



# Evaluation of Premiership Rugby's HITZ Learning Academy Programme June 2017



**Evaluation and Reporting by Healthy Living Lab Members:** 

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## Introduction

The issue of young people characterized as NEET (not in education, employment or training) has risen to the top of political agendas over the past decade, but particularly since the economic crisis of 2008, and is perceived to be a problem at an international level (see for example, Chen, 2011; Benjet et al, 2012, Cahuc et al for work addressing issues of NEETs in Taiwan, Mexico, and France and Germany) as well as in the UK (e.g. see MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Pring et al 2009; Simmons and Thompson, 2011; Wolf, 2011). Despite this, relatively little work has been undertaken which addresses the impact and effectiveness of educational and social interventions which seek to support NEET young people into education, employment or training. The most significant recent project in the UK was that by Simmons and Thompson, reported in 2011. However, this was a small study and the fieldwork was completed around 2008, meaning that the outcomes and experiences for young people in that study are likely to have been qualitatively different to those affecting young people who are NEET now, in terms of availability of employment and training before and after the recession, as well as in terms of the relative impact of different government policies and initiatives. Further, the Simmons and Thompson work was a largely exploratory, ethnographic study, which sought to understand the structural and familial issues affecting NEET young people, rather than to evaluate any interventions, although some initiatives (such as E2E) were discussed in the context of young people's educational experiences. Being NEET at age 16 is a powerful predictor of later disadvantage, including unemployment, teenage pregnancy and involvement with criminality and drugs (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005:26, citing Social Exclusion Unit 1999, Bynner and Parsons, 2002). Many NEET young people suffer from multiple disadvantage, experiencing a range of characteristics associated with social exclusion – such as race, working class, being a young parent or having a disability for example - which also render them more likely to become NEET (MacDonald and Marsh, Ibid; Shildrick et al, 2012; Mirza-Davies, 2015) as they seek to navigate difficult transitions from school to work. These sources of multiple disadvantage have significant negative consequences in terms of life, work and health chances. For example, those young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) have been reported to engage in poor health behaviours including unhealthy eating practices (Young Lives, 2014) and even more concerning is the suggestion that poor physical health and

depression results in 15% of NEETs dying within 10 years of disengaging with the formal education and employment system (Vaughan, 2009). Further, amongst young people who are NEET, there is a threefold greater risk of severe mental disorders (Scott *et al*, 2013). In terms of work, those young people who are NEET, or who 'churn between forms of [low level education and training] participation, punctuated by periods of unemployment' (Simmons and Thompson, 2011:175) are more likely to experience disadvantage and social exclusion (Keep, 2009), something which has clear negative implications in terms of their own future work and life chances and those of ensuing generations.

Current Government statistics indicate that, in the fourth quarter of 2014, 963,000 people aged 16-24 were NEET (13.1% of people in this age group), figures which are above the OECD average (Mirza-Davies, 2015). Mirza-Davies goes on to report that this includes both young people who are unemployed, and those who are economically inactive – not looking for work, or unavailable for work; in 2011, Alison Wolf noted that whilst numbers and proportions of NEET young people had fallen (though remaining well above those of 2000), using the looser definition of those who stated that their main economic activity is neither education, employment or training, numbers and proportions had continued to rise (2011:28). In England, the regions with the highest proportion of 16-24 year olds who are NEET are the major conurbations which have suffered significantly as a result of industrial decline: The North East, Yorkshire & Humber, and the West Midlands. NEET young people were a major focus of Coalition government policy, something which is unlikely to change in the near future. Schemes with elements aimed at reducing the number of young people who are NEET currently include: raising the participation age, the Youth Contract and the Work Programme as well as an increase in apprenticeships.

A key issue in the context of these initiatives is the fact that they address only structural and economic factors (such as low educational attainment/disaffection or lack of place-specific training or employment opportunities) associated with NEET young people (Simmons, 2008). Pemberton's (2008) study of NEET young people in Greater Merseyside differentiated between these, and factors he termed 'intergenerational' (e.g. family breakdown, low aspirations) which are also associated with becoming NEET. Most significantly, Pemberton's study identified the most vulnerable young people as being those who lacked a stable family background and positive parental support, suggesting that these

factors, combined with other characteristics of being NEET, meant that they faced the greatest challenges in terms of becoming engaged in education, employment or training. Clearly, those without a stable family background will lack role models, and emotional and financial support as well as experiencing other exclusionary characteristics. It seems likely that these young people are more likely to have significant deficits in terms of the life and personal skills associated with the capacity to work, and this implies that local and national initiatives which address both intergenerational and structural factors are likely to be more successful in supporting young people back into education, employment or training. Although this is an under-researched area, Russell (2014) also suggests that integrated approaches addressing all these factors are more likely to be successful in achieving positive outcomes for young people (and potential employers). There are two further significant influences on young people who become NEET. Firstly, there is the prevalence of 'pragmatic rational decision making' (Hodkinson et al 1996, Pemberton 2008; Atkins 2014) amongst young people who, with limited options, make choices influenced by institutional, structural and agency factors. Secondly, there is the primary importance of leisure in the lives of young people (e.g. see Ball et al, 2000, Atkins, 2009). Work by Feinstein et al (2006) and by Haudenhuyse et al (2012) has demonstrated how structured leisure activities, such as taking part in clubs or sports 'correlates with less social exclusionary outcomes at a later age'. However, as Haudenhuyse et al (2012:450) also report, there is a need for further research to 'develop our understanding of how organised sports, as a series of social relationships and processes, can contribute in making socially vulnerable youth less vulnerable'. In summary, many of the young people who are at risk of, or who become NEET have complicated and chaotic lives and need considerable support to facilitate them to attain

In summary, many of the young people who are at risk of, or who become NEET have complicated and chaotic lives and need considerable support to facilitate them to attain academically, and develop the social, personal and life skills necessary to engage with employment, education or training. The literature in this area implies that interventions addressing only structural factors associated with becoming NEET are less likely to achieve positive progression, in comparison to those which address both structural and intergenerational factors. However, there is also a need to assess the efficacy of such interventions by drawing on multiple methods including the views of users as well as stakeholders to ensure that the needs of those directly involved in these schemes are met.

## Context of the HITZ Intervention

HITZ is an education and employability programme delivered by all 12 Premiership Rugby clubs across England. The programme aims to support young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) to gain qualifications and skills to support their transition back into education, training, apprenticeships and/or employment.

The young people involved in the HITZ programme are often embroiled in highly challenging circumstances including transitory living arrangement, drug and alcohol abuse and crime. So, as well as addressing disengagement from education/employment, HITZ also aims to support young people to make better lifestyle choices to promote long term health and wellbeing.

The programme has various strands working with young people aged 14-19 years. However, the focus of the current evaluation was on the HITZ Learning Academy aimed at NEET young people aged 16-19 years.

## \*HITZ aims to:

- Support and educate disadvantaged and disillusioned young people into further opportunities in mainstream education and training and/or employment
- Encourage participants into regular physical activity to receive the associated health and wellbeing benefits
- Encourage good relations between people regardless of their backgrounds
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

HITZ sessions are delivered by HITZ Officers who work in conjunction with various organisations including educational learning providers, local and national businesses and the Armed Forces to give young people a rich and varied learning experience.

# **Evaluative Approach**

Utilising a mixed methods approach, the current evaluation set out to:

- Validate the impact and effectiveness of the HITZ model
- Identify what audience HITZ reaches, and whether these are the most at need young people

<sup>\*</sup>Aims documented as cited at <a href="http://www.premiershiprugby.com/hitz/">http://www.premiershiprugby.com/hitz/</a>

- Identify whether HITZ enables long term impact. Identify which interventions work,
   with whom, why and in relation to young people with chaotic factors
- Evaluate programme effectiveness through quantitative data analyses examining change
- Examine, evidence and quantify the broader societal value of HITZ.

## Stakeholder Views

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with eight HITZ Officers (7 males and 1 female) and focus groups were conducted with 41 young people (36 males and 5 females) to investigate their views of the HITZ programme. HITZ Officers represented eight different HITZ clubs and young people represented 4 clubs from across the UK.

In order to uphold participant anonymity, the names of the clubs with which the HITZ Officers and young people are associated have not been disclosed. To allow HITZ Officers and young people to freely share their views, they were assured prior to participation that this information would be withheld.

The overarching aim of the interviews and focus groups was to investigate HITZ Officers' and young peoples' views on barriers to education, employment and training and the effectiveness of the HITZ programme in supporting young people to overcome these barriers.

The key research questions were:

- What are the barriers to education, employment and training for young people?
- How might HITZ help young people to overcome barriers to education, employment and training?
- How could the HITZ programme be improved to further support young people in pursuit of education, employment and training?

## **Findings**

Through focus groups with young people and interviews with HITZ Officers, 4 key themes were identified, which detail perceived barriers to education, employment and training and

how these might be overcome through engagement in the HITZ programme. Moreover, the findings of the focus groups and interviews outline potential areas of improvement to the HITZ programme from the perspective of users and stakeholders.

The key themes: Disengagement; Work Readiness; Social Support and Relationships; and Practical Considerations are subsequently discussed in detail with example quotes from young people and HITZ Officers to support each theme.

## Theme 1: Disengagement

When talking about how young people become involved in HITZ, the young people themselves and the HITZ Officers mentioned multiple referral routes including school, Connexions, Social Services and Job Centres but it was apparent that, regardless of referral route, the young people had struggled to successfully engage in any kind of education, employment or training prior to HITZ.

Although some young people had attempted to carry on in education by moving from school to college, they had found themselves studying on courses that they did not enjoy and had no desire to continue to pursue. Consequently, they had been referred to HITZ or discovered the programme at college open days and viewed it as a suitable alternative to allow them to move on from the courses they had originally chosen.

'Got kicked out [of school] like most of us so got referred here' (Young person)

'I decided to look at all different colleges and I just started here and there, didn't like that so came here' (Young person)

HITZ Officers suggested that the HITZ programme offered a suitable alternative to school for some young people as it provided a more bespoke learning environment than school or college. Flexibility and the combination of practical and classroom based experiences were viewed as key features of the HITZ programme that helped to keep young people engaged in a way that schools and colleges were not successful in doing.

'We have a good mix of practical and theory a lot of our young people they struggle to be in a classroom setting too long and that is the reason they are not in colleges so I think we have the mix right' (HITZ Officer)

For other young people, their lifestyle before HITZ had seen them involved in crime, drugs and gangs with no desire to engage in education, employment or training. HITZ Officers talked about young people still having some links to criminal activity, which was a challenge that could lead to disengagement from the HITZ programme, particularly if young people joined HITZ with ongoing court cases that resulted in them ending up in prison early in the HITZ programme.

'You know they may have a better offer if someone calls them up and asks them to go out and earn £1,000 for something naughty they would probably go and do something naughty rather than come to HITZ' (HITZ Officer)

However, young people and HITZ Officers talked about how HITZ was helping to keep young people away from criminal lifestyles by keeping them busy and giving them something to aspire to.

'Before here just wanna be that gangster don't ya just wanna do drugs and stuff and you think you're mint in front of all your mates but coming here like sorts your head out like puts you on target for what you actually wanna do in life' (Young person)

Young people, regardless of their route into HITZ, stressed the motivational aspect of the programme. They talked about how HITZ gave them direction and spurred them on to want to achieve something with a number of young people having firm aspirations to pursue further training and career paths on exiting HITZ.

'It's made a few things clear for me for like basically whatever I want I can't just wait around for it like to get it I have to actually make an effort to go out there and get it' (Young person)

Had they not been involved in HITZ, young people believed that they would have continued to be disengaged from education, employment and training. Some talked about how they would have spent their days sleeping for long periods of time and engaging in sedentary activities whereas others envisaged that their involvement in crime would have gotten worse, leading to prison sentences or even death.

'I'd probably be dead or in jail' (Young person)

For those young people who had joined HITZ after disengaging from other courses, they believed that they would have continued to pursue courses and routes of employment that they did not enjoy and with little direction of how to progress.

'It wouldn't have been as enjoyable basically and I don't think- I can't imagine where I would be without it to be honest like it's decent' (Young person)

#### Theme 2: Work readiness

It was apparent that a lack of qualifications had held some young people back from progressing onto employment or training. For others, they had struggled to uphold the level of attainment necessary to continue on the courses they had chosen. Through HITZ, young people were gaining qualifications that they felt would be useful in allowing them to progress onto a chosen career path.

'For Maths I've just been going over past papers so I can improve calculating things quicker and a much better method than beforehand so it's much easier for me' (Young person)

Confidence was also something that was suggested to be lacking in young people prior to joining HITZ. Young people had faced difficulties with communicating effectively with others, which they believed had held them back somewhat. They also felt they lacked appropriate work experience and life skills to successfully pursue further education, employment and training.

'It's made us more confident really it's just like meeting new people and like taking that into a job more easy' (Young people)

'Confidence is another big one just getting guys and girls to do stuff that is out of their comfort zone' (HITZ Officer)

Engagement in the HITZ programme had supported young people to overcome these barriers. For example, the necessity to adhere to a timetable had helped young people to improve their time management skills. Moreover, HITZ had afforded young people work experience opportunities that they had not had the chance to uptake previously.

'We look to get all of our local businesses into a room and our students come dressed up for their first interview in a shirt and tie or whatever they would wear for an interview, a bit like speed dating so they sit down with one employee for 5 minutes and have an interview and get a bit of feedback' (HITZ Officer)

Young people talked about how they had been able to try out numerous different job roles through the links HITZ have with various career sectors including the retail industry, the construction trade and the Armed forces. Young people did not believe that they would have been able to gain such varied practical experiences had they taken up or continued with other training courses instead of HITZ.

'A big bonus because of like HITZ yeah is they work with all different companies and charities etcetera so it gives you opportunity to maybe progress into that company where you'll be having work experience etcetera and they like obviously that's good 'cause if you can work in different environments in later life if you get put in a certain situation in a job you'll be able to cope like in a responsible manner' (Young person)

## Theme 3: Social support and relationships

Young people talked consistently about having negative experiences of school and college. They felt that they had received little support to make progress and had a particular issue with feeling like respect between staff and students was lacking. In comparison, the young people felt that HITZ staff treated them more like adults than school or college staff did and HITZ Officers made an effort to make HITZ unauthoritative.

'Here we have more support and they're fully behind us, every meeting they make, and they're very supportive to help us find correct and the right job for us' (Young people)

'We are not seen as authorative figures you know a lot of these people do not respond to that sort of thing like a teacher or the police in that sense of authority but it is more an arm around a shoulder ok let's all do this together' (HITZ Officer)

Since joining HITZ, young people had developed positive relationships with fellow HITZ members and HITZ staff and frequently referred to a strong feeling of belonging to the HITZ group. This provided a good support network for young people, giving them opportunities

to work through issues on a one-to-one basis or in groups in an environment where their views are valued.

'It's a lot more comfortable being here you know you- like I'm saying you can be yourself, no one judges, no one points fingers you can say whatever's going on and like your opinions are always valid we won't all have the same opinions but we all build on opinions or build on ideas together' (Young person)

HITZ Officers tried to capitalise on these positive relationships and team building opportunities to integrate new young people into their programmes.

'We kind of have a buddy system as well. We obviously gauge who we feel are the most responsible and the ones that are excelling the most so when anyone new starts we kind of try and buddy them up with them so they will sit next to them' (HITZ Officers)

#### **Theme 4: Practical Considerations**

While young people and HITZ Officers were overall very positive about the programme, they suggested some areas that could be considered for improvement. First of all, HITZ Officers proposed that more should be done to promote the programme to let people know what they are offering and how to get involved. HITZ Officers were keen to extend their provision to get more young people on board, particularly females as males outnumber females across the HITZ programme. It was further suggested that the link to Premiership Rugby potentially gives people preconceived ideas that the programme is predominantly about rugby when this is not the case. Therefore, it is important that the aims, availability and focus of the programme are communicated more widely.

'I think we need to have a bit more of a visible output so people understand what we do and what we can offer' (HITZ Officer)

Secondly, the provision of resources such as learning materials and laptops for the HITZ clubs was put forward as a potential improvement.

'New laptops, we need new laptops 'cause they're from like nineteen-o-plonk... they're just slow and they don't work' (Young person)

Some of the HITZ Officers raised concerns about the issue-based learning materials that are provided by Premiership Rugby suggesting that there is a need to make them more inclusive and appropriate to the cohorts with which the HITZ Officers are working.

They give us handbooks with issue based sessions but it seems that the issue based sessions in there are generic things that may work with young kids but not hard to reach that we actually work with' (HITZ Officer)

Finally, the nationwide coverage of the HITZ programme was highly valued by the HITZ Officers but they felt that this reach could be better capitalised upon. A number of the HITZ Officers were keen to work with other clubs to encourage more sharing of best practice and to provide young people with opportunities to work with other clubs.

'I think we could try and make the programme better by linking the clubs up...how can we try and link our clubs together where our cohorts can meet up and build relationships; they are all in the same boat' (HITZ Officer)

Additionally, the potential to develop a national HITZ curriculum that could be broadly consistent across all clubs but flexible enough to adapt at a club level as necessary was also put forward as an area for development. Consistency was something that the HITZ Officers felt quite strongly about maintaining across HITZ as many had experienced a lot of change within their programmes (i.e. changes to bursaries and learning providers) that had resulted in them losing HITZ participants. Moreover, it was argued that HITZ Officers would benefit from more support in terms of training to help them to deal with the range of issues that young people present with.

'I think there is a wide range of stuff that we need to be trained in to make ourselves better in what we do but also to help the young people we are dealing with' (HITZ Officer)

## Summary of Focus Groups and Interviews

Although young people accessed HITZ via a number of different routes, there was consistency in their reasons for attendance. Generally, young people had struggled to engage successfully in education, employment or training; they lacked relevant

qualifications, life skills and confidence to progress, and in some cases had ended up involved in crime.

HITZ was viewed as a suitable alternative route into education, employment or training for those who had disengaged from more traditional routes. The programme was suggested to instil confidence and motivation in young people through a combination of classroom based and practical activities designed to address the needs of those young people who had struggled with the strict structure and routines of previous school and college courses. The HITZ environment was deemed to be more supportive than the traditional school or college setting, making young people feel valued and supporting them to develop positive relationships with their peers as well as with those in positions of authority, which they had struggled with previously.

The work experience opportunities afforded to young people through HITZ were highly valued and perceived to be unique to the HITZ programme. HITZ was said to offer young people a wide range of work experience opportunities and work-relevant skills (e.g. CV building; interview skills) that they had not had opportunities to develop elsewhere. The young people involved in the focus groups talked enthusiastically about the work experiences they had gained through HITZ and had aspirations to move onto develop careers in a range of sectors following HITZ.

While young people and HITZ Officers mainly talked favourably about the HITZ programme, they suggested that there were areas that could be improved in terms of extending the provision; adapting and updating resources; and promoting a national HITZ network that does more to work collaboratively across the country.

## **Educational Materials**

Each HITZ programme was asked to provide samples of learning materials they use during teaching sessions with young people. Samples were received from Leicester Tigers and Sale Sharks. A sample of materials from the HITZ Health Programme, delivered by all clubs, was also provided. Table 1 provides a summary of the teaching and learning materials received for evaluation.

Table 1: Summary of teaching and learning materials evaluated

Level	Title	Awarding Body	Club	Learning Materials	Teaching Materials
1	Strength and Conditioning	AIM	Leicester Tigers	Workbook	Two lesson plans
1	Taking Part in Sport	AIM	Leicester Tigers	Workbook	
1	Health and Nutrition (Prince's trust Get Started Week)	AIM	Leicester Tigers	Workbook	
1	Award in Lifestyle Management	YMCA	Sale Sharks	Workshop	
2	Fitness Testing and Training	ВТЕС	Leicester Tigers	Workbook	Tutor Mark Scheme
2	Skeleton and Muscles	AIM	Leicester Tigers	Workbook	
2	Award in Sports Leadership	Sports Leaders UK	Leicester Tigers	Workbook	Assessor Guidance
3	Sports Development	ВТЕС	Leicester Tigers	Workbook	
Not known	SAL (Acronym not recognised)		Sale Sharks		Lesson Plan looking at performance measurement and fitness – initial testing video
Not known	How the body works – the heart	N/K	Sale Sharks		Lesson Plan looking at performance measurement and fitness – initial testing
Not known- Estimated	HITZ Health Change 4 Life Programme			Workbooks	Tutor Workbooks

2/3			
	Issues based handbook		

## **Findings**

The following section includes a description and analysis of each set of learning materials, conclusions drawn from that, and recommendations for development.

## **Level 1 Strength and Conditioning**

This sample of materials included a student workbook and two sample lesson plans, each for three hour sessions. The award is accredited by AIM at level 1. The workbook is paper based and relies on completion of simple written activities, such as listing the main principles of training and linking them to their correct description/definition (Activity 3.1). However, a significant aspect of this award was the requirement for the student to plan, implement, and record a three-week fitness programme. The two lesson plans were both focussed on carrying out physical activity, including, for example, undertaking reaction time tests and broad jump (sample 1) and sit up tests and Harvard Step test from sample 2. Therefore, whilst the assessment for this award includes a significant written element, the evidence from the document provided and the accompanying lesson plans implied that students spent much of their time engaged in physical learning activities.

## **Level 1 Taking Part in Sport**

The sample of evidence for this unit was formed of a student workbook. Similar to Strength and Conditioning, the assessment requirements meant that students were required to complete a set of prescriptive paper based and written activities such as creating a poster and listing the main physical and emotional benefits of being actively involved in sport. No teacher resources accompanied this work book. It was evident from the assessment criteria, which only used the verbs 'list' and 'identify' (e.g. List the health and safety considerations for chosen sport), that it would be possible to deliver this unit entirely within a classroom setting. However, the document includes a list of potential sources of evidence, some of which were asterisked, an indication that they were being used for this unit. Those listed included Oral question and answer, written description, reflective log/diary, group discussion and practical demonstration. The latter had two asterisks, which seems to imply that there was an emphasis on this approach to learning and assessment during the delivery

of this unit. This was confirmed by the repletion of the activity 'outline activities for suitable warm up sessions for chosen sport and demonstrate these regularly' across three pages of the booklet, attached to different written activities.

## Level 1 Health and Nutrition (Prince's Trust Get Started Week)

The learning outcomes and assessment criteria for this unit relate exclusively to health diet. However, the booklet includes a comprehensive set of paper resources describing the uses and effects of a range of drugs used in sport. These resources are dated 2004 - it may be that more current information is available which might include substances such as legal highs, for example. These resources are supplemented by three others from a different source which cover facts about heroin, ecstasy and cocaine. Some of the language used in this workbook would be very difficult for level 1 students to access. For example, on a fillthe –gaps page: Protein is a type of nutrient that is made up of non- essential and ......... They are a major functional and structural component of all the cells in our bodies .... 1, most students will take some time to grasp the differences between five food groups: concepts and language such as functional and structural component is likely to be difficult to interpret for young people who are likely to have low-level literacy skills. Similarly, the booklet refers early on to vitamin B, mentioning that this is a group of vitamins. Later in the booklet students are required to give a breakdown of the B group – this would be an activity that would probably be more appropriate at level 3, given the complexity of the science involved. This booklet draws on a number of different sources, something which has the potential to provide a range of interesting information. However, one source is American, and refers to imperial measures for liquid, whereas in the rest of the booklet metric measures are used. It would be helpful to edit and standardize this, to avoid confusion.

# **Level 1 Award in Lifestyle Management**

This workbook contains all the assessment materials for the award in Lifestyle management. The content covers a range of topics which might broadly be described as Personal, Social, and Health Education, and is goal focussed. In terms of level, the materials are appropriate to level 1 students (for example, for the Developing Self unit students are asked to list some of your main strengths and abilities). The delivery for this could be wholly classroom based.

It is not possible to discern from the materials the extent to which 'active' learning takes place in this award.

## **Level 2 Fitness Testing and Training**

The documentation for this unit includes a comprehensive student workbook (resource and assessment materials included) and tutor resources. The student handbook makes reference to participating in 'a range of fitness training methods', indicating that students are engaging in the activities they are learning about in a practical context. Tutor resources include example answers and mark schemes for the different outcomes possible for this unit (pass, merit, or distinction). The booklet draws on examples of elite athletes, using them as case studies. The content and presentation is appropriate for level 2 students, but in terms of progression, these learners would benefit from occasionally working on a piece of sustained prose, which will help to develop appropriate skills for level 3 study.

## **Level 2 Skeleton and Muscles**

Evidence submitted for this unit comprised a student work book designed to address the assessment criteria for the unit. The unit is designed to be classroom based, although there is significant potential for learning to take place in a gym or other sports facility where students reflect on how different parts of their muscular-skeletal system feel, what the implications of that is, and how each physical activity is placing particular demands on different muscle groups or parts of the skeleton. It is possible that activities such as this may already form part of the teaching strategy, but that is not possible to discern from the work book alone. The content does draw close links to sport, but might for example, equally well be delivered as part of a programme in health or childcare.

## **Level 3 Sports Development**

The documentation for this unit includes a comprehensive student workbook (resource and assessment materials included). It implies participation in sport on a regular basis, but this is not explicit as activities in the booklet. It is well presented, but has a tendency to adopt short, fill the space activities found in level 1 and level 2 work books. For example, students are asked to 'plot your own progress through the sport development continuum' represented as four small boxes. This is far less appropriate at level 3, which is an A level

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equivalent: it is worth considering what the purpose of this award is. Is it to re-engage young people in education, and/or in sport? If the focus is education, progression should be considered: from level 3 students will normally progress to higher education programmes and need to be adequately equipped to do so.

## Lesson Plan 1: Looking at performance measurement and fitness - initial testing

This lesson required learners to draw up a session plan for a practical coaching session for children aged 0-7. Special arrangements had been made for a Deaf learner. A video clip of students practicing their delivery in a small group was included. The video clip demonstrated that this was a very interactive and student-centred session, in which all members of the group were participating, learning, and engaged.

#### Lesson Plan 2: How the body works - the heart

This session was classroom based. The content around the structure and function of the heart is difficult for many young learners to appreciate. The learning in this session was active, involving a classroom game in which students carried coloured cones indicative of oxygenated/deoxygenated blood in and out of the 'heart'. The game was extended to demonstrated the working of white blood cells. The practical activity was evaluated by the teacher as working 'really well'. The description on the lesson plan indicates that the session was content rich, but learner centred.

## HITZ Issue Based Handbook

This is a comprehensive teacher resource which encompasses healthy relationships; Anger; Self-esteem; sexual health; Alcohol and drugs; Stress; Financial management; and Core Value rugby sessions. The booklet includes a range of resources and lesson plans to support the sessions. The focus is on a workshop based or active approach, which involves students in participating in role play or playing trust games for example. This implies a learner centred approach. The activities designed to address potentially embarrassing or illegal issues (e.g. sexual health; drugs) imply that the workshops take place within a nonjudgemental context, which is critical for engaging the young people. The core value sessions are clearly related to the content of the wider course as well as to sport more specifically.

## **HITZ Health Change 4 Life Programme**

This is a comprehensive programme of ten modules. It adopts a workbook approach, with paper based activities such as 'complete the gaps' or fill in a 'sleep diary' for three nights in a small table. It is accompanied with a larger resource for teachers, which gives detailed information about the content they are delivering. This implies that the programme is designed to be delivered by non-specialists. The documentation is not identified as being at a particular level. However, analysis of the language and concepts used would suggest that it is at approximately level 2, and occasionally level 3. Examples include: 'Regular and varied consumption of at least 400g of fruit and vegetables is linked to lower risk of: heart disease, stroke, some cancers and type 2 diabetes" (Module 7, page 3) or 'macronutrients are most commonly listed on the food packaging but less so micronutrients ... fortified products such as' (Module 6 page 4) This text has a Gunnings Fog Index of 27.20, whereas a level 2 student would be expected to be able to read text with an index score of 11/12. Thus, it could present some difficulties for learners with literacy skills at or below level 2, in terms of both de-coding and comprehension. The materials provided also assume access to a kitchen and cooking facilities – it is possible that for some NEET young people, chaotic lifestyles may include homelessness, intergenerational difficulties and/or financial problems and consequently, this may result in limited or no access to kitchen/cooking facilities. Many NEET young people come from socially, culturally, and educationally impoverished backgrounds. This is likely to mean that they will not have had experience or knowledge of many of the foods identified in the HITZ Health scheme – for example, advice to add "muesli, granola, fruit puree...[to] add texture to natural yoghurt" (Module 10, pp6/7) – Level 1 and some level 2 students may also have difficulty with the word 'texture'.

## **Summary and Analysis**

A range of different resources were provided for analysis. In addition to a range of learning and assessment resources for students, some of the sample included tutor resources. This ranged from guidance on the content for delivery (HITZ Health) to lesson plans and evaluations (Sharks) to Marking schemes (Leicester Tigers). The different Units and Awards

were accredited by a range of Awarding Bodies. There was a wider range of Awarding Bodies at L1 (eg YMCA; AIM). This is reflective of the fact that a significant number of small awarding bodies focus on re-engagement and PSHE programmes targeted at low-attaining and disengaged young people. There were examples of BTEC resources at both L2 & L3 (Leicester Tigers). BTEC is a brand of Pearson, formerly EdExcel, and one of the largest awarding Bodies in the UK. Particularly at level 1, these programmes have been subject to significant criticism (see Wolf, 2011) that they fail to confer any meaningful knowledge on young people, and have little or no exchange value in the education and labour market (Keep, 2009).

## **Level of Learning**

The sample included evidence of programmes from L1-L3, with a majority at L2. Whilst research shows that NEET young people are drawn from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, including, for example, young unemployed graduates (see Simmons and Thompson, 2011) those who disengage from education at a young age and later participate in re-engagement programmes such as HITZ are unlikely to have high levels of attainment in formal education. Therefore, education programmes at level 1 and level 2 are most likely to be appropriate. However, this should be judged on an individual basis, as lack of educational challenge and boredom are shown to be factors in disengagement (Curzon & Tummons, 2013: 259).

# **Participation in Sport**

All example resources had a clear relationship with sport generally and some with rugby specifically. Some of the example resources provide evidence of physical activity or sport as part of the learning process (Lesson Plan One and accompanying video, Sharks; Level 1 Strength and Conditioning) whilst some data implied the involvement of physical activity (Level 1 Taking Part in Sport; Level 2 Fitness Testing and Training; Level 3 Sports Development).

# **Active Learning**

In addition to those resources which had a clear focus on, and participation in, sport, others involved the students in 'Active Learning'. 'Activity is an important element in the process of

learning' (Duckworth, 2014: 111), and has been shown to be a factor in the educational engagement of young people. Lesson Plan 1 (Coaching 0-7 children) provided a very positive example of this, as did Lesson Plan 2 and the Issue Based Handbook, and these offer the potential to act as models of best practice shared across different clubs offering the HITZ programme.

#### Work Books

Across all the samples submitted, a paper based, work-book approach was heavily represented. Whilst this was not unexpected, it reflects an approach which has been subject to significant criticism (REFS) and which has been described as 'busy work' (Atkins, 2009). This term describes an approach which is primarily about occupying young people perceived to be disengaged, or at risk of disengagement, rather than one which confers useful or valuable skills or knowledge. It is difficult to avoid 'busy work', particularly in programmes at the lowest levels, since all Awarding Bodies structure vocational qualifications, particularly at the lowest levels, around a broad outcomes based structure which generally requires the presentation of written evidence to achieve a credential. This lends itself to the collection of written 'evidence', often through the completion of structured worksheets or workbooks designed to meet the assessment criteria. There are a number of problems with this approach:

- It does not communicate high expectations. Evidence shows student attainment rises in response to high expectations from the teacher (Ecclestone, 2002; Kelly, 2009)
- It requires periods of time focussed on 'writing', an activity which rarely motivates disengaged young people: boredom is a significant factor in disengagement from learning (Curzon and Tummons, 2013)
- Evidence demonstrates that a range of different teaching and learning methods will have the best outcomes in terms of motivation and engagement (Curzon & Tummons, 2013: 259)
- Evidence demonstrates that active, rather than passive engagement with learning activities is more likely to engage and motivate young people (Duckworth, 2014)

 Working on structured tasks in a book is a solitary activity. Evidence indicates that learning is a social practice in which individuals work together to construct knowledge (e.g. Ormrod, 2006; Avis et. Al (2010).

## **Educational and Vocational Outcomes**

HITZ clubs were asked to supply data on five young people who had enrolled on their programme. Leicester, Bath, Sale, Saints and Exeter all provided data. There were some differences in representation, and this is reflected in the subsequent narratives, which describe the transitions of 22 young people across the five clubs.

## Findings

The young people forming this sample had a variety of credentials, ranging from Entry Level 3 to Level 3 and encompassing GCSE, BTEC, functional skills, and other vocational awards. For the purpose of clarification, the Qualifications and Credit Framework equates Entry level 3 to Key stage 3 (age 11-14). Level 1 equates to GCSE grades D-G (or 'fails') and Level 2 equates to grades A\*-C at GCSE. This significant benchmark has been defined by successive governments as a minimum for employability (e.g. Anderson & Peart, 2016) and five GCSEs at these grades is the expected minimum level of attainment post-16. By this definition, only two of the 22 young people in this sample attained that, and most had levels of attainment significantly below that, which has significant implications for their successful transitions from school to work.

Detailed data were made available on five HITZ graduates from Bath. These young people had been referred from a variety of sources, but mainly from youth services: two from youth clubs and two from Youth Connect, an organisation providing a range of services for young people to make their transitions to work or training. All had low levels of attainment on entry, ranging from Entry Level 3 to Level ½. None had achieved Level 2 in both English and Maths. All had positive outcomes in terms of credentials achieved on the programme, with all achieving Maths and English at level ½. All had completed work experience successfully and three had progressed onto apprenticeships. Pseudonyms have been used in order to uphold young peoples' anonymity. One young person Adam, had progressed to employment with Deliveroo; and Carl who was still on the programme at the time of data

JACK STARTED HITZ WITH
QUALIFICATIONS BELOW THE
MINIMUM FOR EMPLOYABILITY.
THROUGH HITZ, JACK GAINED
VARIOUS LEVEL 1 QUALIFICATIONS &
PROGRESSED TO AN APPRENTICESHIP
IN SPORTS COACHING AT BATH
RUGBY FOUNDATION.

collection, but hoping to move on to an apprenticeship in personal training. Given the very low starting point of most of the young people in this sample, the employment and training outcomes may be regarded as very positive. Jack, from the Bath sample, is a good example of such progression. Referred by Youth Connect, Jack had low school attainment, reflected in English and Maths credentials on entry to the programme. At entry point, Jack held Entry Level 3 credentials in English and

Maths. Awards at this level are normally reserved from students with special educational needs, and are two levels below the GCSE grade C 'Pass' level (level 2). Level 2 itself has been described as 'the minimum for employability' (Anderson & Peart, 2016) and 'lowskilled' (Atkins, 2013). On exiting the programme Jack attained Level 1 credentials in Maths and English, and had also gained a basic First Aid at Work qualification, a 'Parliamentary Award' and a BTEC Level 1 Sport and Active Leisure Diploma. Jack had also successfully completed work experience at Bath Rugby Foundation; RFU Rugby Ready and at Scrum Factory. Six months after completing HITZ Jack successfully progressed to an apprenticeship in Sports Coaching at Bath Rugby Foundation. Michael, also from Bath, entered the HITZ programme following referral from a parent with an existing Level 2 maths credential. Thus, in Michael's case, the focus was less on academic credentials, and more on work experience. None-the-less, Michael gained a level 1 English and First Aid at Work qualification whilst on programme. For Michael, the greatest emphasis was on work experience, which was successfully completed with Running High. Michael also undertook unspecified 'paid work'. Michael progressed to 'an apprenticeship', although the nature/level of this was not specified. Alongside this Michael also gained paid work with Marque company for 'match day set up', and had been asked to return to work for Running High next year as crew on the Bath half-marathon.

# DURING HIS TIME WITH HITZ, JAY PROGRESSED FROM LEVEL 1 TO LEVEL 2 AND WAS IN THE PROCESS OF APPLYING TO JOIN THE RAF

Similar success stories were evident in the data supplied by other clubs. For example, Saints reported on four HITZ students; all male. All were still on programme at the time of data collection so the extent to which

their outcomes were more or less successful was more difficult to determine compared to the Bath sample. However, the HITZ officer had made qualitative comments about each young man's development. Sam, for example, had 'worked on the Kings Heath project and gained lots of confidence and was working hard to keep on track'. Dan had also 'worked on the Kings Heath project and gained lots of confidence'. Alex, whose work experience involved working on Saints car-parking for all events, was reported to have 'become more independent'. Most notable, however, was Jay, who had been on the programme for two years and was deemed to be 'working very hard'. He had successfully progressed from Level 1 to Level 2 during that time, and was in the process of applying to join the RAF. If successful, this would represent a significant achievement for a young man with such a low level of attainment post-16. Similarly, Richard from Exeter joined the HITZ programme with Level 1 credentials in English and Maths. Whilst on the programme he attained Level 2 English and Maths, in addition to a BTEC Sport and Active Leisure Diploma and a BTEC Work skills qualification (both at level 2). He had undertaken work experience with Chiefs maintenance whilst on the programme. After completing HITZ Richard joined the army, where he was undergoing basic training at the time of data collection (May, 2017). HITZ continues to follow him up weekly. Dean and Jill, who were also graduates of the Exeter programme, both progressed into employment. Jill had joined the programme with no post-16 qualifications, but left with Level 1 functional skills, a Level 1 BTEC Sport and Active Leisure Diploma and a Level 1 BTEC Work skills qualification. She gained employment in a restaurant two weeks after completing the programme. Similarly, Dean gained employment at KFC. This however, was temporary, as, like Richard, he had applied to join the army, and at the time of data collection was waiting to start his basic training. The fourth member of the Exeter sample was David. Referred by Careers South West, he had joined the Exeter

**JUNE 2017** LIZ ATKINS

FOLLOWING HIS
PARTICIPATION IN HITZ,
DAVID WENT ON TO WORK
FOR SOMERSET COUNCIL

HITZ programme with a grade C GCSE in maths, and a level 1 English. He was successful in upgrading his English to Level 2 whilst on the programme, and also attained a Level 2 BTEC Sport and Active Leisure Diploma, in addition to a BTEC Work skills award. Details of David's work experience

were not made available, but since completing the programme he had progressed to unspecified employment with Somerset Council.

Like Exeter, Leicester reported on four young people. All had completed a BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Sport and Active Leisure whilst on the programme. This did not, superficially, seem to represent a progression for all students. Ryan, for example, was reported to have a Level 3 BTEC in Uniformed Services on entry, two levels higher than the Level 1. However, no mention was made of other life circumstances which could have made this programme a positive progression. Similarly, Nick was reported to have entered the programme with a BTEC Diploma in creative media (level unspecified) and GCSEs in English and Maths (grades unspecified, but Pass – i.e. grade C or above – was implied). Progression was reported only for one student, Shaun, who had moved on to unspecified 'employment'. Progression was reported by Sale, who provided data on five young people, Nicole, Demi, Millie, Brook, and Alfie. Entry credentials were not available, but all five were reported to have successfully completed 120 hours work experience and a range of programmes and credentials which included 'L1 Lifestyle Management Improvement in Functional Skills, Improvement in Employability Skills, participation in multi sports activities'. The five young people were reported to have successfully progressed to an Apprenticeship, a Further Education programme, employment, employment, and an apprenticeship respectively, all reflecting positive outcomes at the time of follow up.

## **Analysis**

The young people on the HITZ programme are undertaking a course of study which has broad similarities to coalition government recommendations made in 2012 for the education of young people with special educational needs and disabilities, which was itself a

re-working of the earlier Foundation Learning programme, with a more substantial work experience element. Unlike HITZ, it did not include an enrichment component. The 'Supported Internship' programme required the offer to include 'realistic work experience', the successful completion of a vocational qualification of 'substantial size' and maths and English GCSE (DfE 2012:54). The young people on the HITZ programme are significantly marginalised in terms of, for example, being NEET, having very low levels of attainment or experiencing other characteristics associated with marginalisation such as social class. The degree of disadvantage experienced by these young people has significant implications for their life and educational chances. National data show that in 2014/5 (most recent data):

Overall, 84% of disadvantaged students were in sustained education or employment compared to 89% of others... 65% of disadvantaged students who completed key stage 5 study continued in sustained education, the same as for other students. However, they were less likely to be in higher education (44% compared to 49% of others) or sustained employment.

(Department of Education, 2016)

Pre-HITZ attainment levels for the young people who formed part of this sample were mainly at level 1, but ranging from Entry 3 to L3. Post-HITZ attainment stood at L1/2 which for some of these young people will represent a significant academic achievement. Follow up data on this small sample seems to indicate a range of positive outcomes in terms of employment and further education. A high proportion from this sample moved into employment rather than Further Education (8/22 into employment, and 4/22 into Apprenticeships). A further four were applying for either work or apprenticeships, and four were still on their programme. Only two had progressed to FE, possibly reflecting the fact that previous experience of education of the majority of young people who engage in low level programmes has often been negative (e.g. Coffield et al 2007:724). Over time, these negative educational experiences have been found to be a factor in the strong orientation to work, rather than education, found in vocational students (e.g. see Willis, 1977; Avis, 1983; Stafford, 1991; Hogberg, 2011; Niemi and Posval, 2013). Despite this strong

orientation to work, low level vocational programmes have consistently been found to have poor returns in the labour market, particularly at level 1 where it has been suggested that returns may even be negative (Keep, 2004; 2005). This would seem to indicate that despite research showing that Level 1 credentials have minimal, and sometimes negative, returns in the labour market (Keep and James, 2010) the HITZ programme is successfully developing a range of skills in young people which are attractive to employers. What is also significant is that the transitions to employment or further education made by the HITZ students implied that the HITZ programme has broadened their 'horizons for action' (Hodkinson et al 1996) and provided a stepping-stone to a career path. Based on the small sample of Bath and Exeter, where more detailed progression data (for 9 students) was available, it was apparent that at least five were progressing to occupations or training which presented real opportunities (apprenticeships and the armed forces). One remained on programme, and it was difficult to judge the potential for two students (one working in a restaurant, and the second for a local council). Only one had a job which was marked by precariarity, and this was a young man working for Deliveroo. Allen and Ainley (2014) have noted the rise of the 'pear-shaped' labour market, in which jobs are precarious and insecure. Evidence mentioned above notes that young people on low-level vocational programmes are broadly expected to make transitions into what Keep and James (2010) have described as 'rotten jobs', and to experience significant 'churn' in and out of different forms of engagement (REF). Given that the HITZ programme outcomes run counter to that research, this begs the question what is different about the HITZ programme? The answer to this appears to be the emphasis on 'enrichment' which provides the young people with access to a broad range of activities. This emphasis on enrichment is illustrated in an example timetable for the HITZ programme submitted by Exeter (see Table 2).

Table 2: Example HITZ timetable

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Lunch	Period 4	Period	Period 6
9:00-10:00	10:00-	11:00-	12:00-	13:00-	5	
	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00		
Enrichment	FS	BTEC		BTEC	BTEC	Enrichment
	English	HITZ		HITZ	HITZ	
		Tutor		Tutor	Tutor	
	9:00-10:00	9:00-10:00 10:00- 11:00	9:00-10:00	9:00-10:00	9:00-10:00	9:00-10:00

		HITZ Tutor					
Tuesday	Enrichment	FS Maths HITZ Tutor	BTEC HITZ Tutor		BTEC HITZ Tutor	BTEC HITZ Tutor	Enrichment
Wednesday	Enrichment	FS English HITZ Tutor	BTEC HITZ Tutor		BTEC HITZ Tutor	BTEC HITZ Tutor	Enrichment
Thursday	Enrichment	FS Maths HITZ Tutor	BTEC HITZ Tutor		BTEC HITZ Tutor	BTEC HITZ Tutor	Enrichment
Friday	PLANNING, PREPARATION, ASSESSMENT AND RECRUITMENT DAY						

The timetable demonstrates that 8 hours of a 24 hour taught week – one third of the total – is given over to enrichment. The enrichment offered by the HITZ programme (see HITZ marketing booklet) includes a variety of activities. Some of these are work-related (for example, volunteering on match days, or in the local community) whilst others (for example, guest speakers, sports participation and adventure activity courses) contribute to the development of cultural and social capital, as well as broader employability skills, such as team working. Research indicates that the enrichment and work experience are likely to be equally significant in the success of the programme. Negative school experiences have, over time, been found to be a factor in the strong orientation to work, rather than education, found in working-class students (e.g. see Willis, 1977; Avis, 1983; Stafford, 1991; Hogberg, 2011; Niemi and Posval, 2013). Another body of research (e.g. see McDonald and Marsh, 2005; Reddy, 2014) confirms that these young people aspire to have 'secure' jobs: thus, the work experience component, with the strong possibility of future employment, would be significant to the young people. Concurrent with their work aspirations, other research (Ball

et al, 2000; Atkins, 2009) implies that leisure identities are a key aspect of young peoples' identity formation as they navigate their school to work transitions. The same research has noted a preoccupation with celebrities amongst young people. This would seem to suggest that some enrichment activities – particularly where these are offered by clubs which are perceived to have celebrity status by the young people – might be regarded as 'leisure'. NEET and low-attaining young people consistently reject activities such as the 'writing' associated with schooling experiences they have rejected. Thus, the enrichment activities offered by HITZ are more likely to be successful in re-engaging them with education, employment or training, as well as promoting the acquisition of greater social and cultural capital.

This is significant. Disadvantaged students, such as those who are NEET, have low attainment or are in other ways vulnerable, are largely from low socio-economic backgrounds and have little access to valorised capitals. This can be exacerbated, rather than helped, by the pedagogic approach traditionally used with these young people, which has been criticised for relying heavily on approaches and interventions such as building self-esteem (e.g. see Ecclestone 2004; 2007; Ecclestone and Hayes 2009; Atkins, 2010) and engaging in 'busy work' rather than focussing on generating more cultural capital. Further, the work experience component has, for many, led into employment or training (such as apprenticeships, or the armed forces) which offers meaningful career opportunities, consistent with the recommendations of Wolf, 2011, and the aspirations of the 2016 Skills White Paper and the 2012 SEND paper.

The HITZ programmes, and the successes identified above, have significant policy implications. Such a programme is difficult for FE colleges to offer, despite current policy initiatives, given the funding constraints they have operated under since 2008: enrichment is no longer a standard part of FE programmes as it has been in the past, although one college (Guernsey), with support from local businesses, is currently developing such a curriculum based on the 2009 study mentioned above. The support from local businesses relates to enrichment as well as work experience: for most institutions, funding streams are currently only available for the main qualification and English and Maths, rather than for the enrichment which is a key aspect of the HITZ programme.

The work experience component too is significant. Few colleges are able to offer work experience for level 1 students. Government research commissioned before the 2010 election reported ongoing difficulties in engaging employers with Foundation Learning Programmes (NFER, 2010:v), and the DfE recognised in its own SEND paper in 2012 that for young people with statements of special educational need 'high quality' employment could be aspirational rather than a reality, depending on the 'business needs' of the employer who had provided work experience (DfE 2012:59). The HITZ programme is significant for its success in being able to provide 'high quality' work experience for vulnerable young people who can sometimes be unprepared for the discipline of the workplace.

For those who have not previously accessed the labour market, this is potentially very valuable in developing the necessary skills of self-discipline needed to make a successful transition. However, research (Siraj et al, 2014) indicates that most young people who become NEET, and those who are low-attaining, do engage with the labour market (and indeed, are keen to gain 'good' jobs), albeit in low pay low skill work which is often short term and insecure. The progression data supplied by the clubs implies that a significant proportion of HITZ graduates are progressing to work or training which offers greater security.

## In summary

- The BTEC programmes undertaken by the young people on the HITZ programmes are widely offered nationally in further education
- The HITZ programme offers these BTEC qualifications at levels 1 and 2, generally regarded as 'low level'
- Research indicates that, as stand-alone qualifications, these have little exchange
  value in the labour market. However, there is currently little else available to offer as
  an alternative to young people working at this level
- Research indicates that increasing numbers of young people are experiencing school to work transitions marked by precariarity and short term, insecure work
- The young people graduating from the HITZ programme have positive outcomes that appear to run counter to this earlier research

**Commented [PLG(1]:** Needs to be checked with Liz to clarify that this is worded accurately

- The difference between HITZ and more traditional offerings of low-level vocational programmes may be seen in the extensive work-experience component and the extensive enrichment component
- This implies that these aspects of the HITZ programme are most significant in supporting successful transitions to work or further education
- This should be noted by policy-makers in terms of current funding constraints on wider FE provision. Consideration should be given as to how this model might be applied in the general FE context
- Further research, following up some of the HITZ graduates at up to five years' postprogramme, would provide more significant evidence about the efficacy of the programme

# **Self-Perception**

Young people from all HITZ clubs were invited to complete an amended version of the Self-Perception Profile for Learning Disabled Students (Renick & Harter, 2012) around September 2016 when their HITZ programme began (Time 1) then again approximately 3 months into the programme (Time 2). The questionnaire was amended to only measure the factors that were of interest to the evaluation: Global Self Worth; Social Competence; Reading Competence; Athletic Competence; Writing Competence; Behavioural Conduct; Maths Competence; Spelling Competence; and Physical Appearance. The scale measuring general intellectual ability was excluded to ensure that young people were not over burdened with irrelevant questionnaire items. Some individual questionnaire items were also reworded slightly to ensure that they used English terminology that would be familiar to the young people (e.g. the term 'Math' was changed to 'Maths'). Table 3 shows the number of questionnaires that were returned from each club at Time 1 and Time 2.

Table 3: Number of Self-Perception Questionnaires completed and returned by each club

Club		Time 1	Time 2		
Saracens	6	(6 males; 0 females)	1	(1 male; 0 females)	
Exeter	11	(7 males; 4 females)	8	(6 males; 2 females)	

Wasps	10	(9 males; 1 female)	7	(6 males; 1 female)		
Partington (Sale)	7	(6 males; 1 female)	0			
London Irish	6	(5 males; 1 female)	4	(4 males; 0 females)		
Worcester	13	(11 males; 2 females)	0			
Newcastle	15	(12 males; 3 females)	8	(7 males; 1 female)		
Leicester	7	(6 males; 1 female)	0			
Salford (Sale)	13	(11 males; 2 females)	0			
Saints	8	(8 males; 0 females)	5	(5 males; 0 female)		
Bath	12	(12 males; 0 females)	9	(9 males; 0 females)		
Gloucester	0	No one on programme at time of data collection				
Harlequins	0	No one on programme at time of data collection				
Total	108	(93 males; 15 females)	42	(38 males; 4 females)		

# Findings

As Table 3 shows, a total of 42 young people (38 males and 4 females) aged between 15 and 19 years (Mean=17 years) completed and returned questionnaires at Time 1 and Time 2. Analyses of these data showed that young people reported a significant increase in Global Self Worth (F(1,41)=4.15; p=.048); Social Competence (F(1,41)=11.69; p=.001) and Athletic Competence (F(1,41)=7.42; p=.009) across time. Significant differences between scores at Time 1 and Time 2 are illustrated in Figure 1. Data are representative of responses from young people across all clubs.

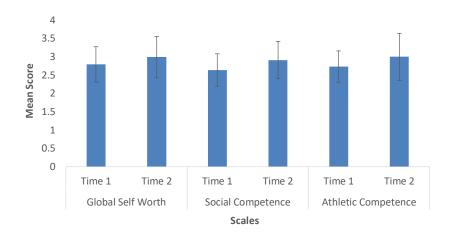


Figure 1: Changes in self-perception across time

Behavioural Conduct data showed a trend towards improvement between Time 1 (Mean=2.68) and Time 2 (2.86) but analysis fell slightly short of a significant effect (F(1,41)=3.85; p=.056).

No significant differences were found between Time 1 and Time 2 for Reading, Writing, Maths and Spelling Competence and Physical Appearance (p>.05).

## **Work Readiness**

Young people from all clubs were invited to complete the Attitudes Towards Employment scale (Johnson, Messe & Crano, 1984) at the same time as they completed the Self Perception scale to gage how ready they felt for work at the start of the HITZ programme and again approximately 3 months later.

## **Findings**

Questionnaires were completed and returned at Time 1 and Time 2 by 42 young people (38 males and 4 females) aged between 15 and 24 years (Mean=17 years) 7 HITZ clubs (see Table 3 for attrition and return rate per club).

Analysis of Time 1 and Time 2 data showed that there was no significant difference in young peoples' work readiness across time (p>.05).

# Summary

Evaluation of HITZ revealed that the programme is successful in recruiting young people who have become disengaged from education, employment or training. They are often struggling to progress whilst encountering a range of issues including mental health problems, domestic upheaval and criminality. HITZ works flexibly with young people to address a range of needs. The combination of one-to-one support and group discussions was believed to be particularly successful in helping young people to address and overcome personal challenges. In addition, young people responded positively to the practical, hands-on elements of the programme, having previously struggled with the rigid delivery of classroom based sessions in schools and colleges.

Young people on the HITZ programme gain low level qualifications that are known to typically lead to insecure, low level employment. However, young people generally have positive employment outcomes when exiting HITZ, which is likely to be as result of the rich, work experience and enrichment activities that young people are involved in during the HITZ programme. The strong work experience and enrichment elements of the HITZ programme should therefore be maintained and promoted.

Through qualitative focus groups, young people identified improvements in their selfconfidence, social skills and achievements in physical activity. These suggestions were further supported by quantitative data showing that young peoples' self-worth, social competence and athletic competence did indeed improve significantly over time.

The substantial sports participation and coaching elements of the HITZ programme were believed to contribute to improvements in young peoples' self-perceptions as well as their physical fitness, suggesting that the inclusion of sports and coaching are further elements of HITZ that should be preserved and promoted.

Longer term follow-up is needed to ensure the sustainable efficacy of the programme. For example, do young people manage to hold down jobs; progress in their career aspirations?

Overall the programme appears effective at engaging a 'hard to reach population'. Further research could investigate the Social Return on Investment in terms of health, education, employability and community issues (e.g. potential reduction in crime).

## Recommendations

- Review resources, especially where they are combined from a range of sources, to
  ensure consistency of level and information, and to ensure materials are suitable to
  address the needs of HITZ cohorts
- Review resources to ensure that language and concepts used are appropriate for the
  attainment level of the young people participating. Both Gunning's Fog Index
  (<a href="http://gunning-fog-index.com/index.html">http://gunning-fog-index.com/index.html</a>) and the Flesch-Kincaid Reading score
  (<a href="http://www.readabilityformulas.com/flesch-grade-level-readability-formula.php">http://www.readabilityformulas.com/flesch-grade-level-readability-formula.php</a>)
  are quick and easy to use.
- 3. Begin to move away from a work-book based approach to one which involves more active learning and is less structured. This will facilitate students to develop ideas and undertake research more independently. The *Issue Based Handbook* provides a good model which could be developed in other areas.
- 4. Where work books are considered essential, include group, paired activities, and research activities as part of the teaching strategy, so the work-book becomes a focus of a social and shared development of knowledge.
- 5. Consider alternative methods of assessment to reduce reliance on workbooks. These could include observation of engagement in an activity, or visual evidence such as photographs or film, as well as statements written by reliable others who have observed a young person in an activity and are qualified to make a judgement.
- Consider the progression young people are likely to make from the HITZ programme, and ensure that there are clear pathways they can pursue into further/higher education or the labour market.
- Identify effective ways of following up on longer term progression of HITZ participants beyond the programme
- 8. Work with HITZ Officers to identify gaps in resources and HITZ Officer training at a club level
- Consider implementation of a national HITZ network that promotes cross-club collaboration throughout the country

10. Further researchneeds to be conducted to examine the social return of the HITZ programme in terms of health, education, employability and community issues (e.g. potential reduction in crime).



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