

Table Tennis Supports People to be Active During Lockdown

Theme: physical activity

Defining the Issue

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant effect on the world, with social distancing and movement restrictions having an impact on the way many people get active. Although overall physical activity levels have remained fairly sustained across the country, known inequalities between demographic groups have been worsened by these changes, with these groups still finding it harder to be active.

Background Information

Table Tennis England's *Ping* project supports people to lead active lifestyles by providing a wide range of opportunities for people to play in their local area – including outdoor public tables, Ping Pong Parlours, community and workplace projects.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, many opportunities for people to be physically active have been suspended, including much of *Ping's* existing local playing infrastructure. Table Tennis England believe that we can have an impact on these inequalities, by utilising partners with local understanding and networks to target key demographic groups, and providing opportunities for them to be active at home and in their local area.

One of these partners is Leicester & District Table Tennis League, who work to enhance playing opportunities and get people active in the city of Leicester. The project is led by development officer Harry White, who is passionate about developing table tennis across Leicester.

The Project

With support from Table Tennis England, the project utilised local partnerships to identify groups in need, including low income families, people from lower socio-economic groups and families in receipt of food parcels via an intervention by the Assistant Mayor and Police Crime Commissioner.

Over 100 table tennis kits were given to an existing network of local partners, for them to pass onto local families and people in need. The kits were accompanied with a range of online videos to support activation and encourage use of the kits.



The Impact

"We are very grateful for these table tennis sets and YouTube channel with coaching sessions. This has allowed us to reach out to families of our community club players and keep them engaged in the sport during a challenging time" – Josh Dixon, Senior Playworker at Goldhill Adventure Playground



"We've managed to give some of our most vulnerable children resources to ease the tedium of lockdown and get them active – thank you very much!" – Steph Beale, Principle at Ellesmere College

"My son has made a table tennis table for the kids to use in our courtyard, using the kit we got from Big Local. It's helped to keep the kids entertained in lockdown" – Parent supported by St Matthews Big Local Charity



"Table tennis activities and lessons online have been a godsend. Aside from keeping my children occupied they also helped keep them fit and active in a fun way. The table tennis set was a massive bonus!" – Local Parent

Learnings and Next Steps

1. Utilising local partners and their networks is successful at engaging key target groups
2. Providing additional support and activation helps to maximise impact

Next Steps

We expect to see more success across our three phase engagement plan, where we will provide over 3,000 table tennis kits to local partners for distribution to key target groups and those in most need.

For more information on introducing table tennis in your area, contact ping@tabletennisengland.co.uk

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