productivity and mentoring.*

- 2.14 The programmes beneficial impact can be witnessed in the retention of participants across a pathway towards employment formed by partners at an operational level.
- 2.15 By way of illustration, the Transitions programme, which deals with NEETS does not directly lead to employment, although the skills and training gained by participants has led to their further engagement with employment successes achieved within other projects in the portfolio; however the nature and length of individual support required by participants in this category can not be underestimated.
- 2.16 Table 1 below captures the progression of Pathways participants.

Table 1: Analysis of participant's progression

| Entry point | | | Current Status | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|---|----------------|------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Employment Status | Entry Nos and (%) | Nos and (%) without Qualifications At Entry | Other Training | Leadership Award | Level 1 | Level 2 | Other formal qualification | Employed FT,P/T, Self Employed |
| Full time student (college/university) | 116 (14.1%) | 69 Y | 59.5% | 14.7% | 30.2% | 0.9% | 1.7% | 6.0% |
| Part time student (college/university) | 7 (0.8%) | 7 Y | 71.4% | 0.0% | 28.6% | 0.0% | 14.3% | 14.3% |
| Unemployed | 170 (20.6%) | 96 Y | 78.2% | 27.1% | 39.4% | 7.6% | 17.6% | 17.6% |
| Working full time (30+hours per wk) | 92 (11.2%) | 23 Y | 70.7% | 7.6% | 9.8% | 3.3% | 27.2% | 12.0% |
| Working part time (-30 hours per wk) | 79 (9.6%) | 29 Y | 62.0% | 11.4% | 17.7% | 1.3% | 22.8% | 5.1% |
| On govt. work training programme | 14 (1.7%) | 9 Y | 78.6% | 28.6% | 21.4% | 14.3% | 14.3% | 7.1% |
| Permanently unable to work | 4 (0.5%) | 1 Y | 100% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| In full time education (school) | 150 (18.2%) | 131 Y | 10.0% | 88.7% | 2.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4.0% |
| Out of school | 30 (3.6%) | 25 Y | 30.0% | 70.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.3% |
| Temporarily unable to work (e.g. ill) | 5 (0.6%) | 3 Y | 60.0% | 20.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 20.0% | 0.0% |
| Full Time Education | 13 (1.6%) | 10 Y | 38.5% | 46.2% | 15.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 23.1% |
| Housewife/ husband full time in the home | 5 (0.6%) | 4 Y | 100.0% | 20.0% | 20.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Other | 140 (17%) | 90 Y | 22.1% | 65.7% | 12.1% | 0.7% | 1.4% | 20.0% |
| Total | 825 | 497 | N/a | N/a | N/a | N/a | N/a | N/a |

2.17 Whilst the mid-term review undertaken in 2005 facilitated some early reflection, it was also undertaken at a critical point in the evolution of the Regeneration Zones with broad strategic reviews impacting generally on all revenue funded activities. This extended to an increased focus on and redefinition of economic outputs which required adaption by Pathways to refocus delivery on quantitative outputs rather than qualitative outcomes.

The Programme was identified as an **exemplar project** by the research for promoting sports employment within the region and directly contributes to three strategic objectives – up-skilling the workforce, developing tomorrow's workforce and developing volunteer and seasonal staff - by:

- **Tapping into new potential pools of labour** to ensure that the sector has sufficient skills people to fill the anticipated forecast in employment
- **Developing soft skills** such as communication, leadership and team working which are lacking in the current workforce.

2.18 The revised AWM definitions and interpretations, particularly in respect of job creation adversely reflected on practise in the sector where it is rare for coaches, lifeguards and other Leisure employment to occupy positions for more than 10 hours per week. This has been influenced by both employer need and other factors such the seasonal nature of coaching. The culmination of these processes was a contract variation with performance targets reset by agreement with AWM.

The review of the strategic context highlights that the Pathways to Employment through Sport Programme currently contributes to a range of priorities at a national, regional and local level.

It is important for the Programme that it continues to deliver within the evolving regional and sub regional context which is currently being put in place.

2.19 Considerable learning opportunities have been created moving a number of participants into employment. The investment made by AWM for the five year period has been £1.8 million and the assessment below is taken as a programme as a whole rather than individual projects within the programme where you expect better value for Money.

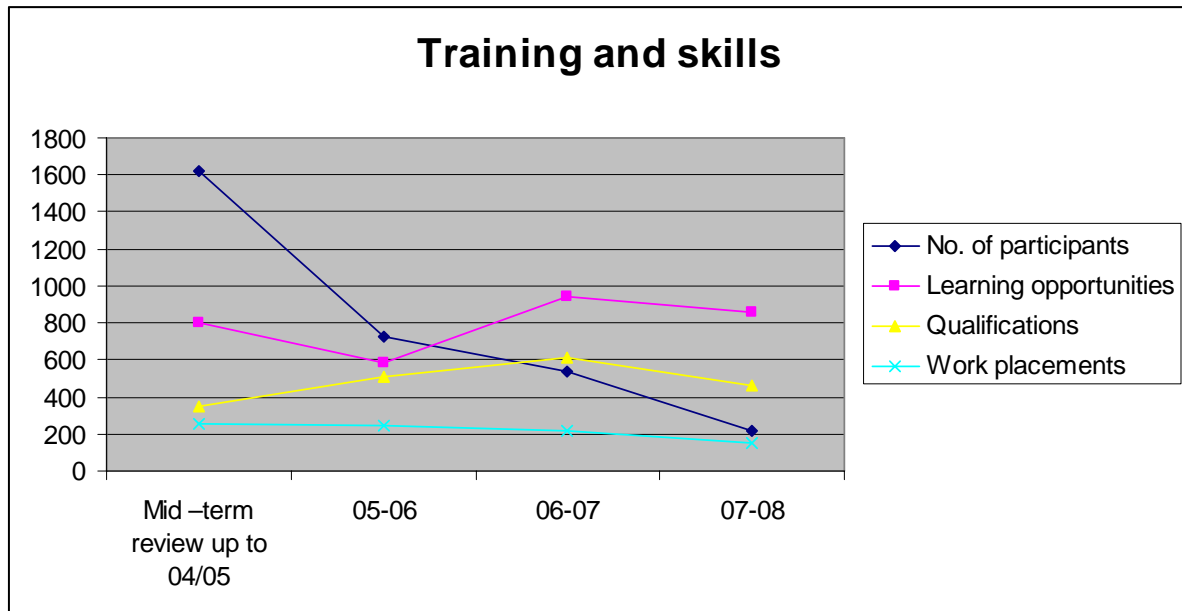
2.20 Table 2 below describes outputs until March 31st 2008.

Table 2: Participant outputs from the overall programme

| | Mid –term review up to 04/05 | 05/06 | 06/07 | 07/08 | Total |
|---|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
| No. of participants | 1623 | 728 | 539 | 215 | 3105 |
| Learning opportunities | 799 | 589 | 945 | 859 | 3192 |
| Qualifications | 352 | 509 | 611 | 466 | 1938 |
| Work placements | 258 | 245 | 219 | 155 | 877 |
| Into Employment | | 22 | 50 | 49.5 | 121.5 |
| Jobs Created | 15 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 39 |
| Total employment | 15 | 26 | 58 | 61.5 | 160.5 |
| Positive Outcomes (Excluding Learning Opportunities) | | | | | 6080.5 |

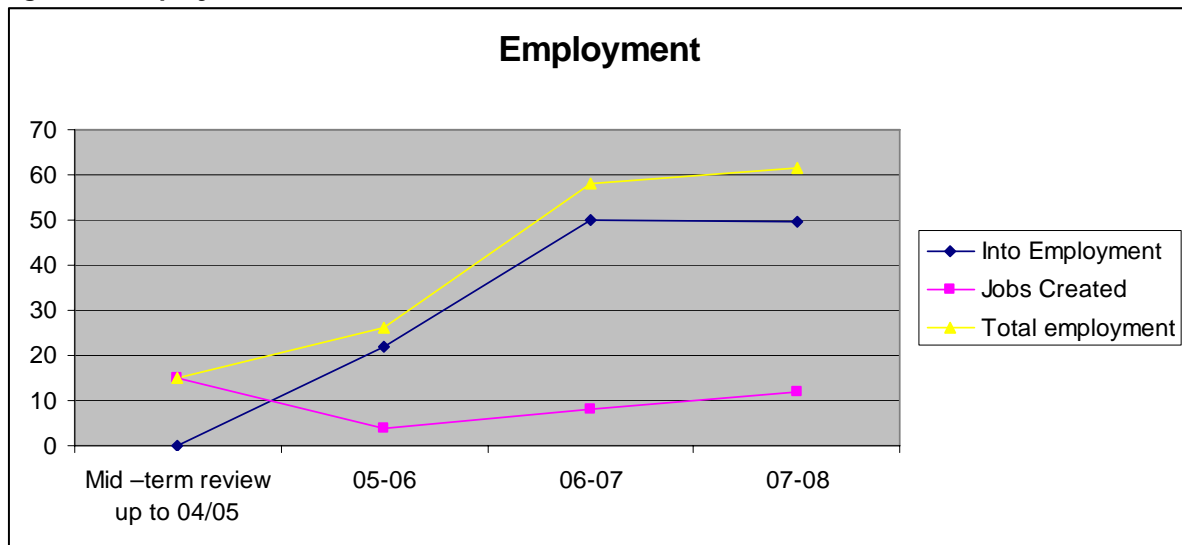
2.21 As highlighted earlier in the report the first half of the programme focussed on the need to develop training and skills and Figure 1 below illustrates the priority given to this approach. It also demonstrates the subsequent change in emphasis in the second half of the project seeing a more specific focus to link with employment outcomes.

Figure 1: Level of Training and Skills



2.22 Figure two however demonstrates the re-positioning of the programme to concentrate on moving people into employment. The projects took on this challenge with demonstrable success.

Figure 2: Employment Achievements



2.23 Throughout the programme an emphasis has been put on the need to generate revenue to enhance the projects as a whole. As can be seen in Table 3 the increase in levered funding has grown considerably in the life of the project. This demonstrates the benefit of being a five year programme and the quality of the project management of the project and its individual programmes

Table 3: Leverage

| Project | 2003-4 | 2004-5 | 2005-6 | 2006-7 | 2007-8 | Totals |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| BICCS | | 122,000 | 51,410 | 67,501 | 30,250 | 271,161 |
| Dance | | | 7,500 | 23,868 | 57,644 | 89,012 |
| PSE | 12,000 | 18,018 | 8,050 | 2,500 | | 40,568 |
| PVP | 7,900 | 26,505 | 22,500 | 71,224 | | 128,129 |
| Transitions | | | 36,000 | 76,182 | 87,650 | 199,832 |
| Coach Education | | 5,000 | 5,000 | 40,000 | 54,100 | 104,100 |
| Equaliser | | | 17,000 | | | 17,000 |
| Mentoring | | | | | | 0 |
| Other | 17,980 | | | | | 17,980 |
| Total | £37,880 | £171,523 | £147,460 | £281,275 | £229,644 | £867,782 |

2.24 An essential element of the programme has been to demonstrate value for money gained from the investment made. The table below shows the change in approach at mid-term providing a higher value for money ratio. The cost of one person into employment alone identifies clear value for money as all those moving into employment will reduce the benefit support and move them into paying tax providing clear benefits from the approaches taken.

Table 4: Value for Money

The calculations are based on a total of £2,515,782 funding comprised of the AWM Grant of £1,648,000 and £867,782 levered funding from individual projects in the period up to March 31st 2008.

| | Mid – term review up to 04/05 | Total | Mid Term VFM AWM contribution only | March 2008 VFM AWM contribution only | March 2008 VFM AWM and leverage |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------|---|---|--|
| No. of participants | 1623 | 3105 | £1500.00* | £530.76 | £810.24 |
| Learning opportunities | 799 | 3192 | £1014.28 | £516.29 | £788.15 |
| Qualifications | 352 | 1938 | £2336.78 | £850.36 | £1,298.13 |
| Work placements | 258 | 877 | n/a | £1,879.13 | £2,868.62 |
| Total employment | 15 | 160.5 | N/A | £10,267.91 | £15,674.65 |
| Total Outcomes (Excluding Learning Opportunities) | | | | £271.32 per positive outcome | £413.75 per positive outcome |
| Benchmark in Mid Term review £3194.00* | | | | | |

* ESF measure 2 – Equal Opportunities for All & Social Exclusion

- 2.25 The programme was not specifically designed to raise physical activity levels in Birmingham, Dudley or Sandwell and the contractual arrangements with AWM and other project funders did not require related data to be collected. However, the strategy from the outset was to intentionally create linkages through the development of leaders, coaches and Dance teachers. This was achieved where the design of courses leading to formal qualifications were structured to require participants to deliver practical education practice in clubs, community centres, schools and other locations.
- 2.26 Consequently, although evidently supporting increased access and exposure to quality coaching and teaching since 2002 there is no data available capturing the level of participation sustained by that practise across the programme period.
- 2.27 However Table 5 below highlights the level of participation directly supported by Pathways investment in coach, leader and teacher education in 2007/8 where this outcome was first measured. The activities supported by the individual projects highlighted below were delivered in both school and community time.
- 2.28 Four new dances coaches were recruited in the year under the Dance Mentor programme. These coaches worked two hours a week with groups of young people within and beyond the SBCWB zone area with term time provision supporting attendance by over 40,000 young people at coached sessions.
- 2.29 The coach education participants were employed into holiday and evening coaching sessions employed through Sandwell Leisure Trust or Youth services. The sessions were funded through Positive Activities for Young People.

Table 5: Participation Supported

| | Hours per week | Average size of class | number of weeks | Total participants |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Dance - Primary | 24.5 | 21 | 40 | 20580 |
| Dance - Secondary | 22 | 24 | 40 | 21120 |
| Coach Education | 10 | 15 | 30 | 4500 |
| | | | | 46200 |

- 2.30 It should be noted that as the data collection process was not consistent across the Dance and Coach Education projects the data is and therefore inconsistent. However it does illustrate the minimum extent of additional participative outcomes that Pathways could claim to have supported in 2007/8 as other projects in the portfolio also supported positive activities for young people.
- 2.31 From details contained in earlier Annual Reports it could also be asserted that Pathways contribution to increased participation rates will have been at least the same if not higher in each previous year. As such it would reasonable to suggest it is likely to have supported between 200,000 and 250,000 participants since its inception.

- 2.32 It is significant to note that the programmes 5 year duration, rather than the 1-3 year norm historically experienced by Lottery or regeneration revenue funded projects was critical in establishing a relatively stable and successful operating environment for partners, also in providing a credible platform for testing new ways of working.
- 2.33 The original intent regarding succession arrangements was established from the outset by Sandwell MBC with tapered AWM grant aid designed to lead partners to lever more external or main programme investment for the same level of activity.
- 2.34 With high levels of uncertainty existing as a consequence of the Sub National Review, changes in 14-19 delivery arrangements impacting on the Connexions Service also the Learning and Skills Council and the demise of Neighbourhood Renewal Funds the effect of the tapered funding strategy could not be confidently predicted during production of the Scoping report. It was noted in the report however that the strategy of reducing grant dependency was not necessarily leading to cessation or expansion, rather to sustaining more limited activity within a variety of constraints, notably individual agencies territorial remits. This was a logical conclusion to issues of accountability/risk.
- 2.35 It was recognised after the Comprehensive Spending Review that to achieve continuity, let alone expansion, there was a growing importance to delivery of a succession strategy for Pathways to establish strategic alignment with Key Performance Indicators within Local Area Agreements (LAA).
- 2.36 However, scope to influence LAA's varied in each local authority area given the impact of the demise of Neighbourhood Renewal Funds, levels of awareness of the benefits of the Sports Pathways approach, the extent of engagement by sports development professionals with the worklessness agenda and the priority afforded to targets to raise participation.
- 2.37 As indicated previously Sandwell MBC has committed to sustain four of the five Pathways projects through such alignment. It is also aiding further development of the Dance mentor project with sub-regional partners engaged in promoting an application for Grants to the Arts.
- 2.38 Notwithstanding that, the level of physical activity potentially supported by Pathways illustrated at Table 5, when considered alongside the sectors continuing growth trajectory and the benefits described in Tables 1-4 provides an indication of the scale of opportunity for all areas to develop new models to deliver health, employment and sporting outcomes through coordinated commissioning of coaching services across Schools, community sport and youth provision.
- 2.39 Whilst bundling discrete outcomes targeting different groups may increase the probability of a risk of failure, the opportunity clearly exists to build on the Pathways platform and develop a sporting legacy for future generations.

3. Pathways Projects

- 3.1 The projects supported were designed to respond to evidenced needs in the training and employment landscape across the SBCWB Regeneration Zone; providing additional routes into the Sports & Leisure sector for disadvantaged and disengaged young people and adults and developing sector specific e-learning tools. They also aimed to be capable of being expanded by existing or new partnerships to deliver similar activity across the target area over time.
- 3.2 The programme funded 8 main projects:
- Dance Mentor –delivered in Sandwell through Wood Green College of Sport;
 - Personal Social Health Education – delivered in Sandwell through WBA Community Programme;
 - Pre Volunteer Scheme – delivered in Birmingham through the City Council;
 - Transitions through Sport – delivered in Sandwell and Dudley through Black Country Connexions Service;
 - Birmingham Inner City Coaching Scheme (BICCS) – delivered in Birmingham through Pertemps Employment Alliance;
 - Positive Mentoring – delivered in Ugly Bug World Limited in Sandwell;
 - Equaliser – delivered in Sandwell Leisure Trust venues by Skills Active; and latterly by Sport Structures
 - Coach Education – delivered in Sandwell, Dudley and Birmingham by Sport Structures.
- 3.3 The number and range of initiatives supported reflected the broad spectrum of the industry itself. For many activities a specialist qualification is required, and the opportunities even within one specialism such as coaching, require both teaching and technical skills.
- 3.4 The diversity of the projects also reflected the range of client groups that the Programme attempted to reach, with varying degrees of engagement dependent upon the target group. In some cases participants could be supported into learning and employment opportunities quite quickly, while in others, re-engagement was a major challenge. This particularly applied to those with social, learning and behavioural difficulties.

3.5 The projects faced a number of challenges and have had some key successes. These are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 6: Success and challenges of the Pathways projects

| Project | Key successes | Key Challenges |
|--|---|--|
| Dance Mentor | Employment of new Dance teachers and engagement within schools. Leadership of the programme. | Moving into community environment |
| Personal Social Health Education | Engaged with large number of schools and young people who developed as peer mentors. Strengthen WBAs relationship with the community. | Cross over from school into community engagement. Quality of staff. |
| Pre Volunteer Scheme | Engaged with other projects and Supported with local and national events. Built volunteering ethos | Employment outcomes and challenging recruitment for volunteering training |
| Transitions through Sport | Working Black Country wide, working in partnership with other partners and agencies. Supported under-achieving young people. | Maintaining engagement with young people through-out the process. Employment opportunities |
| Birmingham Inner City Coaching Scheme (BICCS) | Supporting participants through learning and employment opportunities. Modifying programme to suit the needs of the participants | Sourcing quality work placements and employer engagement. Recruitment of women. Time for supporting individual participants including basic skills |
| Positive Mentoring | Acted as a conduit to other programmes to build confidence and identify opportunities for those engaged. Flexible/responses approach to participants. | Identification of participants that will gain most benefit from the programme. Time allocated to supporting participants on an individual basis |
| Equaliser | Number of people who were unemployed engaging and gaining first qualifications leading to employment. Led to the development of the coach education programme | Recruitment of participants and providing suitable courses for the participants without any prior experience. |
| Coach Education | Actively engaged people from disadvantaged communities in developing skills, education and employment in coaching. Partnership arrangements and funding. | Sourcing quality placements and employer engagement. Time supporting participants on an individual basis |

Critical success factors

- Positive central leadership and management giving clarity to direction
- Dedicated resources to facilitate individual project management
- Customer focussed
- Flexible approach to working with participants
- Individual one-to-one support and guidance
- Partnership working both within the projects and with other partners/agencies
- Ability and confidence to challenge conventional approaches

What worked and why

- Leadership - Sector lead important
- Awareness of and credibility across the sport sector vital.
- Capacity and flexibility created for innovation at strategic and operational levels eg Equaliser
- Core skills sets in the delivery team - empathy with the client group paramount over sport /leisure experience
- Stayed true to its original aspirations and did not promote pet projects
- Identified and responded to needs which either met gaps in a market eg Coach Education/Dance or promoted actions capable of later delivery across boundaries eg BICCS/Connexions/PVP.
- Sandwell MBC commitment to equitable delivery across local authority areas
- Robust service level agreements enabled partners to plan with certainty and engage senior managers eg Transitions programme extended across the Black Country by the Connexions Service
- Project network meetings developed trust and collaborative practise
- Sandwell MBC prepared to take risk as the accountable body for delivery outside its area (LSC & Connexions declined for different reasons)
- Multi agency ownership of a succession strategy process
- Advance commitment to an Ex-Ante Evaluation and Mid Term Review enabled Pathways to withstand pressure via AWM and adapt to maintain a balance between outputs and quality outcomes.
- The right people in each delivery arm eg Amanda Beehag, Amy Heppingstall, Claire Anderson, Kerrey Clarke, Alison Tripney
- Motivated partners eg Sport Structures, Wood Green, Connexions, Pertemps, WBA FC

What didn't work?

- Inability to drive delivery on participation and inclusion -undermined by failure to secure Sport England support for a joint Dudley/Sandwell Sport Action Zone bid which meant AWM outputs dominated the agenda.
- Strategic links within individual agencies and the partnership as a whole were undermined by a lack of clarity around Zone delivery structures and the Zone Implementation Plan
- Limited Black Country LSC engagement
- Lack of Birmingham & Solihull Connexions engagement
- Multi agency ownership of a succession strategy process
- PR - Unable to roll out because of risk at mid-term review
- Branding - undeveloped

4. Potential strategic positioning for the future

- 4.1 Reflecting on both current sector needs and potential latent demand to sustain increased participation it became evident during the Scoping exercise that for Pathways to exploit its potential it was necessary to strategically re-position it.
- 4.2 Reflecting on lessons learnt since 2002 particularly in light of annual reviews and the level of adaption achieved following the Mid Term review it became evident that a “new” Pathways could be developed encompassing the whole of the Black Country whilst seeking also a clearly defined partnership with Birmingham including potential support for the development of a sister programme.
- 4.3 Whilst still requiring clarity on the outcome of future arrangements for the Connexions Service and an understanding of implications to arise from the Sub National Review, a degree of alignment evidently exists between the strategic plans of Skills Active, the development of the UK Coaching Framework also the implementation of the City Strategy and the Regional Economic¹³. With a direct contribution to the Black Country Sports Partnerships business plan the Scoping document suggested the future mission for Sports Pathways could be;

To tackle worklessness, improve basic skills needs and employability by enabling residents of the Black Country to gain qualifications, to access education and employment opportunities in the sport and active recreation sector.

- 4.4 Although funding would inevitably present variable challenges for each stakeholder it was recognised that the objectives to achieve that vision could embrace the following:
 - Increase participation in sport and active recreation through the development of a diverse workforce
 - Improve the quality of the Black Country sports workforce
 - Reduce worklessness by addressing those ***not in education, employment or training***
 - Provide a learning continuum for those engaging in the programme
 - Provide effective access to leadership and first level education in Sport
 - Provide individual support and advice to assist those choosing sport
 - Provide opportunities for voluntary training, placements and progression routes
 - Develop the skills base of those entering and choosing sport to develop as a career or vocation
 - To improve employment opportunities in sport and Leisure by engaging those currently unemployed
 - Provide the opportunity and support for the development of Social enterprise
 - To improve links to employers in the sector
 - to respond to barriers to growth in the sector and provide a sector led response to the Leitch Review
 - To provide added value to the development of the Black Country Workforce through improved social cohesion

¹³ Connecting to Success: West Midlands Economic Strategy –Advantage West Midlands, WMRA 2007

4.5 The Pathways programme at any scale should be related to the emerging Black Country workforce and skills plan¹⁴ to generate a greater awareness of:

- a) **The current position within our sector and the wider skills issue in our sub-region and,**
- b) **Define the social and economic importance and growth potential of the sport and active leisure sector and its workforce in the Black Country.**

4.6 Common aspirations within the Black Country Workforce plan relate directly to the experiences of the Pathways programme of:

- **Increase sport and active recreation participation**
- **Improve recruitment and retention**
- **Professionalising and up-skilling our existing workforce**
- **Matching the supply of learning to employer and individual demand**
- **To use sport as a social catalyst and bring those that are disadvantaged greater opportunities to advance their qualification and skills base.**
- **Increasing sector investment in our people**

4.7 The projects within the Pathways programme naturally fit within the needs of the Black Country Workforce plan as identified in Table 4 below:

¹⁴ Black Country Workforce and skills plan 2007

Table 7: Black Country Workforce and skills strategic themes

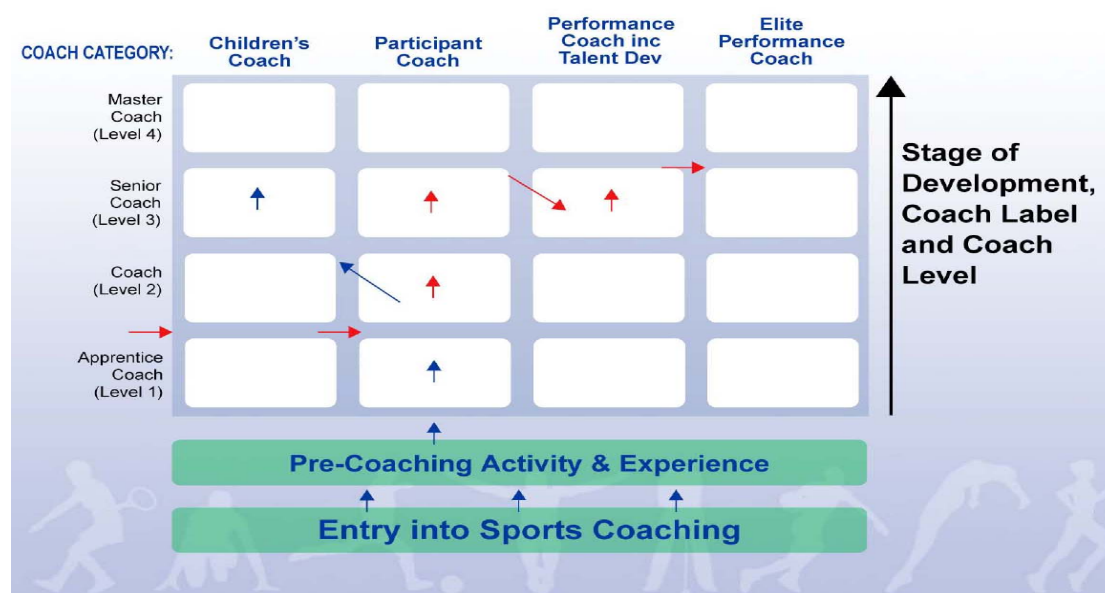
| STRATEGIC THEME | What this means | Pathways experiences |
|--|--|---|
| Education Programme - Upskilling the existing workforce | Increasing access to and take-up of learning by employees; increasing the use of national occupational standards; focus on the main skills gaps identified by the sector in respect of management, communication and influencing. Maximising the skills, knowledge and experience of the large voluntary workforce in the sector; increase training support and CPD so that their contribution can be even greater in terms of productivity in future | All Projects |
| Regeneration, (Worklessness & Tomorrow's Workforce) Sport and the wider agenda | Support for those workstreams that have the potential for creating further opportunities via sport and active leisure, especially in identified deprived local areas. Encouraging employers to recruit from non-traditional sources of the local labour market; supporting social inclusion and pre-employment projects helping them develop the multi-skills required of sport sector employees and increasing the transition to employment. | BICCS CESP Dance Mentor PVP PM |
| Supply Vs Demand | Encouragement of training solutions that meet employers' needs across the sector; co-ordination of the training providers in the region and development of a collaborative Training Plan for the sector. | BICCS CESP |
| Attraction / Recruitment / Retention - Careers in Sport and Active Leisure | Inform and educate young people, job-changers, influencers and practitioners about the career opportunities, progression and advantages of choosing a career in the sector; development of case studies; promotional material; website presence as appropriate; activities in schools, colleges etc. | TiS PSHE |
| Advocacy and Partnership Working | Ensuring each stakeholder has signed up to these recommendations; developing the right structures to take this work forward to maximise benefits and negate duplication of all resources both financial and non-financial | All Projects |
| Strategic tools | The provision of invaluable sector and workforce development specific information and intelligence via BCC Ltd sports division. Open commitment to share / update intelligence for the sector; production of sub-regional fact sheets showing trends, forecasts and issues of supply allowing for partners to identify and meet demand. | All Projects |

4.8 Although other options and delivery mechanisms need to be resolved preliminary discussions have revealed that a number of sport and non-sport agencies would support this concept and build on the good practice already established. However rationalisation would need to be carried out to ensure the objectives are met.

4.9 One critical element in establishing shared objectives will be recognition that in improving the skill base and reducing worklessness the identification of personal motives of participants will vary from the use sport to improve their quality of life or employability or both and whether they wish to pursue careers within or outside of the delivery system for sport.

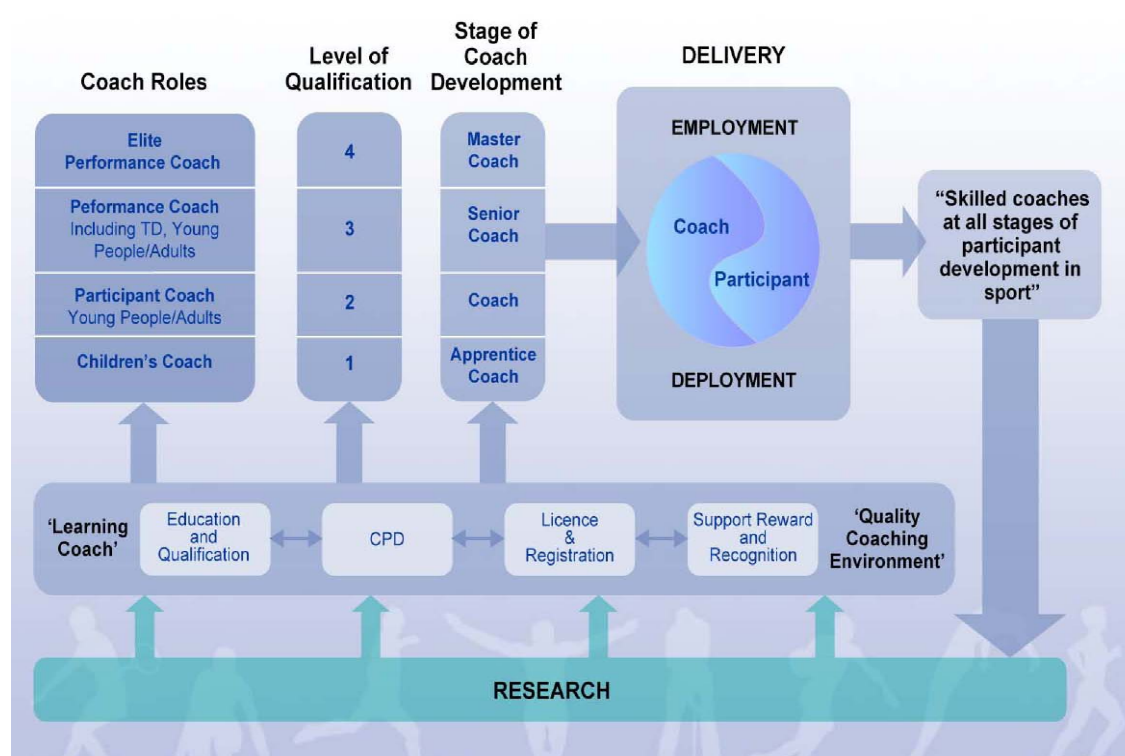
4.10 The recent announcement of further investment in coaching and the development of the UK Coaching Framework by **sports coach UK** has set a strategic context for coaching element of the project and for the potential of a coordinated approach to the development of coaches as a professional workforce. The diagram below, from the UK Coaching Framework, describes the emerging description of coaching roles that is expected to provide a framework for this study.

Figure 3: Coach Role



4.11 Many coaches start on the coaching pathway by volunteering at their local sports club or sports facility and without entering into any formal structure. This experience for many coaches is borne out in the coaching study conducted by **sports coach UK** in 2004¹⁵ that identified that only 38% of coaches were suitably qualified. These 'pre-coaches' may provide the opportunity for Access into the programme through the delivery system. This project intends to identify a more effective system for the management, development and deployment of those within the coaching industry in providing quality coaching by the right people at the right place at the right time.

¹⁵ MORI (2004) *Sports coaching in the United Kingdom*. Leeds: sports coach UK

Figure 4: Coach progression pathway

4.12 The opportunity to address the levels of unemployment in the Black Country has been proved to be a critical outcome of the Pathways programme. Many of the participants engaging have progressed across the continuum of learning opportunities provided by different elements of the Pathways portfolio. This skills escalator has been critical in ensuring participant are effectively supported throughout their experience with many progressing to level 1 or level 2 through such relationships. However it is evident also that any successor to the programme (or Train to Gain) should also address their progression into level three and four.

4.13 In addition the Community Sport Coach Scheme has provided employment opportunities for a number of coaches and the support of these coaches at level three and four should assist the development of the communities they live in and contribute to community cohesion outcomes. Although coaching is an important element of the project it should be seen in the broader context of an employment route into the sector.

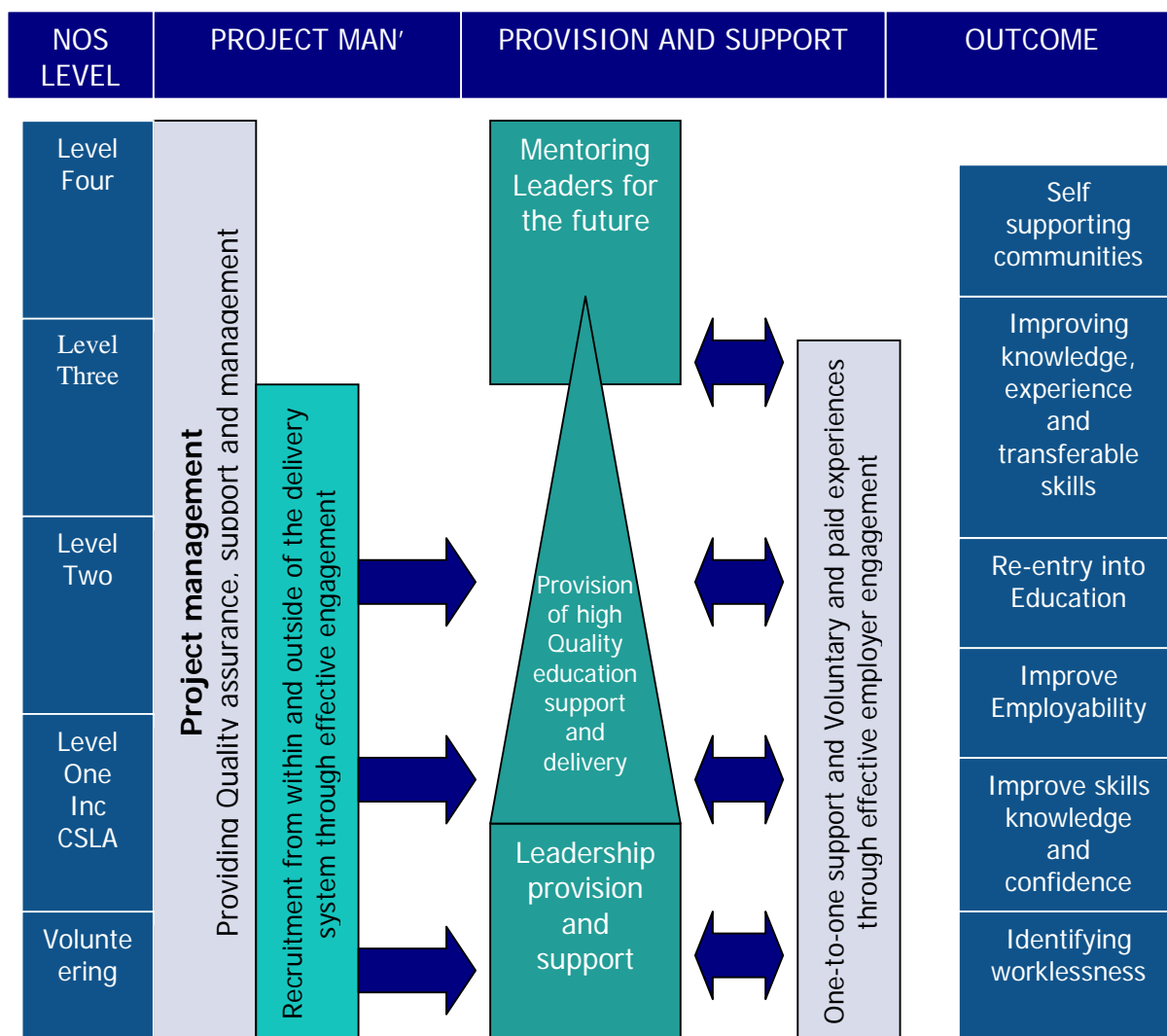
4.14 The support should not only be that of developing coaches but also the development of social enterprise, small business, or self employment models that will also support the sustainability of the communities of the Black Country. Good examples have been developed through in particular the Dance Mentor project.

- 4.15 The relationship with employers and other commissioned providers in the Black Country and wider City Region will be critical to ensure a smooth movement into employment. A number of the projects embraced partnerships across the public and private sector and lessons from those should be shared to inform future commissioning practise.
- 4.16 However what cannot be underestimated is the extent of support required by those who are unemployed, have had poor educational experiences or lack confidence or self esteem in order to give them an opportunity the engage into Sport and active recreation leadership and coaching. The support needed to take participants through the process is necessarily individually focussed and difficult to quantify. Therefore it should be assumed that there remains a need to resource dedicated management costs for individual project managing agents.
- 4.17 The model proposed for Pathways within the Scoping report drew upon best practice from each project in the portfolio and developed themes to align with strategic approaches taken across the sport, employment and regeneration agendas.
- 4.18 The model is one that can easily be modified to suit the needs of a particular KPI's /desired outcomes in Local Strategic Partnership plans/Local Area Agreements and/or local economic strategies although this will need to be reviewed on an individual basis as not all activities will be relevant to all areas
- 4.19 In assessing the way forward the projects within programme portfolio were reviewed against two themes of developing accredited skills through training and the ability of individual projects to provide routes to employment opportunities.

Table 8: Relationship with accredited learning and employment opportunities

| Project | Relationship with accredited programmes and employment opportunities | Comment |
|--|---|--|
| Dance Mentor | Provides high level of training and employment opportunities | Positive relationship with employment and training agenda's |
| Personal Social Health Education | Provides opportunities for young people already in education | Although providing education to a participants younger than 16 does not directly relate to employment support. |
| Pre Volunteer Scheme | Provides volunteer training with accredited qualifications | Although providing volunteer training does not relate to employment agenda. |
| Transitions through Sport | Provides intense support for younger NEETS does not provide direct employment opportunities | Should act as a conduit to other programmes |
| Birmingham Inner City Coaching Scheme (BICCS) | Provides education and employment opportunities for those from disadvantaged participants | Provides direct support to those out of employment |
| Positive Mentoring | Provides a link to other programmes provides accredited learning | Could be integrated into other programmes |
| Equaliser | Provided direct employment support and training | Has been integrated into BICCS and Coach Education |
| Coach Education | Provides accredited learning, employment experience and support | Provides support for those from disadvantaged backgrounds into training And employment. |

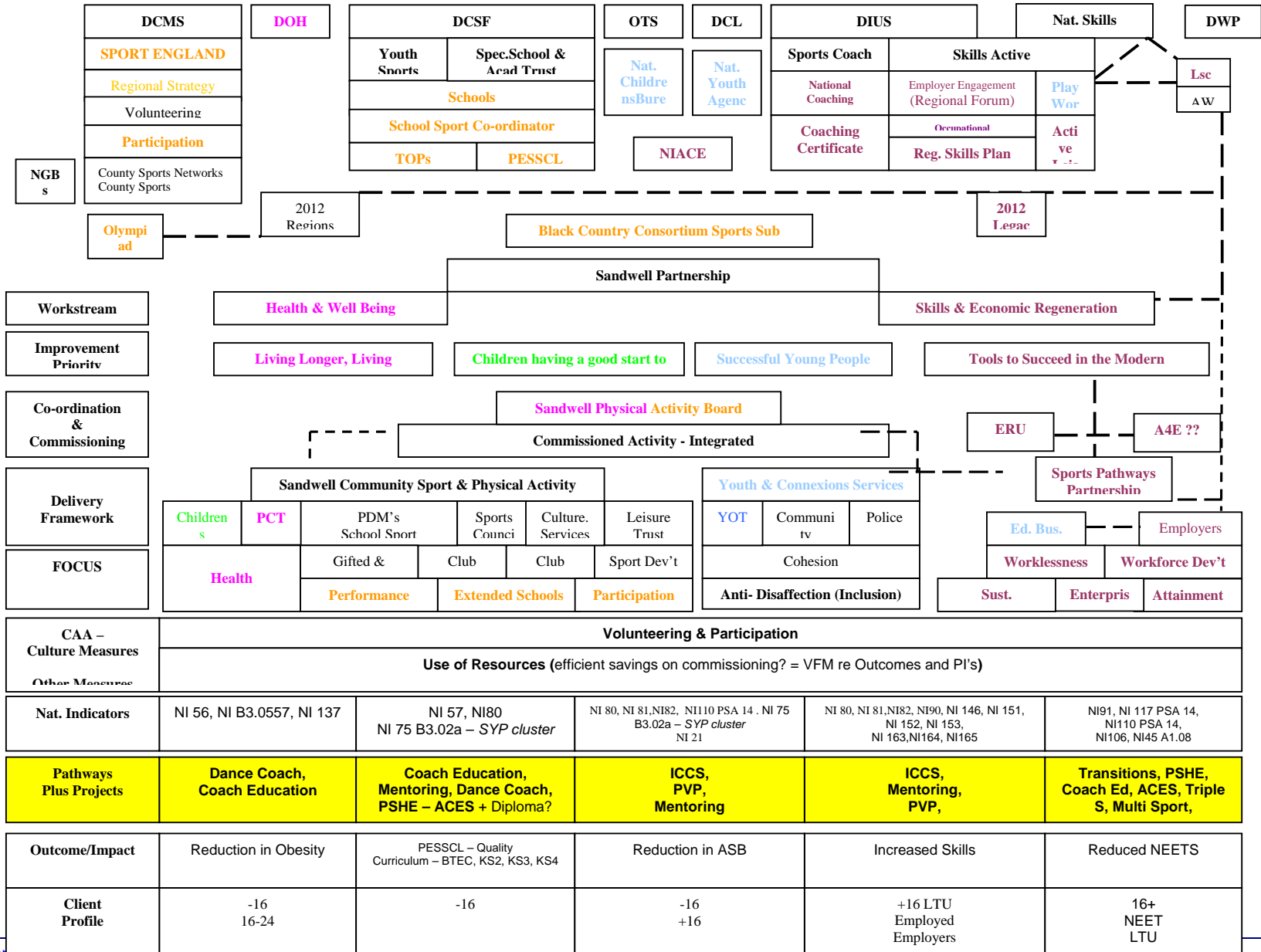
Figure 5: Emerging Pathways Model



4.20 The model identifies the process through the pathway. An assessment of projects against the emerging objectives undertaken to date has led to the PVP and Positive Mentoring programme being dropped from the suite of projects adopted by Sandwell MBC. The Council is currently also exploring options to nurture increased wealth retention and capacity to sustain development through strategic commissioning practises geared to optimisation of public procurement and delivery of activities by Sports Pathways participants.

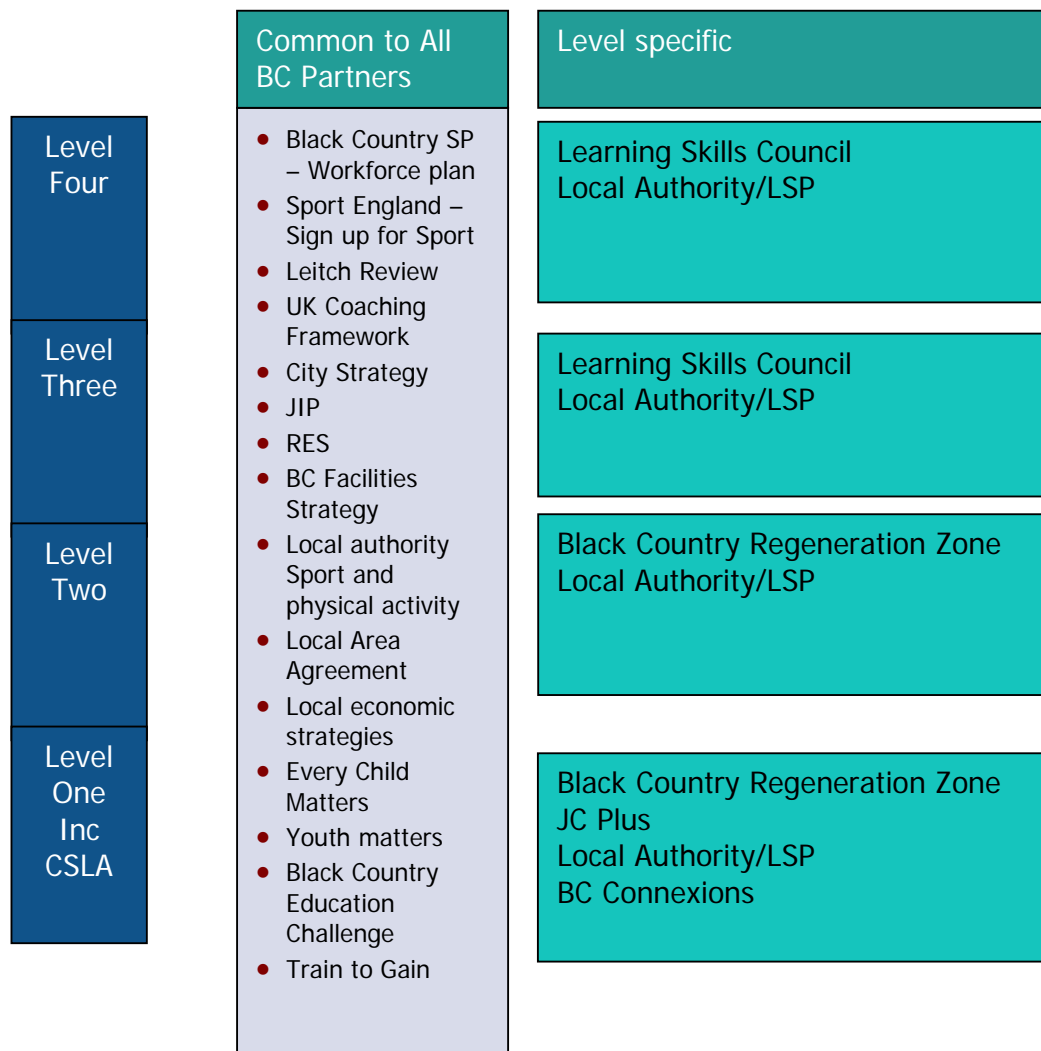
4.21 Figure 4 below presents the programmes potential strategic positioning¹⁶ in the context that emerged for Sandwell in 2007, but also illustrates how it may be presented within a national framework, thus highlighting both the opportunity and complexity of the challenge.

¹⁶ Modified from model developed by Tony Costello in 2007



4.22 The diagram identifies theoretic outcomes however what must be established is where strategic priorities/plans/documents/approaches fit within that process and where along the value chain to begin to assess and to measure the benefit of engagement. Figure 4 below starts to establish a strategic fit for each of the areas of development identified earlier in this document but as illustrated in the scoping report resourcing delivery is complex.

Figure 4: Strategic relationships



5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This document has identified the achievements of the Sports Pathways to Employment programme. It illustrates how imaginative approaches have been developed to provide valuable training and skills development for people in areas experiencing high deprivation levels whilst evidencing the ability to address worklessness through the medium of sport.

- 5.2 The report gives provides clear evidence of the impact of sport on people's lives.

Appendix 1: Pathways Case Studies

Birmingham Inner City Coaching Programme (BICCS)

Michael Marcus, MB1

Previous to Mini Biccs 1 Programme Michael was unemployed for longer than 3 years and used to be a client at the Newtown Pertemps office, although he was actively seeking work it was hard to find the sort of job he wanted because he lacked qualifications. Michael wanted to work in the sports industry i.e. coaching, teaching, etc but knew that in order to achieve this certain qualifications were needed.

He attended north Birmingham College and achieved NVQ level's 1&2 in sports coaching and F.A. Level 1 in football coaching, but Michael still knew that he needed more major qualifications and experience to meet the criteria of working in the sports industry. While job searching at his local Pertemps office his personal advisor told him about the Mini Biccs Programme which was due to start soon. Michael was told that it was only a pilot course and that it was the first time something like that had been done so there was no guarantee of a job at the end of the course. Mini Biccs scheme lasted for six months with 12 candidates joining the course in hope of all becoming sports coaches and gaining the necessary experience.

Within that six months while on Mini Biccs Michael achieved a variety of qualifications and awards including F.A. level 2 in football coaching, first aid, child protection, Basic Football Skills, Basketball Level 1, SAQ P award and a number of general sports coaching awards including disability sports. On the programme Michael also received some first hand on the job training, he did a lot of team building and communication courses which was vital for the group as they would be dealing with people.

Michael worked alongside the coaches at Coachright to gain first hand experience of what it's like to work with different groups of people and to work with different types of schools. We sensed that Michael enjoyed working with Coachright as he was always asking to go back at the first given opportunity.

As the Mini Biccs project was coming to a close Michael was offered a job as a part time coach with Coachright the contract was for 3 months with a view to it being extended. This was a fantastic opportunity for Michael and was a result of how much he had achieved on the programme. Michael grasped the opportunity with both hands and it was clear to see the happiness, having been awarded a job in the field of work that he always dreamed.

Michael's contract was extended at his first review and he gained more confidence and experience in his field of work. Michael's contract was then made permanent and his hours went up to 25. Three years on and Michael still works with Coachright, he is now a full time sports coach with a permanent contract. He has developed as an individual immensely, he clearly now demonstrates the confidence to manage and lead sessions and fantastically as a part of a team.

Michael has another major passion outside of work which is Music, using his talents Michael has also developed a number DJ/Music production programmes which he delivered across schools and youth centres right across the West Midlands.

Within his time with Coachright Michael has proved himself a well thought of irreplaceable member of team with an ability to build relationships with children and young people as young as 4 to adults 50 plus from various different backgrounds and abilities. Michael is an excellent role model to anyone looking to en-role on such programme including coaching young offenders which he has done via Coachright and at the start of every Mini Biccs programme Michael has always taken an introductory session to show what it is all about, tell his story and highlight the possibilities.

Tracey Lumbard, MB2

After leaving school at 16, Tracey started a two YTS program as a clerical assistant she found that office life wasn't for her. After finishing this programme Tracey found herself 23, single mum of two living on benefits. At 25 Tracey started with the Job centre to try and escape the rut she had now found herself in, she eventually studied and achieved a number of NVQ and CLAIT qualifications but still wasn't sure what to do with them. Tracey also got herself a part-time job as a cleaner to keep her busy while deciding what to do. Into her 30's and Tracey was introduced Holistic Therapies and for the first time Tracey knew what she wanted to do, she pursued this over the next number of years gaining 2 certificates and 4 diplomas along the way and voluntary experience.

Tracey then came across Pertemps and the Mini Biccs programme, after interview Tracey secured a full time paid position for 6 months on the programme. She felt the opportunity would be a good opportunity to develop her massage therapies especially with the close linkage to sports injuries of which was also keen to pursue.

During the programme Tracey achieved 9 sports qualifications, child protection, first aid and drug awareness. Also via the programme Tracey achieved levels 1 and 2 in literacy and level 1 in numeracy on Learn Direct. Most importantly Tracey achieved vast experience and knowledge which would help her progress in her desired area. This experience included two days per week giving sports massages in the Newtown activity base to Pertemps WIN clients.

When the Mini Biccs programme finished Tracey secured a 6 week extension to her contract as a therapist and part time sports coach.

This extension led to a 3 month extension again as a therapist but also a mentor on the Mini Biccs 3 programme. This was a real achievement for Tracey as it gave her an opportunity to use her experiences to offer the new trainees advice and guidance. Throughout this extension Tracey was supported by us to set up her own business and go self employed. At the end of this contract Tracey set up her own business called 'On Site Office Massage' which is aimed at businesses to relief stress with their employees, all in all a true Mini Biccs success story.

Adam Aldhouse – MB4

Adam came on to the Mini Biccs 4 programme whilst on his second time with Pertemps Employment Zone; previous to this he had engaged on New Deal Gateway to work programmes. Adam had some experience working in retail and had achieved NVQ levels 2 and 3 in Retail and wanted to work but just felt 'a little bit stuck'. The opportunity arose with the Mini Biccs 4 programme, this was highlighted by his Employment Coach at Pertemps and he liked the sound of it but he did still have concerns that it may have been a bit much for him. Adam's Employment Coach did put his name forward to interview but expressed the project co-ordinator Adam's concerns and that he suffered with very low self –confidence. Adam allayed all these fears at Interview and breezed through, his enthusiasm and passion for Sport would carry him through.

On starting the programme it was clear that Adam may struggle, he didn't adapt the situation as well as others in the group and his low level of confidence could hold him back. The programme co-ordinator and group facilitators working hard to integrate him into the programme and over time it worked. Adam did is work experience with Pertemps Coachright and Aston Villa FC (another major passion of his) and when he started with the support of experienced coaches leading and delivering sessions his confidence seemed to improve dramatically; from a young person scared to say anything to an adult leading a group of children for the first time. The results were incredible.

Adam achieved a variety of different sports qualifications many of which had written or practical assessments these again boosted his confidence not just because he had achieved them but because he had to deliver the sessions using his peers as participants and had fully gained there respect. Towards the end of the programme Adam's employment coach asked 'what had happened to her little Adam?' She stated the difference in him as person because of his new found confidence was remarkable.

After finishing the programme Adam continued gaining experience and working voluntary with Aston Villa FC, which he was very proud of. Adam has also gone on to achieving F.A. Refereeing awards which has helped him secure part time work as a Referee. Adam now hopes to continue developing and secure more hours and permanent employment in the sports industry.

June Roberts, MB5

On the Mini Biccs 5 – Women's only programme, we engaged with lady called June Roberts. June was unemployed but in a slightly different situation to other candidates on the programme by the fact that she had only recently moved into the area from Glasgow, she did not know the area or where best to go for work. Whilst looking for employment June was referred to Pertemps, there via her employment Coach June found out about the Mini Biccs 5 programme and jumped at the opportunity.

June had no problem at interview and secured herself a position on the 6 month programme. On the programme it was soon clear that June had great potential for a decent career in the sports industry. June was very self motivated, pro active and confident in making the programme work for her. During the programme June achieved vast amounts of qualifications including the YMCA Fitness Instructors course, which is a very creditable achievement in fact June passed her theory with an incredible 57 out of

60. On work experience June also shone, the feedback she got from placement providers was second to none – a real credit to the whole programme. From these work experiences June did receive some offers of paid work, a testament to her successes.

After finishing the programme June did take up some of these offers whilst considering her next steps. In the end June has decided to set up as self employed with her own business, this was something that again we were able to support June with. From the start of October 2007 June's new venture will be underway still using many of the links she built during the Mini Biccs programme including a site to run from. June's self employment will offer sports including football, holistic therapy and physiotherapy all of which the Mini Biccs programme has given her the chance of developing and gaining the necessary qualifications. It was a joy to engage with a candidate such as June on the programme as she was truly grateful and appreciative of the opportunity and we are sure she will make every success of it in the future.

BICCS Tall ship feedback

- **First Impressions when boarding 'The Lord Nelson' Tall ship....**

'I thought this wasn't for me and didn't think I would fit in. I was a little bit out of place, but I knew the rest of the group were there, so I was alright and this is what kept me motivated' Mikey Marcus

'This is OK' Mike Buckley

'I felt like going back home and was cautious, I did not know what to expect' Sanjeev Sahonta

'I felt like it was going to be the longest 6 days ever' Ricardo Edwards

'Fear, ship looked small, bit of worry' Paul Richards

'Do I still want to do this? A remark was made to me at the beginning and Helen the medical pursor stuck up for me, so I knew I was going to get on with others already' Becks Lewis

- **What did you most enjoy about the trip...**

'Learning how to sail a ship' Ricardo Edwards

'The rough seas, been at the front of the ship and watching the ship cut through the water' Paul Richards

'I enjoyed being away from home and the stress of Birmingham for a week. I also enjoyed the sea and mixing with a group of mixed ability' Mikey Marcus

- **Would you recommend someone else sailing on a tall ship...?**

'Yes, it's a good experience and it would change you as a person, there are a lot of people to meet and experience a different life style for a week' Michael Marcus

'Yes, To improve yourself, change your perceptions and mature as a person' Becks Lewis

Coach Education and Support Programme

Candidate 1

I was on job seeker allowance, basically doing nothing before going on the Coach Education programme.

I enjoyed the sports coach UK workshop they were really good, but then coaching is what I have always wanted to do and it wasn't hard work at all. I feel really grateful to be given this opportunity. Sports Structures have helped me all the way and are still there now in the background giving me support and encouraging me to go onwards.

I did my work placement in a primary school, I would go in at 12 noon to organise lunchtime play as the children really enjoyed the games and activities I came up with. In the afternoon I would assist the teachers in PE lessons, some just left me to get on with it others acted as my assistants for the lesson. I had a fantastic time and really felt at home coaching and working in the school. I also worked with the Community Football coach and in the school holidays assisted him with the football camps. I also went to Birmingham City Football club where I began to play for the reserves and also got into coaching their younger players.

In the summer holidays I worked for Ugly Bug World Limited on their 5 – 13 year olds summer camp, I was then asked to mentor on their football programme. I now work one day a week for Birmingham Sport in schools. I still volunteer at the school where I did my work placement. The children and teachers have encouraged me to think about getting my teaching qualifications and I am now working towards getting all of the entry qualifications I need to start a teaching degree next September.

All of this has come from doing the Coach Education and Support Programme; I gave 100% commitment and effort on the course and look where I am now. I am going to the first session of the new Coach Education and Support Programme to meet the new candidates, to tell them my story and to help them through the first workshop. I am glad to give my time back to the course and encourage others to become coaches and work in the industry."

Candidate 2

I was at school and looking after my young daughter before joining the Coach Education & Support Programme (CESP) in April. Football has always been my favourite sport, although I found that I am good at most sports I try and enjoy them all.

Although I enjoy sport I have not previously considered doing any sports coaching, the CESP though has provided me with a chance to try it. The CESP workshops have been really good, and showed me the issues surrounding coaching. In particular I have found the Safe-guarding and Protecting Young People workshop and the Emergency First Aid course most helpful to me.

In August, I attended a Level 1 Football course. Before attending the CESP I didn't feel I was a good talker, or had the confidence to speak in front of a group of other people. When I got on the football course, the rest of the course was made up of only men,

which I felt was really daunting. However I am really pleased with myself because I was able to speak in front of the groups on the course, and did really well. I have one more section of the course to complete but I have much more self belief now and more confidence in what I can achieve.

Growing up I always wanted to play football and even be a professional player! My Dad really encouraged me to play sport, and at primary school I did. However since my Dad passed away I've not played as much as I want. My Mum and family don't like me playing football, and would prefer I did things that were more *'girly'*. My secondary school really wanted me to go to after-school practice, and I attended once, but because of this I wasn't able to go again. I don't think I'll be able to teach my daughter football because of this either.

In the future I'd like to coach football for a while, but I want to start playing properly again myself, instead of like now, I am just playing in the house with my brother.

Candidate 3

Before I started the course I was playing rugby and helping my club coach with the junior section of our club. I have always enjoyed sport but my coach was a big influence to me and this is one of the reasons why I wanted to become involved in coaching. During this time, I was completing my final year at school and with this I was looking for a direction – the coach programme came at just the right time!

I really enjoyed the four workshops that the CESP offered. I was involved in lots of group work which was beneficial as I learnt from others but I was also allowed to share my ideas. Some of the issues and topics covered in the workshops were very useful and it has helped me to think about the way I coach.

The Rugby award was well organised and I was required to deliver coaching practices to my peers. The course covered the basic coaching practice but I also learnt new skills and the tutor was very knowledgeable.

I completed my work placement at my local rugby club and these hours have gone towards my hours that I need to complete to achieve my level 2 rugby qualification. I am due to attend the second part of my qualification in October so I hope I pass!

The barriers I have experienced whilst trying to become a coach are money and transport. The majority of national governing body courses are really expensive and without programmes like this, I would not be able to become qualified. In addition, many of the courses are not local so I have to rely on my parents/friends to take me there which is frustrating.

In the future I would like to take further coaching awards for my development. I would like to coach at a local level but I would also relish being involved in a professional set up. Since I took part in the coach programme I have been able to secure a full time position at a retail store and I have been involved in coaching at the summer Sandwell play-schemes organised by Sports Structures.

Candidate 4

Before I came on the Coach Education Programme I was in college studying Computing. I have always had an interest in sport and wanted become involved in coaching. I thought that the Sports Coach UK workshops were very beneficial. I learnt alot about the responsibilities a coach has when coaching groups of adults or young children. By doing the workshops, I feel I have a good knowledge base about coaching in general.

The level one course was really enjoyable and I liked the mixture of both practical and theory. Since then, I have completed a work placement at a local club and have coached children of different ages. Through the club I am now working as a casual assistant coach. It is very helpful as I am able to learn skills off the other coaches at the club. I really want to complete more coaching courses in the future. I would be really interested in doing a level two award. The only barrier I have come across when wanting to do the coaching courses is the cost. They are very expensive and as I do not work, I find that it is hard to finding the money to enable me to do the coaching badges. The coaching programme has given me an opportunity, of which I am grateful.

Candidate 5

Joined the Coach Education and Support Programme (CESP) in January, having seen one of Sports Structures flyers in Tipton advertising the programme.

‘When joining the CESP I was at college and was only playing tennis with friends and had occasionally helped out with coaching at my local club, but was not part of a formal set up. I was not aware of any opportunities that could take my tennis coaching further. I am very positive about the opportunities the CESP has provided me, I have particularly found useful the Safe-guarding and Protecting Young People sports coach UK workshop, where we discussed the best practice guidelines for child protection. Before joining the CESP I did not know anything about these issues at all. Now I know what to consider and how a coach should act, and I’m confident of what to do in certain situations.

Since joining the CESP, I have completed three Sports Coach UK workshops, a Level 1 tennis coaching award (which is a nationally recognised qualification organised by the LTA) and have gone on to complete a 30hour voluntary coaching placement at Tipton Tennis Academy. I really enjoyed my placement and it has shown me what I want to do full time. I have now been involved as a paid coach in the LTA County Tennis set up and worked in local schools. I’m looking forward to turning 18 years old, when I’ll be eligible to complete the LTA Level 2 tennis coaching award and further my development. With this qualification I will be able to gain more paid work at Tipton Sports Academy. I am also hopeful that the County Tennis set up will fund me to do this.

Before joining the programme, I didn’t know what was out there for me to go on and do related to tennis. I need to tell other people about this course, it has been very beneficial, it has been excellent, and I wouldn’t be doing what I am, without it. Thank you.’

Dance Mentor Programme

Kimberley Roberts

Before I started the coaching scheme I had just completed a Sports and Dance degree at University of Wolverhampton and was unsure about what next to do. I did not want to go straight into doing a PGCE after leaving University, so when I heard about the scheme I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to take.

I began to coach in October 2004 in 15 schools across the Birmingham and Sandwell area. Although I had done some teaching before, and had studied the national curriculum in my degree, this scheme gave me hands on experience in all of the key stages. I was able to teach nursery classes, up to A level classes, which was great.

In my last few months of coaching I went for an audition for ACE Dance and music company. They were so impressed with my teaching experience that they offered me a job right there and then. I began to work for ACE as an educational workshop specialist in July 2005, the day after finishing my coaching work. I was able to get this job as a result of taking part in the coaching scheme.

For the past ten months I have been travelling across the UK teaching for ACE. It has been a great experience, which might not have happened without the training on the Dance Mentor project.

Matthew Chambers

Before the course I was just finishing completing my BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts Dance which I have been doing for the past two years at Halesowen College. Also I had finished my teachers I.D.T.A exams in freestyle at Adage dance Studios for the past couple of months.

From the coaching scheme I have learnt a great deal about myself. I have learnt a lot of different teaching methods, which I have used and worked very well and can carry on using in the future. I have also learnt about the responsibilities of teaching and how many there actually are, from preparing a lesson to health and safety of the pupils.

I have used what I have been taught in my dance training to teach the pupils so they can have a better knowledge of dance.

I also feel that I have experienced and achieved something that a lot of people have not had the chance to.

I think a lot more dancers especially, should do this course because I really think it sets you up in the future you can easily get a dance job.

In September I will be moving to London to start my BA Honors in dance at the ballet and contemporary school Rambert that I will attend for 3 years to get my degree.

If I was not leaving to London the first thing would have been to apply for a teaching post in schools because I would love and will come back to teach after my degree. The coaching scheme has really inspired me to keep on teaching in the future.

Amy Greaves

Before going on the Dance Mentoring course I taught at a dance school and worked for Funki Feathers dance productions. Although I wasn't overly impressed with the teaching standard at the university I enjoyed being part of the course and it has enabled me to get work this year. Two of the schools from last year have kept me on for this year and I also have a few other schools which I am doing work at.

Before the course I was doing my dance degree at Wolverhampton University. The course has enabled me to progress and I am now doing my GTP teacher training in Dance/Drama. Thank you

Jade Haines

Before I went on the Dance Mentor course I was working for Temple Meadow School as a class room assistant and helping out within dance and PE lessons. The Dance Mentor course really helped me in many ways, teaching me the best ways of dealing with a class and how to incorporate dance into different school topics. It showed me different ways of making it fun for everyone in the class and not just for a select few. I also find lesson plans a lot easier and how to cross reference with the national curriculum. The scheme has definitely helped with improving the standard of dance within the school. Now I have completed the course I am more involved with dance in the school and less in the classroom, which is what I wanted. I am also having more input in the planning and dance styles etc that we teach the children.

Emma Brain

Before the Dance Mentoring course I worked at Woolworths. The course was very good because they combined the qualification with the work experience in the schools. I believe this is a great advantage to us and the schools receiving the coaching. Following on from the course one of the schools where I did my work experience has kept me on and I am also delivering dance classes and after school clubs to various junior schools that I have approached myself.

Vicky Cadwallader

Before the course I was working as a pastoral manager (attendance and behaviour) at George Salter High School. The school then offered me a Dance Teacher placement alongside the Dance coach scheme. Some elements of the course were extremely useful and have assisted me when teaching in schools, such as, working through schemes of work which could be used in the workplace. However, some of the sessions were completely primary school based and as I was placed in a secondary school were of very little use.

I am now a full time Dance teacher at George Salter Collegiate Academy and have worked alongside Senior Management to set up and run the Dance department. Without this qualification I would not have been able to do this

Pre-Volunteer Programme

Carol Miknenas

Before joining the Pre Volunteer Programme, Carol was volunteering on a Thursday at The Birmingham Dyslexia Association performing administration tasks. She states that she had very little confidence and had isolated herself from activities; often feeling extremely anxious about encountering new situations and working with new people. Carol was trying to find new ways to update her skills and confidence and heard about the Pre Volunteer Programme through her job centre. She was issued a flyer and made a decision to apply to get involved in a course.

Carol attended the OCN Introduction to Volunteering in November 2004. She feels that she benefited from attending the course as she generated a boost in confidence and skills. She was initially very anxious about attending but enjoyed the relaxed environment and enjoyed participating in the group activities and discussions. She expresses that she enjoyed working with the other participants due to their mixed and diverse backgrounds and enjoyed changing partners during course exercises. Carol also feels that topics within the course were useful in relation to building skills applicable to her volunteering role.

During December 2004 Carol volunteered at the Gymnastics World Cup, NIA. She worked within the VIP liaison team greeting and supporting the many VIP's who were visiting the event. Carol had expressed how nervous and anxious she was prior to the event, however, she worked through the 2 days and states that she thoroughly enjoyed the experience, in particular enjoyed working within a friendly, happy team.

After being involved with the Pre Volunteer Programme, Carol has increased her volunteering hours. She continues to support the Dyslexia Association but now also works for 3 days a week at The Cottage Hospital, Sutton. 1 day supports the Medical Secretary, 1 day supports the Ward Clerk and 1 day supports the PA to the matron. Carol now feels that she has generated more confidence to work with others and is enjoying the administration task that she undertakes at the hospital.

In the future, Carol would like to be kept informed of any major events that she may be able to assist with in a voluntary capacity.

Curtis Griffith

Curtis Griffith is originally from Barbados and he had been in the UK for 14 months before enrolling on the Pre Volunteer Programme. Curtis was looking for employment and to increase his skills, however, at this time he was not participating in any other training courses. He saw a Pre Volunteer Programme flyer displayed on a notice board along with the dates and venue of the next course and made a decision to come along on day one of the new course.

Curtis enrolled on the OCN Introduction to Volunteering Course in February 2005 and the OCN Health, Safety and Emergency Assistance/Stewarding at Public Events in June 2005. Curtis gave 100% commitment and attendance to each course. He acknowledges that although he is a naturally confident person, his confidence improved due to the fact that he met new people on each course. He feels that he benefited from learning from other participants on the course in relation to new cultures, religions and UK politics.

Curtis also volunteered at a number of local and international sports events. These included the Yonex Badminton Championships 2005, The Birmingham Youth Games and The Junior Wheelchair Basketball World Championships 2005. Curtis thoroughly enjoyed these experiences and has identified that that was specifically due to him to building good relationships and making new friends at the events. At the Wheelchair Basketball Championships Curtis was a team chaperone to the Canadian Junior team. His support and friendship to the team has resulted in him keeping in contact with them and now has an invitation to go and visit them in Canada.

As a keen basketball player Curtis was referred from the Pre Volunteer Programme to the Coach Education Programme where he completed his Level 1 Basketball Coach Qualification.

After being involved in the Pre Volunteer Programme training and event volunteering, Curtis was introduced to the Birmingham Basketball Sports Development Officer. From this point, Curtis became involved in supporting some existing basketball coaches, coaching young people at a variety of venues. His commitment and support was much appreciated that funding was sourced for Curtis to complete his Level 2 Coaching Qualification. From this point he was able to coach unassisted and was successfully recruited to the Birmingham Casual Coach Pool where his coaching hours are financially supported.

Curtis now coaches approximately 9 hours per week to a variety of under 16's. He also travels around the country coaching and supporting the teams at a variety of tournaments. He is quick to explain that his teams of young people are quickly developing in skill and confidence and their overall performance is improving. Curtis has indicated that he would like to continue volunteering at sports events whenever the need arises as long as he can fit it around his coaching arrangements. Through attending a Sports Pathways job club and being supported by the Programme Manager Curtis was successful in his application to become West Bromwich Albion's Basketball Community Sports Coach.

Transitions through Sport

Laura Brown

Laura completed the JSLA, with Transition Through Sport. This was after a very long debate on whether or not she should be allowed to stay on the programme due to her behaviour and the impact that it was having on the other members of the group. Fortunately Laura turned it around and became one of the most improved members of the group.

Prior to this Laura did not engage in any other activities that she was put forward for. Her mother told us that this was the only programme that she had got out of bed for. At the end of the JSLA Laura stated that she was glad that I had the confidence in her to allow her to complete the course and that she had learned from the experience.

Laura was then referred onto the CLSA, where she excelled, not just in her performance but behaviour and referring others to the course. Although very verbal and confident, Laura had moments where she had to be reminded of her reasons for being on the course.

There were times when others went AWOL and Laura would call to ensure that they turn up at the programme. On the Away day and residential, Laura performed exceptionally well and was voted by all staff as most outstanding young person. Laura has also signed up with Millennium Volunteers with Cedar Projects

Laura would like to work with young people doing outdoor activities or with young people with learning difficulties or disabilities. Laura, since completing the CSLA has been referred onto Princes Trust and is awaiting a start date, she has also been referred onto the XLR8 programme to continue to engage, motivate, build confidence and learn new skills and move forward into college in September

Laura says

"I am thankful for Connexions and whilst working with Dave and Sarah I have been able to change myself not getting into trouble. They have let me see that there are other ways than getting into trouble, I hope to go on to do better things with my life"

Referrers' comments:

"My young person has been out of school for three years, he completed the course and a placement, he gained loads of confidence, made new friends and has even decided to go back to college to get some other qualifications."

" Has really gained confidence he can't wait to come every week ..."

"How many people can I refer for each course? This would really suit some of our young people."

"He has shown loads of interest, which normally fades after a while, do you do any other courses? He has really enjoyed the course."

"Before, the school wouldn't allow ... to participate on the course, but they have seen the results with ... before he joined the school and now, said they would allow the young person to attend, it just shows you."

"It's given them the confidence to seek for employment and extra training and qualifications".

"The referral process is easy and communication with the project leader very useful"

"Not only have they gained confidence and new skills, the young people have used the new skills to gain and progress in personal development"

"The programme motivated my young people, which developed confidence and provided them with access to provision which due to his status, access to other provision is limited"

"It's changed the mindset of some of my young people"

"They see themselves as role models"

"The young people have come back into school with a positive attitude, even working towards exams"

Young People's comments:

"It was really good fun to work with Claire and Tracey because they are kind and helpful and always very supportive. The course is very enjoyable."

"I thought it was just about football but it wasn't and I think I enjoyed it more because of the different activities."

"THANK YOU, THANK YOU!"

"I really enjoyed the residential weekend. I am going to start swimming lessons soon. Thank you for all your help and support you gave me."

"I used up a lot of negative energy."

"I think I am doing better in school thanks to TTS".

"I learned to keep my patience more. I try my hardest not to distract people in lessons and not to be confrontational".

"I think my behaviour has got better, because I have the confidence to talk to people before I didn't and sometimes this got me in to trouble".

"I knew if I stuck my mind to it and did well on the course I could get something to be proud off".

"The staff helped me a lot".

"I can speak freely in front of people and I am not so argumentative"