



Sport for Change Cities

Prospectus

An initiative from ConnectSport CIC in
association with The Commonwealth
Secretariat



Executive summary

Sport for Change Cities is a place-based campaign from ConnectSport CIC which highlights and supports organisations using sport and physical activity to create positive social, economic, health and environmental change in urban communities.

It is a storytelling initiative which brings together grassroots organisations, media, universities, funders and policy-makers to increase awareness, investment and collaboration within the sport for development sector.

The programme begins with pilot cities and will scale nationally, and potentially globally, to create a network of Sport for Change Cities where local organisations collaborate to address social challenges through sport.

Key objectives include:

- Raising awareness of local sport for development organisations.
- Increasing funding and investment in community sport.
- Strengthening local partnerships and collaboration.
- Training the next generation of sport for change journalists and storytellers.
- Supporting projects aligned to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).





Vision & mission

Vision

To position sport and physical activity as a core driver of social change in cities across the UK and globally.

Mission

To build a network of Sport for Change Cities that showcase, connect and strengthen organisations using sport to tackle social challenges.

ConnectSport CIC aims to increase awareness and investment in community sport by giving it greater visibility through storytelling, journalism, partnerships and campaigns.

The issues we want to help solve

Many UK cities face multiple social challenges inc:

- Physical inactivity and poor health
- Youth disengagement
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Unemployment and lack of skills*
- Social isolation and mental health challenges
- Inequality affecting women, ethnic minorities and disabled communities

In the three months to December 2025, an estimated 957,000 young people were not in employment, education or training (NEET), equivalent to 12.8% of all 16 to 24-year-olds. This is an increase of **around 200,000 since 2021.*

Sport for development organisations already address these issues through targeted programmes, but they often lack:

- Media visibility
- Sustainable funding
- Collaboration opportunities
- Policy recognition

At the same time, the sector is large but fragmented, with thousands of organisations delivering social impact through sport.

The opportunity before us

Sport is increasingly recognised as a powerful tool for social impact, contributing to areas such as:

- Health and wellbeing
- Education and employability
- Crime prevention
- Community cohesion
- Environmental awareness

The United Nations recognises sport as an important enabler of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting its role in development and social change. By building city-based networks and telling powerful stories, Sport for Change Cities can:

- Unlock new funding streams
- Influence policy
- Inspire new collaborations
- Scale proven interventions

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Sport for Change Cities is built on four key pillars...

1. Storytelling & Media

ConnectSport journalists and student reporters produce:

- Feature articles
- Short films
- Case studies
- Podcast interviews

>> *These stories highlight organisations using sport to tackle real social challenges. This helps to:*

- *Increase awareness*
- *Attract investment*
- *Inspire replication*

2. City-based networks

Each Sport for Change City will develop a local network of organisations including:

- Charities and social enterprises
- Community sports clubs
- Universities
- Local authorities
- Foundations and governing bodies

>> *These networks share knowledge and collaborate on initiatives.*

3. Research & Learning

Partner universities support:

- Impact evaluation
- Research projects
- Student placements
- Journalism training

>> *This creates a pipeline of future sport for change storytellers and practitioners.*

4. Advocacy & Policy

The campaign builds national awareness by:

- Engaging media
- Influencing local and national policy
- Connecting organisations with funders

>> *This supports recognition of sport as a tool for social change.*



SPORT FOR CHANGE WOLVERHAMPTON

Join a city-wide initiative using sport to transform lives and communities across Wolverhampton


Join us in making sport a force for good!

ARE YOU a COMMUNITY SPORT ORGANISATION?

Together we can have a greater impact on the city by sharing stories, building your profile and working together:

 Promote your activities and impact


 Access opportunities and funding


 Connect with universities and businesses


 Participate in events and exhibitions


BECOME A PARTNER OR SPONSOR?

Support our initiative to improve wellbeing and create positive stories

 Showcase your commitment to Wolverhampton

 Enhance your corporate social responsibility (CSR)

 Increase brand visibility

 Make a real difference in local communities

Supported by the University of Wolverhampton and Wolves Foundation

Part of the Sport for Change Cities initiative from ConnectSport CIC

Target cities

The initiative will start with pilot cities before scaling nationally.

Phase 1 – Pilot city

- Wolverhampton and the Black Country (launched March 2026)
- This area was selected due to high deprivation levels and a strong network of community sport organisations working on local challenges.

Phase 2 – Potential expansion cities (Cities currently under consideration)

- Bradford
- Bristol
- Dundee
- Hull
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Newport, South Wales
- Sheffield
- Leeds

- To find out what it would cost to launch Sport for Change Cities in your region, contact hello@connectsport.co.uk
- Each hub will be supported by a mix of funders and will appoint a local editor in its second year.

Each city will build its own Sport for Change network.

What you'll get



Within 12 months you will have:

- **1** managed and maintained online hub at sportforchangecities/[insert name] showcasing at least 50 local sport for development organisations.
- **2 5** positive news and video updates aligned to policy objectives, eg addressing serious youth violence, employability and skills, social cohesion [50 in year 2].
- **1 0** items covered by mainstream media [20 in year 2].
- **1** visible, vibrant and galvanised local Sport for Change movement, inspiring and engaging so-called 'hard to reach' local communities.
- **1** annual celebration event to promote your city to key stakeholders, media and investors.
- **2 0** employable, proud and motivated local young storytellers and citizens.

Target beneficiaries

Primary beneficiaries:

- Young people at risk of exclusion
- Communities experiencing deprivation
- Women and girls
- Ethnic minority communities
- Disabled people
- Individuals experiencing mental health challenges

Secondary beneficiaries:

- Local community organisations
- Coaches and volunteers
- Universities and students
- Policy-makers and funders
- Local business community





Helping you to create a happier, healthier and safer city!

Impact measurement

Success will be measured through:

Awareness

Media reach

Published stories*

Social media engagement

Participation

Number of organisations involved

Number of beneficiaries reached

Number of student reporters
moving into employment

Investment

Funding secured for
organisations

Sponsorship partnerships

Increase in private sector support

Collaboration

Cross-sector partnerships created

Increased co-working and pooled
resources

Joint funding bids from charities sharing
common goals

Social outcomes achieved

Core outcome domains: Health and
wellbeing; social integration; inequality
reduction; economic opportunity

Enabling outcomes: Community capacity;
system collaboration; active environments

Long-term impact: Sustainable, scalable,
place-based change

**Since 2017, ConnectSport CIC has published more than 1300 stories aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Read our [2025 Impact Report](#).*

Growth strategy (2026-2030)

2026

- Launch pilot
- Feature 50 local organisations

2027

- Expand to three additional cities
- Establish city partnerships

2028–2030

- Network of 10+ Sport for Change Cities
- National summit
- International partnerships, with opportunity to focus on 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad





Outcome

- A sustainable ecosystem where sport is used intentionally to improve health, inclusion, education and opportunity in cities.

Visit connectsport.co.uk



Contact hello@connectsport.co.uk