

# Community Club

Blackpool FC  
Community  
Trust Column



## We're still there for pupils

Over the past couple of weeks, I have written about new areas that our work has taken us since coronavirus took over our lives – but we have also continued with some of our traditional provisions and delivered them in new ways.

A prime example of this is our education programmes, including our alternate education with local secondary schools, our BFC sports college for BTEC sport, our traineeship provision and our degree in community football coaching and development.

These have always focused on face-to-face education delivery, including the use of Bloomfield Road, new facilities and classrooms and great teaching and coaching, delivered in a more relaxed and less formal nature, but since we have been in lockdown, a lot has had to be adjusted.

Our intentions and end goals haven't changed but our ways to make sure our students remain engaged have had to – and our use of technology has had to really develop quickly.

In a normal timetable, our students will attend classes each day with our teachers, do their coursework on site with mentors, and take part in a full practical enrichment programme.

However, in our current environment, we have switched all classes to online portals to keep our students



The Community Trust has switched classes to online portals amid the coronavirus crisis

engaged and learning.

This has proved difficult for some of our students, who do not have computers and laptops at home, so we have sent more than 20 students home with our devices to use – and the vast majority of them continue to engage and enjoy our support.

This method has been used across all our projects as we strive to ensure pupils maintain some normality.

While GCSE and A Level exams have been cancelled for this year, our BA Hons, BTEC and NCFE qualifications continue due to most work being coursework-based.

However, questions around how we grade our maths and English function-

al skills and GCSE resits remain unanswered for us.

While we continue to investigate the solution, we have continued to set the students challenges to complete – and even publish a weekly maths question on our social media – and our poem competition (#Blackpoolrhyme) challenges literacy skills.

The big area that students are missing out on is their enrichment programme, which normally includes football training every day as well as playing in the EFL national 11-a-side league and futsal competitions.

At the time of lockdown our first team were top of their North West league and the students and staff are hoping they get to complete

their season and hopefully win the trophy they have worked so hard for.

We have, however, tried to keep the players engaged by sending weekly physical activity challenges and sessions for them to complete at home.

It's the best we can do in the circumstances and may benefit us in the early restart of games if the two-metre social distancing rules apply – especially on corners.

Our BTEC sports coaching students are obviously missing out on essential work experience, but we can make up these hours during summer months once our projects return.

Another thing our BTEC students have missed out on

is June's trip to Barcelona.

A large majority of students have saved and fund-raised for a trip to another area, to see how sport engages communities in the city, and also to take part in a host of activities and matches.

We are now working with the travel company to reorganise the trip for next year.

Another area dramatically impacted has been the work experience element of our traineeship provisions.

Usually students spend two days a week in a work environment that they would like to potentially progress to in the future.

Our work and attention in this area is a main contributor to why we have so much success in getting young people – previously not in any education or employment – onto a positive path with more than 71 per cent of our students progressing.

While businesses are closed down, we have encouraged our learners to volunteer at community food hubs and given them extra employability support skills.

We have also put a large focus on ensuring we support the welfare of all our students across all of our education programmes.

This includes phone calls to have a chat outside of teaching and learning, as well as informing them of the support available.

We have also had some significant success in the past couple of weeks, prior to the lockdown.

Pupils on our alternate education programme, delivered with five local secondary schools, sat their BTEC tech award in sports studies with 90 per cent passing at their first attempt.

What makes this an even greater success is students on this programme are young people at significant risk of being excluded from their mainstream schools, so they spend a day a week with us.

We have also seen significant changes in their behaviours and attendance back in schools for the other four days too.

While the above explains a little about how we are focusing our attentions on current students, we are looking to the next academic year.

If you, or a young person you know, is interested in a career in sport, coaching, teaching, or just wants to re-engage with education and use football and coaching as a motivation to do so, then visit [www.bfcct.co.uk](http://www.bfcct.co.uk) to get further information on our BTEC and degree courses.

No matter what grades you receive this summer, we have a course for you – and students not only receive a first class education in new facilities but they receive one-to-one care, smaller classes, the opportunity to represent Blackpool FC in the competitions mentioned earlier and first-hand work experience in the community.

**ASHLEY HACKETT (CEO, BFCCT)**

## Helping to Inspire students in exam preparation

By **Lauren Cholmondeley**  
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Blackpool FC Community Trust, with support from the Premier League and Blackpool Public Health, have been supporting local year 10 pupils to prepare for exams with a new mental health provision called 'PL Inspires'.

The Community Trust offers local secondary schools a 20-hour programme, focused on helping them become more

resilient individuals as well as reducing anxiety and developing coping mechanisms and relaxation techniques, to support students through the difficult time of exams.

The programme has been developed by the Trust's head of education and employability, Selina Hayes, and secondary education manager, Simon Smith, with support from Headstart Blackpool.

Kiera Threlfall, a year 10 pupil at St Georges High School, said: "I'm really enjoying Premier League Inspires,

it's very different from my normal lessons.

"I get involved a lot more and there are more fun activities but I'm still learning just as much."

The pupils have also taken part in a PL Inspires challenge as, earlier this year, eight teams from across Blackpool came to present their social action ideas to staff at the club.

Since then the winners, pupils from St George's High School, have held fundraisers for their chosen charity.

We look forward to seeing

how they get on when they represent the club at the final celebration event in London later on this year.

As lessons are currently unable to take place, our PL Inspires team have compiled activities to try at home.

We have been posting resilient 'moves' across our social media platform and the activities suggested so far are: Plan Out Your Future, Be Responsible, Exercise and Fresh Air.

For more activities please visit [www.BFCCT.co.uk](http://www.BFCCT.co.uk) or follow BFCCT on social media.



Pupils have taken part in the 'PL Inspires' initiative