The Regional Educational Legacy for Arts and Youth Sport (RELAYS) project seeks to engage young people in the South West in sporting and cultural events in the run-up to The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. RELAYS is funded by Legacy Trust UK, an independent charity that has been set up to help build a lasting cultural and sporting legacy from the 2012 Games, and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

The detail

A programme has been developed with Bournemouth University where RELAYS offers Higher Education (HE) students the opportunity to volunteer as leaders and coaches. The reward for their time is a bursary of £50–£100 and training from local partners to deliver activities and games for events in the area. Active Dorset, Bournemouth University and RELAYS also benefit as the scheme helps:

• to sustain a coaching workforce of HE students from years 1–4
• generate a coaching bursary and income
• raise the profile of the three partners.

The programme also aims to:

• engage with governing bodies of sport to support their local coaching plans through HE
• broker relationships with private coaching providers through quality placements and work experience provided for practising coaches by Active Dorset, the county sports partnership (CSP), RELAYS and Bournemouth University.

What’s happened so far?

Dorset Coaching Development Manager (CDM) Callum Burt, Further Education Sport Coordinator (FESCo) Ben Heath, RELAYS programme leader Virginia Bailey, and University
Programme Leader Dr Ian Jones identified:
- roles and processes
- bursaries for coaching and improving HE students’ capacity to coach.

A series of coaching events were then planned and students offered applications for the RELAYS programme through an interview process. Once they had volunteered for a set amount of hours, the students received a £100 bursary each.

On top of this there were professional development days. They included an ‘inspire mark’ session with Calum Giles, while the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) provided community coach tutors for a children’s/multi-skill session. Governing body officers also provided support to students through practical delivery.

The total cost of the project in year one was £500, with finance provided from SkillsActive and the RELAYS programme.

The results
- Increased deployability of students.
- Improved links between students with clubs and governing bodies of sport.
- Students have benefited from assigned mentors.
- Students have benefited from opportunities to gain further skills and qualifications above and beyond their academic studies.
- The Aim Higher link between schools, colleges and the university has been strengthened in sport and coaching degrees.
- Over 30 HE students from Bournemouth University have been involved in the delivery of festivals and events across Dorset.
- To date, 15 out of the 30 students have been awarded bursaries to support the development of HE students since January 2010.
- Six Bournemouth University students attended the Coaches Conference, organised by Active Dorset in September 2010.
- 85% of students involved with the training programme agreed it enhanced what they had learnt through their academic course.
- 90% of students strongly agreed they would find future training valuable in their development as coaches.

Future developments

Over 80 students from the first, second and fourth-year Sports Development and Coaching Sciences, and Sports Psychology and Coaching Science courses at Bournemouth University have signed up and been interviewed for the 2010–2011 programme. Training dates have also been set.

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