



Insight driving innovation and impact

Understanding Beacon Locations Research Brief

March 2023

Believing in every child's future

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Introduction

About the Youth Sport Trust

The Youth Sport Trust (YST) is a national children's charity passionate about creating a future where every child enjoys the life-changing benefits that come from play and sport. We are on a mission to pioneer new ways of using sport to improve children's wellbeing and give them a brighter future.

Our [2022 – 2035 strategy](#) focuses on starting locally and building momentum. We aim to galvanise and inspire changemakers to transform attitudes, improve practice and drive policy change. Together we will harness the power of play and sport to build belonging for a generation, improving their health, fostering inclusion and developing character and leadership. For more information about the YST, please visit our website: www.youthsporttrust.org.

Beacon Locations

To effectively deliver our new strategy, we remain committed to equipping educators and empowering young people across the country, but we recognise that there is a need to have a heightened understanding in locations that serve young people who need access to play and sport the most. This in-depth work will also give us the opportunity to learn how our work can make the biggest contribution to increasing opportunities for participation in play and sport, as well as improving outcomes, for young people across the country.

To support us in doing this, we have identified 20 locations across England¹. We will focus our work in these locations to enable us to take urgent action to build back healthier, happier, more resilient young people. The locations will also provide the opportunity to establish an evidence base to drive a generational shift and achieve societal change.

For internal purposes these locations will be called 'Beacon Locations'.

The Research Requirements

We are seeking to appoint a research organisation to develop a baseline picture in a sample of the Beacon Locations. This will help to inform and shape YST's future delivery in these areas, including helping to identify the types of young people most in need. It will also provide a baseline from which to measure change over future years.

This document sets out the full research requirements.

¹ There are also plans to expand our location area work into Scotland and Wales.
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About the Beacon Locations

Background

The latest research published in December 2022 by Sport England shows that whilst improvements are being made in the activity levels of children, less than half are meeting the minimum levels required. Alongside low levels of physical activity, children and young people are facing low levels of mental and social wellbeing, along with increased inequality. What is more, the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis have exacerbated the challenges that children and young people face.

The YST knows the power of play and sport to change lives, but many aren't making this connection. We need as many people as possible to become changemakers to help us reclaim play and sport in children's lives.

Our Vision

This work is at the heart of our strategy that outlines that we will be *starting locally and building momentum*. They are locations where we will galvanise, learn with, and inspire changemakers to transform attitudes, improve practice and drive policy change. They will also provide an opportunity to build an evidence base to help us drive a generational shift and achieve societal change.

Identification of locations

20 locations have been identified. The locations are spread across England and have been selected based on a 'Determining Need Process', which considered key data relating to physical activity levels, obesity, and deprivation, along with valuable local insights from YST employees who have an understanding of schools and stakeholders priorities². The locations have also been reviewed in terms of their readiness to work with the YST and where there are potential and/or existing collaborations that can support this work.

A long list of locations was ranked based on this evidence and a shortlist was identified. The locations are all characterised by high levels of deprivation, low levels of physical activity, and a readiness to work with the YST. The locations are a small geography, for example a borough or ward where activities would focus on one school and its surrounding community, or a multi-academy trust (MAT) and its surrounding communities. The type of location also varies, for example there are rural, urban and coastal areas.

² The 'Determining Needs Process' included data analysis, which focussed on: physical activity levels among children (Active Lives Survey); obesity levels among children (National Child Measurement Programme); deprivation data (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)); data on the number of schools and pupils in each area; and data from the Rural Urban Classification. It also included insight from the YST's Regional Development Manager, including local strategies, plans and policies, local insight, and information on key stakeholders.

Our Approach

Each Beacon Location will have a YST Regional Development Manager who will be responsible for coordinating the YST's approach internally and aligning our purpose with external stakeholders and organisations.

Our approach will be driven by local needs and opportunities but we anticipate the following stakeholders and beneficiaries as being key to our work:

- Young people (as participants and as young leaders)
- Educators
- Families
- Local organisations and policy makers (e.g. across sport, education, health, families etc)

The Beacon Locations will act as innovation and delivery hubs where we can start to focus our understanding of need, deliver interventions, build capacity, and understand what works. Once momentum is being gained in each Beacon Location we will seek to apply this learning to another location in the area, and then ultimately, across the wider area. An example is set out below; the timings that each phase is implemented will vary across different areas.

Example of the approach in a Beacon Location: Tees Valley

Phase 1: Start in Hartlepool to generate great evidence and use that to build momentum.



Phase 2: Take what we have learned and apply an improved approach into other location in Tees Valley (Middlesbrough).



Phase 3: Hartlepool and Middlesbrough are thriving under this approach and we extend learning across the whole of the Tees Valley area.

Activities in the Beacon Locations will be tailored to local needs and opportunities but as examples, might include the following:

- Pilot, test and deliver programmes and interventions that offer young people opportunities to be physically active, train young people as leaders, and support educators and families.
- Offer support and capacity building to educators, local organisations, and families.
- Undertake research and insight to generate a greater understanding of what works.
- Position Beacon MAT/Schools that shine a light on the whole school impact created by all pupils receiving tangible opportunities to enjoy the life changing benefits of play and sport.
- Build relationships and collaborate with local organisations and policy makers.
- Generate political awareness and advocacy.

- Target School Games and Barclay's Girls Football School Pilots in these areas.
- Build advocacy networks, specifically in and through MATs.
- Align YSTs vision with local strategies.

Alongside the focussed work in Beacon Locations, there will also be ongoing work in the wider surrounding area, which will support our national remit. As examples, work in the wider area might include the following:

- Laying the foundations for upscaling the approach in the Beacon Locations and understanding where to go next
- Connecting and collaborating with regional stakeholders and political influencers.
- Equipping a broader network of educators.
- Delivering locally commissioned projects on behalf of partners.
- Sourcing funding opportunities to resource our mission.
- Working with individuals to build a diverse and representative advocacy and delivery network.
- Delivery of larger scale projects and interventions (if a Beacon Location is too small).

Although every location will have a bespoke approach, we anticipate that we will be able to characterise the Beacon Locations into different 'types of intervention' but further work is currently being undertaken on this.

Measuring Success

We have developed a logic model (see appendix one) for our work which defines our success measures in the short and long-term. These are headline measures that align with the YST strategy and will provide a framework for measuring success across all of our work. However, we recognise that every location will be different and success may look different in each area so we acknowledge that there will be nuances to these overarching measures, and potentially additional success measures in each location. We are also open to capturing unexpected outcomes that may materialise through this work.

Additional work will be undertaken in 2023 to further develop our approach to measuring success.

Timescales

Our work in the Beacon Locations is commencing in April 2023 and will continue throughout the duration of our current strategy. However, we are currently focussed on measuring success and progress over the next five years.

Further stages of research will take place to evidence learnings and impact, including to identify, compare, and contrast approaches across the locations. This future research will be further scoped out during 2023 and offered for tender following this initial piece of research.

The Research Requirements

Research Aim

To develop a baseline picture in a sample of our Beacon Locations. This will help to inform and shape YST's future delivery in these areas, including helping to identify the types of young people most in need. It will also provide a baseline from which to measure change over future years.

The baseline picture for each area would include a summary of the following:

1. The young people most in need and the key challenges they are facing including any evident long-lasting impacts of Covid-19.
2. The extent to which youth voice is heard.
3. The extent to which PE is at the heart of schools, including the enablers and barriers to making this happen.
4. The key priorities and challenges for educational establishments.
5. An overview of PE, sport and physical activity provision in the area.
6. The extent to which families understand the value of physical literacy.
7. The strengths of the area and weaknesses / gaps in the area.
8. Future opportunities and transferable good practice.

Research Questions

A sample of research questions are outlined in the table below but would be further refined and scoped out with the successful research organisation.

STAKEHOLDERS	KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Young people ³	Who are the young people most affected by Covid-19? What are the key challenges that young people are facing today? Which young people are the least active? And what are the reasons for their low activity levels? To what extent do young people feel that their voices are heard?
Educators and educational establishments	What are the key challenges that educators and educational establishments face in supporting young people most affected by Covid-19? What is the PE and physical activity provision for young people like? What are the strengths and weaknesses? To what extent is PE, sport and physical activity at the heart of schools? What are the enablers and barriers to achieving this?

³ The YST works with children and young people aged 0-25 years old.
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STAKEHOLDERS	KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS
	<p>How, if at all, do educational establishments build youth voice and youth involvement (eg. leadership models) into their work?</p> <p>What are the current priorities for educational establishments?</p>
Local organisations and policy makers	<p>To what extent is physical activity for young people recognised in local strategic documents?</p> <p>What is the physical activity provision for young people like? (what, where, when and who?)</p> <p>Where are the strengths and gaps in physical activity provision for young people?</p> <p>Who are the key organisations that are working with young people? And what are their priorities?</p> <p>To what extent is there collaboration and joined-up working between local organisations?</p>
Parents and families	<p>To what extent do families understand the value of physical literacy?</p> <p>To what extent do families access physical activity opportunities? What are the key barriers to access?</p> <p>Who are the key organisations working with families? And what are their priorities?</p>
Area summary	<p>What are the strengths?</p> <p>What are the weaknesses?</p> <p>What are the opportunities?</p> <p>What are the threats / challenges?</p>

Methodology

The YST would like researchers to propose a methodology that best meets our needs. However, we have outlined a number of key considerations:

- We would anticipate that in-depth research would be undertaken in a sample of Beacon Locations that offer a range of different local contexts and delivery models so we can generate maximum (and transferable) learning. We would like to work with the successful research organisation to identify the locations to focus on but we would like you to advise how many Beacon Locations you would aim to include in this research.

- The research would focus predominantly on the Beacon Locations but there needs to be consideration for the wider areas that they are located within to build a comprehensive understanding of their surrounding contexts and to support our future work to expand into the wider areas.
- We anticipate that the research would be predominantly qualitative. The work in these areas will be complex and multi-faceted so we believe that this approach will allow us to generate a good understanding of the local contexts. However, we would welcome the inclusion of a small number of quantitative measures that would act as benchmarks and could be tracked over time⁴.
- We would welcome consultation with a sample of key stakeholders and beneficiaries across the following groups: young people, schools and educators, local policy-makers, local organisations and parents / families.
- We would welcome the identification of good practice examples that we can learn from, and build upon, across the locations.
- The YST can provide evidence that informed the selection of the locations and the YST will be able to provide support in identifying key stakeholders.

Research Deliverables

The following deliverables are required from this research project:

1. **Inception note:** Following the inception meeting, a full research methodology, with associated timescales.
2. **Monthly updates:** Written updates on progress, any challenges / risks in the project, and informal sharing of any emerging findings or learnings.
3. **Final reports:** The YST would like the following report outputs:
 - a. An individual report for each sampled location that addresses the key research aim (as outlined above). We would anticipate each location report being no more than 10-15 pages.
 - b. A synthesis report which summarises the key findings across all the Areas sampled to extract key themes and transferable lessons to inform future delivery. We would anticipate the synthesis report being no more than 30 pages.
 - c. Where appropriate, we would welcome the integration of visual diagrams and infographics to help present the findings, plus examples of good practice and transferable learning.

Key Contacts

The research project would be overseen by Sarah Jenkins, Evaluation and Research Specialist at the YST and Chris Ellis, Head of School Engagement at the YST.

⁴ Quantitative data may be new primary research or based on data that is already collected by partners.

Research Timescales

The timescales for the research project are detailed in the following table.

MILESTONE	DATE
Inception meeting and inception note	May 2023
Monthly updates	June, July, August, September, October 2023
Final reports	November / December 2023

Research Budget

The total budget for the research project is up to **£80,000** (inclusive of expenses and VAT, if applicable).

Successful contractors will be paid against the following terms:

- 10% on a signed contract.
- 40% upon satisfactory completion of the August monthly update report.
- 50% upon satisfactory completion of the final reports.

The Bidding Process

Selection Process

Organisations are asked to notify the YST by midday on Tuesday 4th April 2023 if they intend to submit a written proposal. You can notify us by emailing Sarah Jenkins at research@youthsporttrust.org. Following a review of the proposals, shortlisted organisations will be invited for interview. From this the successful organisation will be selected.

Timetable

MILESTONE	DATE
Deadline to notify YST of intention to respond to brief	Tuesday 4 ^h April 2023
Deadline for proposals	Tuesday 11 th April 2023 at 10am
Interviews	Thursday 27 th April 2023
Successful organisation notified	W/c 1 st May 2023
Inception meeting	Wednesday 10 th or Thursday 11 th May 2023

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be judged on the following criteria:

- Methodology, including a good understanding of the research requirements.
- Experience, particularly in relation to play and sport, education, young people, and place.
- Value for money.

Proposal Requirements

You are invited to submit a written proposal which clearly outlines how you would meet the requirements laid out in this brief. Your proposal should be a maximum of 15 A4 pages (minimum font 11). CV's, along with any other relevant information can be provided in appendices.

As a minimum, the following elements should be included in your proposal:

- Details of the proposed methodology.
- A brief overview of your organisation's experience, including examples of similar research projects you have delivered.
- Details of the team who will be working on the research, including their role, previous experience and DBS status if applicable.
- Arrangements for managing the research and quality assuring the deliverables.
- Timetable for delivering the research.

- A breakdown of costs for undertaking the research, including a breakdown of time and costs per activity and per team member.

Further Information

Any questions you have which will help support the development of your proposals and relate to this research project should be emailed to Sarah Jenkins at research@youthsporttrust.org by midday on Tuesday 4th April 2023.

Responses to queries will be emailed to all interested organisations.

Proposal Submission

Your proposal should be emailed to Sarah Jenkins at research@youthsporttrust.org by Tuesday 11th April at 10am.

Appendix One: Beacon Locations Logic Model

Context	Aims	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short term outcomes	Long term outcomes
Young people	To ensure that every child enjoys the life changing benefits of play and sport	Financial investment through the YST, funders and sponsors	Young people			
Physical ill health Poor mental wellbeing Lonely and disconnected Increased inequality			Opportunities for young people to participate in play and sport	Number of young people participating (<i>including representation of girls, EDC, SEND and disadvantaged</i>)	Improved physical health (<i>enjoyment of /confidence to take part in PA</i>) Improved mental health (<i>happiness</i>) Improved social wellbeing (<i>connectedness / belonging</i>) Improved character (<i>resilience</i>)	Build back healthier, happier and more resilient young people and level the playing field for those most disadvantaged
Educators		YST resources and expertise	Educators (YST Strategy Tactic 1)			
Lack of skills to support YP most affected by Covid-19			Provision of tools, resources and content Deliver training Tell a compelling story	Number of adults trained	Increased confidence and competence (<i>to support young people most affected by Covid-19 and suffering the effects of inequalities</i>) More inspired / motivated (<i>to unlock the power of PE, sport and PA</i>)	Educators are effectively supporting young people's wellbeing and life chances
Young Leaders		In-kind support (including volunteer time, equipment etc)	Young Leaders (YST Strategy Tactic 2)			
Feel powerless to change their own future and feel their opinions don't matter			Training Opportunities for young people to lead play and sport opportunities for peers	Number of young people trained (<i>including representation of girls, EDC, SEND and disadvantaged</i>)	Improved leadership (<i>leadership skills</i>) Increased voice / empowerment	Young people continue to create and deliver opportunities for their peers
Organisations			Organisations (YST Strategy Tactic 3)			
Declining PE, sport and PA Inequality in provision			Networking opportunities Events Tell a compelling story	Number of schools / organisations engaged	Improved perceptions of PE and sport Improved partnership working (<i>quality and quantity, within and across sectors</i>)	Sport and PA is reclaimed within education (fun and at the heart of what they do) and the playing field is levelled for those most disadvantaged.
Families		Families (YST Strategy Tactic 5)				
Lack of understanding of the value of physical literacy for children		Evidence based campaigns and collaborations with influential individuals and organisations Network of family changemakers Opportunities for physical literacy for families	Number of people reached by campaigns Number of family organisations engaged Number of families engaged. Number of family changemakers	Increased understanding of the value of physical literacy Increased access to physical activity Increased confidence and competence of family organisations to support families with physical literacy	Families and family organisations champion / support children's physical literacy	



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