

Table Tennis Supports Physical Activity During Lockdown in Liverpool

Theme: physical activity, target groups

Defining the Issue

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant effect on the world, including impacting the ways in which people and communities take part in sport and physical activity. Table Tennis England's participation projects have had to adjust to the 'new normal' to continue to support people to be physically active.

Background Information

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

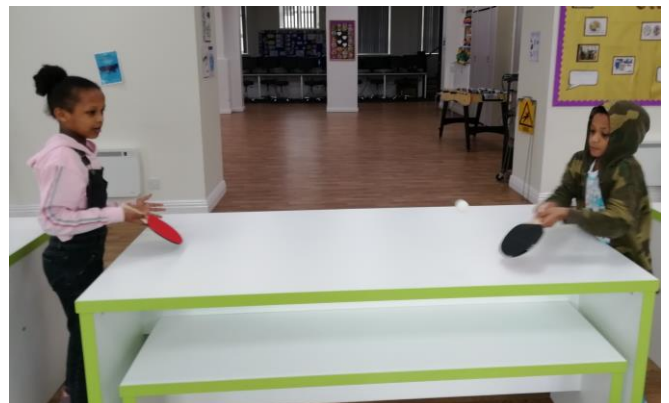
However, Covid-19 has caused many opportunities to play table tennis to be temporarily suspended. In addition, the pandemic has changed people's perceptions of how they would like to be physically active, with some having reservations about taking part in sport and physical activity in public areas.

Table Tennis England believe that we can still provide opportunities for people to be physically active in a way that suits their needs. Through working with partners who have local understanding and networks, targeted interventions and projects can be implemented across the country to continue to provide opportunities for people to be physically active.

One of these partners is Liverpool City Council, who have been delivering the *Ping* project for several years and have built an extensive table tennis scene across the city.

As a result of Covid-19, all of the council's existing physical activity programmes and priorities had been effected, so Liverpool City Council saw an opportunity to utilise table tennis to continue to provide physical activity to those most in need, including;

- > Females
- > Children
- > Lower socio-economic groups
- > Ethnic minorities



The Project

Liverpool City Council used remaining funding from Table Tennis England to source 100 table tennis equipment packages to distribute to key groups within the local community.

Equipment packages were provided to various organisations who the council had previously worked with through their Active Partnerships work. This included local schools, community groups and support groups for those most in need.

The equipment packages were accompanied with a leaflet including playing tips and information on other opportunities to play table tennis on the network of outdoor tables around the city. In addition, Liverpool City Council have provided further activation with the equipment through utilising Table Tennis England's *Play at Home* online resources and videos.

"Big thanks to Table Tennis England for this opportunity to get families active at home and in the parks. It has provided us with an opportunity to increase the interest of table tennis to families, communities and schools across Liverpool" – Sylvia Wensley



The Impact

Equipment has been provided to;

- 4 Primary School Hubs – reaching 14 different schools, 142 children and 100 staff
- 67 families

"Families within our community do not exercise frequently. Ping pong has enabled them to exercise at home during lock down and on daily walks to the local parks on public tables" – Children's Centre

"All of our pupils have really enjoyed playing table tennis. Staff have also been able to join in with the children and have commented how it has improved their mood. We have also noticed that children who don't necessarily always get along have bonded when playing together" – Local School

Key Learnings

1. Utilising existing local partnerships allows equipment to be distributed quickly and to those most in need
2. Providing equipment to families or individuals enables them to play at home or on local outdoor tables, meaning there is flexibility on where people can play based on their needs

Further Information

For more information on bringing table tennis to your area, visit www.pingland.co.uk



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