

BRISTOL CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POSITIVE ACTIVITIES GRANT

2023-24





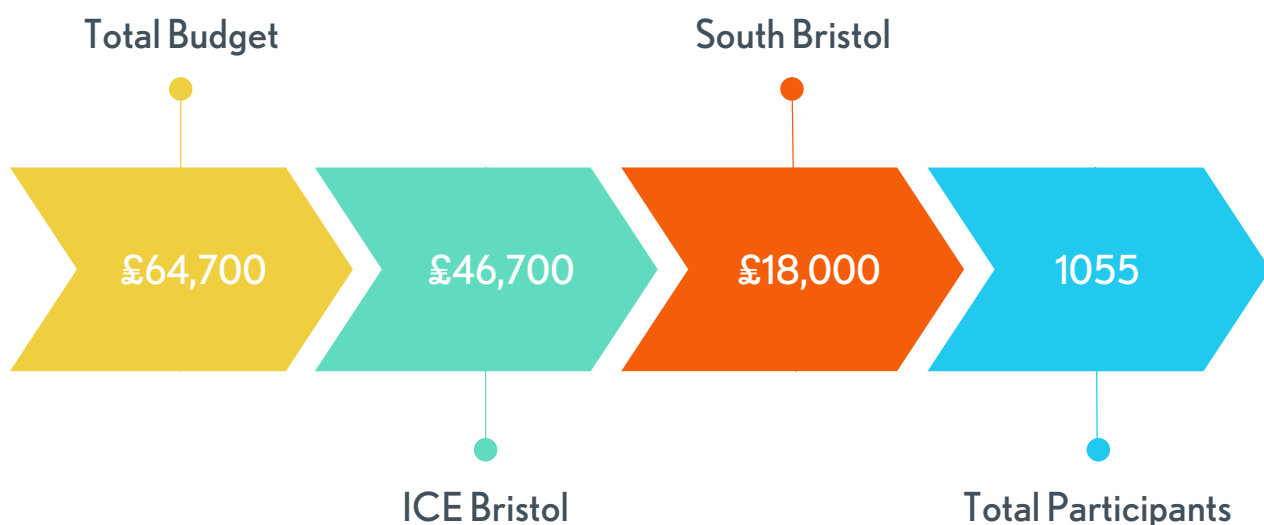
About The Project

Wesport were appointed by the Inner City and East (ICE) Bristol and South Bristol Locality Health Partnerships to manage this one-off Positive Activities Grants process. Whilst we know many factors contribute to both healthy weight and good mental health, we want to build on the natural capacity that exists across our communities and empower communities to identify and realise their own solutions.

The aim of the fund has been to address health inequalities in children and young people by supporting positive activities that can contribute to improved healthy weight and mental health outcomes. The focus for the projects in the two localities were:

- Inner City and East Bristol projects focussed on improving mental health outcomes through positive activities.
- South Bristol projects focussed on supporting healthy weight through positive activities.

The desire has been to provide funding that can explore a range of initiatives and interventions at varying levels that can support positive health outcomes across local communities. This includes projects with a focus on physical activity and movement, engagement in arts, culture, and nature, and initiatives to encourage healthy eating or a combination of all.



The reports from the various projects have been provided by the lead organisations.

Inner City & East Bristol Locality

Bristol City Robins Foundation



ROBINS
FOUNDATION

- Age range: 6-16 years old
- Investment: £5629.00
- Participants: 53

Delivering in St Paul's, we delivered weekly Thursday and Friday group sessions with the focus of improving football skills, promoting healthier lifestyles, and developing young people's attitude in a sporting environment. These female-only sessions took place on Thursdays for 12-16 year olds and Fridays for those aged 6-11. One success of the sessions resulted in 4 of our young people from the Thursday sessions volunteering their time on the Friday sessions.

Grace Phillips, Women and Girls Lead at The Robins Foundation said:



We had a participant begin attending on the Thursday sessions. She was very punctual, would never miss a session, and held good conversations with peers, and the coaching staff.

When participating we asked if she would like to take a volunteer role at the Friday sessions to support with the younger aged participants and help with behaviour management and collect equipment etc. She was extremely helpful to the lead coach and it was beneficial she knew some of the participants, but also made sure to build positive relationships with those that she didn't know.

She became very good in engaging with the young girls and helping to create a positive and happy environment for them. When speaking with this participant we spoke about how excited for her future she is and how we'll hope to keep her volunteering and developing.

We said that if she carries on volunteering, when she's old enough, we'll be able to help her access coaching qualifications and she can coach properly and get paid. She is very excited for her future, and we are too.





Bristol Somali Youth Voice

- Age range: 15-20 years old
- Investment: £10,180.00
- Participants: 380



We work very closely with most disadvantaged community groups including young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. These groups were impacted during and after the pandemic so we are familiar with how covid-19 and the current cost of living crisis have affected them. To inform this work, we have conducted 3 consultation sessions before this project with potential participants to co-design the project activities so this enhancement of the project can reflect the need of the community groups that we work with.

The activities included basketball, football, outdoor activities, and educational workshops. We delivered sessions based around a workshop model, to educate participants about mental health, and provide information, guidance, and knowledge about available mental health services and normalising mental health issues. We also gave a safe space for young people to talk about the issues that they face. We promote positive socialisations, friendship during sessions, and inspire young people to be active, healthy and lead a law abiding life.

One participant from the sessions commented:



We are family of seven people living in a 2 bedroom flat, I often find it difficult to stay at home, it is overcrowded, there is not enough space for all of us. I try to avoid staying at home, this sometimes forces me to mingle with the wrong crowd, hanging out with strangers, standing on street corners. I don't like it, the streets are not easy, a lot of parents don't know what is in the streets.

Being involved in your sessions has been very positive, it gives me an opportunity to engage in exercise, play football and meet new friends, it also created space to showcase myself. I love sport, and participating in your sessions significantly contributed to my confidence and wellbeing, it brought smile back to my face, made friends, we talk about sports after sessions, acknowledging everyone's strength. I hope you could continue this, this built my confidence and resilience.



Creative Youth Network

- Age range: 15-20 years old
- Investment: £7392.00
- Participants: 243

CREATIVE
YOUTH
NETWORK.

The young people who attend our Welcome Wednesday and Thursday sessions are some of the most vulnerable and isolated young people in our city. 90% of attendees are unaccompanied minors, most from Afghanistan and Sudan, as well as Syria, Eritrea, and Iran. Mental health is the biggest concern.

Whilst they tackle their own mental health issues and come to terms with their significant losses, they face a lonely responsibility navigating a complex, unfamiliar environment, and new culture. Often, they are experiencing PTSD. The stress of the immigration process is making young people ill. Our sessions provide a safe and welcoming space, offering food (cooked together during the session), music and games, alongside English support and specialist advice and support.

With more and more young refugees and asylum seekers arriving at our door, we have had to increase our capacity to respond and continue to deliver these sessions. The activities delivered have been identified by our Young Leaders Group – young refugees and asylum seekers attending our sessions who wanted to use their lived experience to bring about positive change for other refugees and asylum seekers. They have described the issues compromising their mental health and explained some of the barriers they face in accessing mental health support.

Activities through this funded work included: pool, table tennis, table football, PlayStation, board games, card games, music and cooking.

We were able to deliver 38 sessions and below is a snapshot of the story of one of our participants:



This young person is an asylum seeker and was originally aged incorrectly so was unable to access any support as a child seeking asylum. He started coming to the Welcome sessions every week (twice a week). In the early days, he lacked confidence in communicating with others (adults and other young people) and he would just sit on the sofa by himself. Over time as he built friendships with others in the sessions and trusted relationships with the youth workers. We have seen an improvement to his mental health during the sessions. He now smiles, interacts with both young people and adults, practices his English, and plays games.

The support of a youth worker has also helped him to access additional support in navigating issues with the financial support he receives from the Home Office, connected him to other sporting activities and gym membership, provided a bus pass and contributed evidence for the review of his age assessment which has helped to improve stability and support for him.





Off The Record

- Age range: 11-25 years old
- Investment: £7829.00
- Participants: 276



Our Community Partnerships Programme (CPP) is designed to offer increased choice of early intervention support for young people who have an identified low level mental health need (e.g. anxiety and depression). The programme is informed by social prescribing and is delivered along three strands proven to improve mental health and wellbeing: Sports, Art, and Nature. Our young people can access quality, informal, and engaging therapeutic support in community settings. We deliver our support alongside specialist partners who are simultaneously upskilled in providing sustainable, holistic mental health advice and signposting to participants. Activities range from one-off sessions, projects and continuous “drop in” spaces. This funding allowed us to deliver 140 sessions.

We have managed to prioritise reducing barriers for young people who would normally find it more difficult to access support. This has included providing travel costs on occasion, and offering groups within wider community settings. We have also focussed on delivering projects with partners already working in localised communities. This has enabled us to respond directly to the needs of specific areas, embed ourselves in trusted relationships, and focus on a ‘place-based’ approach, including:

- Co-Exist Community Kitchen
- Southmead Development Trust
- Henleaze Lake
- Trinity Centre
- Urban Uprising

One participant from the sessions commented:



I feel less lonely than I used to. I can talk to people now. I also feel more confident because I feel safe. Safety is really important to me. I know I won't be judged. Particularly when it comes to speaking. I feel relaxed, able to be myself for the first time in a while.



Trinity Community Arts

- Age range: 0-25 years old
- Investment: £7990
- Participants: 18



This funding has given us an opportunity to hone our focus when using Trinity's Garden space for the Nature Play after school club, ensuring local children have access to green space in the city and experience play in nature. The funding has ensured a quality delivery of 21 sessions by our facilitators, who consistently provide safe and engaging sessions for young people to spend more time in green spaces and access a sense of agency in spontaneous play and child-led and co-created nature activities.

One of the participants has been focussed on as a case study:



They have shown great progress in their confidence. When they started attending the sessions, mum stayed with them as they watched the group from the side lines. After investing some time getting to know the person and with some gentle encouragement, they were happy for mum to leave and to try group activities, being given the space to sit out and watch if they wanted. A few weeks into the sessions and the young person is helping with activities, leading their own play and, with encouragement, coming up with their own ideas for games etc.



Project not yet delivered

The APE Project, £7,680 – Weekly multi-play project.

- The APE Project CIC run the St Pauls Adventure Playground. Unfortunately the playground has been closed for a number of months. The project was originally due to run from July 23 - March 24. This did not happen and permission was given for the project to run from Spring 2024. At this time, the project has not started but the funding is being held for them to access when they are ready.



South Bristol Locality

Greater Brislington Together

- Age range: 6-70+ years old
- Investment: £800.00
- Participants: 35



The aim of the project was to deliver walking photographic tours of local green spaces. The 4 sessions encouraged physical activity and connection with local green spaces to give a sense of place identity.

Leaders from the sessions commented:



We are now talking to several parks groups across Bristol about running workshops. We have had a director be in touch and want to take us under their wing (mentoring offer from Triodos bank), as we develop our workshops as a possible part of corporate volunteering days with park groups. As well as our current, we have 3 further people we have trained up to volunteer to run photography walks or regular groups



A participant from the sessions also commented:



I've brought my daughter and 2 of her friends, it gets us out of the house and they are not just taking selfies with their phones





We Are More After School Club

- Age range: 0 years old and up
- Investment: £5000.00
- Participants: 80



Due to limitations in our community to access free activities for all ages and for the whole family to attend, as well as the history of all round bad health, it has been a prevalent time to give back to the community. I attend monthly meetings with the Knowle West Alliance working group where I get to hear about the help that's being given to my community, yet still my community are too proud to take handouts. I am the Voluntary Coordinator for Springfield Community Allotments - we have vegetables but yet we can't sell them locally - so I had to look at what I thought could work and I thought what better way than using this space to allow the whole family to come along help them to connect to nature for their wellbeing with our nature craft activities, grow produce, and help cook together. This way, people can eat healthily and our care givers get that confidence when it comes to cooking and preparing food. We also have a set time in our session where we do homework and offer peer support to our care givers who haven't always gone to school get that help to help their child/children.

We were able to deliver 36 sessions and staff from the sessions commented:



We have a lady that walks all the way from Hartcliffe to be part of the group, she has four children who all at some point have been part of the group, although now she comes to the group on her own because it is her only form of support - she said "I have, nowhere else to go, that makes me feel wanted, appreciated and safe" We have another lady who comes along with her son and says "It's amazing what community can do for you, this is the only time we get to be out of the house and concentrate on our relationship, with feeling we have the support of our friends and not needing to worry about where the money for Mondays dinner is going to come from, I suffer with complex needs and you make us feel so safe"



Windmill Hill City Farm

- Age range: 6 months and up
- Investment: £6200.00
- Participants: 70



Funding allowed us the opportunity to deliver 17 sessions at Hartcliffe City Farm, for families to access fresh produce, animals, and cooking whilst being in green spaces to allow for a sense of calmness and well-being. The content of our sessions included cooking as a family, picking vegetables, and sharing meals in order to establish healthy eating habits.

One of the staff members from the sessions commented:



We had a mum who said she never had a meal without meat and that with a family of 5 it was so expensive. So we made wraps with hummus and a selection of veg which she ate and her daughter tried things. We then cooked a curry with sweet potato and lentils that she said was “better than a take away and OK without meat!” She said she would try to cook it at home.



Young Bristol

- Age range: 6-16 years old
- Investment: £6000.00
- Participants: 35



Through the relationship with Wesport, we have been able to introduce a number of young people to new sports and provide them with a healthy snack item. It has also allowed us to identify sports which young people are interested to do more of and which young people may be able to take part in the sport outside of club sessions. We were able to provide 24 sessions to support the young people we work with.

An observation of one of our young people is summarised below:



One of the young people attended the youth club sessions but tended to stay inside and not engage much. Over the weeks of the sports programme they actively engaged more in the outside activities on the court. The staff were able to see the young person choosing to take part in sport activities rather than just being inside. They could see a young person becoming more confident in taking part in different activities that they would not normally engage in.





Conclusion

This Impact Report clearly shows the positive effect that physical activity, art, nature activities and good nutrition has on mental and physical wellbeing. Working with, and through, local trusted organisations ensures the funding has reached those in greatest need. A number of the wide range of activities has seen involvement not just from young people but from the whole family.

There is clearly a need for further funding to support this community place based work to build on the impact that this funding has been able to facilitate so far.

This view is supported by the following quotes from providers and participants:

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The funding supplied by Wesport has ensured a quality delivery of sessions by our facilitators, who consistently provide safe and engaging sessions for young people

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“

The support I have had from Wesport has been great. Going forward, the support I'd like [from locality partnerships] would be more opportunity to progress our projects or continued support

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“

You've helped me grow into the person I am today. Before, I would have never imagined with how super shy and anxious I was. I've feel like I've gained so much confidence and happiness from all this, and I feel like it's made me a much better person. I genuinely wouldn't be doing a lot of the things I am now if it wasn't for these sessions.

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