



GARETH BALE FESTIVAL OF SPORT 2024

StreetGames is a national charity that has been working with community organisations across the UK since 2007, with a mission to transform the lives of young people living in low-income, underserved communities through sport and physical activity. The StreetGames 'network' now totals over 1,600 local community organisations – from sports clubs and community groups to housing associations, leisure trusts and local authorities. These organisations are uniquely placed to support young people in their communities, by offering a safe place with trusted coaches and organisers who know their neighbourhood and the young people who live there.

With years of experience and status as trusted sector leaders, StreetGames aims to support each and every one of the organisations in the network through knowledge and insight, help with sustainability and investment, practical tools and resources, networking opportunities and most importantly - empowering them to do what they do best: creating new opportunities and positive change in the lives of young people through sport and physical activity. StreetGames envisages that through these Locally Trusted Organisations (LTOs), we can achieve Healthier, Safer and More Successful Communities through the power of sport.

The Gareth Bale Festival of Sport is an annual event, piloted in 2022, that enables young people living in some of the most underserved communities across Wales to access a safe, fun and exciting one-day multi-sport festival, held at The Celtic Manor Resort in Newport. The festival is delivered alongside the elite junior golf championships event, ran by StreetGames and hosted in partnership with Wales Golf and Gareth Bale, which takes place on the same weekend.

The aim of this event is to highlight the importance of non-specialisation in sport for younger children and provide opportunities for young people living in low income, underserved communities to try a range of different sports and activities. After a pilot event in 2022, the festival was delivered at scale in 2023 and then doubling in size for 2024. On September 15th, more than 100 young people aged between 11 - 18 were provided with the opportunity to attend the best event yet, try a total of ten different sporting activities and meet football legend Gareth Bale, as he stepped up his commitment to promoting sporting opportunities for young people.



2024 Offer

This event is funded by Wales Golf and with support from StreetGames, Locally Trusted Organisations who regularly engage with young people in underserved communities were invited to attend. Support to LTOs included information and guidance before the event, lunch, opportunities to network with other LTO staff and delivery providers and also a subsidiary towards transport where it was needed.

For young people in attendance, they all gained the opportunity to visit Celtic Manor, an iconic venue in Wales and were able to meet other young people from different areas. In carousel style, all had the chance in small groups to try ten structured sports/activity sessions, delivered by the various NGBs and delivery providers also in attendance.

After five sessions, activities were put on hold for lunch and opportunities to socialise with new friends, before the second half of activities, finally concluding with a Q&A session and presentation featuring Gareth Bale. All young people were asked to write down their questions, with a few being chosen to stand up with the microphone and ask Gareth themselves. All then had a group photo opportunity with others from their LTO and the Welsh football icon.



National Governing Bodies / Activity Providers

Ten providers attending the 2024 festival were given the opportunity to network with other providers and LTOs, in-between engaging with over 100 young people from communities across Wales with their respective activities for 30 minutes. Returning providers from 2023 included Cycling, Badminton, Golf,



Table Tennis, Bowls, and Football, alongside new additions Cricket, Hockey, Skateboarding and a DJ workshop for 2024.

Feedback

Providers were engaged in conversation over lunch and between activities throughout the day to capture their thoughts on the experience. A survey was also shared following the event to capture additional feedback below.

All ten NGBs and organisations rated the following as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’:

- Information received from StreetGames prior to the event
- Communication from StreetGames prior to the event
- Support from StreetGames to answer questions and meet your needs

All ten and organisations NGBs ‘Agreed’ or ‘Strongly Agreed’ with the following:

- I was able to deliver the activities well in the space provided
- I had all of the equipment and/or resources I needed
- The participants had fun in a safe and inclusive environment
- The participants were provided with an experience that they could not get anywhere else
- StreetGames, Wales Golf and/or Celtic Manor Staff were friendly and helpful throughout the day
- I would be interested in delivering activities at a similar event in 2025

In terms of what could be better next time, suggestions included:

- More stewards or better signage at the entrance to the venue
- Whilst the 30 minute slots worked well, some young people were exhausted at the end of the day. One suggestion was to only include 20 minutes of actual activity with a 10 minute demonstration.
- 2 or 3 minute breaks in between activity slots, to allow deliverers to reorganise and gather equipment.
- Pre-information on the groups and their locations before the event would be useful, so that providers can signpost any young people that take an interest in the sport to their local clubs and opportunities.

Highlights

In conversation, providers were extremely positive when talking about their experience, the most popular highlights included:

- Being able to mix with other NGBs/Providers
- Seeing a positive impact on Young People
- Being able to reach so many Young People in one day



When asked why events like this are important to their organisation, the most popular replies included:

- Advocacy for sport
- Helping them to achieve strategic priorities, such as increasing junior participation
- Access to an audience that for them, is otherwise hard to reach and engage
- Making new working relationships

Swansea City AFC foundation: *'It's great to have so many NGBs in the same room and collaborating, fundamentally we're a football club but through StreetGames we've broadened things by accessing a multisport kitbag and recently been involved in 'Path 2 Paris' too'.*

Bowls: *'in future, we would be keen to contribute (financially) to an event like this because we would never be able to engage this many young people as we have done today. We're considered an 'old man's sport' but the way everything has been facilitated today is amazing for us. I feel like opportunities like this are much rarer nowadays, this is the only festival / multi-sport event like this, this year that we've attended.'*

Cricket: *'I really like the way it's been run, it's been great to have designated 30 min slots, any shorter and you can't do a proper session, any longer and the kids are exhausted. We've been to other events where there are 600 kids and sessions are open access, they come and go and you just end up putting on a bit of a show, before they leave for the next thing'.*





Hockey: *'We did a quick straw poll for most of the sessions today just to see how many people have played before and it was normally about 50% max, who had actually had the opportunity to see or play hockey before. So to come down to an event like this and be given the opportunity by StreetGames is really important because then we can expose our sport to new communities.'*

Locally Trusted Organisations

In total, 12 separate LTOs from 9 different communities across Wales attended the 2024 Festival, making it by far the most successful to date, engaging 103 Young People.

Feedback

LTOs were engaged in conversation throughout the day and were also asked to capture their thoughts via an online survey following the event, once they had chance to reflect on their experience. StreetGames also explored the various challenges and barriers that LTOs face when considering attending events like this, in an effort to better understand and support them in future. 17 total staff from LTOs completed the survey.

- **All LTOs** rated the activities on offer 'Good or 'Excellent'.
- 95% rated information/support provided on the day and before the event 'Good or 'Excellent'.
- 83% rated the food/drink on offer 'Good or 'Excellent'.

In terms of the barriers that LTOs sometimes encounter, to ensure that their young people can access opportunities like these...

- Two thirds of LTO staff highlighted that they usually encounter financial barriers, whether that be due to transport fees, entry fees, or general extra resource that is needed to make it all happen i.e. extra staff time.
- Around a third of LTOs highlighted that it is a lack of 'awareness' or lack of 'signposting' to them, often they will hear about such opportunities when it is too late to attend.
- A few LTOs mentioned being unable to obtain the consent, or interest from both parents and young people.

In terms of what could be better next time, or anything StreetGames could help with in future, suggestions included:

- More food and more 'kid friendly' options
- Financial support for overnight stays would be welcome to avoid long journeys on the same day
- More financial support for transport
- Opportunities to try wheelchair sports
- Consistent messages to LTO staff and Young People around access to photos and signings from Gareth Bale (so that no young people miss out).

Highlights

In terms of what went well, LTO staff praised:

- The varied activities on offer and how much the young people enjoyed them
- How well the event was organised and ran
- *'Loads of energy in the hall! The coaches delivering the activities were really engaging and understood the young people'*
- Some were glad for, and highlighted the importance of the rest area/quiet room for those that wanted to sit out of a particular activity

'It was important they we had the room with the table as it allowed young people from our group to have a break when they were tired. Due to our early start from Pembrokeshire some of our members with ADHD found the intensity of 10x30 mins of activities hard so this space provided them with this comfort.'



Bridgend: (attending with a Youth Justice cohort of young people aged 15-18). *'I think the way the groups have been set up across the different activities works well, it's hard to get young people from different places to mingle but already (during second session) you can see lots of people from across different places mingling.'*

RCT - *'it's been great so far, really impressed with how well it's been run. All the kids are engaged which is great to see'*

Swansea City AFC foundation: *'Some of our young people have never left Swansea, so for them to come to an amazing hotel and see this venue is a once in a lifetime experience for them. For some of them football is all they're interested in but it's events like this that can broaden their horizons, most will have never seen a golf club before today so the variety of activities on offer is a great opportunity for them, they're buzzing about Gareth Bale too - but they would be here whether his name was on it or not.'*

'Thank you for providing such an inspiring opportunity for the young people'

Young Advisors

At such events, StreetGames regularly invite young volunteers from LTOs to participate in not just the events themselves, but also request their input and involve them in planning and preparation, to ensure Youth Voice is present throughout events that are tailored for young people. This also provides them with exciting opportunities, building confidence and developing life skills within volunteers, helping LTOs potentially to 'grow their own' coaches in future.



Three young volunteers from Welsh LTOs were recruited as 'Young Advisors' prior to the event, all of them coming together with StreetGames and Wales Golf staff to organise, plan and coordinate the event. On the day, Young advisors helped StreetGames and NGB staff set up equipment, then welcome and assist LTO staff and young people by signposting to different areas and activities, taking turns on the microphone to welcome everyone during the introduction and also leading the Q&A with Gareth Bale, at the end of the day.

On the day, Young Advisor Mikey took an interest with the StreetGames Communications Officers role and helped him throughout the event, picking up various tips and communication skills around video recording and interviewing. Through his interest, he was invited into a private press conference with Gareth Bale and representatives from StreetGames and Wales Golf recorded for television. At the end of the day, Mikey tried his hand at taking event photos with a professional camera and was ecstatic when he recorded his own interview then got the chance to interview Gareth bale himself, for StreetGames video content.

Mikey: *(As a Young Advisor) rather than just being on the receiving side, I've been able to have my say and contribute to different things that are going on'.*

Young People

103 Young People from 9 different communities attended the 2024 festival. 16 young people were asked to provide some feedback on the day:

- **All** thoroughly enjoyed the day and the activities on offer
- Nearly all of them had never been to Celtic Manor before
- Nearly all of them agreed that they enjoyed going somewhere different for the day
- **All** would like to attend events like this in future
- **All** of them had tried a different sport or activity for the first time, the most common new activities were young people were Bowls, Skateboarding, Badminton, Golf and the DJ workshop.



'I would (usually) be playing games on my computer or my Nintendo. But it's really good to get out.'

'I found my passion for Badminton here and I've been playing it ever since.'

Following the activities, young people were asked to scribble their thoughts on their tablecloth whilst waiting for the Gareth Bale Q&A session to begin. Each table was full of positive feedback, including some highlights below:

- *'Made me happy'*
- *'Thankful to be a part of the day'*
- *'Enjoyed playing all the different sports and activities'*
- *'It was a lovely day filled with lots of fun!!!'*
- *'Thanks for all the staff putting on the activities for me. I loved them all'*
- *'It was fun I loved skateboarding and meeting Gareth Bale'*
- *'It was lovely meeting Gareth Bale I loved it so much'*
- *'Unforgettable experience!'*
- *'Very fun – Gareth Bale gave me a fist bump!'*



Going Forward

Following the 2024 edition of the Gareth Bale Festival of Sport, there are 103 young people across 9 communities with new experiences, feelings and attitudes towards a variety of sports which will play a part in developing a number of lasting sporting habits, positive peer influence within their LTOs and new interest in wider sports provision in their communities.

Upon reflection, StreetGames realise that we are unable to track the extent of young people continuing to take part in these sports after attending the festival and offering a stand-alone, 'one off' opportunity can potentially be detrimental to young people from underserved communities, where local resource and influence may not exist to further encourage a lifelong habit in their new interests.

- StreetGames will work with funders and partners to consider how they can measure the longitudinal impact of the festival in 2025 and look at options to 'follow up' with LTOs and young people. This will also include comprehensive data collection at the festival itself.
- StreetGames will work with funders and partners to look to sustain the legacy of the Gareth Bale Festival, ensuring that young people from underserved communities consistently have access to equipment, training and upskilling opportunities after the event has taken place.

- In order to maximise the impact of the festival, a legacy offer needs to be created with all partners involved. This is fundamental to the success of the festival and adequate resource and capacity planning needs to be considered.



Gareth Bale: *'This is the third year that we have held the Gareth Bale Festival of Sport and this one has been the best yet. As a boy, I played every sport I could and I'm sure that helped my development as an athlete. That's why it's great to see young people in Wales getting the chance to try lots of different sports they might not otherwise get the chance to.'*

Theo – Wales Golf: *'By working with Street Games and Gareth, we can take this event to audiences that would not usually have access to sport. Aat Wales Golf Junior participation is a huge focus for us. Events like this allow us to access communities that we can't usually get into or the golf isn't traditionally accessible for and moving forward, we want to get golf out into the community as much as we can to give us many people the chance to play our wonderful game.'*

Milford Youth Matters: *'The conversation has already happened with young people today asking "Do we have something like this in our town?" – and yes, we do. Now we act as the role of facilitators to connect them to the next stage.'*

Jamie – Bridgend: *'The children will take what they have learnt today into their communities, into their youth clubs and into the heart of Wales.'*