

Yaxley Street Sports & Youth Club

Yaxley Street Sports has been running for around 2 years. It is funded by Sport England and aims to reengage young people who live in deprived locations in sporting activities. Street Sports was set up as a clear need was identified for accessible Sports provision in Yaxley that was run on young people's terms. Evidence showed that the most disengaged, vulnerable young people did not want to access coaching sports workshops; instead they wanted to be able to turn up and play a variety of sports informally with their friends.

Street Sports is led by Huntingdon District Council; however they are supported in running the sessions by County Council youth workers. This partnership runs session every Tuesdays from 4.30-5.30 pm.

At the time Street Sports was set up Yaxley had very limited youth provision and relationships between services were poor. Numbers of young people attending grew quickly and now roughly 20 to 25 young people turn up every week. Alongside Street Sports other youth provision in Yaxley has now become more established and currently includes outreach work and project with senior group on a Wednesday evening and a junior night on a Thursday evening that runs out of Yaxley's Youth Club building. This provision now also attracts high numbers of young people along.

Regular break-in's and vandalism to the youth building have provided a severe challenge. Fortunately funding was found last October to renew lighting and the kitchen area and put some carpet on the floor. The club had previously been used for a motorcycle project and had been left with metal floor covering, which has now been removed and placed on the exterior walls to prevent break-ins.



A recent graffiti project allowed young people to improve the exterior of the youth club, although there has still been some vandalism and unwanted graffiti, young people are increasingly respecting the building as they see it as their own. To increase ownership and participation young people began paying 50 p a week for clubs in January. A tally is kept of the amount that is collected and then young people decide what this might be spent on.

The main challenge for Street Sports is in winter time when it can be too cold to play outdoors, on these occasions they improvise and use Yaxley Youth Club and play WI consoles and table tennis indoors.

Street Sports and the other youth provision have made a real difference to young people in Yaxley as they now have somewhere to go and something to do. Youth provision provides them with an opportunity to come together as many are separated geographically though their secondary schools. Relationships with other services and local parish and district councils are now also much better. Having regular youth provision has also allowed specialist services to come in and develop project work in partnership with youth workers to address issues of drink and drug use.

Young people are actively engaged in planning and assessment. Street sports workers plan the subsequent session at the end of each session with young people. They also ask young people to rate the evening using scores of 4 – lowest to 0 – highest. In the youth club there is a 'cool wall' where young people can write up ideas about activities they would like to run/attend which others can sign under. If an idea is very popular then the group make further plans to make it happen.

Top Tip: A committed staff team that keep working at developing the youth provision. Working in partnership with others is also essential as it ensures lots of projects take place that the young people want to do.