

Stoke Mandeville Stadium Guttmann Centre

Birthplace of the Paralympics



Creating Futures Through Leisure Careers

Fit for the Future: Leisure
Careers Impact Report



About Fit for the Future

Fit for the Future: Leisure Careers is a collaborative programme designed to address the lack of structured pathways into employment within the sport, physical activity and leisure sector for young people. Delivered through partnership with local employers, education providers and system leaders, the programme responds directly to identified workforce gaps and the need to diversify and strengthen the local talent pipeline. The programme provides meaningful, inclusive opportunities for young people, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, to access the skills, experience and networks required to progress into employment.



The programme has a set of clear, outcome-focused objectives:

- Increase access to high-quality work experience opportunities
- Improve employability skills and readiness for work
- Raise aspirations and awareness of careers in the leisure sector
- Tackle inequalities in access to career pathways
- Support employers to engage, develop and recruit future workforce talent

Fit for the Future is delivered through an employer-led model that combines practical experience with structured learning. Young people on the programme can:

- Shadow departments within leisure settings
- Undergo accredited training (e.g. first aid)
- Employability workshops including CV writing and interview preparation
- Be exposed to inclusive and community focused environments

Addressing Inequalities:

A core principle of Fit for the Future is improving access for young people who may face structural or personal barriers to opportunity.

Through targeted recruitment and partnership with schools and support services, the programme prioritises inclusion and representation. Delivery is designed to be supportive, accessible and responsive to individual needs.

By creating equitable access to experience and employment pathways, the programme contributes to a more representative workforce and supports wider objectives around social mobility and health inequalities.



Breaking Down Barriers to Opportunity

Ensuring Every Young Person Has a Route Into Employment

For many young people, the journey into employment is not straightforward. Limited awareness of career options, low confidence, lack of workplace experience and unequal access to opportunities can create barriers to entering the workforce. At the same time, leisure providers face ongoing challenges in attracting and developing the next generation of talent. Fit for the Future was created to bridge this gap, connecting young people with meaningful opportunities while helping employers build a stronger, more representative workforce.

Current Barriers:

- Lack of structured career pathways
- Limited sector awareness
- Low confidence
- Workforce shortages

Programmes response:

Through targeted support, practical learning and strong partnership working, the programme helps remove these barriers and create clear routes into employment.



Employer-Led Experiences:

Young people gain first-hand insight into the day-to-day reality of working within leisure and physical activity settings.



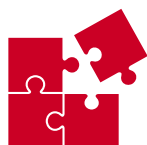
Practical Skills Development

Workshops and accredited training help participants build the confidence and skills employers are looking for.



Inclusive and Supportive Environments

The programme is designed to be accessible, welcoming and responsive to individual needs, ensuring every participant can thrive.



Meaningful Connections

Participants develop relationships with employers, mentors and professionals who can support their future aspirations and career goals.



Daisy's Story

Case Study

An achievement of the programme has been the successful progression of a participant from our first cohort (July 2025) into paid employment as a lifeguard within the center.

Daisy Jacobs, pictured second from the right.

Daisy joined the programme with limited awareness of opportunities within the sector and low confidence in her abilities. About to begin her GCSE's she was experiencing the pressures of what these exams bring. This programme gave her the room needed to grow and develop and believe in herself! Through engagement in practical sessions, workplace shadowing and employability support, she developed key skills including communication, teamwork and customer service. The experience provided direct exposure to the working environment and expectations of a leisure center, increasing both motivation and confidence.

Following completion of the programme, Daisy has secured a lifeguard role with More Leisure, demonstrating the programme's effectiveness in supporting progression from engagement to employment. This reflects the programme's ability to deliver meaningful, long-term outcomes beyond initial engagement.

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“We are beyond proud of Daisy for not only her efforts, but for her wonderful achievements too. We know that she will be an amazing lifeguard and a great employee. Keep on shining very bright Daisy.”

**Amber Harrison, Raising Achievement Officer and Head of Year 11,
The Mandeville School**

What does the team say about the programme and Daisy's success?

"I'm incredibly proud of Daisy and everything she has achieved. Her commitment to both school and the programme really shone through, and her work ethic is outstanding. She truly embodies the values we champion at Leap and on the programme, opportunity, inclusion and growth. Her journey is a clear example of what Fit for the Future is all about: creating meaningful pathways that help young people realise their potential".



Anya Forbes-Phyall, Programme Lead, Leap



"The programme provided a clear structure and promoted inclusion, ensuring that both the young people and we as the operator had well-defined expectations. The intended outcomes were established from the outset, and the insights gained will be used to enhance the offer moving forward, making a typical day at the leisure centre more engaging and accessible. Partnership working allowed us to draw on a diverse range of skills, enabling us to allocate preparation tasks effectively and align responsibilities with individual expertise across different elements of the programme.

During the practical exercise in the pool, it became evident that Daisy demonstrated both enthusiasm and capability, indicating strong potential to train for a lifeguard role. Working in partnership with Leap, allowed us to develop a more structured and meaningful approach to delivering work experience. This allowed the workload to be shared across organisations, allowing those attending the programme to experience a more diverse and holistic programme."

Charlotte TW & Phill Mould, More Leisure



"The Fit for the Future programme was beneficial in helping Daisy secure her role, as it reduced her initial apprehension and allowed her to become familiar with the site, staff, and environment. While her confidence is still developing, particularly with new people and tasks, she grows more assured once she gains experience and works well within a team when she feels comfortable. The partnership approach bettered the overall experience, making it more meaningful and engaging for the young people involved. Daisy has other passions but shows potential to progress within the leisure sector and use her talents in various roles. This has provided a strong starting point for her future development."

Kimberley Jacobs, Daisy's Mother, and Employee, More Leisure



“With the capacity to work at both individual and group levels, the Leap work experience projects can be tailored to support specific needs over the week. This leads to more meaningful experiences for all the students, providing greater impact on them and their next steps!”



Caroline Cooper, Buckinghamshire Skills Hub



“I feel very privileged and honoured to have been fortunate enough to support the Fit for the Futures: Leisure Careers work experience back in July 2025 with Leap work experience. Especially to be supporting disability and inclusion within education. I love the platform and what it stands for. Anya went above and beyond to support our students and staff, really representing Leap's values and goals. This programme and Anya were invaluable to our students/cohort. They enabled our students to build positive professional relationships, create a CV alongside professional mentors, gain first aid knowledge/experience/qualification, as well as secure a reference for further education and employment. This is what makes the work experience programme from Leap so invaluable and important to our young people, it sets them up for their future and for success”.

Amber Harrison, Raising Achievement Officer and Head of Year 11, The Mandeville School

Fit for the Future: Leisure Careers demonstrates the value of collaborative approaches in creating meaningful pathways into employment. The programme not only supports individual progression, as evidenced by successful transitions into roles such as lifeguarding, but also contributes to wider system change by strengthening the local workforce and improving access to opportunity. Through continued partnership and investment, the programme has the potential to deliver sustained impact aligned with strategic priorities across health, skills and inequality reduction.

To find out more about the Fit for the Future: Leisure Careers programme, visit: leapwithus.org.uk/fit-for-the-future-leisure-careers-a-new-era/

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