Pathway 2 Participation Programme

Participants reflection and co-production workshop

13th September 2018
Mike Parker
“P2P makes you come out of your shell”

1.0 BACKGROUND

Since April 2016 Wigan Athletic Community Trust have invested grants totaling £401,792 in a Pathway 2 Participation (P2P) programme, made up of £287,792 from the Big Lottery Fund and £25,000 from Wigan Council’s Deal for Communities, Community Investment Fund. The Big Lottery Grant funded three elements of the programme - mentoring activities for vulnerable 12-19 year olds, volunteering and training with an emphasis on 16 - 19 year olds and activities for 8 - 12 year olds. This evaluation concentrates solely on participants from the mentoring element of the scheme.

The scheme aims to engage the hardest to reach and vulnerable young people across the Wigan borough, including looked after children, young offenders, young carers and those from troubled families with the aim of engaging them in more sporting, educational and leisure opportunities:

- Removing barriers and increasing opportunities for participation in positive activities
- Improving employability and reducing levels of NEET young people
- Reducing anti-social behaviour and offending amongst some of the most vulnerable young people in Wigan

P2P was delivered in partnership with Wigan Athletic Community Trust, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and Wigan Youth Zone. Funding was used to fund a full-time project coordinator, two full-time project workers and activities for young people to take part in.

In total 323 young people aged between 12-19 years have participated in 32 different cohorts of the programme. Participants are identified and referred onto P2P with referrals being received from a wide variety of organisations working with vulnerable children and young people across the Wigan borough.

P2P is currently measured against the following outcomes:

- Improved health and general wellbeing through involvement in positive and meaningful activity, including physical activity
- Improved employability through the completion of training and volunteering
- Improved confidence and self-esteem through engagement in positive activities and self-improvement

2.0 CO-PRODUCTION WORKSHOP

In September 2018 Progress Health Partnerships were contracted by Wigan Athletic Community Trust to plan and deliver an interactive co-production workshop involving P2P participants (n=7) and P2P delivery staff (n=2).

The objectives of the workshop were to explore:

- What participants liked / disliked about P2P
- What impacts and outcomes participants and instructors think that young people achieve through P2P
- What they would do differently to improve the programme

The workshop was delivered as a twilight session (5 – 7pm) at the DW Stadium, (home of Wigan Athletic Football Club). Participants were identified by Wigan Athletic Community Trust and provided free transport to and from the workshop.
The workshop was designed to utilise the stadium environment to inspire and educate the young people with sessions delivered in the stadium Directors box, the press box, the substitutes bench (pitch side) and the changing rooms. The full agenda for the workshop is outlined in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Co-Production Workshop Agenda**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Match Meal</td>
<td>Registration and Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Match Brief</td>
<td>Seated in the Directors Box - Round table introductions to workshop structure.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant reflections on their P2P experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overall group rating of P2P using the added time/ substitute board</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants seat in the press seats and create P2P Headlines, based on their programme experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Ratings</td>
<td>Participants rate favourite / least favourite activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants given 3 red and 3 green stickers which they place on 3 most popular and 3 least popular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Player Rating</td>
<td>Participants rate each of P2P activities, using Directors Seats for the rating scale 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directors seats/rows labelled 1 -5 (1 = rubbish, 5= brilliant).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitators read out each of the 12 P2P activities and participants asked to sit on row that reflects their views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Ratings</td>
<td>Participants asked to reflect on key aspects of programme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Wigan Athletic Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The activities venues</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Instructors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being with / making new friends</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Incentives (eg youth zone membership)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss each in turn and use subs-board to rate 1-10 on impact/importance in relation to positive outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Management</td>
<td>Participants asked to think about new activities for up-coming programme, what would they change.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In home changing room – white board with each of the sessions listed – laid out in team formation. Participants asked to brain storm potential new activities – each on it’s own post it note – placed on changing room wall.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants were allowed to make 3 substitutions – discuss as a group which activities to take off ‘the team’ and which new activities to substitute in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting to the Board</td>
<td>Has the programme delivered against its Outcomes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Back in Board room for final exercise. Each intended outcome listed. Participants asked to rate impact – on each outcome 1-5 and asked to sit in appropriate row of seats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants asked to write down one comment they would use to ‘Sell the Programme’ to their mates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.0 WORKSHOP FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Overall experience on the programme

*I absolutely loved P2P*

The group consisted of participants that had been on different P2P courses over a 2-year period. As a result, all participants had not done the exact same activities, since the programme had developed over time. However, the structure of the programme and broad theme of activities between programmes were consistent, allowing for general reflection.
It was clear from the outset that all participants had very positive personal experiences of the P2P programme, with no negative overall views on the programme given. The main headline feedback from participants focused on the quality and friendliness of the staff, the range of activities offered and the importance of group interaction. These views are best summarised with direct quotes from the young people:

**The Programme:**

It was clear that the programme was appealing to participants. They valued the approach taken by Wigan Athletic Community Trust and the ‘small details’ which included the provision of transport to and from activities and where appropriate the provision of free meals, ensuring the young people felt valued.

“The whole programme was great fun.”

“We all had a laugh”

“It was mentally fun!”

“Absolutely love the activities”

Taking the P2P programme as a whole the participants discussed amongst themselves, (whilst instructors and facilitators were outside of the room) “How they rate P2P programme as a whole on a scale of 1 (Rubbish) to 10 (Brilliant). They gave an overall programme rating of 10.

**The Instructors**

The quality of the instructors was another central component to successful delivery. It was clear from observational study that there was a strong and positive relationship between the instructors and participants and this led to an open dialogue and a feeling that the young people valued these relationships.

“The instructors were fab”

“Astonishing staff”

“The staff are really nice, especially Dave”

“Absolutely loved the staff”

“The staff help you when you need it”

“It’s great that we get picked up, except I’m always last pick up!”

**The Friendships**

A repeated theme throughout the workshop was the relationship between participants. It is clear that one of the critical factors in a successful programme is the ability to develop great group dynamics. This is not always easy to achieve with a mixed group (age, gender, demographics) and it is clear that the activities and staff ensure that the group bond from the outset.

“I made some great friends”

“It’s easy to make friends because you don’t know them”

Making new friends helped me to stick at it”

**The Outcomes**

The instructors raised several outcomes achieved as a result of the programme. These ranged from the simplest of measures – young people come, enjoy it and keep coming back “we must be doing something right” through more complex longer-term outcomes including re-engagement in education and improved school attendance.
One of the instructors reported that their standout moment in delivering the programme was when one participant returned to thank them for the programme.

“A young person came back to thank us for the programme and told us that as a result he was now working and settled down”

3.2 Range of activities provided

Participants were asked, individually, to rate the activities offered on a sliding scale of 1 (rubbish) to 5 (outstanding). As you would expect from such a diverse group of participants (age, gender and background) the views on each individual activity were varied.

The general trend however shows that activities that would be considered ‘more physically demanding’ (Trampolining, raft building, high ropes, orienteering and Ninja) were more popular amongst participants than those seen as ‘more educational’ (Heart Start and Canal and River Trust). These results are summarised in figure 2 below.

![Figure 2: Rating of P2P Activities](image)

These findings were reflected when participants were asked to identify their top 3 and bottom 3 P2P activities, with trampolining, watersports and Be Ninja being the most popular whilst Wigan Youth Zone, Heart Start and Canal and River Trust the least popular activities.

Later in the workshop we explored the options to introduce new activities into the programme. The activity was conducted in the team changing room – with the use of white board set out as a football team formation - with participants in charge of ‘team’ selection.

After brainstorming potential new activities, the group were invited to agree which three ‘potential new’ activities were most popular and then they were allowed to make 3 substitutions on the match board.
Reflecting the data from the previous exercise, the majority of activities suggested in the brainstorming were high intensity physical activities such as skiing, rugby, BMX, scootering, skateparks, paintballing and swimming. Other activity suggestions were more experience based including visits to the zoo, theme parks, visit to watch a match or meet the players. There were no suggestions for training or educational visits.

Following the brainstorming exercise participants were asked to make 3 ‘substitutions’. They suggested that activities at the Wigan Youth Zone, museum visits and Heart Start training were replaced with an outward bounds weekend, paintballing and a trip to a theme park (Alton Towers).

3.3 Critical P2P elements

The group then moved to the substitute bench – pitch side, where they discussed key elements of the P2P programme that were most important in engaging participants to take part in the programme and motivating the participants to continue with it throughout the 12-week programme. For this element of the workshop the instructors were excluded from the conversation in order to remove potential bias. The key elements that young people thought were of greatest importance to them were.

- **Branding**

  The programme being branded Wigan Athletic was important to participants. This is despite none of the participants classing themselves as Wigan Athletic supporters and only three members classing themselves as football fans (2 Everton and 1 Manchester United). It was clear from discussions that the Badge made the programme feel more fun and engaging than programmes delivered by statutory council services.

  “It was the fact that it was run by Wigan Athletic that made me want to do it”

  “All the programmes Wigan Athletic deliver are great”

  “It’s better than a programme run by school or the council”
• **Staff**

The quality of the staff delivering the programme was seen as a critical factor. It was clear that there were strong relationships between staff and participants and that the young people felt able to relate to the staff and share honest and open dialogue. One workshop facilitator stated that:

"Having facilitated numerous sessions like this, I'm amazed how the kids interact with the instructors. The kids are so confident and relaxed when speaking to them"

• **Activity choices**

The choice and variety of the activities offered is extremely important to participants. This is covered in the previous section.

• **Incentivising the programme**

Significant discussion was held regarding the importance of incentivising the programme through rewards. Participants only rated this 4 (on a scale of 1-10). This was explored in more detail to understand if incentives were important or if the incentives offered were not deemed of significant personal value.

Participants stated that the only incentive they received was a Free Wigan Youth Zone membership, which was on the whole not highly regarded (reflecting the activity ratings in the previous section). Participants suggested that incentives would be useful in engagement but rather than Youth Zone membership they suggested – Free Match Tickets (both Football and Rugby), branded clothing, branded stationary, wrist bands and ice cream! Later discussion with participants highlighted the importance of providing Free Food at activities, which is often undervalued in similar programmes.

**3.4 Impact of the programme against intended outcomes**

The final session was delivered in the Boardroom, where participants first discussed and then rated the impact of the programme against a listed set of outcome measures. Discussions involved the instructors who often had to prompt participants in understanding the impact/outcome. The main outcomes listed by participants and instructors related to:

- **Re-engagement in education**
  
  "I've gone back to school – I didn’t go before"

- **Improved attendance at school**
  
  "I definitely go to school more now than I did before"

- **Accessing additional training and volunteering opportunities.**
  
  "coz of P2P I'm now doing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, so I can be a youth leader"

  "I'm raising money so that I can do volunteering in India"

  "I've started volunteering in my local community"

Participants felt that the programme had a benefit on their health and wellbeing, though this was difficult for participants to articulate aside from increasing their levels of physical activity.
The Instructors also commented on the impact of the programme on participants’ confidence and attitude towards school.

“You can see with loads of the kids their attitude towards school has improved. We are told about improved attendance, they are definitely going to school more now than they used to.” (P2P Instructor)

Participants were then asked to rate (on a scale of 1-5) the impact of P2P on the listed outcomes. From this it is clear that the participants felt the programme had positively impacted on the majority of listed outcomes, most notably increased physical activity and increased confidence.

**Figure 4: Impact in relation to outcomes**

In concluding the workshop, participants were asked to develop headline comments on the P2P programme – one that they would use to encourage friends to engage with it. The headlines reflect the overall learning from the workshop and perhaps are the best summary on the impact of the P2P programme.

“It’s enjoyable and helps you learn how to control yourself”

“I would tell people how much I have changed and that they would also improve”

“It gets you out of the house and we do different activities with lots of fun”

“It makes you come out your shell”

“It is amazing help”

**4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The programme clearly resonated with the workshop participants, who rated the programme over all 10/10. Whilst the majority of individual activities were scored highly by participants, it is clear that the more physically challenging the activities are the more they are welcomed by participants.

The quality of the instructors is fundamental to successful delivery and participants clearly indicated that they value the role of Wigan Athletic Community Trust in delivering a programme such as P2P since it distinguishes it to the statutory service providers.
Participants were able to reflect on the outcomes they achieved through participation in P2P and clearly valued its impact in helping them re-engage in education, take up additional training and volunteering opportunities and improve their wellbeing particularly in relation to increasing physical activity.

In continuing the development of the programme participants would like to see more high energy physical activities built in, with less emphasis on educational visits. They would also like to see a greater range of incentives to help with participation and continued engagement in the programme including an opportunity for an outward bounds’ residential activity (perhaps as an incentive).

To aid continued learning from the P2P programme it would be recommended that the outcome measures are reviewed (to include short term impact measures relating to behaviours, knowledge and attitudes) and the language refined to make it more understandable to participants (what they are trying to achieve through participation). It is also a recommendation from the facilitators that a process and outcome evaluation is built in from the outset, benchmarking ALL participants and capturing progress throughout the programme.

5.0 Acknowledgments

The workshop was designed and delivered by an independent public health consultancy: Progress Health Partnerships Ltd www.progresshp.co.uk

The findings were written up by Mike Parker (Director @ Progress Health Partnerships)

The workshop design and delivery were supported by Mark Haig (Director @ PHP Active CIC)

The workshop was supported by P2P instructors Dave Coppin (Wigan Athletic Community Trust) and Kim Owen (Wigan Youth Zone)

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