

# Improving the wellbeing of young people through sport and physical activity

Leading Places  
Bedford Borough

Stuart Wilson & Ian Brown



# The challenge

- 1 in 10 young people have a diagnosable mental health condition and many more struggle with stress and low self-esteem
- Early emotional difficulties lead to poorer educational outcomes, adult mental health issues and unequal life chances
- Evidence tells us that sport and physical activity are beneficial for wellbeing but those who would benefit most are least likely to participate

# Our plan

1. Listen to young people, use behavioural insights and work within existing resources
2. Deliver a programme of activities for young people who may be experiencing lower level mental health issues
3. Evaluate the programme and use the emerging evidence to inform future development and
4. Work with local educators and sports clubs to broaden the accessibility and appeal of local sports and physical activity

# Achievements to date

1. Established a partnership between the University of Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough Council and East London NHS Foundation Trust
2. Identified our target group (secondary age young people with emerging emotional wellbeing needs)
3. Delivered Mindful Yoga to 80 participants since October 2017
4. Held focus groups with a range of young people to better understand the issues they face, their perceptions of sport and activity, what they would like to do and how they would prefer to find out and access it



# What's important to young people?



# Next steps and learning from Leading Places

## Next steps

- Build on existing programme of 'Mindful Yoga', co-producing with young people, drawing on behavioural insights expertise and delivering with student volunteers

## Learning

- Our resources are increasingly stretched and prioritising Leading Places has not always been easy.
- The long term impact of Leading Places on Bedford Borough and it's anchor institutions remains to be seen.
- However, Leading Places has created a genuine partnership.
- We share the same values and we all want the very best for young people in Bedford Borough.

