

Active Futures Programme

We are excited to announce the return of our Active Futures programme for a third successive year.

This programme will fund **primary level early intervention activities** which will increase physical activity and reduce involvement in Serious Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation in the Cheshire and Warrington areas.

The Active Futures programme will be delivered in partnership with the [Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire](#) and [Active Cheshire](#).

Context

This programme has been developed, based on our learning from the first two years of delivery including monitoring, feedback, and community sport provision data gathered by [StreetGames](#).

To date, the Active Futures programme has awarded over £280,000 to projects aimed at reducing serious youth violence and developing workforce capacity.

Before applying, applicants may find it useful to read the following Impact Reports and Case Studies from the successful delivery of Phase One of the Active Futures Programme:

- [Cheshire Community Foundation – Active Futures Phase 1 Programme Summary](#)
- [Street Games – Active Futures Phase 1 Summary Report](#)
- Previous Delivery Case Studies:
 - [Title Shot](#)
 - [Youth Fed](#)

When poverty, deprivation and serious violence are prevalent in communities, children and young people are directly and indirectly affected, leading to increased vulnerability to becoming involved in serious violence as a victim or perpetrator. There is an increased likelihood that violence becomes normalised in communities, elevating the possibility that young people will experience trauma and become vulnerable to exploitation. Through data sharing with stakeholders from across Cheshire, insight can help identify where vulnerability is likely to be elevated, and therefore children and young people would benefit from intentionally designed sport-based provision to better meet their needs.

What will the programme focus on?

Active Futures 3 is seeking to invest in sports and physical activity organisations across Cheshire and Warrington that deliver primary prevention provision for children and young people.

This programme will fund projects which provide universal, accessible opportunities open to all young people, using sport and physical activity as a positive vehicle for engagement, development and prevention. Successful programmes will contribute to reducing vulnerability and preventing involvement in behaviours associated with serious violence by providing safe, engaging and diversionary activities within local communities.

Primary prevention provision is defined as:

"Universal provision that is open to all, providing engaging and diversionary activities which contribute to preventing offending and reducing vulnerability."

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how their proposed programme aligns with the [Theory of Change](#), which will be provided as part of the application pack. Applications should clearly reference the relevant elements of the [Theory of Change](#) and explain how the proposed activity will contribute to the intended outcomes and wider aims of the programme.

We encourage applicants to draw upon an appropriate evidence base to support their approach and to clearly articulate the outcomes they expect their programme to influence, particularly in relation to reducing vulnerability, increasing protective factors and improving opportunities for young people.

To ensure investment is targeted where it is needed most, this programme will be open to applications working within areas identified in the [Cheshire Commissioning Dashboard](#). The dashboard highlights areas of greatest need across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington, using indicators including deprivation, youth population and other factors associated with vulnerability. Applicants should demonstrate how their proposed delivery responds to these local needs and priorities.

How will it achieve this?

We want to fund projects of up to 12 months that deliver year round sporting activities which can demonstrate:

- An understanding of the impact of Serious Youth Violence and/or Child Criminal Exploitation. We want to see projects that use a trauma-informed approach/lived experience to help shape and deliver the work wherever possible.
- A clear plan for sustainable work, lasting beyond the lifespan of the grant, or plans for transitional support once the project ends. This could include the upskilling of staff and volunteers for future work.
- A collaborative, youth led process in relation to co-production, delivery, and evaluation.
- An approach which is rooted in local communities and builds trusting relationships with children and young people.
- A clear method of engagement.

Funded projects will:

- Use sporting activity to deliver positive outcomes in young people's **wider lives**. The programme will not prioritise projects which focus on attainment in a sporting capacity.
- Identify a clear need in an area or group, and can tailor the intervention directly to the children and young people with whom they wish to work.
- Deliver primary level programmes in community settings for at risk young people.
- Deliver interventions which, whilst focussing on prevention, also consider broader impact on communities.
- Deliver a year round intervention which does not significantly change during school holidays.
- Factor in workforce development to strengthen skills, consistency, and capacity of related organisations
- Use clear data gathering processes to facilitate learning and insight.

- Have a strong approach to communicating with the wider sector and youth services.
- Can demonstrate a lasting difference in the lives of children and young people. This could be through improving resilience, aspirations, skills, wellbeing etc.
- Consider workforce development and sustainability to ensure lasting impact.

What can organisations apply for?

Applicants can apply for up to £20,000 for costs delivering early intervention and prevention work with Children and Young People aged 0-18. All grants must engage Children and Young People through physical activity or sport. Please be aware that £20,000 is the maximum grant size, and we expect to fund several grants at a lower level to this.

Who can apply?

We will accept applications from any organisation which:

- **Meets our [minimum requirements for all grants](#).**
- Is working with Children and Young People who live in areas identified in the [Cheshire Commissioning Dashboard](#)
- Has a track record of delivering sport or physical activities for Children and Young People.
- Has a proven history of running sports activities in local communities.
- Can ideally demonstrate a track record of working with Children and Young People at risk of becoming involved in Childhood Exploitation and/or Serious Youth Violence.
- Can deliver projects using staff and volunteers with suitable skills, qualifications, and experience in relevant, wider interventions (e.g. Mentoring, Youth Work, Mental Health Support, etc.) in addition to sporting activities.
- Has clear next steps and exit routes for young people to move into ongoing, regular activities after finishing the current program.
- Already works with other local organisations like schools, social services, youth justice teams, or the police.

We will consider applications from partnership bids involving multiple organisations delivering work together, so long as there is a nominated lead applicant and a memorandum of understanding outlining the relationship between the delivery partners.

Funded organisations must be willing to work with the local Police and Crime Commissioner to develop and become a part of referral pathways for children and young people who they have identified.

We welcome applications from organisations who were funded in the first two rounds of the Active Futures programme. If you were funded previously, we may seek to understand how you have factored learning from your previous grants into your planning. We will want to see that you have developed your project where appropriate to maximise the positive impact of your work.

Applicant Workshop – Understanding the Active Futures Funding Pathways

To support organisations interested in applying for Active Futures funding, an optional application workshop will be held on 10th August at 12.45pm, facilitated by Active Futures partners and Street Games.

The workshop will provide applicants with a clear understanding of the Active Futures programme, as well as upcoming commissioned opportunities focussing on Secondary Early Intervention.

Attendees will learn how to use and reference the [Theory of Change](#) within their application, understand the programme's intended outcomes, and see how these align with priorities identified through the Cheshire Dashboard.

The session will also demonstrate how the dashboard helps identify areas of need using indicators such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), youth population data, school suspension data, and geographical coverage across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington.

In addition, the workshop will reinforce the role of sport and physical activity as part of a wider system approach to preventing serious youth violence and supporting vulnerable young people across Cheshire. Participants will have the opportunity to consider which funding pathway best fits their proposed programme, ask questions, and gain clarity on the requirements and expectations for each route.

To register your interest and attendance at this workshop, please [click here](#).

Monitoring and Evaluation

All successful applicants will be required to submit Monitoring and Evaluation data about their project throughout the year. Applicants should be able to demonstrate how they will measure and report the impact of their programme on young people; this should include clear and straightforward outcomes as a result of regular participation in sporting activities.

This will include monitoring data around:

- The number and demographics of your beneficiaries
- Referral routes
- Attendance data
- Delivery data (such as number of sessions provided)
- Participant engagement levels.

These should be recorded regularly and uploaded via either the [Upshot](#) monitoring system. Streetgames will provide access and support for this throughout the project. There will also be Participant surveys (once near the beginning of the project, then approximately every 3 months).

Finally, you will also be asked to submit a brief end of year evaluation form directly to Cheshire Community Foundation.

If required, you can apply for monitoring and evaluation costs within your budget.

Timeline

The programme will open for applications on 13th July with a deadline for submissions of 24th August

Decisions will be communicated in Mid to Late October .

Applicants will be required to submit basic, **quarterly monitoring reports** in February, May, and August 2027.

Process

Applications will be made via the [Cheshire Community Foundation](#) website.

Depending on demand, we may choose not to take every application through a full assessment. This decision will be made on how closely your application fits the programme aims. If we decide not to take your application through the full process, you may hear back from us sooner than the above date.

Accessibility

At Cheshire Community Foundation, we believe that everyone should be able to access our funding opportunities fairly. We recognise that some people may experience barriers when applying to us. If you need any additional support applying for any of our grant programmes, for whatever reason, please contact us at **grants@cheshirecommunityfoundation.org.uk**, or by calling 01606 330607. A member of our team will be happy to support you on your application journey, or to find alternative ways (such as paper, video, verbal, online, face-to-face or other methods) for you to get us the information we need to assess your application.