



Track Academy Final Report

To: **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**
Grant: **3 Year Core Costs Grant ref. 15-0715**
Nov 2017-Nov 2018

Introduction

Track Academy has been delivering activities at Willesden Sports Centre since 2007 and was established as a community interest company in 2010. It was established by Commonwealth Games medalist Connie Henry and today provides a sport for social change model driven by athletics, and focused on delivering high quality programmes for disadvantaged children and young people, to achieve the following outcomes:

- Improved education outcomes
- Increased employability skills
- Stronger personal skills including confidence and self esteem
- Enhanced community cohesion
- Improved health and wellbeing through participation in sport

The organisation is run by a team of staff and coaches the majority of whom are employed from the local area. Many of Track Academy's coaches are former beneficiaries of the programme and Track Academy is actively engaged in providing access to training and qualifications for young people who wish to take up a career as a coach or PE teacher.

Track Academy is overseen by an active and independent board of four trustees reflecting key skills such as coaching, fundraising, education and sports management, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the board members are from the local area.

About the area in which Track Academy works

Track Academy is based in Brent, North West London, within the heart of several of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the country (IMD). Over 80% of Track Academy's beneficiaries are from BAME communities, the majority with Black Caribbean, Black African and Black British heritage and over 50% of beneficiaries are girls and young women.

Brent is the second most **diverse** borough in London, with 82% of its population coming from BAME communities (Census 2011). The school population in Brent is 86% BAME and 55% of the population was born outside the UK. Brent has grown rapidly in recent years and has a larger population now than since records began. It is a very young borough, with 32,889 young people. The under 4 population increased by 37% between 2001 and 2011 and 20% of the population is under the age of 15, compared to 13% across London. 149 languages are spoken in Brent's schools and the national census showed that English was the main language in 57% of Brent households. This was the 2nd lowest rate for any borough in England and Wales. 21% of households have no adults or children speaking English. This diversity and youth brings huge benefits to the area and it is an exciting place to live and work. But it also brings challenges as social services are insufficient to meet local needs. Systemic racism and prejudice affect local families and create barriers for children to fulfil their potential.

Brent has high levels of **social and economic deprivation** and the borough is ranked amongst the top 15 per cent most deprived areas in the country. The median household **income** in Brent is one of the lowest in London at £31,601. Families living in deprived areas are characterised by higher levels of long-term



unemployment, low average incomes and a reliance on benefits and social housing. The ethnic pay gap in London provides evidence of inequality in levels of income and earnings according to ethnicity. White people earn, on average £4 per hour more than their BAME counterparts. The gap is greater amongst full-time employees than part-time workers. BAME groups have a higher rate of JSA claimants than those belonging to White groups. Around 1 in 20 of the working-age BAME population currently claim Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA). The 'gap' currently stands at about 20 claimants per 1,000 working-age population. This has increased throughout the current economic crisis and national austerity policies from around 15 claimants per 1,000 at the start of 2010. Unemployment disproportionately affects the BAME population, with the current rate more than 2% higher for these groups than the London average. There are significant variations in the level of unemployment by ethnicity. Unemployment rate for Black Africa, Black Caribbean ethnic groups stands at 18% and 16% respectively compared to 9% for all groups and 6% for white groups.

Over a third of **children** in Brent currently live in a low-income household and a fifth in a single-adult household. The proportion of our young people living in acute deprivation is rising. There is severe overcrowding in many households. BME populations are more likely to live in social rented accommodation than the White: British group. There are large variations within different BME groups – almost half (47.6%) of Black/Black British people live in social rented housing compared to over half of Asian/ Asian British people living in owner occupied housing (BME populations in London report, 2013).

There is a growing gap in **educational achievement** between children from deprived backgrounds and the rising borough average, in particular affecting Black Caribbean and Somali children.

Health inequalities are also greater in Brent, with significantly high levels of child obesity, particularly affecting children living in Harlesden and Willesden and children of black Caribbean and Black African backgrounds. Physical activity rates amongst all ages are lower than the national average, and the gap between boys and girls is around 20% fewer girls and young women taking part in sport after the age of 14. 24% of young people are obese compared to 19% nationally (2015/16) and 8% have diabetes compared to 6% nationally.

External context

Summarise any major changes which have affected your progress towards your outcomes.

Since this grant began, there have been a number of external changes that have affected the organisation, some in a positive way and some that have created more of a challenge. None have hindered Track Academy's ability to achieve its outcomes. These factors have included:

The World Athletics Championships, held in London in August 2017: This event provided a wonderful opportunity for Track Academy to engage in a world-class international athletics event in our home town. It provided an opportunity to galvanise the local community, organize associated events such as the highly successful Track Academy Outdoor Invitational held in Willesden in August 2017 and engaging many of the British athletes as well as local young people and their families. The Championships' profile also enabled Track Academy to talk to new donors and raise the profile of Track Academy nationally as well as in the local press.

Government policy on migration- the 'hostile environment' and its impact on Caribbean-heritage families: Track Academy has worked with families and young people who are affected by this policy, including young people who are unable to access housing and face risk of homelessness once they reach age 16 because they don't have documents in place. In an area where family breakdown is a situation that many young people face, this is a crisis for our young people. Track Academy has been able to help by providing advocacy and support with



local agencies, help to complete documents and support to rebuild family relationships so that the most vulnerable young people have a safety net within the community.

Government policy of austerity has created greater poverty in Brent: poverty rates amongst local families are getting worse and more and more of the children we work with come from very difficult home situations. We are working to combat this through our holiday programmes, attempting to cover some of the needs of young people during times they are not at school. We are working to create long term improved circumstances for our members through helping them into employment, gaining skills and life skills and opportunities that will help them to break the cycle of poverty for their own

Internal context

Are there any major issues which have affected your progress towards your outcomes?

Since 2015, when Track Academy gained status as a registered charity, the organisation has gone through a focused process of internal learning and strengthening of systems, processes and impact to build sustainability and resilience for the long term. This has been especially helped through the Esmee Fairbairn grant as it has provided essential multi-year core funding and relieved the pressure on the senior management team to focus solely on fundraising. The management team has focused on key functions within the organisation as well as strengthening of programmes and activities towards the achievement of key outcomes. A fundraising and monitoring and evaluation consultant has been brought on board to strengthen these areas of work, with support from a new board member with fundraising expertise.

Organisational functions have been strengthened including policies and processes for child safeguarding, health and safety, equal opportunities, finance management, output and outcomes monitoring and donor relations and reporting. Policies have been written into the newly designed Handbook, which is given to all new members, families and is openly available on the Track Academy website.

Track Academy has undergone a branding review and in 2016, launched its new image and website.

Track Academy is currently undertaking a review of its HR functions through support from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation's Grants Plus programme.

Beneficiaries of Track Academy

Over the last 3 years of the grant, Track Academy has worked with an aggregate 1013 young people. Growth in membership has risen steadily each year from, 283 in 2016 to 388 in 2018 (Figure 1). 52% of members are female and 48% male. 80% of members are from a BAME background, which reflects the ethnic mix of Brent as a whole.

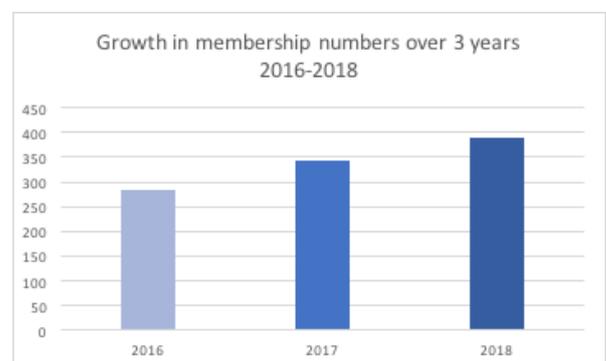
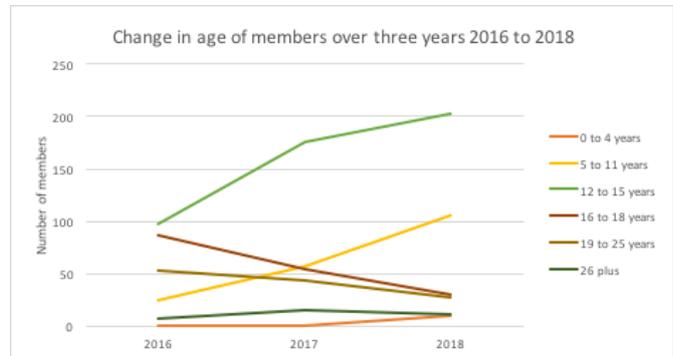


Figure 1 Membership numbers 2016, 2017 and 2018



The age range of members has changed significantly, due to an increased focus on engaging younger children through partnerships local primary schools, a new toddler and parent programme, and emphasis on supporting parents older members of the community to come to the track and take part in activities both with their children/ grandchildren and for their own wellbeing (Figure 2).



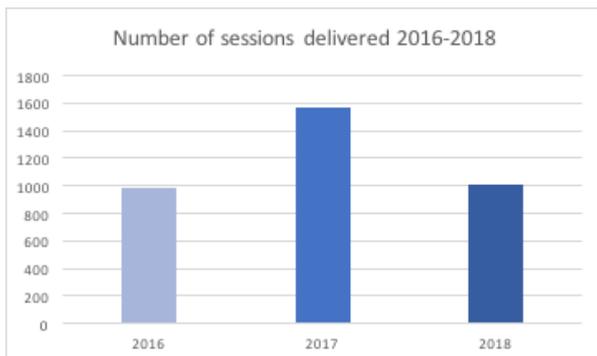
with
and

Our monitoring data also shows a drop off in the number of young people aged 16-19 attending.

Figure 2: Change in age of members 2016-2018

This

is something that Track Academy is determined to reverse, although seems from conversation with other organisations working in the sport for social mobility sector that this is a common pattern across the country. Track Academy is working with current members, the Athlete Forum and coaches, parents and teachers, to identify why this is the case and to redesign programmes specifically to appeal to needs and preferences of this age group.



Track Academy data also shows that the majority of members attend Track Academy for 5 years or more and 58% of 8-11 year olds and 86% of 12-18 year olds say they intend to attend Track Academy throughout their education. This provides a huge opportunity for Track Academy to enable its members to create real change in their lives and it is this long-term approach that is credited for the successful achievement of significant outcomes as detailed below.

Figure 3 number of sessions delivered 2016-2018

Activities and sessions delivered over the last 3 years

In total over the three years there have been 3563 sessions delivered, amounting to 4853 hours of delivery. The average hours of contact per beneficiary over this time period was 44 hours.

The majority of activities focused on mentoring and life skills imparted through athletics sessions, micro-mentoring and group mentoring. 40% of activities at Track Academy are focused on mentoring and 40% on delivery of life skills through athletics and other sports. 14% of activities are focused on building employability skills, volunteering and leadership opportunities and 5% on supporting young people through their school education and into university.

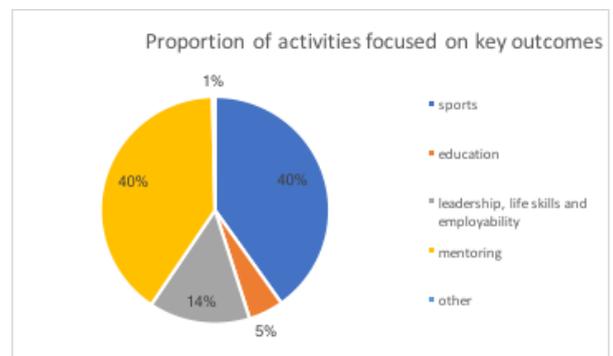


Figure 4 Activities by theme 2016-2018

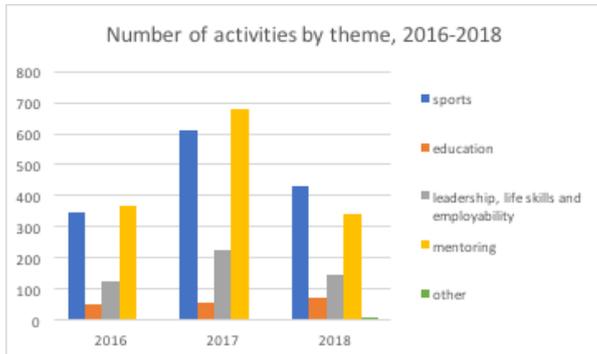


Figure 5 Number of activities by theme in 2016, 2017 and 2018

A change in the way in which mentoring was recorded in 2017 resulted in very high number of activities being recorded in that year. The World Athletics Championships being held in London also contributed to an increase in the number of athletics and other sports sessions being delivered. 2018 shows growth in delivery of sessions compared to 2016 and in this year there has been an extra focus on ensuring the education sessions are high quality and consistently delivered every week after some staff shortages in 2017 which have now been resolved.

Progress towards achieving outcomes

Outcome 1: Young people demonstrate personal and social development progress

- **Indicator 1: 70% of members say that attending Track Academy sessions has made them feel more confident.**

In order to build personal and social skills such as confidence, self-esteem, communication skills, relationships and appropriate interactions with peers, juniors and adults, timekeeping Track Academy engages all participants in athletics training combined with micro-mentoring. Micro-mentoring interventions take place with every participant throughout the year and Track Academy has delivered over 343 recorded micro-mentoring interventions in the last twelve months, benefiting around 300 participants. Micro mentoring takes place at every Track Academy session and all athletics coaches are trained as mentors. They deliver over 4500 micro mentoring moments benefiting over 300 members every year. Recording of these moments is a challenge and something that Track Academy has been working to find solutions to over the last 24 months. These sessions are now being recorded on VIEWS and calculated as around 80% of participants benefiting.

- **Indicator 2: 25% of teachers in partner schools say that children who attend Track Academy have improved communication skills**

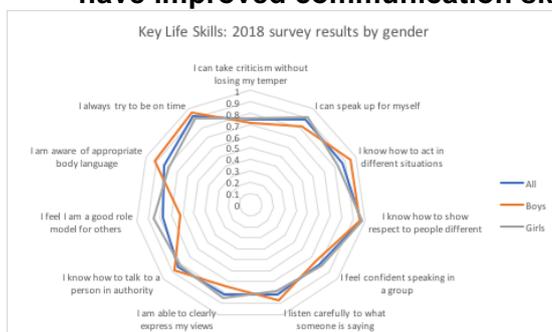


Figure 6 2018 Survey Results: Life skills by gender

It takes a huge amount of self-esteem, confidence and dedication for young people to attend training sessions, push themselves to their physical best and gain the endurance and strength of character to compete against others and both win and lose graciously and continue to strive to achieve their goals. In 2018, Track Academy delivered 433 sports-based sessions to groups tailored to the needs of participants based on age, gender, ability and specific athletics skills (throws, jumps, hurdles etc).

- **Indicator 3: 72% of members say they are more active than they were ago and 71% say they feel more fit and healthy than they were a year ago. 86% of parents agree that their child's health/fitness has improved since they joined Track Academy.**



Alongside the athletics programme Track Academy has held workshops to build life skills and to talk about career options, education options and employability skills. Track Academy has also held talks and workshops with inspirational speakers and role models, to give student athletes the opportunity to hear about different career paths and experiences of which overcome challenges to achieve in their field.

- **Indicator 4: 87% of members say they trust that their future will turn out well and 88% say they feel excited about the future**

Track Academy has focused this year on building the leadership skills of members, through opportunities to take up leadership roles at Track Academy by assisting with coaching, becoming peer leaders to our younger athletes, promoting Track Academy at local schools and colleges and at community events and open days and running the registration desk before training. This aims to give the student athletes an experience of working life and the professionalism required for working with others, managing time and taking control of their personal finances. 15 young people are on the leadership pathway, which is providing coaching qualifications in affiliation with England Athletics, to enable young people to enter into careers as PE teachers and coaches.

- **Indicator 5: 85% of members say they feel they are able to express their views and opinions clearly and 75% feel confident organising a group activity or project.**

Outcome 2: Increase in the number of young people having better educational and career outcomes

- **Indicator 1: 57% of parents report that their child has improved attention and ability to do school work since attending Track Academy.**

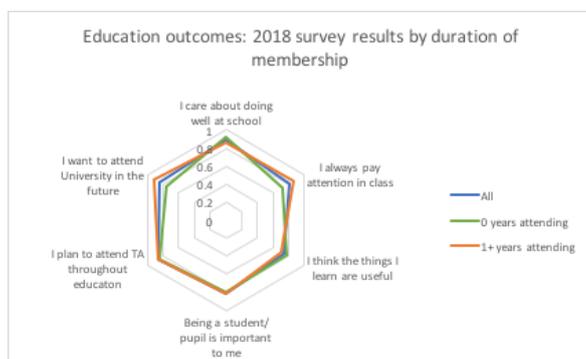


Figure 7 Survey 2018: Education outcomes by duration of membership

Track Academy provides education support, homework clubs and study support for all its participants from age 11 to 18 and above. In the Annual Participants Survey, 86% of respondents said they plan to attend Track Academy throughout their education, which shows the level of engagement and opportunity to create impact which Track Academy has. Over the last 12 months, The Track Academy Supplementary School delivered 148 study support sessions every Saturday for 43 weeks of the year, focused on building confidence in English and Maths, Additional workshops focused on preparing for GCSE exams, preparing for 6th form- in partnership with Stanmore College, and workshops on preparation for university.

- **Indicator 4: 50% of teachers agree that Track Academy have improved ability in English and Maths and 60% of participants who attend Track Academy tuition sessions say they have increased confidence in Maths and 65% have increased confidence in English.**

Over the last 3 years, 100% (15) members have achieved their 5 A*-C grades and in 2018 a further 15 were supported through their first year of GCSE and are on track to do well in their 2019 exams. Feedback from teachers continues to support the work that Track Academy is doing to improve classroom behaviour, emphasizing the value of education and engaging parents alongside children in their wellbeing and achievements at school and on the running track.



- **Indicator 3: 25% of teachers strongly agree that children who attend Track Academy have improved classroom behavior and 87% of members show an understanding of the importance of education for their future lives.**

For many Track Academy members, going to university is a huge decision, they are often the first people in their family to do so, and lessons from previous years have shown that it is a really tough transition that requires additional support. After 5 Track Academy members successfully entered university in 2016, it was realized that the retention of students was also a key challenge as young people faced new contexts, challenges and routines. In 2017, Track Academy set up additional mentoring support for university-going athletes through additional monitoring and tracking of students through regular calls and a new database, to enable staff to support students to complete their first year and continue into their 2nd and 3rd years at university. Currently 10 members are studying at university and continue to attend Track Academy sessions at Willesden Sports Centre as well as receiving ongoing remote mentoring support. A-level and college age students in 2018 have been supported to plan their careers and academic pathways, apply for university and jobs, gain skills and qualifications and complete their UCAS applications and prepare for interviews. Track Academy works with children of all ages to underline the importance of education and to inspire young people to do their best, to aspire high and achieve their goals.

- **Indicator 5: 92% of members who have been attending Track Academy aspire to go to university in the future, compared to 75% who have just joined.**

In addition to a focus on education, Track Academy provides support to help young people prepare for the world of work. Activities over the last 3 years included delivery employability workshops, focusing on age-relevant topics including career planning, goal setting, motivational talks from guest speakers. The funding for employability programmes is grant-based and therefore a consistent programme of employability skills and job-search support has not yet been developed- it is an aspiration to develop this into a strong sustainable programme but in the meantime, Track Academy is able to support the development of 'soft' life skills that are crucial for employability, with workshops and talks, visits from inspiring speakers and role models as available.

In 2018, Track Academy has introduced a new pathway for younger people who wish to become a coach or PE teacher. 15 young people each year will be able to enter this pathway and receive access to volunteering opportunities to gain experience and skills, recognized qualifications through a partnership with England Athletics and career advice and support, including the opportunity for older members to gain employment as coaches at Track Academy and in partner organisations across London and the UK. This is an exciting new project for Track Academy and helps to deliver against outcomes of reducing worklessness as well as addressing a national shortage of entry-level PE teachers and trained athletics coaches.

Outcome 3: Young people are able to access additional specialist support

A number of the participants at Track Academy need specialist support to meet their needs, in addition to the support that Track Academy is able to provide. Track Academy's commitment to its participants includes ensuring that those who need additional support are able to access it, through referrals to outside agencies and specialists. Track Academy works in partnership with many agencies to ensure that this support is available. Two examples of cases this year include one girl who was made homeless by her parents when she turned 18. Track Academy worked with social services and housing office to find her suitable accommodation, and worked with agencies to ensure that she maintained a place in education while her personal circumstances settled down. In another case, work is ongoing with mental health support agencies, family and social services to provide the support needed to face increasingly severe threats to stability.



- **Indicator 1: 60% of members say they feel more confident after help from their coach-mentor and 41% say that having a coach-mentor has helped them focus better at school**

All coaches at Track Academy are trained mentors, and this mentoring role is crucial to our model. Coaches are highly trusted and respected by members (91% say they respect their coach and 94% say their coach respects them) and this enables coaches to play a vital role in supporting young people both to develop key skills and to learn how to handle problems in their lives. Track Academy also takes on a direct advocacy role for young people with external agencies as needed. 32% of members in 2018 had help to access external agencies.

- **Indicator 2: 20% of parents agree that their child has been helped to deal with a problem or issue through mentoring at Track Academy**

Track Academy also receives referrals from external agencies, to support a child's development via their love for athletics. Track Academy's approach is particularly good for working with certain issues that young people face, especially if athletics is already a passion or interest for that young person. Track Academy works with referring agencies to develop behaviour intervention reports, run school visits, engage parents as well as provide the one-to-one mentoring sessions discussed above.

Some of the situations that Track Academy is working with is particularly challenging. While Track Academy can provide the services, it also takes its toll on staff wellbeing and resilience, having to deal with very traumatic situations on a weekly basis. As such Track Academy is investing in strengthening its HR processes and systems of support for all staff in 2019 to ensure that they are well equipped and supported on an ongoing basis.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us or ask us?

Include any conditions of the grant now met, significant changes to future plans, or funding.

We would like to apply for further funding from Esmee Fairbairn to continue our work, especially focused on securing sustainability for the organisation. This means that we wish to focus on strengthening our core delivery through careful collection and analysis of data, review of learnings, feedback from members, parents, teachers and other partners and training for staff. In addition, we wish to continue to strengthen key management areas, with a focus on HR, fundraising and management. The ultimate aim is to make Track Academy strong enough and with really solid foundations and processes so that Connie can step down from her role as Director and enable the organisation to appoint an Executive Director and ensure the organisation is less reliant on her as an individual. With this goal in mind we require some core funding for the next few years in order to ease the burden of fundraising as a fire fighting task from Connie's shoulders and enable her to focus on the sustainable development of Track Academy.

Thank you for your support over the last 3 years.

Track Academy Team