

Street League case study

Street League is a UK wide charity that works to support young people (14-30 year olds) in disadvantaged communities by developing their skills, qualifications, raising their aspirations and enhancing employment opportunities.

“We [Street League and its participants] will work on Maths, English, functional skills, employability skills, qualifications, sports and personal development. They [the participants] also take part in short work experiences and at the end it’s about progressing those individuals into employment, education, and training. They get the 15 weeks of support, qualifications, and sport” - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

In 2015, the previous Operations Manager of Street League, Bashir, saw an opportunity to develop and launch a new programme for the organisation in Sheffield. Although Street League are not a sports employment organisation, and the end goal is not always about progression into employment, they use sport as a cathartic tool and to promote personal development. Bashir saw the potential to connect with SCT as an organisation whose ethos and values aligned with their own. Street League and SCT have a collective vision to tackle inequalities and to move people towards more positive destinations.

“For SCT to be associated with Street League [a UK wide charity] is very complementary to what SCT values are – there is definitely synergy there. If we are successful then whoever has to report to the board from SCT has real live data, backed up with evidence. [It’s] a genuine, real relationship and you can see the impact... There’s an emphasis from SCT to give youth a chance.” - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League.

Bashir met with Uriah Rennie, Rob Womack and David Bly from SCT who agreed to hosting the programme at their elite site, English Institute of Sport Sheffield (EISS). This was decided as both parties saw the venue and its prestige as a significant positive draw that would help to attract the organisation’s target audience.

Street League run two types of sessions at SCT facilities:

- Academy – Primarily classroom-based skills / training with sport sessions scheduled into the day as a reward – a chance to see staff away from the classroom and have a social game together.
- Street Sport sessions – Once a week session for the unemployed, where they can find out more about Street League. Aimed at those who are ready for work but need a bit of a confidence boost / support on their journey.

Impact and benefits of the partnership

Since early 2015, Street League has grown from two members of staff to four. They have worked with over 645 young people from the Sheffield City Region and supported 455 young people into employment, education or training. This is a 71% conversion rate from the academy and street sport programmes. SCT have been a massive part of Street Leagues’ development and the two organisations have nurtured a strong partnership which benefits both organisations.

For SCT, the benefits include supporting young people, understanding the barriers and challenges faced, and strengthening connections.

“We empower the programme through hosting it and showing the young people we connect with them, further progressing their trust in wider society. The insight is two-way; how a

successful venue operates and, to all of our staff, allowing them to understand the barriers and challenges some of these young people have to overcome daily. [The] legacy is through employment- we have seen some good success stories in the young people coming to work for SCT, which benefits us as an organisation and also benefits Street League.” - David Bly, Sports Programme and Engagement Manager - SCT

For Street League, benefits are derived through the use of elite venues, promotion of their name and brand at these venues, the provision of advice, guidance, support, and employment opportunities within SCT for participants.

“The venue helps young people to raise their aspirations and motivation as they are seeing, not only elite athletes day in, day out from a number of able bodied and disability sports, but just general day to day people who work there, from reception staff, maintenance staff to sports staff. This helps us to engage with our young people and break down their barriers to employment, education and training.” - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

“[SCT] also support us with work placements, interview skills and techniques. We do mock interviews with staff from here (EISS) and facilitate any employability skills that are needed. [SCT] will look at CVs, work placements, and some young people have moved into work here.” - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

In addition, the use of elite sporting venues allows Street League to engage with other partners which can lead on to further employment and volunteering opportunities for their participants, as well as raising aspirations about what is possible.

“It allows us to interact with different elite NGBs, education and other organisations which helps to build the Street League networks. It has also led to us supporting other organisations with volunteering from our young people.” - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

Another benefit has been the networking tournaments that Street League run at SCT venues. These events help to bring partners together, supporting local people to be active and raise funds for local charities.

“SCT has always been an active partner in our networking tournament, Street League and partner’s Champions Cup. They [SCT] help with the tournaments (hosted at EISS and Ponds Forge) and are always great with donating raffle prizes etc. At one of those tournaments, we raised £550 for Macmillan Cancer Support.” – Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

In addition, SCT provide recruitment and promotional support in the form of leaflets and flyers in their venues, as well as reposting any content which goes out through social media. This helps to promote their name and brand further, reaching more people.

Success of the partnership

“The longevity has been a major part of it. There has always been a strong relationship of supporting each other...that is down to relationships built up over time and regular communications.” - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

The organisations and their staff work closely together, finding solutions to things in a collaborative way.

"The staff are very accommodating; it feels like we are a part of it and not just someone who uses the centre. If there are any issues i.e., around behaviour from time to time we resolve those issues together." - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street league

The Future

Street League hope to continue their strong working relationship with SCT. *"We [Street League] want to continue the relationship [with SCT] building year on year and keep innovating."* - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager – Street League. The two organisations have several plans in the pipeline which they are working on together, linking up their contacts and networks within communities with other organisations such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

"We [Street League] are looking to explore these opportunities [with DWP] further with SCT so that there is a sporting offer available following their job centre appointments." - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager – Street League

Another recent development of the two organisations working together, joining up two pieces of work has resulted in new weekly football and multi-sport sessions running at a local secondary school. Here SCTs community team were able to connect a community group with an already well-established funded programme whom they know and trust.

"Not only were the network and reputations crucial to this, but we had some very honest and open conversations together to ensure we understood where we all came from." – Rob Womack, Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Manager

"We are proud that our programmes are part of SCT...It is much more than the academy and use of facilities." – Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

Hasfah case study

Hasfah first found out about Street league in 2016, after meeting Bashir (ex-operations manager) at the U-mix centre where she was participating in football sessions. Her involvement in Street league has enabled her to get qualifications such as her Level 1 and Level 2 functional skills in Math's and English which has in turn helped her secure a job at Sheffield City Trust (SCT) as a football coach.

"She initially did a work placement here (EISS) and really impressed the staff. A casual / coach role came up and was encouraged to apply for it. She'd always had an interest in sports coaching." - Graeme Severn, Operations Manager - Street League

"[Street League is] very multicultural, so you see different backgrounds and people are very welcoming and encouraging and they're always happy to help. They [Street League] are really great, they helped me get a job at EISS. They helped me boost my confidence; they helped me in every way." – Hasfah, participant at Street League, Sheffield.

During her time working at SCT (2017-2020), Hasfah gained sport coaching qualifications which SCT paid for. Unfortunately, due to COVID her employment at SCT stopped but the qualifications she gained during her employment with them and help from Street League with interview preparation and job applications have enabled her to get a job at the U-mix centre, where she works now.

Working at SCT really helped support Hasfah grow as a person both personally and professionally.

"They [SCT] helped me build my confidence up, they helped me get my sports coaching qualification."

Working with young people makes Hasfah *"really happy and satisfied."* She is currently working part time and hoping to find more employment as a football coach and go back to Street league to gain more qualifications. To young people thinking about getting involved in Street League Hasfah says: *"I would advise them to take up the opportunity. They [Street League] can help you get a job; they help you a lot with life."*