Secondary School Focus #1: Steven Jamieson and Tim Fletcher

Bio

Name & Type: Steven Jamieson and Tim Fletcher (SGOs), local secondary schools
Location: Lancaster & Heysham
Impact Award Category: Secondary School Focus
Term: Autumn

Summary of Activity

Having noticed that the same secondary schools were consistently dominating county tables, Steven Jamieson and Tim Fletcher knew that new plans and processes needed to be put into place to encourage wider involvement.

To inform their planning, Steven and Tim created a local survey for schools which highlighted how activity levels had been negatively affected and which sports or activities would be of priority to schools.

The activities set up were a mix of competitive and targeted events which were held simultaneously, allowing departments to incorporate the sports into their school or club's curriculum to ensure a range of competitive and more values-based activity. These took place every Wednesday after school throughout the Autumn term and continued into January and February.

Events were planned in collaboration between the SGOs and PE departments with the latter taking the lead on activities alongside wider school departments to aid continuation of the activities. Local clubs and colleges were also brought on board to utilise facilities otherwise unavailable and to help with local school to club links.

Impact on Young People

Secondary school engagement in Steven and Tim's area is up significantly with a real positive change in attitudes and appreciation for the importance of involving more pupils beyond traditional competition and the utilisation of the School Games moving forward.

At the time of entry, over 500 pupils had been positively impacted by this work as schools moved from selective traditional fixtures to broadening activities so that a wider range and greater number of pupils could feel the benefits of physical activity.

Schools across Lancashire quickly realised the positives of the School Games offering and the wider benefits of physical activity for young people, who in turn benefitted from greater opportunities locally.

Key Learnings

Steve and Tim reported that one of their key challenges included time and workload on both school departments and SGOs. They overcame this by timing meetings to take place after school, by highlighting the wider benefits of

physical activity on both young people and the school itself, and by picking a regular slot for activities to take place.

In terms of SGOs, Steven and Tim shared the workload with neighbouring SGOs to ensure the activity could be completed in the 3-day SGO window and to the secondary school scale.

Any initial scepticism from PE Departments was overcome by combining data and national messaging around the benefits of physical activity with local insight from the schools themselves. Once they understood the value, felt the impact and saw the smiles on children's' faces, they were full onboard.

To ensure each sport could be represented , Steven and Tim had to work collaboratively with their schools across Lancaster and Heysham who had varying facilities. They stress that sharing the load was crucial to the activity's success.

In terms of next steps, Steven and Tim will look to add less traditional sporting events to their offering, to target disengaged girls, to improve pupil insight to encourage schools to assess their priorities, and to further partnerships with local clubs by scheduling events in line with club recruitment.

How this could be replicated across the network

This best practice of shared working and altered attitudes to make an impact on the sometimes disengaged secondary school staff audience can be replicated across the network.

"A problem shared is a problem halved", says Steven, who recommends working collaboratively with PE departments, SGOs, and partners to not only lessen workload but also to create opportunities and achieve the best outcome.

Steven and Tim also advise that finding common goals and outcomes means that everyone can work together towards the same thing. You can find these goals using local insight, finding an ally, or even simply meeting with relevant groups.

Finally, sell it to schools. It's crucial to consider how you might better engage secondary schools through the School Games offering, and engage them using data to demonstrate the benefits of physical activity to sway sceptics.

Steven and Tim said:
"*Completing the Impact Awards Application was a great opportunity to reflect and being able to tell the 'how' and 'why' things were done and others involved- it is very much about collaboration; Numbers don't always tell the whole story. It was a chance to focus on some real positives after coming back from Covid and all the negativity that surrounded that. To then be shortlisted is fantastic for ourselves but also recognition for our supportive secondary school staff who were central to the success of the project!"*