

The Sprint Project

Introduction

In 2006, as part of the Sector Skills Agreement process, SkillsActive held a number of employer focus groups to discuss challenges facing employers from the public, private and voluntary and community sector in London. Two of the groups focused on employers in the voluntary and community sector. Those employers whose main business was the more traditional sports programmes, such as basketball clubs, delivered by paid staff and unpaid staff. Many of the workforce, whilst qualified to deliver the relevant sports do not necessarily have the softer skills or understanding of the issues facing individuals living in the most disadvantaged areas of London. The second group focused on the wider voluntary and community sector organisations, which use the delivery of sport and physical activity often as an intervention tool to engage people in their local communities. Many of the individuals working in the voluntary and community sector have the skills and understanding to work with individuals living in London but do not have the sport specific skills to progress them to the next level.

Both groups identified the need to upskill the sport and recreation to deliver sport to people not in employment, education or training (NEET). Discussions were held with the London Development Agency (LDA) around the skills required for 2012 and beyond coming out of the Sector Skills Agreement process in London. As a consequence they agreed to fund, what is now known as the Sprint Project, as a direct response to meet the needs of employers in the voluntary and community sector.

What is Sprint?

The Sprint Project is a bespoke programme which aims to up skill the youth and community sport workforce who work with young people that are at risk of exclusion. This unique project provides continual professional development to the community sports and recreation workforce across the 33 London boroughs with a special focus on those working in the five Olympic host boroughs. Through a package of over forty different free training courses (both accredited and non-accredited) Sprint will increase the skills of the workforce in order to support the diverse issues facing young people.

The project is being delivered by the London Community Sports network in conjunction with a number of clubs from the voluntary and community sector as well as specialist sports clubs.

What does the Project offer?

Sprint has been specifically designed for the youth and community sports workforce. This exciting programme of professional development focuses clearly on three vocational areas:

- Sports & Physical Activity leadership
- Youth & Community Work
- Project Management

Sprint offer 500 employees/learners from across every London borough (250 of those will specifically be from the five host Olympic borough) the opportunity to access accredited (Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications) and non-accredited courses and provide

informal learning opportunities with seminars, short workshops and master classes. A wide range of topics in each field will be offered including:

- Sports coaching certificates (e.g. football, cricket, basketball, boxing, table tennis, handball, volleyball, archery, boccia, kayaking, netball, badminton, CSLA, athletics, tag rugby, cycling leader, street dance)
- Understanding Eating Disorders, Advanced Emergency Aid & First aid courses, Advanced Child Protection, Disability Awareness in Coaching, Introduction to Fundamentals of Movement and How to Coach Effectively
- Certificate in Community Sports Work and Managing Community Sport
- Introduction to Youth Work, Working with Gangs, Young men and Anger, Tackling Bullying, Working with Challenging Behaviour, Basic Counselling and Substance Misuse
- Successful Project Management and Basic Skills

Sprint will also provide clear paths for progression with an employment support package which includes work shadowing, job swaps, Employment Brokerage linked to the 2012 Games and an employer's fair.

Success to Date

The Sprint Project was successfully launched at the Emirates Stadium on the 20th February 2007. Over 150 employees signed up within the first two weeks of the programme going live. To date over 30 employers have expressed interest in the innovative job swap scheme, which will be established in the next 3 months once employees have complete their initial training.

Since the launch of the project in February the LDA have identified it as one of their major flagship projects, with it being in the top 2 success stories on their home page.

Manny Lewis, Chief Executive of the LDA, said:

"The difference that positive role models can make is immense. These youth workers are already making a difference in their communities, but with further training they can make a bigger impact. We all know that sport can harness young people's imagination and teach them the value of dedication and hard work - but social problems can often keep them away. The holistic approach in these courses is going to make a difference in engaging the most hard to reach."

The Future

A voluntary and community sector workforce group for London has been established by SkillsActive to continue the dialogue regarding skills development and training for the both paid and volunteer staff working in the sector. The group will consider the range of offer of both accredited and non accredited training to the voluntary and community sector, with a view to developing the offer which will be made through the National Skills Academy being established by SkillsActive in London.