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**If I wasn't at Friday Night Lights  
I'd probably be out causing  
trouble with my friends, maybe  
drinking or shoplifting**  
*- Local Young Person*

# Friday Night Lights Leith



# Friday Night Lights @ Leith

In March 2023 our Leith Friday Night Lights Project started after community police officers identified an increase in criminal gangs intentionally targeting young people in Leith and the surrounding areas to undertake organised crime, as well as other anti-social behaviour. Lead organisation YMCA Edinburgh and partner Pilmeny Development Project also identified a gap in prevention activities managed by youth work organisations on a Friday night. Our Friday Night Lights Project was created using sport and physical activity as the hook and aimed at young people aged 9-14 identified as 'at risk' of committing crime. These young people are referred to attend by the community police officers, local youth work organisations and Leith Academy, who all work closely with the young people already.

Food is provided at the beginning of sessions which allows space to connect with the group and build vital relationships. This is followed by physical activity and sport led by four local youth workers from YMCA Edinburgh and Pilmeny Development Project and supported by local clubs and facilities. Young people who require additional support are directed to further local support, and a mentoring project provided by YMCA Edinburgh. Local community police officers attend sessions to build relationships, rapport, and trust with the young people.

We are thankful the project has been funded through 2024-2025 by Places for People Scotland and Leith Community Fund. 2024 saw the project located at Hibernian Community Foundation and Lochend Football Academy before a move to Leith Community Centre in January 2025. Football was our main sport while at Lochend and remains at the community centre. The indoor space has allowed us to also introduce basketball, badminton and tennis. The average attendance is currently 15 which is a drop from 22 before the facility move. This number is steadily increasing as referrals are received from Leith Academy and local youth work organisations. A success this year is the development of Solomon from a previous project participant into an employed youth worker. We continue to have a strong relationship with the community police, and the relationships and impact our project team has on the young people involved can be seen in the evaluation below.



Meet Solomon

Click to view our project video



# Friday Night Lights Evaluation 2024-2025

Click to view the  
SportFirst Article



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This project allowed an on-site intervention that was the best community police intervention I've undertaken in my 6 years of policing

—  
- community police

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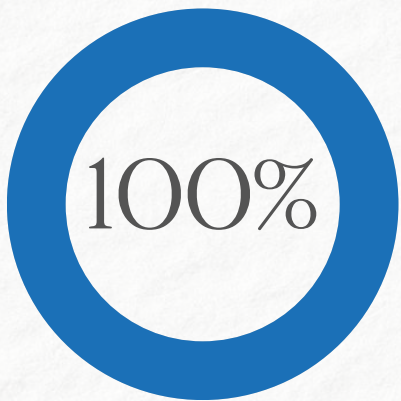


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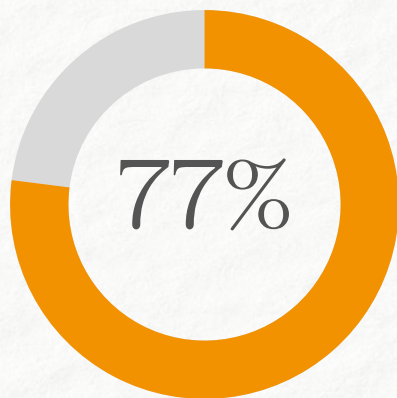
If I wasn't here I'd probably be out with my pals causing trouble

—  
- local young person

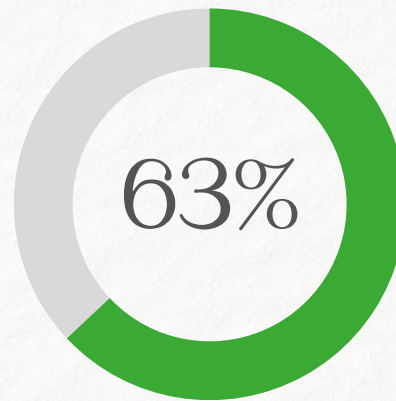
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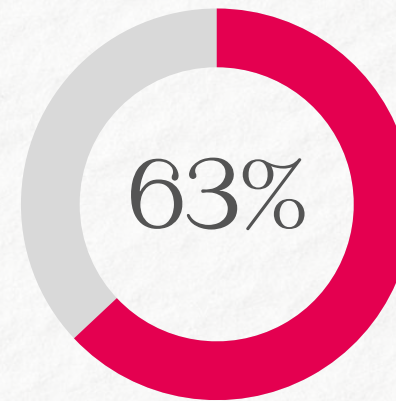
feel positive about their wellbeing and are very happy when attending FNL



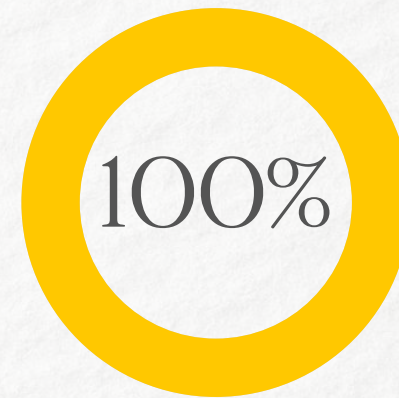
would be on the streets or doing nothing if FNL wasn't available



feel more confident



feel their involvement in anti-social behaviour has reduced since attending FNL



fell more connected to the local area

# Friday Night Lights Evaluation 2024-2025



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There is an increasing need for more contact time with local young people. We consistently hear from the project participants of the need for more things to do, and we see and hear what they do when not involved in Friday Night Lights

- project worker

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Click to view our  
STV footage



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In early 2024 local police were actively searching for a missing young person, happily he was found safely. One of this project's youth workers was the only person this young person confided in post incident.

Our worker spent 1-2-1 time, and from these conversations it transpired the young person was 'at risk' of child exploitation from local gangs. Our worker was the first to identify this and was able to support, and find additional support for the young person going forward.

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