



University

The UNIVERSITIES have played a vital role in supporting and developing the DIP sports programme and are important partners in building a more cohesive and inclusive society.

As part of the Sport Universities North East England initiative the 8-week programmes have supported the universities in their attempt to actively include and engage socially excluded groups. The DIP sports programmes have proved to be popular with service users, the student coaches and university directors.

“The Universities are delighted to be so heavily involved in the Drug Interventions Programme for the North East of England. From our students’ point of view the programme gives many undergraduates the chance to work alongside individuals they would not normally come into contact with whilst at the same time gaining additional coaching qualifications. It is clear from the first year of this project that both the students and drug rehabilitation clients have a much better understanding of each others circumstances and they have gelled incredibly well together.” Director of Sports, Durham University

Risk was managed as an important ongoing element of the sports initiative. This included comprehensive briefings to university and student coaches, the presence of key workers from each drug agency at sessions and monitoring throughout each programme.

The STUDENTS play a vital role in the actual delivery of the sports programme, providing a quality coaching input which results in a mutually rewarding experience for participants and coaches alike.

A total of 36 university student coaches took part in the coaching programmes.

25 students gained either a level 1 or level 2 FA coaching qualification.

“I thought coaching was going to be a lot harder & expected people not to do as I instructed. I was surprised at how much respect I received which has made me look forward to next Sundays session a lot more & feel more at ease about trying new coaching ideas.” Student coach, Newcastle University.

The students identified a range of benefits from the programmes both academic and personal, and expressed varying degrees of surprise at the rapport which quickly developed between themselves and the service users.

“Just at the start you were a little bit like “what’s this gonna be like?”, but as soon as they got started they were just listening from the off. They listened, and did everything you asked them.” Student coach, Northumbria University.

Academic gains:

- FA coaching qualifications
- Improved academic study and development through active work experience away from the classroom
- Improved C.V creating broader range of opportunities short term and long term e.g. following the programme in Newcastle 3 student coaches used the experience to help gain places on a Camp America course
- Blood born virus training in two programmes

“I have to admit I had some prejudicial ideas about them. Having got to know some of them my prejudices have gone and the experience has made me a better person as a result I think.”
Student coach, Durham University

“My original opinions of what I thought it was going to be like from the start were just totally thrown out the window after the first couple of sessions.” Student coach, Teesside University

Personal gains:

- Life experience: overcame barriers of misconception
- Broke down the view imposed by the media: given chance to mix with different groups
- Increased confidence, self esteem, assertiveness and leadership skills.

“I went in to the coaching sessions expecting the worst. Having no experience of working with this group I expected them to be like everything that I’d seen on T.V about criminals and drug users. My opinions have completely changed. I’ve really enjoyed myself and got a lot out of this experience – more than I was expecting. Everyone got on really well.” Student coach, Newcastle University

The student coaches identified a range of factors responsible for the success of the programmes:

- Based on sport
- Opportunity not restricted to gender
- Similarity in age of service users and students
- Support by presence of key workers at every session
- Positive image provided by student coaches – well presented, mentors, role models, good level of skill.
- Comprehensive briefing on client group prior to programmes
- Pro-social modelling

“Initially I went for it because I’m applying for a PGCE to be a teacher and it’s an additional factor to add to the CV. The more I got into it though, the more I enjoyed it and I didn’t mind giving up my spare time to do it. I saw the benefits it was producing.” Student coach, Teesside University

“I think because it was football, everyone was there to play just that. It’s like football’s a ‘neutral territory’.” Student coach, Newcastle University

“The most exciting and rewarding two hours since I arrived to take on the role of Director of Sport in 1995.” Director of Sports, Durham University