

A comprehensive evaluation of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Partnership Sports Diversion Programme

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Project Overview

Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County's Sports Diversion Programme supported four projects to deliver diversionary sport and mentoring interventions. The evaluation objectives were to:

- Assess the outcomes, impact and effectiveness of the programme
- Examine the cost effectiveness
- Understand the acceptability, reach and integrity of the projects for participants
- Understand the complementarity of the projects with each other and within the wider public health approach to violence reduction
- Make recommendations for local commissioners and decision makers, on the future model, design, and delivery of diversionary violence reduction interventions

Methodology

- The methodology for the evaluation was based on 'realist evaluation' principles (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) using multi-methods which recognises that the rationale, mechanisms and resources that underpin projects are instrumental in bringing about the stated outcomes
- Data collection involved visits to sessions (n= 8), semi-structured interviews with project staff (n=15), stakeholders (n=2) and young people from the four projects (n=11). Surveys were also completed by young people (n=29)
- Qualitative data was analysed thematically
- Quantitative data was summarised using descriptive statistics to identify what worked, for whom and under what circumstances in line with the realist approach.
- Potential cost reductions that arose through the programme were also explored

Barriers and Issues

- The case studies demonstrated both the potential and the complexity of harnessing sport in attempts to prevent youth crime and violence.
- Projects were underpinned by Theories of Change but there was variation in the extent to which these informed the practice of project staff
- Staff turnover and contextual challenges (e.g. cost of living crisis, access to facilities) impacted delivery
- Breaks in delivery and changes in staffing can impact negatively on engagement and retention of young people. Rebuilding sessions is resource intensive and negatively impact on the effectiveness of projects.
- The vulnerability of the young people necessarily requires more formal support and staff expertise and therefore more financial resource than other sport-based interventions

Table 1: Matching a public health approach with different types of sport interventions

Public health approach		Type of sport intervention (Coalter, 2007)	Description
Primary level	Universal level, open to all young people with the aim of preventing offending. These young people are not showing signs of vulnerabilities or engaging in offending behaviours.	Sport	Focus on sports activities and playing sport, open access recruitment of young people, coaches might have ad hoc, informal conversations with young people, some opportunities for young people to help out/ volunteer at the sessions.
Secondary level	Targeted approach for young people who have been identified as experiencing multiple underlying factors and have vulnerabilities and/or are engaging in behaviours associated with offending or who are at risk of offending. This level of intervention requires more formal support and expertise	SportPlus	Focus on purposefully designed Sports activities Plus other activities to support young people including volunteering, mentoring, advice, workshops, training/ qualifications etc. Often a targeted recruitment of young people including referrals
Tertiary level	Targeted approach, usually focused on young people who have already offended and have multiple vulnerabilities. Interventions at this level require high levels of expertise and resource based on holistic support for the young person.	PlusSport	Focus on providing support for the young person first including 121 mentoring, holistic/ family support, workshops etc with sport used as a hook/reward/engagement tool. Almost always a targeted recruitment of young people based on referrals. Usually one to one or small group work.

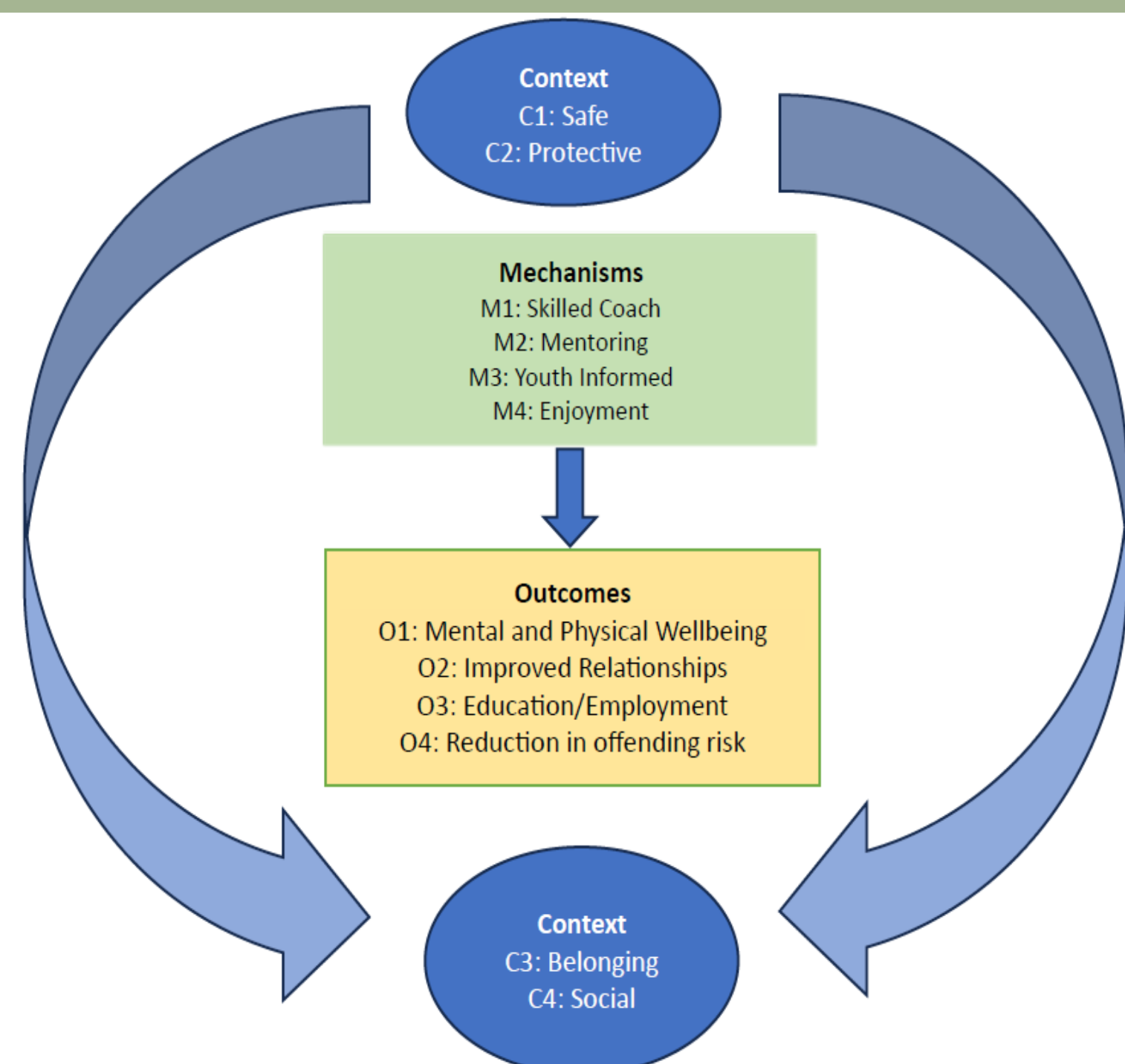


Figure 3: Context-Mechanism-Outcome Configuration for the NNVRP Sports Diversion

Findings

- With support from the funder, projects overcame contextual challenges to deliver effective projects that were well received by young people
- The funded projects contributed to preventing and reducing youth violence through impacting positively on participants' mental and physical wellbeing, their relationships with peers and with adults, supporting young people back into mainstream education, enhancing employability and reducing their offending risk
- The evaluation showed importance of recruiting and retaining staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver a SportPlus project and of connecting with other services to ensure that young people access appropriate support
- Despite the greater cost of this type of delivery the evaluation indicates that the investment has the potential to deliver a range of cost savings