

LONDON'S SPORT INTERVENTION MODEL

Enhancing our understanding of how sports interventions play a **positive, disruptive force** in the lives of young Londoners affected by violence

About London's sports intervention model

The Mayor of London has committed to providing sports opportunities to young Londoners, with the aim of making London the most active and socially-integrated city in the world. These investments aim to provide opportunities for young Londoners affected by violence.

In 2020, Loughborough University conducted research into London's sports programmes, to better understand how sports programmes can most successfully provide positive outcomes for young people affected by violence. The research gave rise to London's Sports Intervention Model (LSIM).

The model highlighted that successful programs draw on four key elements:

- Knowledge of context
- A safe space for delivering the activity
- The delivery of an intervention
- A hyper-local approach tailored specifically to the community it caters for.

Project overview

This is an ongoing project. This poster features interim findings from fieldwork with a sample of London's sports organisations. See below for next steps.

Project aim: Gather more data to validate and enhance the existing model.

Specifically, the research will investigate:

- **Intersectionality** – To better understand the impacts of sports programmes for young people with different and intersectional protected characteristics.
- **Type of sport** – To examine how different types of sports can be accessed and supported to promote positive outcomes
- **Youth voice and engagement** – To involve programme participants in the further development of the LSIM.
- **Comparative localities and regional diversity** – To platform hyper-local initiatives and highlight how context impacts programme delivery.

Project timeline



Methodology

Sports program profile survey (n=12)
Collecting operational and contextual data on sports programmes, including schedules, attendance, philosophies and community connections.

Interviews (n=79)
Engaging coaches, managers, parents, young leaders, and young people.

Case studies conducted by young leaders (n=5)
Ethnographic dives into the wider lives of young Londoners affected by violence, including the role of sport within this.

Participatory observation
Programme sessions were observed, with field notes documenting dynamics and context.

Survey (ongoing)
An online survey to capture a greater number of young people's perspectives and understand the nature and importance of relationships built through sports interventions for young people.

Workshops (n=3)
Offering programmes with networking, discussion and learning opportunities.

Interventions engaged



Challenges

Survey engagement

- Dissemination strategies included
 - Employing young leaders to encourage peers to complete
 - Advertising via sports opportunities website
 - Prize draw for one young person's sports organisation
 - Encouraging coaches and sports leaders to promote
- However, low response rate to survey meant the breadth of youth perspectives was lower than hoped.

Research timing and funding cycles

- Fieldwork was conducted towards the end of 2024, when information about future funding for London's VRU was uncertain.
- Uncertainty about future resource meant some delivery organisations felt under-capacity and were unwilling to engage in the research.

Learnings

Youth engagement
Most of the sports organisations employed young leaders to coach and mentor younger team-members. Youth leaders were key touchpoints for the research team to promote the research activities and gain richer insight via peer-research methods. It also provided key learning opportunities for the young people.

The need for trauma-informed practitioners
Many programmes said they wished they had the capacity to be a trauma-informed organisation. They felt this would better support participants and amplify the impacts of the programme.

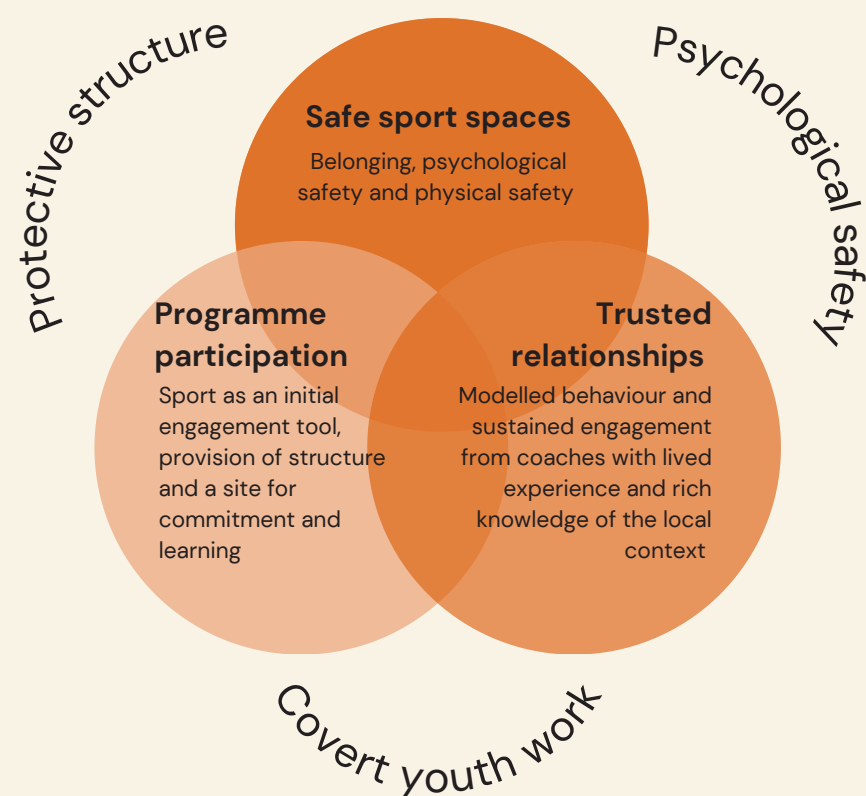
The role of lived experience
Some organisations referred to lived-experience exclusively in relation to a persons' lived experience of violence. Others included the experience of creating and taking advantage of pro-social opportunities in their definition of lived-experience. A focus on this positive lived experience can have a monumental impact on young people deemed at risk.



Interim findings

Findings are considered at three levels: individual, organisational, and community.

Individual-level impacts:



Organisational-level impacts:

Successful programmes relied on 4 key 'ingredients' to deliver individual and community-level impacts:

Strength-based approach:
Empowering young people by focusing on positive progress and their strengths, rather than focusing on their risk of experiencing violence.

Intentionality:
Ensuring every action and interaction with a young person was deliberate, and worked towards ensuring they were taking positive steps.

Adaptability:
Proactive and flexible adjustment of practices to meet the needs of young people and their community.

Leadership-driven:
Grounded in effective, compassionate leadership that demonstrates a commitment to bettering the local area and outcomes for its residents.

Community-level impacts:

Successful organisations took a **hyper-local** approach to delivery. This provided four key benefits to the community:

- Community representation**
through the visibility of a programmes values, culture and identity which reflect those of the community.
- Community integration and empowerment**
where community needs are reflected in actions and practice of organisations, facilitated by trusting two-way relationships between community and organisations.
- Community capacity-building**
where the organisation contributes to equipping the community with skills, knowledge and resources to address systemic issues.
- A collaborative ecosystem**
of dynamic, sustainable partnerships between the community, sports organisations and external stakeholders.