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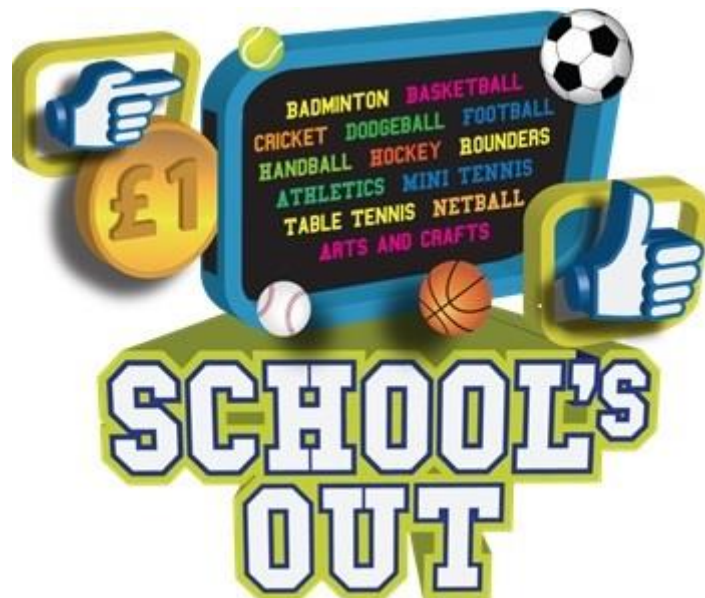
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LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

# Evaluation of the Notts County Football in the Community (NCFITC) delivered 'Schools Out' programme.

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Final Report



## Reader Information

This report was prepared by Dr Zoe Rutherford.

### **Report Reference:**

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### **Contact Details:**

Dr Zoe Rutherford,  
214 Fairfax Hall,  
Leeds Beckett University,  
Headingley Campus,  
Leeds,  
LS6 3QS.

☎ Tel: +44 (0)113 812 4021

✉ Email: [Z.H.Rutherford@leedbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:Z.H.Rutherford@leedbeckett.ac.uk)

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## Summary

### Reach

A sample of 30 children ( $n=12$  girls,  $n=18$  boys) took part in this evaluation, along with 12 parents/guardians. With exception of one family, all of the children attending School's Out were from the areas surrounding Southglade and Clifton leisure centres, which suggests that the programme does attract people from areas of high deprivation within Nottingham. The age range of children who attended these sites during the measurement period was between 8-12 years, which is narrower than the targeted range of 7-15 years. In many cases, siblings attended together but many more had extended family members who attended or who had previously attended.

Parents/guardians reported that they found out about School's Out through a variety of sources, such as posters and fliers seen through local authority venues and schools, via social media and the internet and via word of mouth. Only one parent/guardian mentioned Notts County explicitly as a means of publicity with School's Out.

### Effectiveness, Adoption & Maintenance

While no quantitative data were collected at this time, there were a number of qualitative indicators that suggest that School's Out is effective in increasing children's physical activity and behaviour both while they are in attendance and subsequently at home.

Parents report that their children take part in a variety of sports and physical activities during the day, more than they would have had they not attended and more than they would experience at school. This is supported by the children, who said that if they were not at School's Out, that they would be more likely to play computer games, watch television or engage with other media. One of the reasons for many was because they were not allowed out to play, due to parental concerns with safety (e.g. bullying or potential crime). Another was the lack of equipment, space, supervision or availability of friends.

As a result of their exposure to different sports and activities, a number of parents/guardians report that their children have pursued these beyond School's Out. Their continued engagement in sports such as football, basketball, swimming and hobbies such as origami are attributed to the increased confidence and competence (self-efficacy) that they have gained as a result of the positive experiences during School's Out, as well as their enjoyment of the activities. According to Welk's Youth Physical Activity Promotion Model (1999), these are all important factors in increasing and maintaining young people's physical activity. A number of children who attend School's Out are in year 6 & 7, which is a time where research shows that young people's physical activity declines.

From the responses provided by children and parents, School's Out may well be an effective way of increasing and maintaining young people's physical activity during this time.

As well as increased confidence, parents/guardians reported that they felt that in attending School's Out, their children had seen a marked improvement in their team working skills and conflict resolution- something that was important for those who had made the transition from primary to secondary school. Their children were also better behaved at home, cooperated more with their siblings and shared new games with them. Children themselves reported that they were better behaved when they were at School's Out than they were at school. They attributed this to the knowledge and enforcement of the rules set out, the consequences of breaking them- namely the disruption to the games they played when they weren't followed and the possible exclusion from the programme for persistent offenders. Children also discussed that they didn't want to be told off by the coaches and saw them as role models.

### Implementation

The affordability of the programme was the biggest driver for parents when it came to the reasons for them sending their children to School's Out. This is unsurprising due to the low socioeconomic status of the majority of the families who attended. Many parents/guardians saw School's Out as the most affordable childcare option available to them during the school holidays and with the times mirroring that of the school day and the venue was local to them, it meant that they did not have to spend additional money on travel or day-care. All of the parents saw School's Out as incredible value for money and said that they would be able and willing to pay a little extra for their children attending, especially if it meant that the programme could continue. A number of parents did not know what they would do if the School's Out ceased to be, as they would not be able to afford mainstream childcare or many of the other play/sports schemes on offer locally or in the city.

In addition to cost, knowing that their children were safe during the day (not on the streets or being bullied), being cared for by an organisation that they trusted and they enjoyed themselves were the main reasons for sending their children to School's Out.

The main reasons why children enjoy School's Out are because of the types and variety of activities that they are exposed to (football, swimming, basketball, dodge ball, badminton, table tennis, bib snatch, arts and crafts, board games), the fact that they get to play with their friends (new and old), that the coaches are friendly and inclusive and most of all, because they enjoy it and they have fun. Along with cost, enjoyment is also a big reason why parents choose this programme.

When asked what they might change about School's Out, children would like to do more of the activities that they enjoy, especially swimming. For the boys, they would like to have less opportunity to sit and have 'quiet time' at the beginning and end of the day, while the girls said that they would like to do more arts and crafts and play more board games at these times. A number of children spoke about having separate spaces for the active and sedentary activities, so that they were not interrupted by balls being kicked in their direction and disrupting their activity. There were some suggestions by children that some of the equipment required replacing or updating. For example, there were insufficient dodge balls at one centre, or scissors for crafts at another. Parents/guardians had little to offer with regards what they would like to see improved, as all of them were happy with the service provided.

When asked what additional activities they might like to do, children tended to have low aspirations and repeated doing more of what they already do and like most. When suggestions were made about dance, the girls responded most favourably. However, more sophisticated arts and crafts would be welcomed by both boys and girls, especially DJing, sculpture, drama etc. Similarly, the parents/guardians didn't really think beyond the activities already on offer- largely because they didn't presume that this would be in the remit of what NCFITC could offer, but supported the suggestions offered.

### The role of NCFITC

When parents and children were asked about whether they chose School's Out because it was run by Notts County, none of them felt that it was a factor in their decision. Indeed, only one or two children and parents were supporters of the club. The main reason why parents/guardians saw Notts County as important was because they trusted the organisation, the brand and the coaches delivering it. This was largely through previous personal experience or that of a friend or family member of the programme or other activities offered by NCFITC.

From this evaluation, it is clear that School's Out reaches the people it is intended for and that it is effective in increasing children's physical activity and improving their behaviour and aspirations in the short and long term. The programme is very much needed by the community it serves and is enjoyed by all who attend. Any additional activities that could be offered in the future would be welcomed by children and parents/guardians alike.



## 1. Introduction

The important role that exercise and physical activity plays in reducing risk factors associated with developing, for example, obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes is widely recognised, especially for children (Department of Health [DH], 2011). In addition to the physical benefits, children who meet current physical activity guidelines experience superior psychological/social and cognitive capacity (Poitras et al., 2016). Despite this, only 21% of boys and 16% of girls aged 5-15 years old are getting enough physical activity daily to benefit their health (at least one hour of moderately intensive physical activity per day; Health Survey for England, 2012). It is for these reasons that the promotion of physical activity in children is a global public health priority.

The United Nations Task Force (UNTF; 2003) identified additional benefits of the physical activity was undertaken in the form of sport, as participation in sport could increase levels of self-esteem, confidence, resilience, teamwork and discipline. Furthermore, sport has been recognised as having a natural place in education, whether the approach used is formal, non-formal or informal (UNTF, 2003). Football is the most popular sport worldwide, so it is not surprising that many organisations have used football-based activities to raise awareness and address health problems around the world (Fuller et al., 2010). In 2006, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) recognised the unique role that football could play in the promotion of exercise and healthy behaviours, which in turn could reduce the burden from communicable and non-communicable diseases in many countries. To that end, this mechanism of health promotion and intervention has been found to be effective in improving cardiovascular health and fitness in men & women; effective weight management in men (Rutherford et al., 2014); and improving physical activity and social inclusion (Kelly, 2011) in older adults (Parnell et al., 2014). Despite this, there have been few studies (Duby et al., 2014; Fuller et al., 2011) that have evaluated the effectiveness of football clubs in delivering physical activity and behaviour change interventions in children.

School's Out is a sports participation programme delivered by Notts County Football in the Community (NCFITC) to children aged 8-15 in Nottingham during school holidays (Autumn, Spring and summer half terms; Easter and Summer holidays). The main aim of the programme is to engage young people from areas of deprivation in the City, by offering low-cost, accessible sports and arts activities, to raise their aspirations and using the Football Club and the activities as a hook to change their behaviour (health behaviours, anti-social behaviours).

In order to inform the development of School's Out beyond the funding period and in line with similar studies in this context (Pringle et al., 2012) this report has been guided by the REAIM framework. REAIM not only provides a comprehensive structure for assessing the impact of

interventions across the behaviour change continuum (**R**each, **A**doption and **M**aintenance), but also the process **I**mplementation by which interventions are **E**ffective when impacting on the behaviour of participants. As such, findings from this study will help to inform decisions on the design of the programme going forward and in line with those principles set out by Fineberg (2012) for successful health care.

The aims of this report is therefore to identify and evaluate participants', parents/guardians', coaches' and managers' perceptions of Schools Out's Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance by exploring:

- The reasons why children attended the School's Out programme,
- the role of Notts County Football in the Community in School's Out,
- the aspects of the programme that children enjoy and those that they do not,
- children's activity preferences while taking part in the programme,
- additional activities that children may wish to experience in the future.

## 2. Methodology

During the week beginning the 27th October 2014, children attending School's Out and their parents/guardians were invited to take part in face-to-face semi-structured focus groups ( $n=5$ , total children  $n=30$ ) and interviews (parents  $n=12$ ). The focus groups and interviews took place at two leisure centres that host School's Out: Southglade Leisure Centre (SLC) in the North of Nottingham and Clifton Leisure Centre (CLC) in the South; and at FITC's offices. Ethical approval for the study was provided by Leeds Beckett University's Local Research Ethical Committee.

### Focus Groups

The parents/guardians of children attending the programme were provided with the study information sheets and asked to return the informed consent forms if they were happy for their child to take part in a focus group (see appendix 1 and 2). Only children providing informed parental consent and verbal assent took part. The focus groups were gender specific (in order to determine any gender differences) and took place in the presence of an adult with a valid DBS check and in a private room separate to the School's Out activities, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The semi-structured focus group schedule can be found in Appendix 4. In summary, the aim of the questions were to determine why the children attended; their perception of NCFITC's role; what children enjoyed most about attending School's Out; what they would change and what additional activities they would like to do in the future. Each focus group lasted between 30-40 minutes.

### Interviews

Following the provision of informed consent (see appendix 3), parental/guardian interviews took place in a private room as above, but in order to reduce participant burden and to maximise the time available (during the drop-off and pick-up times of the day) were limited to 10 minutes. The main aim of the questions asked were to explore the reasons parents took their children to School's Out; how they found out about the programme; what they liked about the programme; the perceived role of NCFITC; what impact attending School's Out had on their children; what aspects of the programme they might change and other activities they would like to see included in the future (see appendix 5).

Each interview and focus group were digitally recorded and anonymously transcribed verbatim for further analysis. All data were saved on a password protected computer.

### Data Analysis

At the point of analysis  $n=5$  focus groups (30 children) and  $n=12$  interviews took place. In order to address the research questions, a thematic content analysis was completed and framed around the

perceived Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance (Glasgow, 1999) aspects of the programme described above; as well as children's enjoyment, preferences and expressions of interest for future programme developments. The themes have been generated in order to capture important information about the School's Out programme from the point of view of the end users. Anonymous direct quotes are used to support and highlight the themes identified.

### 3. Results

The majority of children and parents who took part in the focus groups and interviews were from the area surrounding the Southglade (Bullwell and Bestwood) or Clifton leisure centres, which are situated in areas of high deprivation within Nottingham City, which itself is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England (Gov., 2015). This demonstrates that the programme attracts the people for whom it was intended, with a large proportion having attended Schools Out for a number of years (range 3 days to 3 years) and during the autumn, Easter and summer programmes.

Parents and children were made aware of Schools Out through a variety of media, including posters in various local authority sites; fliers brought home from schools; searching the internet and social media such as Facebook: “I think they posted it on like Facebook that’s how my mum told me it was on” (Girl, CLC); as well as by word of mouth and recommendations from friends or other parents.

#### 3.1. Why School’s Out?

The main decision maker in terms of children’s attendance of School’s Out was the parents/guardian, but for many, the decision was collaborative:

“I was at school erm, they handed out a poster and me and my mum were just reading it and we thought it would be really fun and then since there it had football I really wanted to go and said it had really good activities and that made me want to go” (Boy, 8, CLC)

The following section outlines the reasons why parents/guardians choose to send their children to Schools Out and the reasons why their children influence them to do so.

##### Affordable Child Care (Cost)

All of the parents/guardians interviewed saw School’s Out as the most affordable form of childcare during school holidays, with the hours of 9-4pm replicating the school day. As many parents/guardians worked, being able to drop their children off and pick them up on their way home and without having to arrange additional childcare, meant that they did not have to incur any further cost. This was especially true for single parents:

“It’s just better off for me, what with the hours I do, I can drop her off on my way to work and then pick her up. It works for me. I don’t think I’d know what to do if it stopped.” (Mother of one girl, CLC)

The cost of School’s Out was a focal reason for the majority of parents/guardians choosing to send their children to the programme, especially during prolonged summer holidays. This was true for those with one or multiple children:

“I found out about it through a friend \*who’s children also attend\*. It’s cheaper for me to do it that way, because obviously a child minder’s just too expensive.” (Mother of one girl, CLC)

“The main attraction would be the cost. Because it is incredible value for money. I mean they have the children from 9-4, which is actually longer than they would be in school! And it’s like a £1 a day... It’s actually just ended up being, basically because of the cost, they’re much cheaper, and I know that sounds bad, but some of the other ones, particularly the ones that focus just on football, you can end up paying 25, 50, £75 for a week, per child, so it gets very expensive really.....” (Foster parent of two, SGLC)

Another important factor for choosing School’s Out was that it was local to where they lived. By being close to where they lived, it meant that parents did not need to spend additional time or money on transport. Being able to walk young children to the leisure centre or for older children to walk themselves was invaluable.

“He has gone to other leisure centres for things to do in the holidays, but it just got so expensive... And of course, I work full time so I have to get him booked in somewhere and when this one came up, I was like, well, it’s not expensive and it’s local...” (Mother of one boy, SGLC)

Being able to send both their son and daughter to the same place was another factor that a number of parents/guardians identified that made School’s Out stand out from other activity and sports based opportunities during the school holiday. This was especially important for parents/guardians who worked.

Because of the value they placed on the programme, a number of parents/guardians suggested that while staying low-cost was important and that they would be unable to afford more expensive programmes, they would be willing to pay a little extra for School’s Out, if it meant that the programme could continue:

“I mean, I almost feel embarrassed about it and keep trying to offer them more money, but obviously, it’s funded and you know, so it’s good value.” (Foster parent of two, SGLC)

“Well, it’s a pound! I can afford to let both of them come for that. In fact, for what you get, and if it meant that it stays open, I could afford to pay a bit more. I think it’s worth it” (Mother of two, CLC).

### Safety & Trust

Knowing that their children were safe when they were at School’s Out was very important to a number of parents. By sending their children to their respective programme, parents knew where

they were while they were at work and that they were supervised by staff from NCFITC, whom they trusted:

“It is a God-send... I know where he is, it keeps him off the streets. I don’t want him doing anything that he shouldn’t be doing. Especially at this age, I mean, next year he goes to the big school.”

(Mother of one boy, CLC)

“Yeah, I wouldn’t leave him with anybody, so yeah, like I say, there’s quite a few of them, so you know that they’re going to be closely supervised all the time, so they’re going to be safe” (Mother of son, CLC)

Parents surprised by and liked the fact that there was a higher student:staff ratio than there was at school and that gave them confidence.

### Enjoyment

Despite cost being the main driver, all parents/guardians said that they took their child to their respective programme because they enjoyed it:

“He loves it here. He gets himself up in the morning, packs his lunch and walks over. I know he does so many activities here - he’s active all the time he’s here.” (Mother of teenage boy, CLC).

“They really enjoy coming here, both of them. They love being able to do all the activities and play with their friends. Swimming, they love going swimming too. I asked them before the start of these holidays whether they wanted to come and \*name\*, my daughter got really upset at the thought of not being able to come” (Mother of a girl and a boy, CLC)

This collaborative decision making process is supported by a boy from Clifton leisure centre who said “I wanted to come here because I knew all my friends would come here and there would be loads of activities going on and there would be a good opportunity for me, so I decided why not” (Boy, 9, SGLC)

### 3.2. What aspects of School’s Out do children enjoy most?

The aim of School’s Out is to encourage children and young people to take part in physical activities and other positive behaviours that will raise their aspirations. Psychological theory explains that individuals will only take part in activities if they value and believe that they are able to be successful in them (self-efficacy, Bandura, 1986). It is important that children and young people gain positive

experiences and interact favourably with others and/or the place/situations they encounter while taking part (Figure 1). This can be achieved through skill development or training, providing clear instructions and by modelling of the desired behaviour- these are all things that have been reported by children and parents/guardians about their experiences of School's Out.

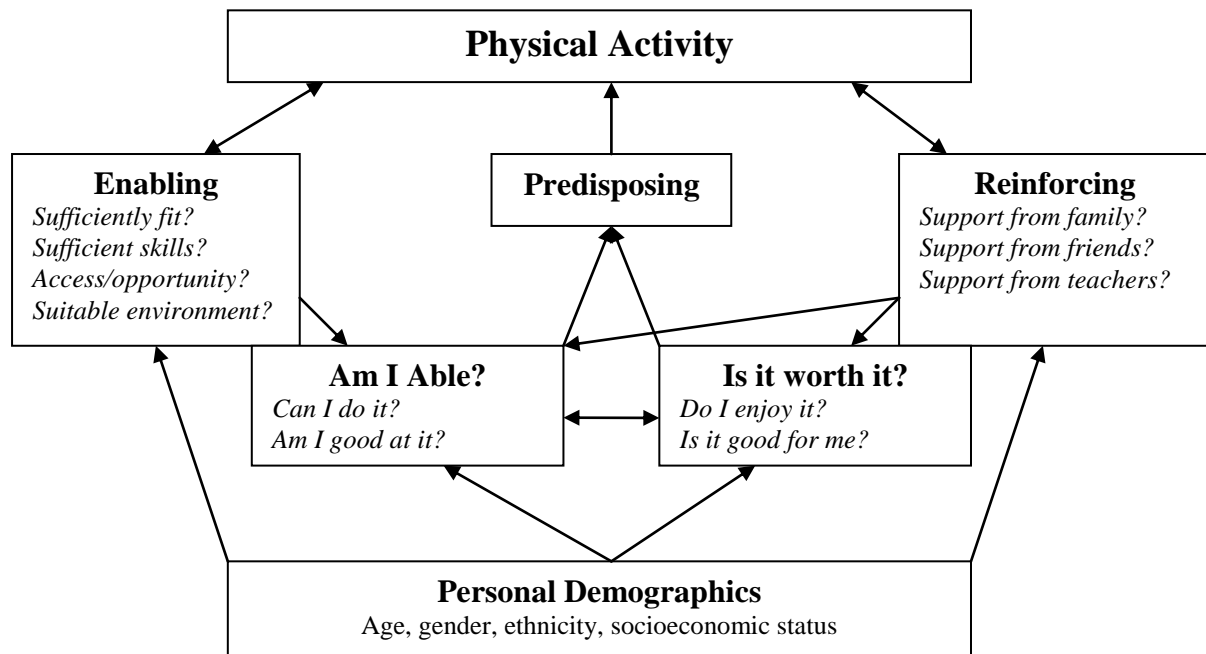


Figure 1. Welk's Youth Physical Activity Promotion Model (1999)

### Variety of Activities

The types of activities that the girls and boys enjoyed most differed slightly, but both enjoyed games like dodge ball, bib snatch and the opportunity to go swimming and do gymnastics. Distinctively, the majority of boys enjoyed sports and activities like football, cricket and basketball. While some of the girls also reported to enjoy football, the majority listed board games, hockey and netball as their favourites. These activities are in line with other studies that have examined the gender preferences of underserved adolescents, as well as their motives for taking part in physical activity (Wilson et al., 2005).

When asked whether having so many activities to do was important, one girl from Clifton leisure centre said, "because if you try different things then you can experience different things, but if you just do the same thing over and over again then it's just going to get boring", something that was echoed by the rest of the group. Indeed, this was a view that was shared across the leisure centres and by both boys and girls.



## Fun & Friends

Most importantly and fundamental to building self-efficacy in children is that they enjoy the activities that they take part in and that they have fun. The main reasons boys and girls enjoy School's Out are because it is fun and they are able to make new friends:

"I really like it here cos it's really good. You make loads of new friends and loads of really new and nice grown-ups. It's really fun". (Boy, CLC)

"It's fun and you make lots of friends but then you just have fun here and when you play all the games you just think that is fun and join in". (Girl, CLC)

"I like to spend time with my friends" (Girl 11, SGLC)

"I like it because you can make like new friends that aren't just in your age group." (Boy, SGLC)

The vast majority of children had been to School's Out previously and many had attended for several years. Most children would recommend School's Out to friends, have already done so and most wanted to keep going back.

"It's nice to come back cos you can see if your friends come back and if there's new people or make new friends" (Boy, 8, CLC)

## Coaches

Another aspect that was important was the friendliness of the 'adults' and how fun they were:

"Because, I like \*name\* because he's funny and I like \*name\* because he's fun". (Boy, CLC).

"I really like \*name\* she's really nice, the one with the blonde hair, she's lovely" (Girl, SGLC).

"The coaches are actually the ones who work hard". (Boy, CLC)

"Because they look after you, then encourage you to join in". (Girl, CLC)

The boys from both Southglade and Clifton leisure centres saw the coaches as role models and found them to be supportive and encouraging, which was something that they valued and respected.

"yeah \*name\* I like him because he always like plays with us when we do like dodge ball this morning he, when I was on my own \*name\* came and helped me in dodge ball and then we ended up winning because \*name\* is a really like lively coach" (Boy, 8, CLC)

“he's really supportive as well, like if you don't like it here and you like cry and wanted to go home he'll look after you and stuff” (Boy, CLC)

“Sometimes I'm upset but when I come here and we do all the games and they encourage me to join in then I'm just happy” (Girl, CLC)

“She takes time to understand what we've done and how we've done it and she tries to like use the first aid in a way that none of the other coaches do.” (Girl 10, SGLC)

### Inclusivity

While the activities enjoyed by boys and girls varied (see above), all children agreed they felt included in all activities:

“We swim, we do fun activities that all of us join in. When we sit down they encourage you to join in, so it's really fun”. (Girl, CLC)

A number of the girls stated that they enjoy playing games with boys at School's Out because they felt safe to do so and that the games were more inclusive here than at school:

“I didn't really like dodge ball at school cos everybody kept pushing me over and I do like it here because nobody pushes me over and nobody tries to nick the ball off me and stuff, like they do at school” (Girl 9, CLC)

“I didn't like football at my school because all of the boys, all they just do is fight over the ball and then they always push the girls out of the way and this boy, his names \*name\* and he never lets any of the girls play, he always says he needs the ball, 'it's my turn not your turn'... so I like it here cos none of the boys do that” (Girl 8, CLC)

Erm I like sometimes when we can do Football tournaments, and they do also different sports, so they know that girls will like it and boys will like it. They \*the coaches\* make sure that everyone likes what they get to do.” (Girl, SGLC)

Some of the boys also stated that they liked playing with the girls, something they said that they wouldn't necessarily do so in the school playground.

### 3.3. How could School's Out be improved?

The response to this question from parents/guardians was limited, as the majority were happy with the running of the programme and the activities being offered and couldn't think of anything 'off the top of their head'. When pressed, some parents/guardians felt that their children might like more

variety in the activities offered, although none could provide any suggestions beyond what was already offered.

### Organisation

Two parents/guardians suggested that perhaps their children might like a little more quiet-time before pick-up. However, this was something that was refuted by the boys from both leisure centres who said that they wanted more physical activities during the start and at the end of the day:

“I would like to change the timetable so you don't have to wait as long in the morning “ (Boy, 9, CLC)

“Yeah we should be able to carry on playing til it's time for us to leave, because we just sit down and it's a little bit boring... and d'you know before we come in, we have to wait from 8 o'clock to 9 o'clock where we do nothing we just sit down” (Boy, 10, SGLC)

### Resources

At Southgalde leisure centre in particular, resources in terms of the variety of board games, the number of dodge balls and pairs of scissors were identified as an issue with all focus groups:

“maybe we could have more games because, in the morning because once we get here we have a few connects \*games of Connect 4\* and stuff but we have to sit down for like 20 minutes and I'd like a bit more board games in the morning” (Boy, 8, CLC)

“We don't have any, \*dodge balls\* we've got like one... I think because they all get like ripped up and then you can't use them...Something like they haven't got the funding to afford them or something” (Boy, 11, SGLC)

Separate space for 'quiet' activities such as board games and arts and crafts were also mentioned across centres:

“We should like have a game, there's a cupboard where all the stuff it, should like clear that out, put like a different bit to put it, and obviously turn that into like some next play area or game bit.” (Boy, SGLC)

“I'd give em an actual room to do arts and crafts rather instead of just using the area near the craft cafe, and also I would give them more stuff like paints and more scissors”. (Girl, CLC).

### 3.4. What difference has School's Out made to Children's behaviour?

One statement from the foster parent of looked after children summarises the impact of the programme on his children and echoes how the majority of parents/guardians feel that School's Out has had an impact on their children:

“Confidence, competence and socialising...no, I’m sure you’d understand this, but I can’t emphasise enough that for looked after children, just to...I mean the first task when they come to live with us is to get them to feel safe and secure with us in the home. But then, we have had children that then, because they feel threatened wherever they go and school is a big, can be an absolute nightmare for them, they just don’t want to go out. And they actually become recluses if you let them. So to be able to introduce children to places on a bigger scale with more people, where they can feel safe and secure, is such an amazing thing for them. And actually, it takes a lot of pressure of us as well. Because, you know, you can almost with some kids feel like you’re having to be...its either because they don’t want to go out or because they want to be on the streets being up to no good all the time, and you can either feel like their carers, in terms of like with elderly people almost, you know looking after them at home all the time or even like their prison wardens, you know which is what you don’t want. So, you know, these sorts of places are amazing, not only for the kids but for us...urm...in terms of their whole development really. But I’d say confidence and socialising would be the main two things really.”

### Confidence

The majority of parents reported seeing improvements in confidence in their children in relation to communicating with peers and adults and in participating in physical activity. One mother commented that it allowed her son (who had been attending School’s Out for 3 years) the opportunity for team building and that this has given him a lot more confidence, especially in standing up for himself and in conflict resolution- this was especially important as he had recently made the transition from primary to secondary school:

“And I think it gives him a bit more confidence, you know, and a bit of team building with other friends... He will stand up for himself now- before he might have just backed off, so I think it’s given him a lot more confidence, yeah.” (Mother of one boy, SGLC)

One mother of two children who attend private school said that Schools Out was really important in providing her children the opportunity to socialise and play with children from different ethnic minorities, something that they didn’t do at school. This has enabled them to better relate to children from other ethnic backgrounds, something that is important to their family. When talking about her daughter she said: “she really didn’t integrate a lot with people from other backgrounds or different socioeconomic, sort of, facilities, and that’s been a big thing for me because it means that she’s become more accepting of people and people from different culture and different backgrounds. So I think, for her, she also acknowledges that and it also, kind of, instilled some values in her in terms of what we do at home and how that doesn’t necessarily translate into other people’s behaviour, but that she can still identify with what she’s been taught and still stand her ground in terms of her values. So that’s been a very positive thing.”

## Physical Activity

Without exception, all of the parents interviewed spoke about how their children had an increased physical activity while at School's Out, with the majority expressing that this was important to them:

"He wants to come and he comes home exhausted. He's a big kid and I know he's getting the activities he's needing here. I know he's getting the stability, the social life, everything like that when he comes here." (Mother of a boy, CLC)

The same mother reported that her child was much more active after attending School's Out and that he has pursued activities at home. He had used his pocket money to buy a badminton set and now played with his family. He has also taken up origami after being exposed to it at Schools Out. In particular, one foster parent of two looked after children felt that his children had increased their physical activity, due to their improved self confidence and competence in a variety of sports that they had tried during School's Out:

"Yeah. He joined a football club- typically, as you could imagine. Urm, he is trying more sport out at school as a result, because it's built up his confidence, which is another issue, obviously with looked after children particularly. So he's tried, because he's just gone to secondary school this year, basketball- which he first tried here. Urm, her swimming's come along leaps and bounds as a result of this. She used to be very timid of the water to start with and now, as I mean, as a result of this club actually, we signed her up for swimming lessons, because she's got one tonight, and she's shooting through the levels, she's about level 4/5, whereas before she came on this she was stuck at about level 1. So yeah, they'd be the main ones I think. And she will try more at school, because she was very timid in any kind of team sports, but she's signed up for athletics and various other sporting things they do after school as well. I mean, I can't say that they wouldn't have gotten onto this things eventually, but these clubs have speeded up the process. Which obviously, with looked after children, because they've missed out in certain developmental stages, to say fast-track them seems a bit clinical, but in a way you want to give them as many experiences and as wide experiences as possible, to help them catch up if they can, so that they're not falling further behind their peers and stuff like that." (Foster parent of two, CLC)

When asked what they would be doing if they weren't at School's Out, one boy from Clifton said "I suppose this gets you doing more activity because playing on your Xbox all day, that's got to be good... We like invite people into our house to like play on Xbox or something". Another said "yeah, cos if it was gone, then over the holidays sometimes we wouldn't be able to do stuff cos without this then we're just really bored and there's nothing really to do." Playing on computer games and other electronic devices was not exclusive to the boys:

"My mum said I have to come here cos, to get me off my phone...I can't live a day without it" (girl, 9, CLC)

## Behaviour

In exploring some surprising statements made by boys and girls in both leisure centres about behaving differently when in School's Out compared to school, they responded by saying that they felt that they were better behaved and followed the rules more when playing in School's Out. There were a number of reasons for this, one being the recognition of rules:

“Because they play fairly and at school they just play not really with the rules and they think when the teachers looking at them they think they can do whatever they want and just mess about and not let other people play.” (Boy, 9 CLC)

“Erm, it's better to play with rules cos nothing that can't really go wrong because if there's rules then you're alright, but if there's no rules then everything goes wrong” (Boy, 8, CLC)

“I didn't really like dodge ball at school cos everybody kept pushing me over and I do like it here because nobody pushes me over and nobody tries to nick the ball off me and stuff, like they do at school” (Girl, 8, CLC)

And the consequences of breaking them:

“cos there's people around and they don't wanna get told off” (Girl 9, CLC)

In addition to the children recognising that they were better behaved during Schools Out, parents also recognised this change in behaviour. Children were more co-operative at home and played better (sharing and taking turns) with their siblings after attending Schools Out- they also acted as role models to younger children, encouraging them to play the same games at home.

### 3.5. Additional activities that children may wish to experience in the future

Parents commented that while there are a large variety of physical activities, their children would also like a wider variety of arts and crafts opportunities.

When children were asked about the types of activities they would like to take part in if they were able to do ANYTHING they wanted, their responses were unimaginative and aspirations were very low, with most children wanting to do more of their favourite School's Out activities, such as 'swimming' and 'football', with 'arts and crafts' being the most popular. In particular, children wanted more time and opportunity to do arts and crafts and that this was separate from the children playing football (i.e. more space and in a different room).

“I'd like to do more arts and crafts” (Boy, CLC).

“if I was in charge then instead of doing board games, cos we wait for ages I'd get some tables out and when I set up I'd let all the children do arts and crafts” (Girl 8, CLC)

“I'd give em, an actual room to do arts and crafts rather instead of just using the area near the craft cafe, and also I would give them more stuff like paints and more and and more scissors that just one pair... cos you could either have table tennis in one room, arts and crafts in the other and football in the other” (Girl, 9, CLC)

When the researchers gave examples of other creative activities such as dance, music production, circus skills etc., without exception, children agreed that they would like to have the opportunity to try them. In particular, the girls stated that they already enjoyed activities like dance and singing:

“I like dancing and singing” (Girl, CLC).

“Drama, and like music and things like that” (Girl, 10, SGLC)

An additional suggestion from one of the boys was as follows:

“I like, I'd like it if they did Boxercise here, cos I'm really into my boxing and stuff” (Boy, 9, CLC)

### 3.6 The role of Notts County

When parents and children were asked about whether they chose School's Out because it was run by Notts County, none of them felt that it was a factor in their decision. Indeed, only one or two children and parents were supporters of the club:

“Because, when it's run by Notts County it might be, especially football because there might be team that you really like and there might be some players that play for Notts county and stuff.” (Boy, CLC)

The main reason why parents/guardians saw Notts County as important was because they trusted the organisation, the brand and the coaches delivering it. This was largely through previous personal experience or that of a friend or family member of the programme or other activities offered by NCFITC.

“No they're not massively, other than, I mean, they will be bothered that they recognise the people and have built up a relationship and the fact that it's NC is secondary really. Because, as I say, none

of us really support NC as a football team. Although, I guess they would say that they support them more than Forest, because there is that, they've been doing it for several years now. But, yeah, it's more the people within the scheme that run it really." (Foster parent, SGLC)

For children, the important thing for them was that:

"Yeah Notts County are really good at making things fun." (Boy, 8 CLC)

"They know lots of sports and like we like I really like the game dodge ball" (Girl, 9, CLC).



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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Participant/Parent Information Sheet- School's Out

*'Evaluation of the Notts County Football in the Community (FITC) delivered 'Schools Out' programme.'*

#### **Introduction**

A team of researchers from Leeds Beckett University are undertaking a research project to evaluate the School's Out programme on the behalf of Notts County FITC. The project aims to evaluate the reasons why children and parents choose to attend the School's Out programme by looking at the aspects of the programme that children enjoy and those that they do not, children's activity preferences while taking part in the programme and identify additional activities that children may wish to experience in the future. Also, we want to know a bit about whether the programme has helped children to improve their self-confidence and aspirations. The information collected as part of the research project will help us to better understand how programmes delivered by football clubs work to improve the experiences and aspirations of the children in the communities they work in and how they can be improved.

#### **Why have my child and I been invited to take part?**

For the research to take place we need a number of children and their parents/guardians who take part in the Schools Out programme to agree to take part.

#### **Does my child have to take part?**

Participation in the project is completely voluntary. You and your child do not have to take part if you don't want to and you can withdraw from the project at any time- you do not need to give us a reason.

#### **What will be expected if my child and I take part?**

***If you agree for your child to take part in the focus group, they will:***

1. Take part in a recorded talk with up to 4 other girls or boys (focus groups will be separated by gender) and the researchers about what their experiences, thoughts and feelings are about the School's Out programme (approx. 30-45 minutes).
  - a. The focus groups will take place during the School's Out programme, so no other arrangements for them will have to be made.
  - b. The focus groups will be voice recorded and then transcribed anonymously word-for-word, so that your child's confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. For safety, once the audio files have been transcribed they will be deleted and the written copy will be password protected.

***If you agree to take part in the interview, you will:***

2. Take part in a recorded talk with a researcher about your perceptions, thoughts and feelings about the School's Out programme (approx. 10-15 minutes).
  - a. The interviews will take place when you drop your child off or just before you pick them up at the School's Out venue, or you can make an arrangement to attend during the day if that would be more convenient.
  - b. The interview will be voice recorded and then transcribed anonymously word-for-word, so that your confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. For safety, once the audio files have been transcribed they will be deleted and the written copy will be password protected.

### **What will my child and I get out of the project?**

The project is intended to be fun, interactive and give service users (the children and their families who take part) the opportunity to improve the School's Out programme for the future. It will also mean that you are involved in a cutting-edge research project that will help us to better understand how programmes delivered by football clubs work to improve the experiences and aspirations of the children in the communities they work in and how they can be improved.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

The risks involved in the School's Out evaluation project are the same as any other activity that involves recording personal information. Any data that is collected as part of the research project will be stored anonymously so that if anything happened to them, individuals can not be identified. All data will be stored on a password protected computer and hard copies (audio) will be destroyed after they have been written up into a Word document. Please remember that **you or your child are free to withdraw from the project at any time, without explanation**. If after discussing the project with your child you are keen to take part, **then please fill out and return the attached consent form to the 'School's Out' team as soon as possible.**

If you have any questions or need any more information to help you decide whether or not you want your family to take part, then please contact Dr Zoe Rutherford on:

**Email:** [Z.H.Rutherford@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:Z.H.Rutherford@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

**Direct line:** 0113-812-4021

Yours sincerely

*Zoe Rutherford*

**Lead researcher – School's Out Evaluation, Leeds Beckett University**

Appendix 2: Informed Parental Consent

**Statement of parental / guardian consent in the investigation entitled:**

‘Evaluation of the Notts County Football in the Community (FITC) delivered ‘Schools Out’ programme.’

**Child’s Name:** ..... **Gender:** Male Female

**Date of Birth:** ..... **Home Post Code:**

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1. I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to my child participating in the above study.
2. I understand from the participant information sheet, which I have read in full and from discussion(s) with DR Zoe Rutherford that this will involve my child taking part in a focus group to ask their opinions and experiences of the School’s Out Programme.
3. It has also been explained to me by Zoe Rutherford that there are few risks and side effects associated with the focus groups, which may result from my child participating but that that during the focus group there may be questions about their experience at ‘School’s Out’ that may make them feel anxious e.g. asking them about their experiences on the programme might remind them of a bad experience they may have had and therefore cause distress.
4. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and, where I have asked questions, these have been answered to my satisfaction.
5. I am aware that I can withdraw my consent for my child to participate in the study at any time and for any reason, without having to explain my withdrawal.
6. I understand that any personal information regarding my child, gained through participation in this study, will be treated as confidential and only handled by individuals relevant to the performance of the study and the storing of information thereafter. Where information concerning my child appears within published material, their identity will be kept anonymous.
7. I confirm that I have read the University’s policy relating to the storage and subsequent destruction of sensitive information. I understand that sensitive information provided through my child’s participation in this study, in the form of focus group responses (audio files and transcriptions) will be handled in accordance with this policy.

Parent/carer/guardian signature: .....Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Primary Researcher signature: .....Date:\_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3: Parent Consent Form- School's Out

'Evaluation of the Notts County Football in the Community (FITC) delivered 'Schools Out' programme.'

**Statement of informed consent in the investigation entitled:**

'Evaluation of the Notts County Football in the Community (FITC) delivered 'Schools Out' programme.'

**Participant Name:**..... **Gender:** Male                      Female

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to take part in the above study.
2. I understand from the participant information sheet, which I have read in full and from discussion(s) with Dr Zoe Rutherford that this will involve me taking part in an interview to ask my opinions and experiences of the School's Out Programme.
3. It has also been explained to me by Zoe Rutherford that there are unlikely to be any risks or side effects associated with the interview, which may result from me participating. However, there may be questions about my experience or that of my child that may make me feel anxious e.g. asking you about yours and your child's experiences on the programme might remind you of a bad experience you may have had and therefore cause distress.
4. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and, where I have asked questions, these have been answered to my satisfaction.
5. I am aware that I can withdraw my consent to participate in the study at any time and for any reason, without having to explain my withdrawal.
6. I understand that any personal information regarding myself, gained through participation in this study, will be treated as confidential and only handled by individuals relevant to the performance of the study and the storing of information thereafter. Where information concerning me appears within published material, my identity will be kept anonymous.
7. I confirm that I have read the University's policy relating to the storage and subsequent destruction of sensitive information. I understand that sensitive information provided through my participation in this study, in the form of interview responses (audio files and transcriptions) will be handled in accordance with this policy.

Participant signature: .....Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Primary Researcher signature: .....Date:\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4: Focus Group Schedule- School's Out

'Evaluation of the Notts County Football in the Community (FITC) delivered 'Schools Out' programme.'

Thank-you for agreeing to take part in this focus group. My name is [researcher name] and I am part of the Research Project Team at Leeds Beckett University who are doing some research about the Schools Out Programme. We want to find out a bit more information about the reasons why you come to Schools out and to hear about your experiences while you are here. What we talk about in this room is confidential, so we won't tell anyone what you have said about the programme. Are you happy to still take part?

So that we can remember what you have said and compare it with the other groups, we will need to record our conversation- are you happy for the focus group to be recorded? The focus group should take approximately 30-45 minutes.

### **1. How did you hear about the Schools out programme?**

(Prompts)

### **2. What made you decide to come? Why?**

(Prompts)

Club/badge

Parent's decision

Activities available

Friends

### **3. Do you have brothers and sisters who come? If so, how many?**

### **4. Who is a Notts County supporter? Are your family supporters?**

### **5. Is it important that Schools Out is run by Notts County? Why?**

### **6. What do you like about the School's Out programme? Why? Examples:**

(Prompts)

Activities

Staff

Club

Time with friends

- 7. What are your most favourite activities? Why?**
- 8. What do you not like so much about School's Out? What would you change?**
- 9. How many of you have been here during a different school holiday? What makes you want to come back?**
- 10. When you're at School's Out, what activities do you do that you wouldn't normally get the chance to do? Why?**
- 11. Have you taken up that activity outside of Schools Out or as a result?**
- 12. If there was anything that you could do in terms of activities while you were at School's Out, what would they be and why?**
- 13. As a result of coming to School's Out do you feel more...? Why? Examples?**
  - a. Confident
  - b. Sociable
  - c. Positive / happier
  - d. Motivated
  - e. Better behaved
  - f. Aspirations / career
  - g. Fitter
  - h. Healthier lifestyles
  - i. More active, more often
  - j. Other.....
- 14. Is there anything else you think is relevant that you would like to tell me about?**

Thank you for your time in taking part in this focus group.

ENDS.

## Appendix 6: Parent Interview Schedule- School's Out

'Evaluation of the Notts County Football in the Community (FITC) delivered 'Schools Out' programme.'

Thank-you for agreeing to be interviewed. My name is [researcher name] and I am part of the Research Project Team at Leeds Beckett University and I am currently undertaking interviews as part of the School's Out evaluation.

The project aims to: To identify and evaluate participants', parents/guardians' and stakeholders' perception of Schools Out's Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance and in this semi-structured interview, we are interested in finding out about your views and experiences of how children and their parents LEARN about and START the School's Out programme; how well you think the programme delivers on its objectives and how you feel the programme could be developed. Your responses will remain anonymous. Are you happy for the interview to be recorded? The interview should take approximately 10-15 minutes.

### **1. How did you hear about the Schools out programme?**

(Prompt)

Word of mouth, friends, others

Schools

Club information systems

Marketing

Local news

Partners

Partners communication channels

Referral sources

Other factors

### **2. What made you decide to bring your child/children? Why?**

(Prompts)

Time constraints during school holidays



Cost issues

Staff knowledge

Participant access/knowledge of marketing

Trust, reassurance

Other

**3. Are you a Notts County supporter? Is your family supporters?**

**4. Is it important that Schools Out is run by Notts County? Why?**

**5. What do you like about the School's Out programme? Why? Examples:**

(Prompts)

Activities

Staff

Club

Child has a good time

Low cost childcare

**6. Has your child taken up an activity outside of Schools Out as a result? If not, would you/they like to? What would be the barriers?**

**7. As a result of your child coming to School's Out have you noticed a change in any of the following...? Why? Examples?**

- a. Confident
- b. Sociable
- c. Positive / happier
- d. Motivated
- e. Better behaved
- f. Aspirations / career
- g. Fitter
- h. Healthier lifestyles
- i. More active, more often
- j. Other.....

**8. Is there anything else you think is relevant that you would like to tell me about?**

Thank you for your time in taking part in this focus group.

ENDS.