

Hamstead Hall Sport and Community Programme helps break down transport barriers

Hamstead Hall Sport and Community Programme (HHSCP) provides a wide range of sports, arts and physical activities for disabled children, young people with specific needs and local people and is one project that has tapped into the Social Inclusion Fund (SIF). It is a working partnership between Hamstead Hall Community Learning Centre, Birmingham Leisure and Culture, Birmingham Local Education Authority, sports and community organisations and the local community.

Before HHSCP applied for Centro SIF, many members of the community were unable to attend activities due to a lack of suitable transport. A number of children and young people regularly visiting the centre also suffered mobility difficulties, long-term illness or behavioural problems and many required specialist transport to and from the centre.

To address the unmet transport needs of the community, HHSCP applied and was awarded Social Inclusion Funding from Centro. The fund enabled the employment of a full time driver and fully accessible transport provision, necessary to allow access to the centre's activities. An after school transport service now operates five days a week to leisure, sports and recreational activities, at sites across the north west of Birmingham. Weekend transport and local trips to HHSCP and other local centres is now possible.

Importantly, parents using the HHSCP reported that the programme has allowed them to share their life with others who are in similar circumstances and given them the ability to cope with their child's disability. Also, transport is no longer an issue, increased numbers of people are enrolling onto the programme and many more groups are working in partnership with the centre. It is hoped more schools and community centres will follow in the footsteps of Hamstead and take a holistic approach so local people can take full advantage of activities available to them.