



The Avon & Somerset Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund

Place case study:
Crime prevention and
early intervention

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Overview

The Avon and Somerset Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund represents an innovative approach to tackling antisocial behaviour and youth violence through the power of community sport. What began as a fragmented landscape, where organisations worked in isolation and young people at risk fell between the gaps, has grown into a coordinated system, building trust and reshaping how sport contributes to safer communities.

Over five years, the fund has invested £280,000 in 42 organisations, and benefitted 3,500 young people.

The challenge

Across the West of England, many organisations were already using sport and physical activity to combat antisocial behaviour and violence, but their work was not coordinated.

Organisations were working in isolation trying to navigate the system. The Avon & Somerset Constabulary covers the footprint of two Active Partnerships: the West of England Sport Trust (Wesport) and the Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP). These are two very different areas, each with their own unique challenges and community needs.

To create meaningful impact, the teams first needed to understand the justice system and their place within it.



The solution

2019

A meeting with community leader Amjid Ali proved pivotal. Unknown to Wesport at the time, he was the Chair of the Avon & Somerset Constabulary Strategic Independent Advisory Group (SIAG). He was interested in broadening the engagement in sport for the Muslim community. A few of conversations later and we were signed up as members of the SIAG, championing the role sport and physical activity within criminal justice.

2020

A co-creation event brought together four unitary authorities, the police, youth organisations, youth workers, sports clubs and youth offending teams to discuss the youth justice system, early intervention and preventative activities for young people.

In August 2020 we agreed to take over the administration of the Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund. This gave us greater reach into community and sports organisations. An updated application form developed leant on the theory of change used by the Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice, ensuring that the right organisations were working with the right young people for the right reasons. Using this application process also enabled us to both to identify alternative funding opportunities for organisations whose applications did not meet the funding criteria and support successful applicants to attract additional funding.

We worked with the police to provide data and insight, identifying the localities with high levels of anti-social behaviour and where the funding could see the biggest impact.

2021 / 2022

In 2021/2022 alone, £50,000 was distributed to 10 organisations, directly benefiting 700 young people.

- Bristol Somali Youth Voice: Football sessions engaging **180 young people**, embedding workshops on violence reduction and positive behaviours. These sessions remained active into 2025, speaking to their ongoing value.
- Learning Partnership West (LPW): Sports and fitness used to unite two traditionally conflicting communities. **88 young people** came together, forging positive relationships and reducing tensions.

Ongoing conversations with Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) and Violence Reduction Partnerships have seen additional funding invested in South Gloucestershire and Somerset. Funding for the last two years has come from the Home Office via POP Hot Spot funds.

2024 / 2025

A new direct agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner increased funding and introduced **monthly reporting**, enabling more frequent learning and improved targeting.

Our [Annual Impact Reports](#) and [participant survey results](#) can be found on our [website](#).

The learning:

- **Patience and persistence matter** – Navigating Youth Justice is complex and progress requires sustained engagement.
- **Organisation structures are confusing, especially from the outside looking in.** Understanding policing and the justice system takes time. There is a need for shared language and trust.
- **Relationships are the foundation of impact** – Ongoing support for delivery organisations has generated high-quality partnerships and unlocked additional funding across the region.
- **Data and place-based targeting amplify impact** – Interventions work best when rooted in real intelligence about communities and risk.



Wesport case study

Regular contact over the last 5 years between the police and Wesport has strengthened our relationship, allowing us to have clear, honest conversations regarding the best use of any funding provided. Organisational barriers have been broken down with Wesport and the police coming together as one team. Our previous experience of holding funds, delivering an application process and knowledge of place, and the local organisations delivering sport for development, professionalised an otherwise ad hoc process. The police were able to bring data and insight to the table so we could really focus on key locations where anti-social behaviour caused by young people was having a real impact on the local community.

“ Sport and physical activity have a unique ability to engage young people. By diverting them away from negative influences and towards positive activities, Wesport and SASP’s work with their providers is having a significant impact, not just on the young people involved, but also on the wider community.

The feedback from these initiatives has been inspiring. Young people are building confidence, developing a sense of belonging and leadership skills, and finding safe spaces to explore their interests. In many cases, this is reducing their involvement in antisocial behaviour and violence. It’s a fantastic example of how partnership and creativity can make our communities safer and stronger.”

Clare Moody
Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner

The future

Although the annual impact reports produced by Wesport have been invaluable in showing the success of the fund and were key in unlocking continued funding, future funding for the Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund is by no means guaranteed, so we want to further explore the system to find our best fit. The roll-out of Sport England's Place Universal Offer creates a timely opportunity, particularly in Weston-Super-Mare and Bristol, to integrate criminal justice objectives with place-based approaches, amplifying impact and unlocking new resources. We will be working with the Alliance of Sport, who will provide technical facilitation, national expertise and dedicated capacity.

Working with the Alliance of Sport, Wesport will:

- Build internal knowledge and understanding across our team at Wesport to ensure that we have clarity on landscape and its challenges, with the outcome of enabling us to begin to build relationships both locally, regionally and nationally to move this work forward
- Convene strategic roundtable/s with cross-sector partners (justice, health, education, sport, PCCs, VRUs) to co-design initiatives and build shared ownership. In the first instance, this will focus on the power and importance of youth voice to ensure that co-creation is at the heart of our intent around this work
- Develop crime prevention outcomes within place-based strategies within the footprint of Wesport
- Influence policy and funding opportunities, positioning Wesport to access opportunities with the Youth Endowment Fund, Sport England, BBC Children in Need and others

Wesport case study

- Mobilise the justice workforce by engaging relevant police, health and justice stakeholders
- Strengthen the evidence base, supporting consistent monitoring and evaluation across primary and secondary prevention, while recognising emerging work at tertiary levels
- Align with PCC and VRU priorities so sport and physical activity are recognised as key contributors to violence reduction and safer communities.

We're looking forward to it!

Conclusion

The Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund has evolved into a powerful, joined-up model for early intervention. By connecting sectors, investing strategically, and amplifying community voices, it has demonstrated that sport is not merely a diversionary activity, it is a catalyst for safer, stronger communities.



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