

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Aspire programme is targeted to engage, motivate and enhance learning and employment opportunities for 'disengaged' individuals and those requiring specialist educational support. Aspire utilises the medium of sport and physical activity to help learners develop skills in communication, group working and leadership – all of which are structured to enhance employability prospects. Further, individuals derive a deep understanding of health, nutrition and the role of physical activity as part of a positive lifestyle.

KEY OUTCOMES

- To provide a structured educational and social framework for 'disengaged' individuals and those requiring additional support which raises self esteem and aspiration.
- To provide a structured platform whereby individuals can improve skills within communication, planning and reflection within an inclusive, non threatening environment.
- To increase employability skills through a sequential learning process culminating in the attainment of recognised qualifications that demonstrate leadership, team cohesion and organisational capabilities.
- To provide a minimum of two hours per week of physical activity with the objective of improving individual health and fitness.

Throughout the programme students will be required to undertake specific qualifications which closely relate to content as previously described. All qualifications are vocational in nature and the primary method of assessment through practical engagement. Pupils will be expected to undertake an element of theory-based activity in order to complete each qualification.

Current qualifications available include:

Level 2 Principal Learning in Sport and Active Leisure

BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in Sport (QCF) – awarded by Edexcel

Level 1 Principal Learning in Sport and Active Leisure

NVQ Sport & Active Leisure (QCF) – awarded by 1st4Sport

Level 1 & 2 Award in Sport Leadership (QCF) – awarded by Sports Leaders UK

Level 2 Award in Multi Skills (QCF) – awarded by 1st4sport

Functional Skills – Maths, English, ICT – awarded by Edexcel

NB – additional qualifications may be included in the programme based on the motivational and logistical requirements of learners, and subject to funding criteria.

EVIDENCE OF OUTCOMES

The Sport Works Aspire Initiative was first launched in April 2009 as part of South Tyneside Council's strategic objective to enhance Alternative Education provision within Secondary Schools. Subsequently, the programme has been established in several other Local Authorities throughout the UK.

A robust assessment of the programme has been conducted annually since 2009, highlighting the following impact:

- Individual pupil attendance within school increased by 30%
- The number of pupils registered onto GCSE (or equivalent) examinations increased by 21%*
- 'Significant' improvements within pupil attitude, commitment and interpersonal skills reported by Senior Management
- Fewer incidences of 'aggressive' or intimidating behaviour reported by Senior Management
- Self reported improvements in confidence, communicatory skills and employability prospects (pupil self assessment)
- Pass rate over 80% within sport specific qualifications

IMPACT

The Aspire Programme can be tailored to a wide range of pupils. From 1-1 provision for young people leaving the Youth Offending Service to Secondary School pupils who have disengaged from their regular timetable, Aspire caters for a wide range of learner needs. Here follows two examples of young people who have benefited from Aspire:

1) A mainstream secondary school approached Sport Works regarding a 14-year-old pupil who had experienced severe bullying throughout his school career. Subsequently he had disengaged from the mainstream school timetable, presented with challenging behavior towards staff with attendance levels approaching 60% of what they should have been.

With no intention of engaging in school and minimal parental support, our Head Tutor designed a personal programme which involved weekly visits to the local public gym and sports centre. The pupil completed two qualifications within the space of one academic year, which included ten hours of sports leadership and coaching to a group of young disabled children.

As a result of the one-year intervention, the pupil not only gained sufficient grades to be accepted to his local college, but also developed a new commitment and enjoyment for learning. He is currently in his second year of a Foundation Degree studying to become a PE Teacher, with 97% attendance levels!

2) Another project involved three learners aged 14-16 from the local Youth Offenders Institute who were deemed too high risk for integrating within mainstream education or the local Pupil Referral Unit. All three learners were 'on licence' and previously had been housed at a young persons' prison for offences including robbery and violent behaviour.

Sport Works was commissioned to provide a highly engaging programme incorporating not only Physical Education lessons, but also Math's and English with staff ratios of 1:2. Our tutors designed a multi faceted programme that included access to local gymnasiums, outward-bound activities and opportunities for providing sports coaching to younger children.

All learners completed a level one qualification in Sports Leadership and are currently working towards the level two award plus 'functional skill' qualifications in English and Math's. The students also expressed a great interest in applying their skills practically, therefore, our tutors arranged a number of work placement opportunities to provide real life experiences of working in schools, leisure centres and public gymnasiums.

Whilst all three learners remain vulnerable and require close staff supervision, attendance rates are consistently above 80% and all are on target to complete all qualifications within their designated timescale. Even more importantly, the learners have developed social skills and successfully engage with adults and children within community settings and demonstrate exemplary behaviors and positive attitudes.