
Sport and the Unemployment Emergency

Request for Submissions

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Contents

1. Overview of call for submissions.....	1
2. Background and context	2
3. Objectives and focus	3
4. Timelines.....	6
5. Submissions, questions and further information	6
6. Overview of the Sport for Development Coalition	6
7. Sport and Employability Group	7

1. Overview of call for submissions

- 1.1 The Sport for Development Coalition is working with partners in the employment and skill development fields to assess and strengthen the contribution that sport for development, sport and physical activity can make in response to the employment challenges exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. To support this objective the Coalition is requesting submissions of case studies, learning and evidence on:

‘Enhancing education, employment and training ‘in’ and ‘through’ sport in a post-covid landscape’.

- 1.2 Submissions that focus on the following areas are requested:

- Priority area 1: The experience of sport for development, sport and physical activity stakeholders of engaging with Government and third sector initiatives to support skill development and employment outcomes.
- Priority area 2: The contribution that working ‘in’, and ‘through’, sport has made to skill development and employment outcomes.
- Priority area 3: Mainstreaming equity and addressing inequalities ‘in’ and ‘through’ sport for employability initiatives and programmes.

Please see Section 3.10 of this document for detailed questions and potential focus areas under each of these priority areas, including an outline of a specific request for submissions that privilege the diverse lived experiences and insights of young people.

- 1.3 Submissions received will inform a report and briefing which will set out recommendations for Government, third sector funders and employers on enhancing the employment and skill development outcomes that can be delivered ‘in’ the sport and physical activity sector, and ‘through’ sport for development approaches (that is, using sport-based methodology as a tool to support employability and skill development outcomes relevant across multiple sectors).
- 1.4 The audience for the paper and policy brief extends beyond the sport and physical activity sector with a particular focus on policy makers and officials (national and local government), third sector organisations and funders, employers and mainstream media.
- 1.5 Please make submissions or address questions and requests for further information to the Sport for Development Coalition at: coalition@sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org
- 1.6 New submissions are requested to be limited to 2500 words.
- 1.7 Submissions are requested by **17th September 2021.**

2. Background and Context

- 2.1 Covid-19 has had a profound and far-reaching impact on the country. The health emergency, wellbeing crisis and economic shock brought on by the virus and associated lockdowns have created the most significant societal challenge for generations and exacerbated many deep-rooted inequalities.
- 2.2 The effect of the pandemic on employment, economic participation, education and training across the UK has been substantial, particularly for young people. In the 12 months up to March 2021, over 800,000 jobs were lost, with 54 per cent of these young people.¹ Overall there was 2.3 percentage point increase in youth unemployment to 14.4% and a 2.6 percentage point decrease in the number of young people in employment over 2020 to 51.9%.²
- 2.3 Long-term unemployment has also increased. Over the last year the number of young people out of work for six months or more has risen by 50%.³ More than one in four young people (26%) surveyed by the Prince’s Trust at the end of 2020 said they had felt unable to cope with life since the start of the pandemic, increasing to 40% of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Research released by Youth Employment UK reported that one in two (48%) NEET young people can’t see an end to their unemployment.⁴
- 2.4 The most recent economic figures released by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport estimate that almost 570,000 people are employed in the sport and physical activity sector.⁵ But insight produced by the Chartered Institute of Management of Sport and Physical

Activity showed that a fifth of the workforce they surveyed over the pandemic period have had to find alternative work to replace or supplement their current job while just 12% feel their future income is fully sustainable.⁶

- 2.5 Both leading up to, and during the pandemic, a number of employment, training and skill development organisations, charities and social enterprises deployed sport-themed methodology to support employment and skills development outcomes, particularly for people facing additional barriers to entering the labour market.⁷
- 2.6 Among the mechanisms employed in this work are to use the ‘hook’ of sport to engage people at risk of long-term unemployment in personalised support programmes; linking employment-focus mentoring, training and accreditation opportunities to sport-based programmes; use sport-based learning to develop interpersonal skills; and leveraging the social networks that can be built around sporting opportunities to enhance participants’ development.
- 2.7 Example of the outcomes reported by organisations utilising sport-based approaches to support employment outcomes across the UK include:
 - Over 60% of participants in [Empire Fighting Chance’s intensive careers programme](#) progressed into education, employment or training, utilising a pioneering approach which harnesses boxing while more than 80% of their wider cohort had improved employability skills.
 - More than 70% of participants in [Premiership Rugby’s HITZ employability programme](#) go on to achieve a positive progression into further education, training or employment.
 - 90% of the most recent cohort support by [Leadership Through Sport and Business](#) completed the first year of their apprenticeship placement.
 - 77% of young people that progress through [Sport 4 Life’s NEET service](#) move into employment.
 - [Street League](#) helped 1,100 young people into work, apprenticeships and training last year, from 2105 who started in their programmes over the last year.
 - For every £1 invested, the [Change Foundation’s Street Elite](#) programme generates £10.72 in social value over three years, through economic benefits, human capital gains, avoided Exchequer costs and wellbeing improvements among programme participants. This equates to Street Elite generating £3.76million of social value through the last two years of the programme.
 - [Coach Core](#) has consistently placed over 90% of young people not in education, employment and training involved in their programmes into jobs/further education since 2012.

3. Objectives and Focus

- 3.1 In this context, the Sport for Development Coalition is seeking to assess the contribution that sport for development, sport and physical activity can make in response to the employment challenges exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 3.2 To support this objective the Coalition is requesting submissions to inform a report and policy brief titled:

‘Enhancing education, employment and training ‘in’ and ‘through’ sport in a post-Covid landscape’.

- 3.3 The primary focus of the report and policy brief is to set out recommendations on enhancing employment and skill development outcomes delivered ‘in’ the sport and physical activity sector, and ‘through’ sport for development approaches, that is using sport as a tool to support employability outcomes relevant across sectors.
- 3.4 The report and policy brief will particularly focus on the role of sport and sport-themed interventions in helping to address barriers people face accessing employment and skill development opportunities and networks, sustaining quality employment, and under employment.
- 3.5 Submissions that consider the inequitable impact of the pandemic across different communities and groups are especially requested, with a particular focus on age, ethnicity, disability and long-term health conditions, geography, and economic status.
- 3.6 The focus is particularly important given rises in income inequalities between richer and poorer households, socio-economic inequalities in education and skills, and intergenerational inequalities seen as a result of the pandemic.
- 3.7 Submissions that include, but extend beyond presenting previous case studies, evidence and research on sport, employment and skill development outcomes are encouraged. Submissions that examine responses to the pandemic and consider the medium to long-term implications of Covid-19 on employment and skills development, and the role of sport for development approaches and the sport and physical activity sector in this context are especially sought.
- 3.8 It is envisaged the report and policy brief will present a balanced view on the role sport for development, sport and physical activity can play to support employment outcomes in a post-Covid landscape and will not position sport-themed approaches as a ‘panacea’ or fix-all approach.
- 3.9 The audience for the paper and policy brief extends beyond the sport and physical activity sector with a particular focus on policy makers and officials (national and local government), third sector organisations and funders, employers and mainstream media.
- 3.10 Submissions should address the following area:

Priority area 1: The experience of sport for development, sport and physical activity stakeholders of engaging with government and third sector initiatives to support skill development and employment outcomes.

Submissions are requested that provide insight, case studies and evidence on one, or a combination of the following focus areas:

- the contribution to the levelling-up agenda of employment and skill development focused work 'in' or 'through' the sport and physical sector.
- the experience of sport for development, sport and physical activity organisations engaging with Government offers such as the Opportunity Guarantee and Kickstart programme.
- the experience of sport for development, sport and physical activity organisations engaging with wider Third Sector funding, employability initiatives and training provision; and vice versa.
- the experiences of young people on Kickstart; what have the benefits been, will they be sustained and what happens in December when the scheme ends.
- the experience of training and skill development partners, both sport and non-sport, in supporting employment and skill development outcome 'in' or 'through' sport and physical activity.
- the input of young people across each of these focus areas.

Focus areas 2: The contribution that working 'in', and 'through', sport has made to skill development and employment outcomes.

Submissions are requested that provide insight, case studies and evidence on one, or a combination of the following focus areas:

- the design, delivery and evaluation of sport-based employability and skill development programmes, ranging from theory of change and holistic programme design, alignment with wider employment and skill development frameworks, to the use of different sports or intervention activities with different groups and in different contexts.
- partnerships between sport for development organisation and corporate supporters, both as programme partners and avenues to support employment pathways and outcomes.
- the experience of young people who have progressed with employers or in employment, following involvement in sport-based interventions.
- wider outcomes that can be supported alongside employability and skill development results when using sport-based approaches (e.g health and wellbeing).
- effectively monitoring and evaluating the impact of sport-based employability programmes, including, but not limited to, the social return on investment (SROI).
- the specific experience of sports organisations seeking to support employability outcomes, and/or employability organisations that have introduced sport-based interventions.
- challenges and issues in deploying sport-based employment or skill development interventions.
- the input of young people across each of these focus areas.

Priority area 3: Mainstreaming equity and addressing inequalities in and through sport and employability initiatives and programmes.

Submissions are requested that provide insight, case studies and evidence on one, or a combination of the following focus areas:

- addressing inequalities ‘in’ sport-based employment and ‘through’ sport-based employability and skill development programmes.
- the experience and insight of organisations using sport-based approaches to support people from disadvantaged backgrounds, both in relation to outcomes achieved and effectiveness as well as key issues and challenges.
- the lived experience of people from diverse backgrounds of involvement in sport-based interventions aimed at supporting employment and skill development outcomes.
- the experience and insights of employers who have employed young people from diverse backgrounds supported through sport-based employment and skill development programmes.
- utilising sport-based interventions across the life cycle to support employment and skill development outcomes.
- ensuring a wider diversity of lived experience informs programme and intervention design and challenges common perceptions in employability and skill development interventions.
- the input of young people across each of these focus areas.

4. Timelines

4.1 Submissions are requested by 17th September 2021.

5. Submissions, questions and further information

5.1 Please make submissions or address questions and requests for further information to the Sport for Development Coalition at: coalition@sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org

6. Overview of the Sport for Development Coalition

6.1 The [Sport for Development Coalition](#) is a network of over 200 organisations that use sport and physical activity to generate positive social outcomes. The Coalition mobilises collective action to measure the impact of sport for development at scale, support the creation of an enabling policy environment, and unlock investment and resources to help realise the potential of community sport and physical activity to contribute to positive social change.

6.2 The Coalition is made up of a diverse group of organisations including sporting bodies, community organisations, social enterprises, charities, and aligned sector networks and support organisations. The Coalition is supported by Sport England, Comic Relief and Laureus Sport for Good.

6.3 In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Coalition has been facilitating the [‘Adapt, Support, Respond’](#) initiative which aims to understand how community sport and sport for development organisations have adapted their services to continue to support individuals and communities

at this time, and how they can best play their part in the nation's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. This request for proposals is part of this initiative.

7. Sport and Employability Group

7.1 The Coalition's Sport and Employability Group is managing this initiative. The Group is made up of the following sport and employment organisations within the Coalition and their partners in the employment and skill development fields:

- AOC (Association of Colleges)
- Change Foundation
- CoachCore
- EFL Trust
- Leadership Through Sport & Business
- London Youth
- Premiership Rugby
- Sport 4 Life
- Sports Leaders UK
- StreetGames
- Street League
- University of Bath
- Youth Employment UK

Notes

¹ [Labour market overview, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

² [Coronavirus and changing young people's labour market outcomes in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

³ [Labour Market Statistics: April 2021 - Youth Employment UK](https://ons.gov.uk)

⁴ [The Prince's Trust Tesco Youth Index 2021.](https://www.princestrust.org.uk)

⁵ [Labour Market Statistics: April 2021 - Youth Employment UK](https://ons.gov.uk)

⁶ [DCMS Sector Economic Estimates: Employment Oct 2019 - Sep 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

⁷ <https://www.cimspa.co.uk/cimspa-news/workforce-insight#LMI>

⁸ See: [Study on the contribution of sport to the employability of young people in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance); and [Sport and Employability Report | National Alliance of Sport](https://www.allianceofsport.org)