



## MSP COACHING PLAN WHEELS EXTREME

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE IDEA

Part of Merseyside Sports Partnership's (MSP) coaching delivery plan was to use local insight to identify under represented groups in the community and to work with local delivery partners to recruit and develop frontline coaches to provide meaningful activity experiences for them.

To achieve this, MSP identified two key objectives:

- To increase the opportunities for individuals facing specific challenging personal circumstances and complex needs to participate in physical activities or sport.
- To test how to develop a workforce which is able to deliver physical activity or sport to individuals with challenging personal circumstance and complex needs in order to better understand the attributes, skills, knowledge and understanding required to engage this group.

## THE NEED FOR INTERVENTION

This intervention looked at hard to reach young people through the use of a non-mainstream activity. In Liverpool there are 97,343 young people aged between 14 and 25.<sup>1</sup> Statistics from the 'Childhood Obesity: a plan for action' publication show that nearly a third of children are overweight or obese and younger generations are becoming obese at earlier ages and staying obese for longer.<sup>2</sup>

Other research shows that one in ten children and young people are effected by mental health problems.<sup>3</sup> Physical activity has been shown to have a strong link when helping with mental health problems including improved mood, reduced stress, better self-esteem, dementia and cognitive decline and depression and anxiety.<sup>4</sup>

## YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE 21ST CENTURY - BARRIERS AND MOTIVATIONS

Improving technology and increasing availability of cheap high saturated food we are seeing increasing numbers of reports and studies showing that more and more people are becoming overweight or obese and less physically active.

In the context of physical activity, only 22% of children aged 5-15 met the physical activity guidelines of being at least moderately active for a least 60 minutes every day.<sup>5</sup> The National Child Measurement Programme for England shows that 25% of reception children are overweight or obese with this increasing to 36% of children in year six.<sup>6</sup>

The burden of obesity is falling hardest on those children from low-income backgrounds such. Obesity rates are highest for children from the most deprived areas and this is getting worse. Children aged 5 and from the poorest income groups are twice as likely to be obese compared to their most well off counterparts and by age 11 they are three times as likely to be obese.<sup>2</sup> Locally, 33% of the Merseyside area is in the top 10% most deprived in the country,<sup>7</sup> and 27.2% of children under 16 live in poverty.<sup>8</sup>

A list of potential motivations and barriers to physical activity among young people has been developed through the Sport England Youth Insight documentation<sup>9</sup> and is shown below.

<u>Motivations</u>	<u>Barriers</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having fun</li> <li>• Feeling good</li> <li>• Motivations in teenage years (shift from pre-teens) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Health and Fitness</li> <li>◦ Looking good</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of time</li> <li>• Convenient places to take part</li> <li>• Fitness levels</li> <li>• Intimidated</li> <li>• Nobody to go with</li> </ul>

## PROJECT

### MSP COACHING PLAN

When developing the MSP Coaching Plan, MSP set out a plan to achieve the following through working with the Youth Service and Wheels Extreme:

- Examine the feasibility of recruiting and deploying 'park ambassadors'.
- Identify the type of attributes, knowledge and skills which may be required for the role.
- In consultation with the Youth Service, identify individuals with the commitment and motivation to engage with and support the young people in the skate parks. An initial assessment has identified four potential options:
  - Up-skill existing youth workers.
  - Recruit and develop from within the young people using the parks.
  - Recruit and deploy existing external coaches or activators.
  - Combination of the above.
- Produce Personal Development Plan (or similar) with identified deliverers to identify what support is required to enable activity to take place in the skate parks.
- Implement Personal Development Plan and support with appropriate training and development opportunities in order to become 'park ambassadors'. It is recognised that this may be a combination of both formal (traditional coach development) and non-formal.
- Provide ongoing mentoring support during delivery; identify and address any issues or problems as and when they arise.
- Undertake evaluation to identify key learning from the experience.

Due to the nature of skateboarding, scooting and BMX it is recognised that users of the skate parks may or may not want to engage with the role of 'park ambassador'.

## WHEELS EXTREME

Wheels Extreme is a Sports and Personal Development company created by World Class athletes Jenna Downing and Neil Danns. Set up in July of 2015, the aim of Wheels Extreme is to improve the lives of young people using alternative sports provision.

At Wheels Extreme they believe that extreme sports are fantastic for releasing the frustrations and stresses of daily life, and at a time when exam pressures are higher than ever, mental health issues are on the rise, and youth unemployment figures are rising, they know that through the power of extreme sports and their personal development programmes, they can make a difference to young peoples' lives.

Wheels Extreme work with numerous groups and organisations to deliver quality coaching such as:

- Schools
  - Re-engaging pupils with a range of personal and social development programmes.
  - Working with pupils who may be underachieving or have anti-social behaviour issues.
- Local Community Groups
  - Building cohesion and social capital within the local community
  - Using a range of programmes to develop 15-25 year olds in the community by combining extreme sports and skills development.
- Improving Fitness
  - Local Rolla Fitness sessions as a fun way to get fit on skates. A well designed session to provide a cardiovascular workout while still keeping the fun element for everyone and anyone.



# PLANNING AND METHODOLOGY

## PLANNING AND METHODOLOGY



## PLANNING

The logic model, or journey map, on page 6 outlines the original concept for the MSP coaching plan. The model was originally designed to act as a blueprint that would be used to guide a project from conception to completion. However, knowing the potential difficulty of working with the groups identified in the coaching plan, we were aware that this beginning to end style plan could prove problematic and potentially unattainable.

With that being the case, the aforementioned journey map was created using a modular approach. This would ultimately afford MSP the freedom to manipulate the form of the project, and/or data collection, based upon the partner and their service users, without the loss of direction or result.

## METHOD

MSP had already developed a relationship with Wheels Extreme through the Sportivate and Satellite Clubs programmes. Once contacting them about the idea of a skate park ambassadors plan it was clear that Wheels Extreme had already coached at skate parks and youth clubs, engaging the hard to reach groups MSP were setting out to reach.

Jenna Downing and Neil Danns, creators and head coaches of Wheels Extreme were keen to help us with developing a framework outlining what attributes, skills, knowledge and understanding are required to engage young people within the context of youth clubs and skate parks.

At the meeting between MSP, Jenna and Neil it was clear that they were both very passionate about what they do and what they want to achieve. Talking about the way they coach and the participants they coach, MSP were keen to capture this example of exemplar coaches who love their work, as they had the attitude needed to be the best type of coach. Jenna and Neil invited MSP to attend their extreme sports festival event to see what it's all about, grab some images and footage and more importantly, record some interview footage with Jenna and Neil to demonstrate what they believe a coach needs in order to be successful.

On the day of the festival, MSP were able to observe the participants, the young leaders and Jenna and Neil coaching and leading the whole day. Through observations, imagery and videos it was clear that the festival looking fun, engaging and a fantastic success for Jenna and Neil. Following the festival, MSP grabbed the opportunity to grab valuable interview footage with Jenna and Neil to see what they believe makes a good coach when it comes to projects, festivals and Wheels Extreme.

# FINDINGS

# COACH 'PEN PORTRAIT'



## UNDERSTANDING

Having an understanding of the young people and their backgrounds can help with coaching methods.

**"Coaches must be understanding in order to build a relationship with participants"**

## ENGAGING

Ensuring that as a coach, you and your sessions are engaging in order to keep the young people interested and engaged.

## PASSIONATE

Being passionate for the sport and coaching makes it easier to engage with the participants.

## ROLE MODEL

Being the person the young people look up to and aspire to be helps them grow and develop their skills.

**"Every young person has potential to achieve fantastic things as long as they have the right role model"**

## INCLUSIVE

Ensuring coaching methods and sessions are inclusive is an important task to ensure everyone can get involved.

**"Not all kids have the funds to take part. We give them a chance to take part through their school"**

## BELIEF

Believing that anyone can be successful and achieve great things encourages young people to enjoy themselves.

## COACH 'PEN PORTRAIT'

The work of Wheels Extreme extends passed this one festival that MSP got to see, they work on a range of programmes and initiatives such as Sportivate and Satellite Clubs, working with schools and communities to develop skills and confidence of those that they work with. Though, through this one project, MSP were able to observe what factors made Wheels Extreme a success and what made Jenna and Neil so good at coaching.

### UNDERSTANDING

Just like this project to understand what a coach needs to be a good coach, an understanding is necessary to find out what is important, what needs changing, what needs improving and much more. Coaches understanding their participants will help to shape sessions to keep young people engaged, keep the sessions fun, all while ensuring the participants are developing their skills and knowledge.

Sport England released youth insight packs in 2014, this research surrounded sport and activity. Following this, Sport England commissioned YouthSight for three years to develop a deeper understanding of young people, outside of sport and activity. This research was all necessary to gain the best possible understanding of young people to ensure that sport and activity interventions were meeting the needs of those they were aimed at.

Neil and Jenna believe having an understanding of young people is really important as a coach. By understanding the young people you will be able to relate to them by having an "idea of what they are in to, what they like to do and what their interests are". Being athlete mentors of extreme sports, they believe this understanding is vital in order to "engage young people in extreme sports, help them to develop new skills, develop personally and get into trying something new".

**"I believe it is so important that us as coaches have fantastic relationships with the young people that we work with"**

**Jenna Downing, Wheels Extreme, Director & Athlete Mentor**

### ROLE MODEL

When leading groups of young people, the importance of gaining their respect is second to none. Being a role model allows a coach to easily lead a group towards improving their skills whilst having fun and being encouraged to raise concerns and questions.

Neil and Jenna are unique role models when considering coaches due to them both previously competing at a higher level of sport. They are able to relay their experiences, struggles and also fun times back to their young audience to continuously encourage improvement, self belief and the will to improve.

**"It's good that Jenna and Neil come and do stuff with us, to inspire us even more than we already are"**

**Ray, Young Leader**

## PASSIONATE

As a coach, being passionate about what you do helps keep the interest of each and every attendee being coached. Showing that you as a teacher and leader are having just as much fun and can remain fully invested in the sport shows the drive and enthusiasm needed.

The coaches and young leaders of Wheels Extreme show their passion in different ways. Jenna and Neil both show that even after the years of taking part, training, competing and now coaching, they are still in love with their sport. Whether taking part or teaching others, they show passion in everything they do.

The training and development of skate park ambassadors allowed the project to take young people already fully invested, interested and passionate about their sport to take a step up and lead their younger counterparts in taking part to learn the sport as they have.

**"I just thought that I should inspire little ones to do what I like to do best"**

**Ray, Young Leader**

## ENGAGING

An engaging coach can inspire a child for life, and specific techniques ensure a positive impact on a child at a potentially key point in their development. A good coach will plan their activities well, use specific language and show genuine enjoyment in the coaching they deliver. This combination of qualities and planning makes each coaching session unique and engaging.

An added bonus from Wheels Extreme to engage the young participants is the uniqueness of the sport they are taking part in. Not everyone gets the chance to skate on roller-skates, a skateboard or even a scooter, but the chance to do so and the use of ramps really engages the audience into a new and exciting environment.

**"Jenna and Neil put on competitions in our area where there aren't many other competitions. It's good that they put these on to give us the chances to take part"**

**Cole, Young Leader**

## INCLUSIVE

Inclusive sport has been highlighted year on year with the latest Active Lives results showing that Inactivity is more common among people with a disability (43%) than those without (21%).<sup>10</sup> This is why it is important for coaches to understand their audience and to be able to create adaptive sessions to suit the needs of all participants.

For Wheels Extreme, being inclusive extends further than helping those with physical disabilities to take part. It is about making their non-mainstream sport available to everyone and breaking down the barriers that stop people from taking part. They overcome a large barrier of costs for hard to reach young people by offering them the equipment and locations to take part in their sessions.



## SUMMARY

The original objective of MSP's coaching delivery plan was to increase the opportunities for individuals facing specific challenging personal circumstances and complex needs to participate in physical activities or sport. This was to be achieved by testing how to develop a workforce which would be able to deliver physical activity or sport to individuals with challenging personal circumstance and complex needs in order to better understand the attributes, skills, knowledge and understanding required, in order to engage this group.

Through the development of weekly participation sessions and Satellite Clubs, a pre-existing partnership allowed us to identify Wheels Extreme as an ideal partner when considering how best to develop a workforce which could deliver to individuals with complex needs. Through the previous partnership work, Wheels Extreme had already worked with individuals with complex need by engaging them through local skate-parks in order to build a relationship of trust through sport and physical activity.

Through there established connections and developed brand they were able to engage with young people they had already coached and develop their skills to become Skate Park Ambassadors. Combining this with a local extreme sports festival they were able to take young ambassadors to teach even younger children to take part in the sport.

The great success of Wheels Extreme, the extreme sports festival, the young ambassadors and of course, Jenna and Neil themselves can be directly linked back to their own coaching capabilities and qualities that make them amazing coaches. They will continue to work with schools and local skate park locations to continue to offer their coaching prowess to continuously improve the lives of young people using alternative sports provision.

This project has provided the valuable insight needed to guide and help create a coaching workforce with the skills and knowledge needed to encourage all participants to take part and also encourage many more to want to become the coaches they look up to.

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