



Department
for Work &
Pensions

REFOCUS SUMMER PROJECT



Report Produced by Active Essex Foundation
Sports and Youth Crime Prevention
Programme.

August 2024

CONTENTS PAGE

Overview	»»»	03
The programme	»»»	04
Data insight	»»»	05
The need for the project	»»»	08
Provider and Agency	»»»	09
Feedback	»»»	10
Young person Feedback	»»»	10
Summary and next steps	»»»	11



OVERVIEW

The Refocus summer project funded by Police Fire Crime Commissioner (PFCC) to enable the Colchester Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Team to work in partnership with Active Essex Foundation (AEF) Sports and Youth Crime Prevention project team and Changing Lives sports and mentor coaches to provide a two-week (8-day) intensive and targeted programme in Colchester for young people aged between 14- 18 years old.

The project focussed on engaging and working with young people who may otherwise struggle to join the labour market or are not currently reaching their full educational potential and/or young people who had or were leaving formal education and at risk or already classified as NEET (Not In Education, Employment or Training).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Summer Refocus aimed to increase young people's knowledge, skills and equip them to return to education, ready to learn and/or gain future entry into employment, training or apprenticeships by providing an early intervention programme and support to help reduce current or future NEET figures. The project uses a sports plus provision to also create positive physical and mental health. All of which will result in a future cost saving to the national 'purse' and statutory agencies, with more young people are 'work ready' and less likely to struggle with poor mental health, needing benefit support or in low paid employment. As referenced in the 2023 Youth Futures research which ["identifies the key risk factors for young people becoming NEET". \(youthfuturesfoundation.org\)](https://www.youthfuturesfoundation.org).

SNAPSHOT OF ATTENDANCE

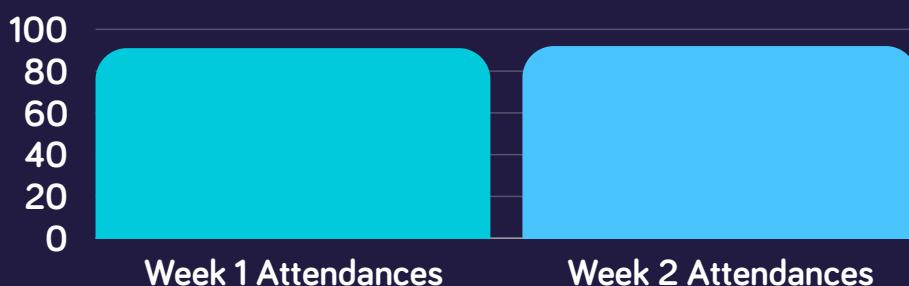
Over the two weeks (8 days of provision), a high number of young people remained engaged and returning daily to take part in the interactive and educational sessions and activities.

23

Number of young people who participated

183

Total number of attendances



THE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES



- Each session commenced with a 'check-in' how are you feeling today' to ensure young people could share their feelings, worries or concerns and receive peer support and professionals support.
- Session one focussed on creating a positive, safe and welcoming environment with young people involved in discussions on how this could be achieved. The aim was to bring in skills and learning around team work, collaboration and communication.

One to one and group sessions were built-into the daily programme to enable young people to work as a team discussing careers, further education, qualifications needed, how to achieve this, and any barriers and challenges some young people face.

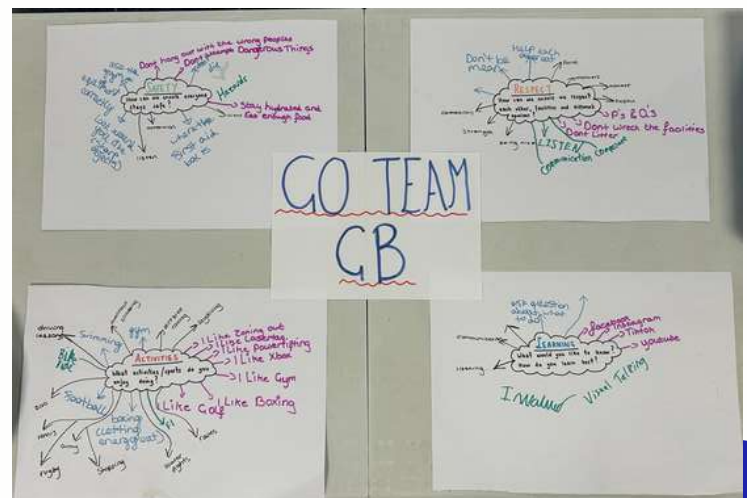
Focussed sessions included:

- How to create a CV, personal statement
- Preparing for interviews/ meetings when seeking volunteering roles, further education or employment.
- Types of training courses and support available.

- Each session included choices for young people to take part in various activities including: boxing, gym sessions, circuit training, football along with opportunities to access Changing Lives music, film hub and their beauty training area.
- All activities were provided by experienced sports and mentoring coaches who have experience of working with young people with challenging behaviours and/or complex needs.

Participants were offered individual sessions throughout the project to help them set SMART goals for achieving their aspirations, alongside support and guidance.

- Every young person received a range of resources including Team GB kit, kindly donated from the GB team via StreetGames.
- 6-Month FREE gym boxing and activity pass at the hub.
- Continued support including one to one mentoring sessions provided by Changing Lives team.
- All young people have been invited to attend the BoxSmart on the Ropes ASDAN accredited course later in the year.
- Advise, support and connections for young people interested in volunteering formed part of the programme.



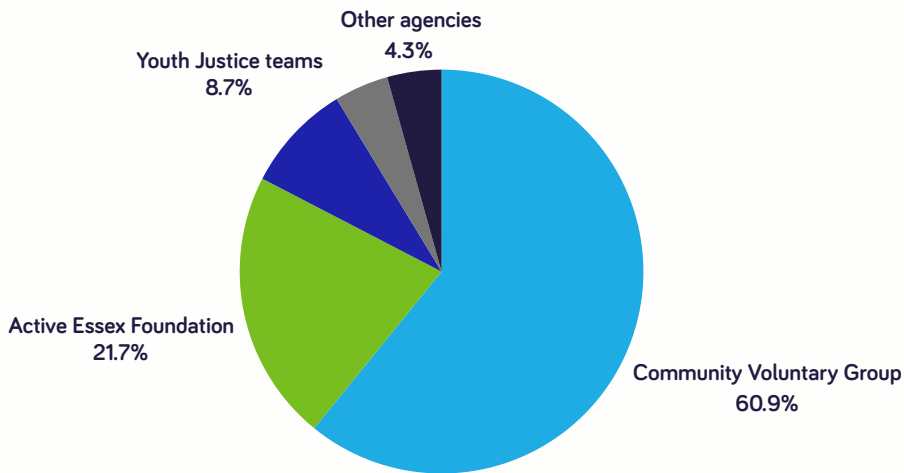
DATA INSIGHT

The following information has been captured and recorded using the AEF Monitoring and Evaluation toolkit by Changing Lives (Colchester).

*Data recorded at the point of referral being received.



Referring agencies

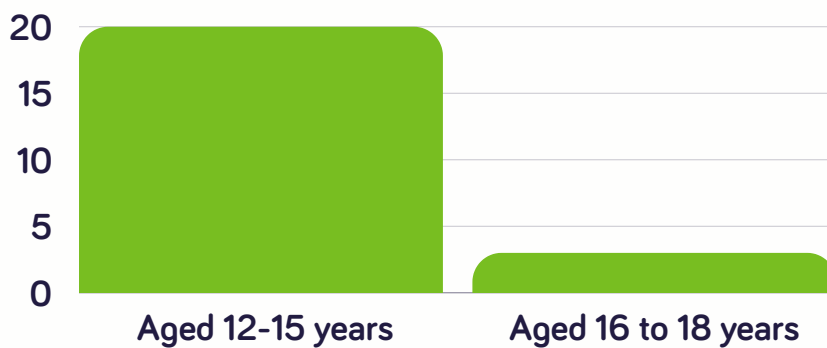


Referrals received per agency

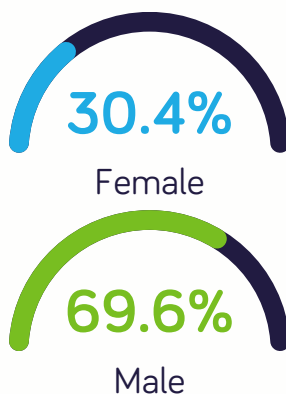
Community Voluntary section	14
Social Care	1
Youth Justice team	2
AEF	5
Other	1

Active Essex Foundation | Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit

Age Ranges

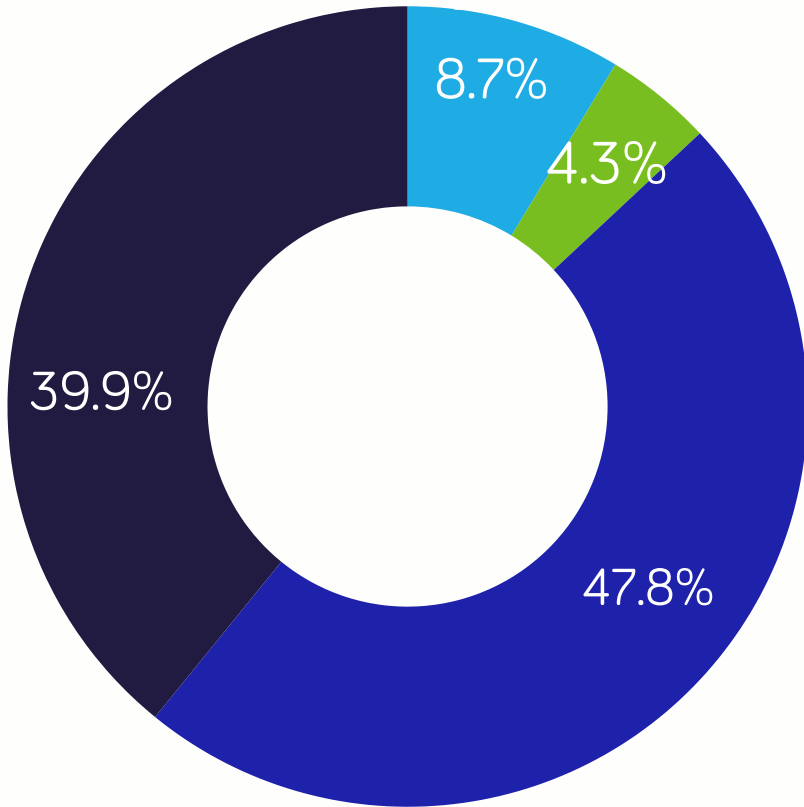


Gender



DATA INSIGHT

Additional needs/ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities(SEND)

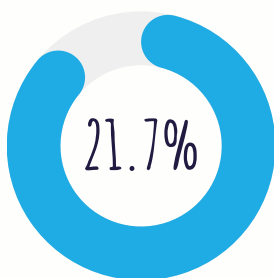


- Learning Disabilities
- Medical or Health Issues
- Emotional or Behavioural Issues
- Other

Nail and Beauty session



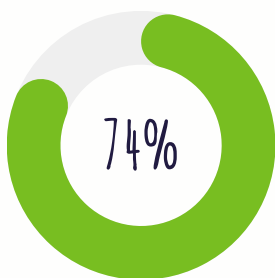
DATA INSIGHT



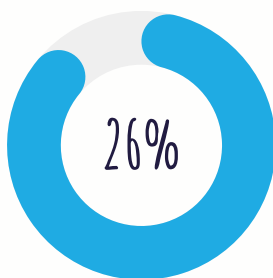
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)



Disabilities



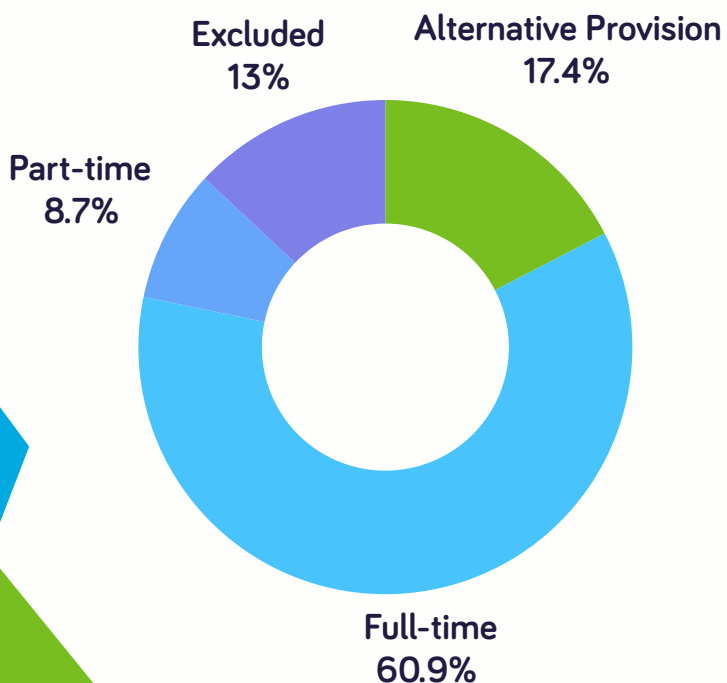
Secondary



Tertiary



Beauty and Nail session



One to One boxing session

WHY IS THE PROJECT NEEDED?

69,000

The increase in the number of young people who were NEET was driven by young men, who saw an increase of 69,000 on the year to 493,000 IN 2023

872,000

An increase in the number of young people aged 16 to 24 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) in April to June 2024, with the total currently estimated to be 872,000, up from 798,000 in April to June 2023.

12.2%

An estimated 12.2% of all people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in April to June 2024. This is up 0.9 percentage points compared with April to June 2023, and down 0.4 percentage points on the previous quarter.

READ MORE



COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The programme supports the Colchester City Council Community Safety Partnership 2023-2024 priorities including activities to support the reduction of anti-social behaviours (ASB) and/or youth criminality. The programme aimed to give young people pro-social activities and build their resilience to cope with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). Along with promoting safety in the community, community cohesion and reducing risks associated with exploitation, gangs, substance misuse



ACES AND TRAUMA

This project responds to research around Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences and how ACES can affect young people's future opportunities compared to their peers. Including poor mental and physical health, low paid jobs, unemployment, crime. As detailed in the "[The Relationship Between Adverse Childhood Experience and Heavy Smoking in Emerging Adulthood: The Role of Not in Education, Employment, or Training Statu's](#)" - PubMed (nih.gov).



NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET)

It is well understood that young people who have high self-esteem and are from a stable background are able to move from school into further education and work. However, those young people who are NEET and receiving Working Age Benefits can lead some young people engaging in risky behaviours, crime and/or becoming a victim or perpetrator of Sexual or crime exploitation. As documented in the recent West Yorkshire report- [neet-young-people-not-in-education-employment-or-training-and-violent-crime.pdf](#) (westyorks-ca.gov.uk)



MENTAL HEALTH

Young people, who are NEET can struggle with poor mental health and have limited funds to participate in community activities compared to their peers. Research shows that unemployed young people experience more health problems than those who are employed. In particular, unemployed young people experience: lower levels of general and physical health; • more anxiety and depression; • higher rates of smoking; and • higher suicide rates

PROVIDER AND AGENCY FEEDBACK

“ DWP staff fully supported the planning of the provision and each session. Their role was pivotal to the success of the programme. Watch the video of the project and views from DWP staff on their role and outcomes seen along with feedback from AEF, Changing Lives and young people. ”

“ Working with Changing Lives staff and DWP for creating a positive environment and safe space where young people could get together and exercise and think about ways to make themselves more employable. The choice of activities on offer allowed them to decide what they wanted to do, with staff on hand to supervise boxing, gym, health and beauty or discuss some of their life choices they were considering. It was great to interact with them to discuss their education, training or work options and how much they have enjoyed these sessions during the holidays. David Streetley, AEF Sports Intervention and Development Coordinator ”

“ I attended and delivered sessions on future planning, goal setting and how to manage change. It was really positive, and all of the students engaged well. Every student that day went away with a change plan worksheet and some goal setting exercises. The goals set by the students were very good and they had some great ideas for the future and how they can manage their behaviours to move forward in their lives. I felt that this session worked really well with what else was on offer at the hub and tied in with the message that the other providers were giving to the students. I would love to be involved again and run something similar next time. Mat Smith, Deputy Team Leader, Support for Schools | Essex Community Engagement Team | Department for Work and Pensions ”

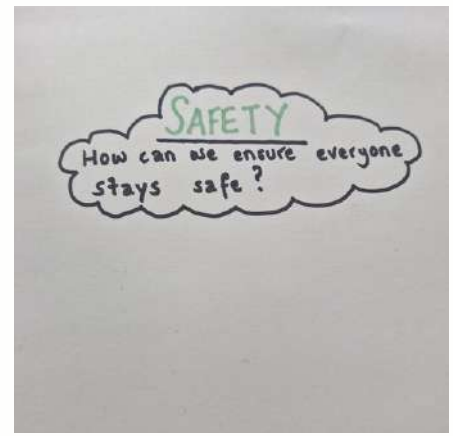




Group work discussion



Click [HERE](#) to watch the video with Changing Lives



Safety, Respect and Learning discussion

David Simmons, Co Director Changing Lives" We are delighted to have partnered with DWP and Active Essex Foundation on this great initiative linking career goals, job and aspirations into sport. It was clear that the young people loved both aspects, learning through the DWP workshops then getting engaged in sporting activities such as boxing and gym work. It's a great hook to get young people engaged and listening. Providing them with a free gym membership was also another fantastic way of not ensuring this wasn't a 'one off ' programme ensuring we keep supporting them on a long term basis. We hope to keep running future projects like this in the future"



“ Child M - Being able to talk to someone about my career and learn how to box is something we would love to do more often. This has helped me alot and I'm now starting to think about what I would like to do in the future ”

“ Child D - Attending this project has made me look for jobs and have a better understanding in apprenticeships. Getting a free gym membership has also helped me as I can also keep fit. ”

SUMMARY FROM LAUREN KILBEY MBE

“ I have led the DWP Support for Schools Team (S4S) for a number of years now, and whilst we have seen the team go from strength to strength in terms of delivery in schools, I have always felt that we could do more, especially during the long summer holidays for those kids who may find the holidays additionally challenging, because they have either a complicated family life or no family, or maybe they are from a deprived area where crime and violence is prevalent. The challenge that I faced is that DWP have a cut off point of 18 when it comes to Grant funding, so I was happy when I got the opportunity to get hold of some funding from the PFCC. Life got even easier when Active Essex agreed to become the Lead Accountable Body (LAB) and collaborate with their partners Changing lives. The programme was pulled together amazingly quickly, mainly due to the energy and pace of Suzanne Page (AEF) and soon the referrals started to come in from several sources including Colchester Jobcentres Youth Team. I believe the project was strengthened by the fact that two DWP S4S advisers were embedded into the programme and delivered several sessions to the group around choosing your future and believing in yourself, the sessions were very similar to the work they do with schools. The programme was well balanced a good mix of activity, sport, and ‘classroom’ style learning.

NEXT STEPS:

I really believe that collaborating with DWP in this way can change young lives, and I hope we can do it again next year! ‘I see the next steps for DWP is to support Active Essex Foundation in obtaining the funding for next year, identify new delivery locations and to review the project evaluation and further develop and design the Support for Schools Advisers content for delivery’

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