

How volunteering saved my life!

Sport & Physical Activity Case Study



My name is Beau, and I'm 20 years old. For the past four months, I've been volunteering at my local Doorstep Sports Club with Wiltshire Council, and this experience has completely transformed my life.

Growing up, sport was my escape. It was the one thing that made me feel good about myself. I never enjoyed being in a classroom, and life at home was complicated, but sport was always there - it was something I loved and something I was good at.

Despite my passion for sport, school was tough. In primary school, I was bullied for being overweight and different. The teasing, laughter, and isolation all chipped away at my confidence. Unfortunately, the bullying continued into secondary school, but sport remained my refuge. It was there that I discovered rugby, and from the moment I stepped onto the pitch, I fell in love with the game.

After a period of homelessness, I reached out to Wiltshire Council for support. That's when I was referred to Amber Foundation, a charity in Trowbridge that helps young people and vulnerable adults transform their lives by providing accommodation and supportive routine to its residents. Moving in on 15th October was a relief; I had a roof over my head and a safe place to sleep. But as I unpacked my bags, reality sank in. I had lost everything. I was in a strange place, without my family. It was the lowest point of my life.

At Amber, I kept to myself. I didn't trust anyone. I followed the programme, then shut myself away in my room, staring at the walls, feeling like giving up. Three weeks in, my motivation was at an all-time low, and I struggled to see a way forward.

Then came the visit that **changed everything**. The Community Sport Team at Wiltshire Council came to Amber to talk about their projects and how we could get involved. Lauren introduced us to the Doorstep Sports Club programme, which supports young people facing barriers to sport and physical activity. I was immediately intrigued. She invited me to a session and even mentioned the possibility of volunteering.

I was nervous before my first session, but everything felt different when I arrived. Lauren made me feel at ease, the staff were welcoming, and the kids connected with me right away. For the first time in a long time, I felt good, good enough to return the following week. And the week after that.

Volunteering at Doorstep became my new escape. Every Wednesday, I had something to look forward to. It gave me purpose, motivation, and a sense of fulfilment I hadn't experienced in years. Seeing the kids engage and knowing I was making a difference brought a sense of positivity I hadn't felt in a long time. It helped me believe in myself again.

I've found a support system in Lauren from Wiltshire Council and Alex from the Bath Rugby Foundation. They've made me feel safe, supported, and heard. Lauren and Alex believe in me, and now I believe in myself too. They've opened doors, welcomed me into the team, introduced me to new opportunities, and helped me grow.

“ Volunteering has helped me grow in so many ways. I've developed leadership skills, improved my communication, gained confidence, and matured overall ”

Thanks to volunteering, I now work with the Bath Rugby Foundation in local schools, lead sessions at Doorstep, and receive training to develop as a coach. Once I finish my training, I've even been offered a job with the Bath Rugby Foundation.

I still struggle with my mental health, and some days it hits me hard. Living at Amber serves as a constant reminder of what I've lost, but it also helps me recognise how far I've come. For the first time, I can imagine a future - one where I'm doing something I love, something that gives me purpose. I want to make my family proud, and I truly believe I'm on the right path now.

I'm incredibly grateful to Wiltshire Council for giving me this opportunity. They saw potential in me when I couldn't see it in myself. Coaching has given me a reason to push forward, to believe in a better future, and to do something I love.

One of the most powerful moments for me was when a young boy at a session told me, "I really enjoy you coming to coach me. I want to ask my mum if I can join the local rugby team." In that moment, I realised that what I'm doing matters - that I have the power to change lives, just as sport changed mine.

“ If you're thinking about volunteering, do it. You'll learn so much - about sport, about others, and most importantly, about yourself. It might just change your life, just like it changed mine ”