



School Games Impact Report

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What is the School Games?

The School Games is a national programme which puts physical activity and school sport at the heart of schools, providing young people with the opportunity to learn through physical activity and competition to achieve their personal best.

The programme aims to provide every child in year 3 to 13 across all education settings with a positive experience where the young person's motivation, competence and confidence are at the centre of every event or project.

The School Games vision and mission sets out our ambitions for young people. The vision states what we want to achieve, and the mission gives clarity around how this will be achieved. Delivering change locally whilst making a difference nationally is key to the success of the vision and mission being achieved.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xM43uPcgI4>

Vision

The School Games will make a positive and meaningful difference to the lives of children and young people through sport and physical activity.

Mission

Putting physical activity and school sport at the heart of schools. Providing young people with the opportunity to enjoy and learn through competition to achieve their personal best.

Our approach across South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire

In South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, we are committed to meeting the national School Games outcomes and fulfilling the **2024/25 pledges**. At the same time, we believe a localised approach is essential to effectively tackle the persistent inequalities faced by children and young people in our counties.

This impact report highlights our progress in the 2024-25 academic year and shows how we are adapting to better serve those who need our support most, addressing inactivity and inequalities in ways that suit our communities. A key focus is supporting schools to create active environments for all young people, recognising how positive experiences can foster long-term engagement with physical activity. We have also continued to work, both county-wide and locally, with partners to achieve shared outcomes.

We continue to take blended approach, providing localised funding to School Games Organisers (SGOs) while delivering county-wide opportunities. Our partnership with SGOs remains central, ensuring programmes are grounded in local knowledge and tailored to the needs of young people in our area.

We continue to attend termly SGO meetings in both counties along with other regular touch points during the year where necessary, supporting with PE conferences and wider CYP work in our districts.

This year, we continued using our three county-wide event categories, 'Inspire and Engage, Develop and Play and Compete', helping schools understand which groups of young people are best suited to each event, both locally and county-wide.

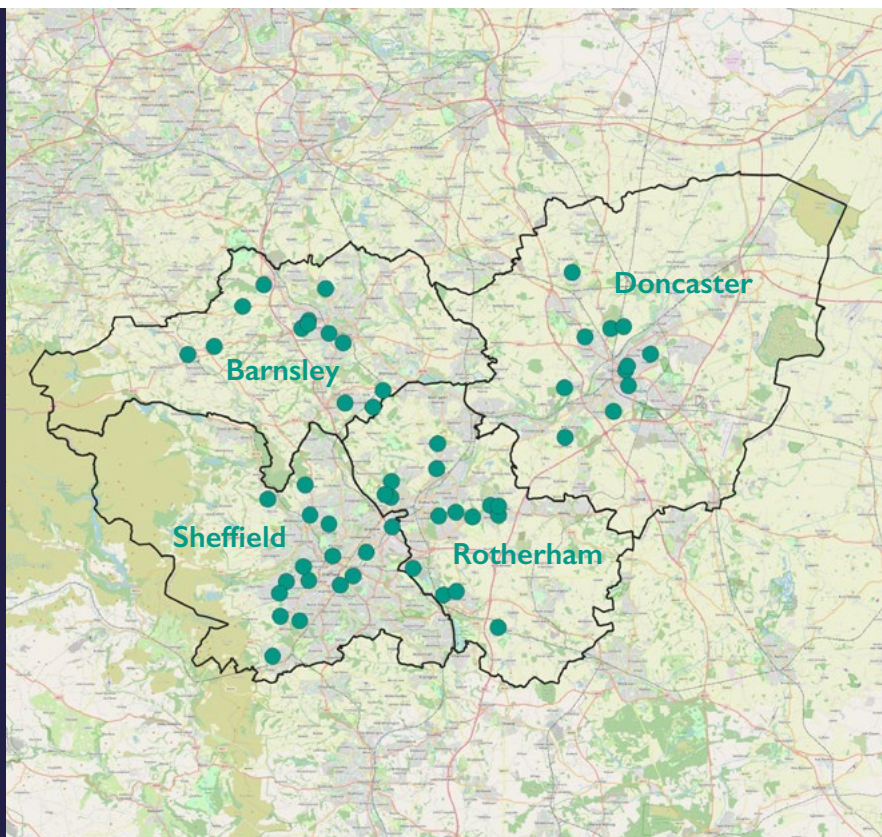


<https://youtu.be/SVZOE7HUuBA?si=9K4xTuhguKFg9dPf>



County-Wide Activity

South Yorkshire School Games County-Wide Event Statistics



Dots represent schools who have taken part in county-wide events.



South Yorkshire

1,033

Total number of attendances

48

Number of schools involved



Number of events held



492
Female attendances



541
Male attendances



263

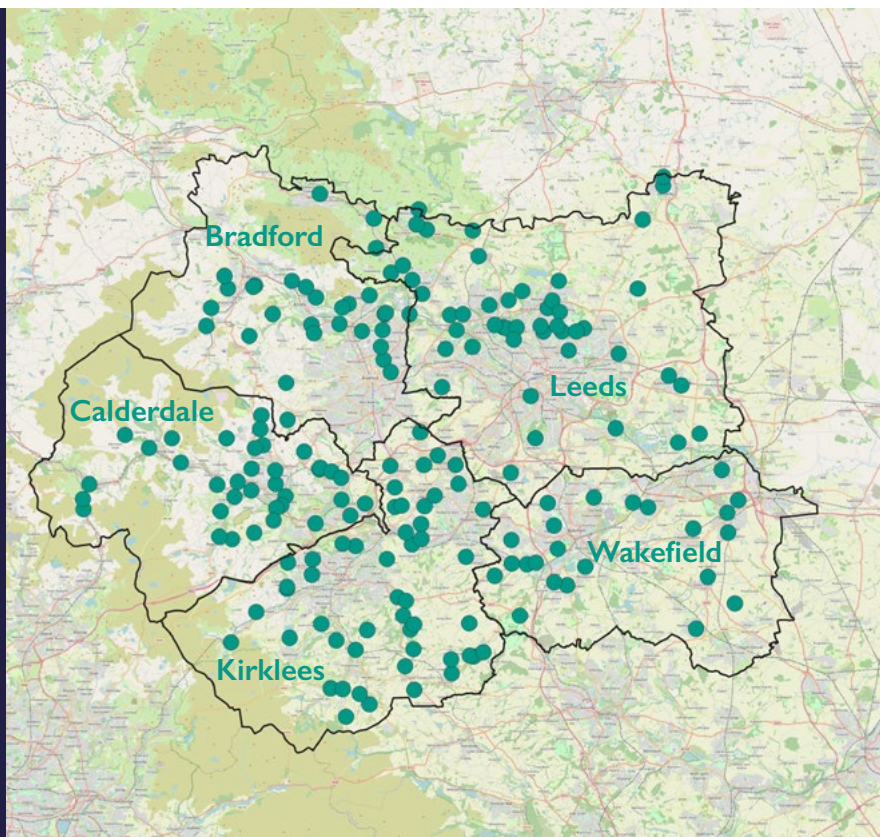
Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities engaged



155

Number of children from diverse ethnic communities engaged

West Yorkshire School Games Cross Country Event Statistics



Dots represent schools who have taken part in county-wide events.

West Yorkshire School Games Cross Country

1,184
Total number of attendances

184 Number of schools involved

 Number of events held

 **618**
Female attendances

 **566**
Male attendances



A Closer Look – West Yorkshire School Games Cross Country Finals

The West Yorkshire School Games Cross Country Finals is our only West Yorkshire county-wide event. While we focus on targeted, localised projects to tackle inequalities, we recognise the important legacy of the finals in bringing SGOs and schools together. This event serves as a great entry point for schools to then participate in other, more targeted programmes.

The March 2025 event engaged 184 schools and 1,184 children. For many children, this event is their only chance to experience a large-scale running competition.

We have recognised that mass participation can cause anxiety for some children. To help reduce pre-event anxiety, we collaborated with a local school in Calderdale to produce a video, which served as a valuable resource to ensure a positive and memorable experience for all.



The video was created with the help of a student from Wainstalls who, last year, was so overwhelmed he froze at the start line. He became the main character in the video, explaining how it helped him prepare for the event this year and take the pressure off. He was proud to be part of a project that could help other children, offering this advice:

“

Be proud of yourself for getting this far, you have earned your place.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjSQhELKD4M>

A Closer Look – South Yorkshire School Games Winter Festival

In March 2025 the South Yorkshire School Games team hosted the Winter Festival at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield. The event celebrated young people's achievements through “Compete” events including primary and secondary sports hall athletics and Panathlon, an inclusive programme offering children with disabilities the chance to develop skills, confidence, and teamwork through adapted sports.

The festival also featured an “Inspire and Engage” come-try festival, targeting 300 children who are inactive or eligible for free school meals. Along with their support staff, participants experienced a variety of activities designed to create positive, lasting engagement with physical activity back in their schools.

Recognising the importance of youth voice, the South Yorkshire School Games team worked with schools to gather questions before the event. These were used during interactive sessions at the Winter Festival to capture young people's perspectives, helping break down barriers and build a sense of ownership. Following the festival, insights were compiled and shared with schools to support ongoing engagement and improvement in physical activity opportunities.





SGO Localised Projects

Background to work

Our localised SGO funding model has proven to be highly successful over the past two years, and we were excited to continue with this approach. This year, we evolved our approach by placing an even stronger emphasis on tackling inequalities.

The SGO funded projects have shown the networks drive to address a wide range of inequalities. The breadth of these targeted projects highlights the expertise within our network and our collective determination to tackle stubborn inequalities.

As well as people working towards their strengths, we also have seen people push themselves out of their comfort zones to expand their knowledge and learn.

By using this place-based approach, we can maximise the impact of our county-wide resources. This empowers each SGO to develop and deliver projects that are suited to their local needs.

We used a structured application process to carefully review each proposal, ensuring that funding was directed to where it would have the most impact. We also provided support to SGOs throughout the application process whenever they needed it.



“ Our funded projects have shown the networks drive to address a wide range of inequalities.



At the National School Games Summit in June 2023, three pledges were introduced to tackle inequalities, strengthen youth engagement, and embed physical literacy. Our localised projects are designed to bring these pledges to life in practical, meaningful ways. Please refer to the case studies later in this impact report to see how some localised projects have addressed these.

Physical Literacy

This case study demonstrates how SGOs are engaging more young people in their programmes by using local spaces and inclusive opportunities to develop physical literacy and building motivation, confidence, competence, and knowledge to be active for life.

Led by Angie Buckley, this project connected young people with Barnsley Metrodome and Nova City, using a place-based, pupil-led approach. Activities were shaped by pupil voice, ensuring sessions reflected local interests and needs. Delivering sessions in familiar, accessible venues helped participants feel confident and motivated, while fostering a sense of connection to their community.

Students took part in a range of activities, from gym-based sessions to spinning and circuit training, offering experiences beyond traditional PE. Feedback showed high levels of enjoyment and pride, with many describing the sessions as “fun” and “grown-up.” Through these real-world experiences, students developed physical competence, confidence, teamwork skills, and knowledge about wellbeing, encouraging a lifelong positive attitude toward activity.

The project has strong sustainability, with schools and venues exploring after-school clubs, holiday sessions, and taster opportunities. Several children have already taken out memberships, demonstrating genuine behaviour change and ongoing engagement. By connecting young people to local pathways, the project supports the “value and responsibility” aspect of physical literacy, empowering them to take ownership of their health and wellbeing.

Building on previous years, this project deepened engagement through co-creation and relationship-building. Involving children in planning and facility staff in delivery strengthened trust and relevance, resulting in higher attendance, enthusiasm, and continued participation.

This place-based, pupil-led approach has been adopted by many SGOs across different districts, allowing programmes to reach more young people and engage those who might not typically participate. By tailoring activities to local needs and building connections with accessible community spaces, SGOs are helping a broader range of young people develop physical literacy and a lifelong positive relationship with physical activity.



Tackling Inequalities

The Key Stage 2 “This Girl Can” girls only multi-sports initiative in North Kirklees targets girls, particularly from South East Asian communities, who face barriers to participating in sport. The programme provides inclusive, fun, and safe opportunities across sports such as rounders, cricket, football, rugby league, and boxing, both in school and through community clubs.

In rounders, they partnered with the Batley Ninjas and their junior section, the Ninjettes, to deliver girls-only festivals, skill sessions, and competitions, creating pathways for ongoing participation. Schools signed up to festivals and competitions, with coaching and after-school sessions supporting continued engagement. Similar models in cricket, football, rugby, and boxing have helped girls gain confidence, develop skills, and enjoy positive sporting experiences.

The project has reached over 100 pupils in rounders alone, with many continuing into community sessions.

Youth voice was central to its design, ensuring activities reflect the needs and interests of the girls. The impact of the project can be seen in this video showcasing feedback and experiences from the children, teachers and deliverers.

With ongoing support from local clubs and partners, the Girls Rounders project will continue, offering sustainable pathways and inspiring more girls to be active in their communities.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6ufVPsxJgE>

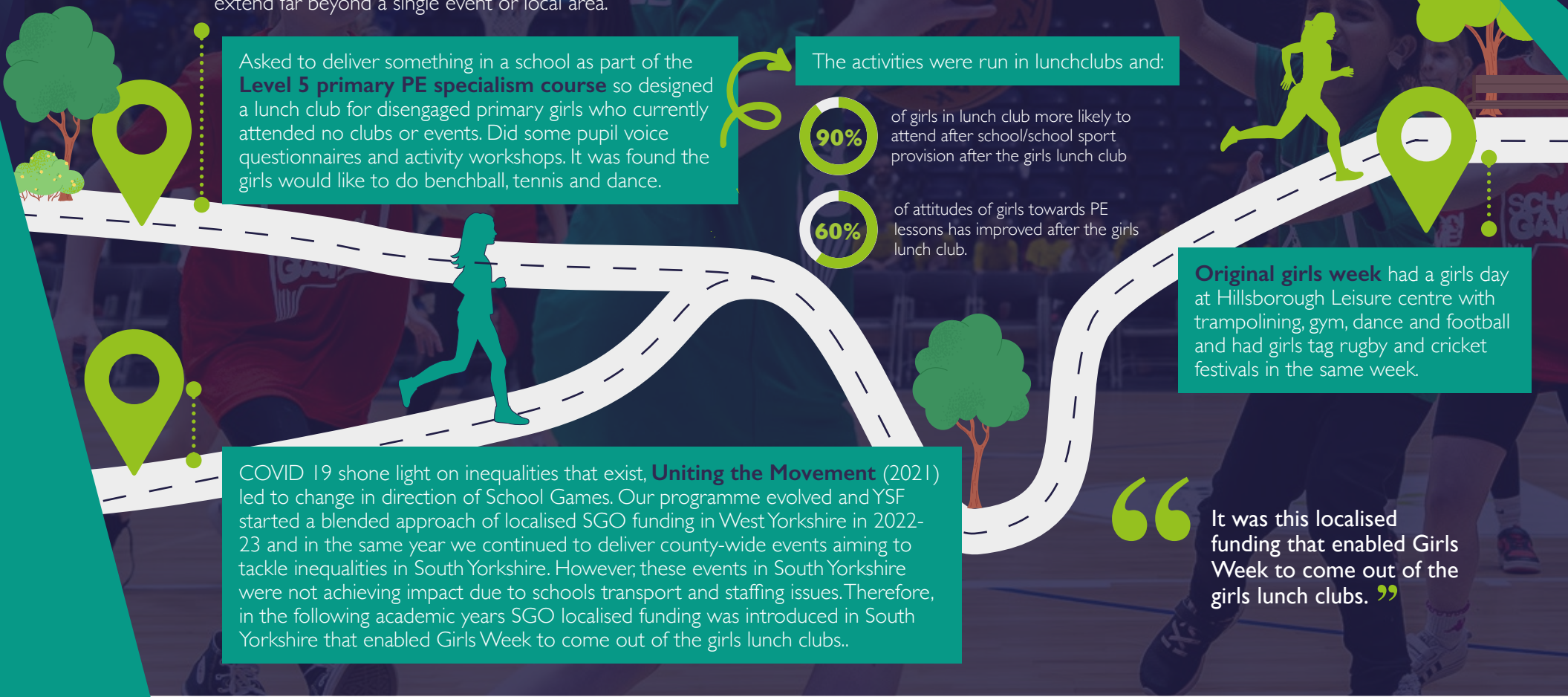
Case study

Youth Engagement

Led by Lauren Donnelly, an SGO based at Forge Valley School in Sheffield, this project aimed to boost confidence and participation among Key Stage 2 girls in PE and school sport. Working with a local junior school PE lead, the initiative began by gathering pupil voice to understand barriers and co-design activities that reflected girls' needs and preferences.

What started as a small pilot Girls Club for ten pupils grew into Girls Week. Through emotionally safe, girl-led environments and strong partnership working, the project increased confidence, enjoyment, and engagement in physical activity, reaching over 300 girls across multiple schools.

The ripple effect of this work is illustrated throughout this section, demonstrating how within a collaborative county, impact can extend far beyond a single event or local area.



Asked to deliver something in a school as part of the **Level 5 primary PE specialism course** so designed a lunch club for disengaged primary girls who currently attended no clubs or events. Did some pupil voice questionnaires and activity workshops. It was found the girls would like to do benchball, tennis and dance.

The activities were run in lunchclubs and:



of girls in lunch club more likely to attend after school/school sport provision after the girls lunch club



of attitudes of girls towards PE lessons has improved after the girls lunch club.

COVID 19 shone light on inequalities that exist, **Uniting the Movement** (2021) led to change in direction of School Games. Our programme evolved and YSF started a blended approach of localised SGO funding in West Yorkshire in 2022-23 and in the same year we continued to deliver county-wide events aiming to tackle inequalities in South Yorkshire. However, these events in South Yorkshire were not achieving impact due to schools transport and staffing issues. Therefore, in the following academic years SGO localised funding was introduced in South Yorkshire that enabled Girls Week to come out of the girls lunch clubs..

Original girls week had a girls day at Hillsborough Leisure centre with trampolining, gym, dance and football and had girls tag rugby and cricket festivals in the same week.

“It was this localised funding that enabled Girls Week to come out of the girls lunch clubs.”

What happened

Lauren Donnelly (Sheffield SGO) ran the second year of Girls Week. Lauren ran a football event where everyone took a football and a shirt home thanks to the local Community foundation. **There was one girl in care who had asked for a football for multiple birthdays and got one at this event.** A rugby event was ran at the Wave, a girls day happened the same as the last year but with yoga instead of football. **A resource bank was created from Women in Sport, and a video was made of women working in the sector** to promote that anyone can work in sport. Wristbands were introduced following the use of them in in a Rotherham School Games project.

Kim Horton, the SGO for All Saints Catholic High School was inspired by the original girls week and how it raised awareness of the importance of offering activity for girls. **They targeted schools who entered a lot of compete events and found girls who had less engagement in clubs and after school activities** within these schools. Activities on offer were girls rugby, girls football, dance, fitness and dodgeball.

Ross Inglis, an SGO based in Rotherham, was inspired by the original Girls Week, had a chat with Lauren and began Rotherham Girls Week. The week included a rugby event, with dodgeball identified as the most popular sport. Three activity types were offered, and a multi-skills rotation took place in which Year 9–10 girls selected the activities they wished to lead. Additional events included cricket and a secondary climbing session. The week targeted multi-academy trusts, involving five primary schools who delivered activities across the week using the Girls' Week pack. A pupil voice activity was also conducted during a SEND Pentathlon. **A pupil voice activity was held at the SEND pentathlon. Wristbands were given to all students.**

Lauren's original Girls Week received a national School Games Impact Award and was featured on the School Games podcast. A presentation on the project was delivered at the School Games Summit, the School Games Welcome Back webinar, and Sheffield Women's Health Week, focusing on increasing girls' engagement in PE and school sport. The work also helped strengthen citywide partnerships, involving sports clubs, universities, and other key stakeholders.

Impact

- 700+ Key Stage 2 girls engaged in school sport across the two Girls Weeks.
- Increased awareness and profile of girls sport within schools.
- Growth in girls-only provision across primary schools.
- The Sheffield PE Conference included a topic focused on engaging more girls in PE and school sport
- Individual success story: a Year 5 pupil who was disengaged during the first year's lunch clubs returned in the second year as a sports leader and went on to compete in Sports Hall Athletics.
- Three schools now regularly access girls-only provision.

- Improved self-belief, self-confidence, and self-esteem among participating girls.
- Increased engagement in PE lessons and improved attitudes toward learning.
- Schools now booking in mums and daughters for after-school clubs to promote family engagement.
- More girls transitioning into school, community, and club-based sport.
- Headteachers increasingly recognising the impact and considering gender when planning PE and sport provision.
- Greater pupil voice within schools, encouraging more inclusive practice.

- 1,236 girls active across Girls Week.
- 54 schools engaged.
- 14 stakeholders collaborated to deliver the programme.
- Exit routes into community sport provided for participating girls.



A group of children in blue 'SCHOOL GAMES' t-shirts are participating in a cup stacking activity on a blue running track. One child in the center is standing with arms raised in celebration, while others are sitting on the track, focused on stacking colorful plastic cups. The scene is captured from a high angle, showing the track's lanes and the children's concentration.

Reflections

SGO Reflections: Working Differently

It was important for us to understand the impact that the localised funding had on SGOs and the work they were delivering in their areas. Some SGOs took part in a focus group to think about what the funding allowed them to do differently compared to previous events or last year, what they learned from working in this way and how they will apply this learning to future working. Below are some of the comments collected during the session.

Examples of how SGO's worked differently

"Tried to link up the secondary and primary teachers to discuss how they can be of help to each other throughout the year".

"Tried to use the major events happening to help create more of a buzz and make them feel they are part of something bigger."

"Allowed it to run more freely than other events, led by pupils on what they wanted and what they enjoyed."

"Targeted work with one individual school that is not traditionally engaged in School Games. Place based approach."

"Engaged more stakeholders to uplift the events, working with Community Foundation enabled an extended partnership where every girl who attended the year 3/4 football Friday left with a football and a shirt."

"Targeted event for year 3/4 girls as Active Lives data shows they are the least active."

"Trying to be proactive rather than reactive in increasing engagement levels, providing positive experiences and developing engagement with PE and school sport."

"Less bigger events and working in schools to tackle school / local issues."

"Much more targeted approach to try and achieve specific outcomes rather than running larger "run of the mill" events."

"Targeted gender this time around but last year targeted SEND pupils."

"More targeted work in schools and impact on schools' agenda/concerns e.g. behaviour, self-confidence, girls provision."

"Developed an online Google Drive full of resources for supporting girls in sport."

SGO Reflections: Learning

During the SGO insight session, we also collected reflections and lessons learned from School Games Organisers across South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. It's important that, we continue to support SGOs not only in celebrating their successes but also in recognising opportunities to improve and grow. We are committed to fostering a culture where we feel excited and motivated to try new approaches, confident that every experience, whether it goes to plan or not, provides valuable learning.

The following reflections capture what SGOs have learned through their work to engage young people in their projects.

.....
"How girls really feel about PE, Sport and Physical Activity. Most of them really want to be active but confidence is an issue and also boys dominating active spaces and lessons. Not really anything new but seeing the difference in them in single gender environments and how they thrived. Also learnt just how much girls value female role models and how many schools have external PE providers who are male."
.....

.....
"Understanding what your area and schools need/ want and enabled a targeted approach. But learnt a lot as well from other people's case studies."
.....

.....
"Pupil voice is essential when working with targeted groups."
.....

.....
"Engaging stakeholders to uplift events and support transition to community sport adds value and increases impact and memorable moments."
.....

.....
"There are different ways of working with different targeted groups e.g. an essential to working with disengaged girls is confidence building and empowerment."
.....

.....
"Local approach has a greater impact."
.....

SGO Reflections: Challenges and what they'd do differently next time

We also explored the challenges faced throughout delivery and what they'd do differently next time. It's important that, we recognise these challenges and use them as opportunities for growth and collaboration. By sharing honest reflections, we can identify common barriers, support one another in finding solutions, and strengthen our approach moving forward. As a network, we're committed to working together to overcome these challenges and continue developing an inclusive, impactful delivery model that supports all young people to thrive through PE, school sport, and physical activity.

Challenges



"Timetable challenges of schools and trying to just get them to come up to their local secondary schools has been eye opening."



From a school perspective, staffing and transport "always seem to be the main barriers to them attending."



"Still education to be done regarding gender stereotypes both with school staff and boys."



I thought I was removing all the barriers by offering to go into the schools and not needing them to travel but I didn't take into account their halls. Many halls didn't have blinds on the windows so couldn't get the hall dark enough for the activity I'd planned.. "

What they'd do differently next



"More youth voice."



"Do more localised events in localities rather than venues. One of the best events was at a school and we invited 3 neighbouring schools so they didn't need transport."



"Have a family engagement angle like inviting family members to an after school event to get everyone involved."



"Start early gaining insight / pupil voice to really understand what would benefit the schools and what would have the biggest impact."



"Capturing impact more – what happens when you are not there. Having the time to follow that up more effectively."



"More individual school interventions and projects rather than events. Will focus on non-engaged schools and those that aren't mainstream. Also more secondary work as currently quite primary focused."

Partner Reflections

Our School Games programme aims to provide opportunities for every young person, regardless of background, ability, or interest, to engage in physical activity and enjoy its lifelong benefits. Key partnerships with The Motor Activities Training Programme (MATP) and Panathlon help support our programme to be inclusive and impactful for some of the children who need it the most.

The Motor Activities Training Programme (MATP)

MATP supports young people with severe and profound learning disabilities to develop fundamental motor skills such as balance, coordination, and mobility. Through challenge events and “come-try” sessions, MATP creates a safe, inclusive environment that builds confidence and celebrates achievement. As Angela Lydon from MATP notes, **“Yorkshire Sport has supported countywide events and training, enabling staff to develop their skills while providing meaningful, tailored sporting experiences for young people with complex support needs.”**

In the 2024-25 academic year, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire MATP Challenge Events were successfully delivered, welcoming athletes from Early Years through post-19. The events provided positive experiences, strengthened school links, and celebrated the abilities of all participants. Moving forward, plans are in place to expand MATP events, including community provision for adults with complex support needs.”

Panathlon

Panathlon offers competitive, team-based adapted sports such as boccia and table cricket for young people with disabilities. This year, district qualifying events enabled primary and secondary pupils to participate and progress to the South Yorkshire Panathlon County Final, held in March 2025 at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield. The event celebrated ability, teamwork, and inclusive competition, bringing together participants from across the county for an unforgettable day of sporting achievement.

Howard Nicholls from Panathlon adds, **“The Transferable skills are huge – Panathlon does it automatically, with things like responsibility and empathy towards others and others’ abilities and together with Yorkshire Sport Foundation the impact goes beyond just the day. It’s changing the mindset, it’s not all about fixtures and competitions, it’s about developing physical literacy opportunities, that lifelong love of physical activity. It’s about engaging all young people.”**

Find out more about how we engage with stakeholders **here:**



Reflections from our Events and Programmes Manager

We are incredibly proud of the collective approach our School Games network in South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire has taken, and the meaningful impact we've made across both counties for the children who need it most. By working together and putting place at the centre, we've been able to reach more diverse groups of young people, respond to their individual needs and create positive, lasting change.

Teamwork and collaboration have been at the heart of this success. By sharing good practice, building trust, and learning from one another, we've seen the strength of our School Games network. Our partnerships, knowledge, and understanding of the stubborn inequalities that exist in our areas has continued to grow, equipping us better than ever to support schools and communities in tackling inequalities, listening to young people, and ensuring every young person has access to 60 active minutes of daily physical activity.

Through our place-based approach, the School Games has been able to respond directly to local needs and challenges, embedding meaningful opportunities where they matter most.

This has allowed both ourselves as an Active Partnership but also SGO's to design and deliver projects that not only tackle inequalities but also give young people ownership and voice in shaping their own opportunities.

The additional resources invested in our network through our blended approach has further demonstrated what can be achieved through continued collaboration and targeted, localised support in each School Games area. This delivery model across both South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire has proven impactful and we are excited to build on this in the 2025/26 academic year.

Emma Lea

YSF Events and Programmes Manager



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