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YST RESEARCH

Insight driving innovation and impact

Youth Leadership Opportunities: Beyond COVID-19

August 2020

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Executive Summary

About Youth Leadership

This original piece of YST research seeks to understand what young people themselves want from their journey as a school and community sports leader. This is a timely question considering sport and subsequent leadership opportunities have been severely affected by COVID-19, accentuated by the closure of schools. Social distancing measures, year group bubbles, restrictions on mass participation events etc all pose challenges to the roll out of leadership opportunities for an unknown length of time.

About the Research

It was imperative to hear from young people themselves for this research. To produce this report, the following was completed:

- ✓ Youth Sport Trust's Leadership, Coaching and Volunteer (LCV) and Inclusion Lead School networks were invited to host focus groups with their students to hear their thoughts on forthcoming leadership opportunities
- ✓ YST staff also held a focus group with YST Team Leaders in July 2020
- ✓ Recordings and/or notes from these focus groups were sent to YST's R&I Team, and the findings were analysed and thematised into the themes which are the subheadings in the Main Findings section of this report

In total, over 45 young people aged from 12-25 were consulted during the research process.

Key Recommendations

Below are the key recommendations which this report deems imperative for the successful development of youth leadership opportunities. As the main body of this report demonstrates, these recommendations help position and re-affirm the importance of the YST Leadership Framework.

- ✓ Young leaders value seeing the impact of their work and this is what motivates them to lead. This is something that has been missed during COVID-19
- ✓ Leadership and subsequent sporting activities were viewed as vehicles for boosting wellbeing amongst peers; leaders seemed keen to use their position to be able to collectively recover from the social and emotional impact felt as a result of COVID-19
- ✓ Simultaneously, leaders noted that their confidence may have been knocked through being unable to lead for a substantial time during the pandemic
- ✓ A flexible leadership model with activities that could be delivered by young people either online *and/or* face-to-face would be beneficial, as would a model that encourages proactivity and creativity, to empower leaders to create innovative activities/content themselves
- ✓ Further consideration needs to be given to leaders offering sensory approaches, as part of ensuring their activities are inclusive
- ✓ Interactive and fun training opportunities are imperative for young leaders. Establishing a light tone with, for example funny video clips, and having tasks to do as part of the training were provided as examples. There was no enthusiasm for just staring at a screen for training!

- ✓ Using 'breakout rooms' within online platforms, and encouraging people to discuss their interests in order to build common ground and relationships was also significant for training
- ✓ Whilst there are clearly going to be short-term challenges to delivery of leadership opportunities, a long-term approach is still valued with this entailing, for example: ensuring young people can carry on leading after a programme/opportunity has finished, providing qualifications/accreditation to validate their involvement
- ✓ Provide further training to schools/SSPs to deliver focus groups and providing enough data back to YST

Introduction

About the Research

Leadership is a key part of YST's work as it can help young people to gain new skills, such as communication and confidence, which can have a lifelong impact on an individual. Furthermore, leadership can result in young people believing in themselves and acting as agents of long-lasting social change in their communities. The Youth Sport Trust has an extensive network of Leadership, Coaching and Volunteering (LCV) Lead schools and who support the delivery of, and provide advice and guidance on, leadership opportunities in sport for young people.

This network was utilised to gain young people's perspectives on future leadership opportunities, in a rapidly changing world coming to terms with the short and long-term impact of COVID-19. Young people have suffered considerably during this pandemic, with **74% of children and young people (age 8-24) reporting that, during lockdown, they were missing going to school or college, with the same number saying that they had found it hard to maintain friendships during lockdown.**

Additionally, missing outings, trips, celebrations, and sports and activities have been cited as ways in which young people have been affected (YST, 2020). Concerningly also, **at least one-third of children have experienced an increase in mental health issues including stress, loneliness and worry** (Barnado's in YST, 2020¹), whilst those older (16-19 years old) are worried about their future due to COVID-19 disrupting their education and well-being. Leadership opportunities delivered by young people to their peers could begin to address these challenges young people face.

For this research project:

- ❖ Six YST Inclusion and/or Leadership, Coaching and Volunteering (LCV) Schools held face-to-face focus groups with their young leaders, or held focus groups using the video conferencing technology, Zoom, or sent out questions for students to answer and send back
- ❖ One focus group took place with young leaders from across a School Sports Partnership area
- ❖ One focus group was held with YST's Team Leaders and Welsh Young Ambassador Steering Group members, facilitated by YST staff

Semi-structured focus groups were mostly used for this research, which is an interview with a group of individuals where a set of questions have been prepared, and the interviewer can ask further questions that stem from the answers. In this case, School Games Organiser's, School Sports Partnership Manager's and teachers conducted the focus groups using a Discussion Guide (See Appendix A) created by the Research and Insight team at Youth Sport Trust.

Collectively, 45 young people were consulted with. Full demographic data was not provided by all participating schools, and so a more comprehensive account of the which students partook in this research cannot be provided at this stage.

Limitations of this research

As with all social research methods, there are strengths and weaknesses. An oft-critiqued aspect of the focus group method is that it can lead to more confident speakers dominating the focus group,

¹ Source: <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/evidence-paper-impact-covid-19-restrictions-children-and-young-people>

and thus skewing the data collected to that individual's experience. Each participant will have unique experiences and opinions of leadership that can't always be drawn out from a time-limited focus group. Furthermore, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, most of this project's focus groups were held online. Further challenges to this virtual delivery include ensuring that participants are in a safe and comfortable space at home where they feel they can talk freely; without interruption or fear of judgment by those also at home. By not being face-to-face, this appeared to be a hindrance to engaging with quieter respondents, as interviewers could not use body language or other tools to encourage a greater response.

Questions around inclusion and accessibility can also be raised with regards to virtual delivery; it cannot be assumed that young people have access to laptops/phone/tablets and Wi-Fi to be able to participate, therefore reminding us that those able to participate are privileged to be able to do so. To counter this, it was beneficial to draw upon YST's Inclusion network, as it meant that leaders with Special Educational Needs, including Autism and Multiple Learning Difficulties (MLD), were involved. With all social research methods, we must ask ourselves whose voices are heard, as well as those whose voices are not heard, and why, and ensuring that research respondents reflect the diversity of society is of paramount importance.

Key Findings

This section reports in detail the key findings from the focus groups held, and this is hoped to provide the roadmap for successful leadership opportunities over the next academic year, and beyond. These findings provide recommendations which are linked to the existing YST leadership framework (see below):

The Youth Sport Trust believes every young person should be supported through PE, sport and play to develop their personal leadership capabilities. Through a range of leadership experiences, young people can acquire skills and learn behaviours which not only develop them as individuals but as drivers of change for others.



The Challenges of Lockdown

Lockdown has presented multiple challenges to young leaders. Across the focus groups, it was regularly noted how hard this time has been for young people. This research reinforces existing evidence that young people have missed social activities/routines, such as going to school and maintaining friendships (YST, 2020). Missing leadership opportunities provides a closer understanding of this challenge, with leaders across all focus groups commonly stating that they **missed the intrinsic satisfaction** of seeing their peers, or primary aged children enjoying the benefits of play and sport and missed the **social connections** that are built through sporting opportunities.

- *'I have missed the enjoyment on other people's faces when I am leading the sports activities. We all need it and we can't do it. I haven't been out of the house for the whole of lockdown'. (Focus group participant with SEND)*
- *'Not seeing and interacting face to face with people...when you're with someone you can tell if their enjoying it...not being able to see people is really, really hard'. (Focus group participant)*

Above, we can see that the face-to-face, personal connection has been a key component of leadership that has been sorely missed. To this end, lockdown was noted as being a 'demoralising' time, with some leaders being unmotivated, or simply unable to complete any leadership activities during the time schools have been closed and lockdown measures highly restrictive. Young leaders noted that they were **motivated to lead by seeing the impact** they have on those they work with.

- *'...sitting behind a screen kind of makes things feel a little bit redundant...I know they're not...but it can be very difficult...not feeling connected to a bigger purpose' (Focus group participant)*
- *'...especially when I've planned a session and I thought it went really well it sort of pushes me to want to do more so then I'm thinking of more ideas, wanting to be creative, go the extra mile...' (Focus group participant)*

Here, we see that young leaders missed the internal feeling of contributing to a meaningful cause of encouraging their peers to be active. Furthermore, young leaders empathised with their peers who have missed out on sport and physical activity. It is promising that the young leaders who attended the focus groups demonstrated a commitment and enthusiasm to their roles.

Key Recommendation, in relation to YST leadership framework: Young leaders have expressed missing the internal feeling of contributing to a meaningful cause and **driving change**; in addition to empathising with their peers who have missed out on the impact sport and physical activity. Such honesty, integrity, empathy and passion for leadership expressed through this can be positive signs of **learning, demonstrating and developing** within YST's leadership framework, which can be harnessed in forthcoming opportunities.



Rebuilding Confidence and Wellbeing through Leadership Opportunities

As we have seen above, some leaders have understandably struggled with motivation and found it hard to continue leadership throughout lockdown. We have learnt that losing momentum with leadership opportunities has had an impact on the confidence of both leaders and peers. Building back this confidence will be key in forthcoming opportunities, even if this is just within the “bubbles” that may be used for considerable time to limit social interactions between year groups:

- *‘People will be a lot less confident now’. (Focus group participant)*
- *‘Confidence...you haven’t been round many people other than in your neighbourhood or your family...not seeing people and then going to stand up and being in front of 20 kids and teach people...you’ve got to have confidence to do that...might have slipped’. (Focus group participant)*
- *‘Maybe lead in specific small bubbles to build confidence. These could be focused on specific skills or in position bubbles. Maybe smaller sessions on particular different days’. (Comments submitted by one school’s focus group)*

It is a shame, yet perhaps an inevitable and crucial finding that young people’s confidence has suffered as a result of a national lockdown. To rebuild this confidence in leaders and to **support them to learn to lead in their peers in a new, challenging context** will be a rewarding and vital task to ensure that the benefits of play and sport are reignited.

Further to the boosting of confidence leaders acknowledged:

- *‘Everyone’s going to have dealt with being in lockdown differently’ (Focus group participant)*

The collapse of young people’s daily routines, such as attending school and regular sporting groups, will have had multiple consequences on young people. Participants noted how, for instance ‘starting work at 4pm’ (Focus group participant) wasn’t always a beneficial new routine to create for themselves, and that eating and sleeping habits had changed. Therefore, **leaders viewed their role as key in supporting peers get back into a routine, and back into physical activity:**

- *‘People need to establish a habit of exercising again and leaders could help with this. Need to get back into a routine’. (Focus group participant)*
- *‘My leadership skills on coming out of Lockdown will be to encourage people to start getting involved in sport again as I think quite a few people may not have done much sport during lockdown and will need help to get involved again’. (Focus group participant)*

Focus group participants recognised that getting peers back into a routine involving physical activity will be a challenge; some young people will be anxious, others excited to return to physical activity. Ultimately, leaders perceived, after what has been an unprecedented, challenging and emotional time, that leadership skills should centralise around wellbeing, and listening to others. ‘Just knowing

someone's there' and 'giving someone your time' are two of the key principles that leaders identified as being key to this wellbeing-orientated leadership. As leaders also elaborated:

- *'Patience and empathy...learning to communicate with someone in a slower, calmer way because it will all be ok in the end'. (Focus group participant)*
- *'Some people may feel bad through Lockdown and sports leaders may be able to lift people's spirit and make people feel good'. (Focus group participant)*
- *'Nothing will ever be the same...learning to adapt with different people; how we're going to communicate with everyone as individuals and as groups...will be a big stepping point for how you can take that into your coaching'. (Focus group participant)*

Young leaders demonstrated **empathy and the desire to be positive role model** to their peers. **Demonstrating skills by leading and mentoring others** thus seems to be a timely component of the YST leadership framework. YST will need to ensure that this can be achieved in ways that still can safeguard the social and emotional wellbeing of all pupils, following the impact of COVID-19.

Leaders have experienced and recognised the strains that lockdown has caused emotionally and socially, it has affected the confidence and routine of young people. Leadership was viewed as being a mechanism to steer peers towards routine and normality, crucially providing support and a listening-ear at the same time. Leadership, confidence and wellbeing were therefore viewed as needing to operate together. This will help leaders to reconnect with the impact of their work, which we have seen to be regarded as valued by leaders.

Key Recommendation: To support peers out of a difficult time, **demonstrating skills by leading and mentoring others** can be viewed as integral; with young people being empowered to build relationships with peers to encourage either changes or kickstarting continuities in their physical activity routines and thus **driving change** focusing on wellbeing.



New opportunities

Thus far, we have acknowledged the challenges young people have faced due to COVID-19, and how leadership can help overcome these challenges. Simultaneously, it is important to note the opportunities that emerged from the lockdown and which forced leaders into changing their delivery of engaging peers in physical activity challenges.

Some young leaders have been involved in the creation of videos for their personal social media accounts, which sometimes complemented content that schools themselves posted on social channels. This has compelled leaders to refine their leadership skills for a new, digital context. For instance, leaders noted how creating videos 'does take lots of takes' because, at first, it is:

- *'Harder 'cos you're worried about presenting yourself...if you're clear, stuff like that'. (Focus group participant)*

Leaders had to re-consider how to present and engage with their peers, when able to produce digital content. Furthermore, this tested leaders' creativity to come up with new content they hoped peers would regularly watch. 'What to do next?' with digital content was a question that leaders had to ask themselves. The rapidly changing COVID-19 situation has tasked leaders with targeting their peers with content in new ways. Understanding that leaders may need support with creating effective, engaging and safe digital content could help shape a reimagining of leadership opportunities that includes digital methods. Indeed, it was also noted that the skills learnt from this digital delivery could be transposed into face-to-face delivery. Therefore, a flexible leadership offer founded on creativity, proactivity and transferability to face-to-face or digital could help boost the reach and impact of young leaders' work. Certainly, the plethora of online material had catalysed some leaders' interest in sharing new ideas with one another at pace, and enabling ideas to be shared, developed and delivered would be beneficial to reigniting motivation, confidence, delivery and impact of leadership opportunities. All the while, it is imperative that this flexible offer is inclusive. Testing leaders' creativity could involve considering approaches that are, for instance sensory. Leaders could use this refreshing of opportunities as a chance to learn further about inclusive sporting activities for their peers.

In addition to new modes of delivery, some leaders were able to try out new sports and activities during lockdown. As one leader described:

- *'[It was] just me and the dog in the house...having no interaction with any of my friends...going for a run was the thing that kept me going...maybe knowing I will see someone by the marina where I live'. (Focus group participant)*

Above, trying new activities is inextricably linked to wellbeing. In other focus groups, it was noted in that it could be beneficial for leaders to lead a greater variety of activities to broaden their skills base, rather than leading on already popular sports (e.g. football). This could work well considering new activities that young people did during Lockdown, and the associated wellbeing benefits this brings.

- *'I think it is really important to run activities and maybe some that wouldn't usually be run so it can open up different interests'.*

Key Recommendation: Lockdown has provided new opportunities to **learn to lead** which have manifested itself through behaviours including curiosity and skills of creativity and communication, which can be harnessed as part of a new, flexible leadership model which offers both digital and face-to-face opportunities.



(Virtual) Training

We have seen that confidence and wellbeing are significant to young people for forthcoming leadership opportunities, as are new, creative and proactive ways to get peers involved. Here, we discuss how training can be delivered to best equip young people to achieve in these reimagined leadership roles.

Some focus groups noted that they would prefer training to take place in the school environment, within year group bubbles, if necessary. This would provide students with some version of normality and suit learners who prefer a more “hands-on” approach, of which many leaders suggested they would favour.

Nonetheless, where virtual delivery of training was discussed, young leaders were clear that future training opportunities should not entail simply staring at a screen for a length of time, and that short-sharp tasks which were inclusive and accessible to all being paramount. Tasks ensure that young people become active and agents in their learning, rather than passive recipients of the information. Suggested tasks included talking through scenarios that one may be faced with in a leadership setting.

- *‘I learn better when I have a go, when I have a try and then I can show them how to do it’.* (Focus group participant)
- *‘Make it interesting, not boring! Maybe cartoons and videos and little clips of things. Maybe get us to do things. Lots of funny things to get us interested! Lots of funny things to get the point across!’* (Focus group participant with SEND)

Additionally, virtual training was still viewed as an opportunity to meet new people and share common interests, aspirations, or best practice. Using breakout rooms as part of video conferencing technology’s functionality, and having icebreakers and “getting to know you” sessions were deemed to be important throughout training sessions, which perhaps would help provide that connection to a ‘bigger purpose’ which was noted as missing during Lockdown.

Participants considerably noted that not everyone will have access to IT and/or WIFI to be able to take part in online training, and also noted that publicity of when training was going to be would have to be very clear, to avoid people missing the training opportunities. With virtual training sessions also sacrificing initial conversations between the trainer and trainee leaders, focus groups discussed how it was necessary to ensure that all could engage with the content of the training, regardless of whatever previous experience or understanding they had:

- *‘Make sure that you are delivering a variety of activities so that participants are at similar starting points.’* (Focus group participant)

Key Recommendation: If virtual training is to be used, interactivity is key and using the full functionalities of video conferencing is recommended to key young people engaged and **explore and develop their skills.**



Wish List

To provide young leaders with an opportunity to shape leadership opportunities, the last question gave respondents free reign on what they perceive good future leadership opportunities to look like.

Many leaders wished for:

- More signposting to exit-routes into community leadership roles, beyond the school environment or following completion of a fixed term leadership programme (e.g. YST Young Leaders)
- Greater reward and recognition for partaking in leadership opportunities, including access/signposting to recognised qualifications which can support Further/Higher Education applications. Keeping registers to track and reward engagement, and offering credits for completing certain amounts of activities were also mentioned
- Further opportunities to network and/or meet with leaders in order to share best practice, this may be in the shape of team-building days where those from neighbouring schools, to 'give leaders a chance to get to know each other before they begin their sporting events together and encourage them to work with people who aren't just from their schools'.

Some Leaders wished for:

- Further support on following government guidelines on social distancing, and other relevant consequences of COVID-19 on sports delivery
- Being part of a network even after the completion of fixed term leadership opportunities to be able to offer peer support to those now leading
- Further access to courses/workshops, with topics of interest being noted by respondents including nutrition
- Targeting leadership sessions to the needs of young people, with this potentially involving leaders researching specific needs of pupils in school

From the above, key themes that emerge relate back to what we understood participants to have missed during Lockdown. Here, **feeling a part of something** appears to underscore leaders' Wish Lists, whether this be through networking or reward and recognition to validate this contribution to their school and community. **Opportunities for future development** appears also as highly significant with workshops and qualifications being valued. YST can be a pioneering organisation here in responding to these wishes, in addition to providing guidance to young people on how to lead in a way that is COVID-Secure. To date, little guidance for young people themselves has been issued.

Across all responses and themes, ensuring there is a **long-term** approach to leadership opportunities appears invaluable to all involved. This means that leadership opportunities should not be a "sticky-plaster" to inactivity or an otherwise lack of local opportunities, but rather should be part of a pathway with plenty of opportunities to sustain involvement over a longer period of time, and therefore encouraging more young people to enjoy the life-changing benefits of play and sport.

Key Recommendation: A sense of belonging within the network is important, as is ensuring all aspects of the leadership framework are long-term in their outlook.



Method Evaluation

Finally, it is important to reflect on the method of getting teachers/SGOs/SSPs to deliver focus groups on behalf of YST. Interviewers were asked to evaluate how the method of the focus group went, if applicable. Interviewers noted the success of groups being able to bounce ideas off one another in a safe and non-judgmental space were included as positive feedback. Areas for improvement in the use of focus groups included:

- ✓ If SEND students are participating in focus groups, greater thinking and reflection time may be required, and so presenting the questions to students before the focus group may be beneficial. This is linked to the 5 key principles of inclusive focus groups that YST has established, which include:
 - **Consent:** Ensuring that participants are aware of what is expected from them in the session, how their information will be kept safe, and how they can leave the focus group
 - **Participants:** To increase confidence, and to encourage peers to support one another, it is suggested that focus groups take place amongst friendship groups, in groups of no more than 10
 - **Environment:** A comfortable setting which participants are familiar with
 - **Equipment:** Using Chateez cards (see Appendix), Prompt cards etc to facilitate discussions and support those less-verbal to articulate their opinions
 - **Time:** 30 minutes max is for younger people with additional support needs, including time for discussion beyond the set questions.
- ✓ Time limits on the free version of Zoom can hurry/cut-short focus groups
- ✓ Virtual focus groups can take place at times of the day outside school/office hours, yet this flexibility must not be at the expense of those who may already have routines/responsibilities. The flexibility of virtual methods must not add to the stresses and pressures of young people
- ✓ Embedding the subject of the focus group into an interactive, creative task. For example, trying out a virtual leadership activity among participants and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of it. This would prompt a discussion on leadership through an activity, rather than just through questioning
- ✓ Some schools provided more data than others. Some schools provided Zoom's recordings of the virtual focus groups, and so allowing YST to analyse the whole focus group, whereas others provided sheets with the interviewer's notes from during the focus group, which had less detail. It is tricky to make notes and convene a focus group simultaneously and for these notes to provide rich detail

It is not always possible for YST staff to conduct all social research by themselves, and so empowering networks to report research back to YST is a cost-effective and also provides a chance for young people to discuss their opinions on a subject with someone they already have a rapport with. The above provides key considerations, should a similar method be used in the future.

Conclusion

This research project has provided invaluable insight into what young people hope from future leadership opportunities. This report has provided a number of key recommendations, and in the main body of this report has linked these to the existing YST leadership framework.

We have learnt that Lockdown has prompted young people to consider how confidence will need to be rebuilt amongst leaders themselves, and their peers, all of whom will have had different experiences of Lockdown. Learning to Lead in a post-COVID context will need to be inextricably linked to wellbeing, and reintroducing young people to a positive routine which involves physical activity. This will help young leaders to demonstrate behaviours of empathy and being a positive role model.

There is scope to learn from digital methods of leadership delivery, which have taken precedence during Lockdown. Proactivity and creativity are two key skills that could be built upon, in both digital *and* face-to-face methods, with flexibility being necessary between both of these models of delivery. Indeed, this will be very relevant in the event of local, short-term lockdowns. If training takes place online, interactivity and encouraging personal connections have been noted as still valuable.

Ultimately, whilst COVID-19 has presented numerous challenges to young people, a long-term approach to both leadership opportunities, and the benefits that it can have on leaders and peers alike is paramount. This will help young people to develop lifelong skills that can both mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and equip young people to tackle the strains and pressure of contemporary society.

Appendix A: Discussion Guide for Focus Groups

This discussion guide offers brief suggestions on how to deliver your focus group with pupils, as part of Youth Sport Trust's research into youth leadership opportunities. This guide is not meant to be prescriptive, or exhaustive, yet seeks to draw out the salient details that can help shape the programme.

It is certainly to be encouraged that you ask further questions that stem from what participants in this focus group say. Example further questions that may arise are offered in the indented bullet point list.

Please consider the most suitable space for this focus group; one that is comfortable for all pupils participating, and free from distractions.

Introduction:


- Thank the participant(s) for their time
- Briefly outline what is going to happen over the next 30-45 mins (EG. Set of questions will be asked and I will invite your opinion on these questions)
- Explain why their views are important, and that they should be honest and open with their responses
- Establishing informed consent- participant has right to withdraw at any time and stating what this interview may be used for
- Confirm that participant is happy for interview to be recorded (if applicable)
- Check participant is happy to be identified/would rather anonymity
- Remind participants of the following:
 - To be respectful of other speakers' views
 - To ensure everyone has their say
 - To wait their turn patiently to contribute and not to interrupt others
- You may wish to begin with a "warm-up" activity, eg. Tell me about an activity that you've enjoyed being able to do (again) with Lockdown restrictions being eased.

Main Body:

- Could you tell me about the challenges that you may have faced taking part in leadership activity during Lockdown?
 - Tell me about what you've missed the most?
 - Have any of your opinions about leadership changed during Lockdown?
 - Could you tell me what leadership skills you think are going to be useful as we come out of Lockdown?
- Could you tell me about leadership opportunities you'd like when you go back to school?
 - What role could you play to achieve this?
 - How may this be different to before the school closures?
 - Could you tell me about how these leadership opportunities could benefit your classmates?
 - Do you think that these opportunities can help overcome some of the challenges that young people have faced during Lockdown?

- If you were taking part in leadership training virtually – tell me about how we can make sure this is fun and engaging?
 - We need to ensure that this training is accessible and inclusive too. How can we achieve this?
- If you aren't going back to school until September, how do you think you could be a leader for other children in your school?
 - Do you think there are ways you can document what you're doing as a leader when not in school to help celebrate your role?
- If you were to create a "Wish List" of things that help you to continue to be a leader, what would be on that list?
 - [With reference to what the pupils have said on their "list"] Tell me about why that's important to you...
 - [With reference to what pupils have said on their "list"] Tell me about how that may also help those that you lead...

Wrap-Up:

- Repeating back what the participant has said, in a way to invite any further comments, eg. "So you've told me about..."
- Thank participants for their time
- Reinforcing why their views are important and encouraging them to keep up the good work


Data Collection Sheet

Date of focus group	Age range of participants	Please provide a breakdown of the ethnicity of the participants	Please indicate how many participants have SEND	Consent forms received from all pupils?

Question	Comments- including those gained from asking the sub-questions Please feel free to use more than the space provided below
<p>Could you tell me about the challenges that you may have faced taking part in leadership activity during Lockdown?</p>	
<p>Could you tell me about leadership opportunities you'd like when you go back to school?</p>	
<p>If you were taking part in leadership training virtually – tell me about how we can make sure this is fun and engaging?</p>	
<p>If you aren't going back to school until September, how do you think you could be a leader for other children in your school?</p>	
<p>If you were to create a "Wish List" of things that help you to continue to be a leader, what would be on that list?</p>	

Method Evaluation

Please use this space below to indicate what went well about using this focus group, and what may have helped further to get the best possible detail from those involved.

What went well?	
Even better if...	

Appendix I: Inclusive Focus Groups

It is important to ensure that focus groups are accessible to all pupils; with pupils of all abilities empowered to share their views.

With specific regards to conducting focus groups with students with Special Educational Needs, the following are important considerations:

- **Consent:** Ensuring that participants are aware of what is expected from them in the session, how their information will be kept safe, and how they can leave the focus group
- **Participants:** To increase confidence, and to encourage peers to support one another, it is suggested that focus groups take place amongst friendship groups, in groups of no more than 10
- **Environment:** If possible; use an environment which is well known by the students, as this can reduce student's anxiety. For example: A quiet classroom environment with a table and circular seating.
- **Equipment:** For example, Chateez cards to be a really effective tool for finding out among children and young people what they feel about leadership opportunities
- **Time:** 30 minutes max is for younger people with additional support needs, including time for discussion beyond the set questions.

Examples of how you could use the Chateez cards- taken from Youth Sport Trust Lead Inclusion Schools

- **Lead Inclusive Focus groups- Check IN:** ask young people to select a card based on how they currently feel about the leadership offer in their schools. **Check OUT:** how would young people like to feel about it?
- Use the Chateez cards as prompts and ask young people to identify which cards most reflect their feelings in and outside of school. They could **rank them** whether that be 3 or even as many as 15!
- Put all the Chateez cards out on the table and **discuss** how emojis can be a very inclusive way of sharing thoughts and feelings together. How could students use these in their school?
- **Act out-** charades- young people to pick a card then guess the emoji and have a conversation about it
- **Reflections-** choose a card and use it to encourage young people to reflect on their feelings, personal triggers and coping strategies
- **Why why why!** Place a selection of cards on the floor/table- ask young people to write questions about different Chateez cards ie 'why do people get angry' and come up with responses
- **Pick a card-** and give to young people in pairs- encourage them to tell their partner why they feel that way
- **Sort cards** into positive and negative emotions and use as a conversation starter.

For more information on Chateez, please visit: www.chateez.co.uk

YST RESEARCH

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. YST Research offers research, analysis, insight and evaluation services to organisations with an interest in the wider children and young people's sector. Our research expertise is focussed on improving the wellbeing of children and young people through sport and physical activity.

Our specialisms include:

- Education, PE and school sport
- Community sport / clubs
- Early years settings
- Life skills and employability
- Activism and volunteering
- Health (physical, social and emotional)

For our latest research findings, visit <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/research-news>

By working with us, you are supporting us to achieve our mission to improve children's lives and their future.

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