

Testing & Learning Gamification in Essex

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Prepared by
The Active Essex
Insight & Evaluation Team



Gamification is the use of technology to turn walking, running or cycling around a local community into a game. Active Essex has been working with Intelligent Health (creators of Beat the Street) and Street Tag to test this concept, create an evidence base and understand the range of outcomes that delivering these games can lead to.

In Essex, Sport England Local Delivery Pilot funding has enabled games to be tested in Basildon, Colchester and Tendring in a range of settings including community, workplaces and care homes.

We have been impressed with the outcomes seen as a result of investing in these games and are excited to share our findings.

The Essex LDP has demonstrated that both Street Tag and Beat the Street games can increase and sustain levels of physical activity in deprived areas. We will be including both games in our plans for supporting the Sport England place expansion over the coming years.

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Gamification is another example of the Essex Local Delivery Pilot looking to 'do things differently'. It has been positive to see how the approach has connected and engaged people of all ages and abilities, in an accessible, convenient, and importantly, fun way. We were pleased to see not only the impact that participation had on individuals, but also the data that has been captured showing the collective reach of the project, with over 10,000 players participating, and the learning from this report is likely to be of interest to other places across the country.

Marie Hartley, Place Relationships Manager

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Basildon
Street Tag
Launched
June '20

Colchester
Street Tag
Launched
March '21

Clacton
Street Tag
Launched
July '21

Harwich &
Dovercourt
Beat the Street
Game
Sept '21

Clacton &
Jaywick
Beat the Street
Game
June '22

Harwich and
Walton
Street Tag
Launched
June '22

Impact of Beat the Street and Street Tag in Essex

1,893,941

miles covered

11,621

players

572,567

kg CO2 saved

Engage Deprived Communities

Up to 91% of players live in IMD 1-4 and up to 51% live in IMD 1-2

Engage Inactive People

Up to 33% of adults are inactive and up to 46% of children are less active at the start of games

Community Connection

Players reported making new friends, becoming aware of local community groups and seeing their area more positively



More Active Adults and Children

Up to 57% of inactive adults become active
Up to 49% of less active children become active

Improved Wellbeing

Playing led to increases in happiness and worthwhile and decreases in anxiety

Long-term Behaviour Change

45% of players who were inactive before the Harwich & Dovercourt Beat the Street game were active 6 months later

Beat the Street

Beat the Street is a six-week game where residents are encouraged to explore their local area by tapping cards and fobs against Beat Boxes distributed across their town. Players are rewarded with points, can create teams and earn prizes depending on how far they run, walk or cycle.

- Games typically last 4-6 weeks, with 2 leaderboards - one for schools and the other for the community
- For additional points, players can also play with an app
- Works at scale, usually engaging between 10-13% of the population

Street Tag

Street Tag uses virtual tags so teams can collect points on the app by moving into a location with a tag. Teams can be formed by schools, workplaces, families and friendship groups, with a live leaderboard and rewards and prizes.

- Games typically last 12-14 weeks
- Virtual tags are placed around the community
- Participants can instantly generate tags in areas with no tags
- Average number of players over the course of the game for schools is 1,555 and for the community leaderboard, 486





Participation at scale

Typically 10% of a local population take part



Tackling Core20PLUS inequalities

26% of registered participants were from the top 20% most deprived neighbourhoods

31% of adult participants have a long-term condition or disability



Social Cohesion

Social cohesion increased from 1% to 17% after one game



Supporting the high street

40% of residents travelled to the town centre specifically to play Beat the Street and visited a range of local attractions and businesses



Increasing active travel

53% reduction in traffic outside schools

Planning (3 - 9 months)

- Build a collaborative steering group with representatives from multiple sectors and agree a shared purpose
- Plan locations that support active travel, leisure activities in parks and along waterways and draw people into the town centre.
- Engage key groups including schools, community groups and workplaces

Game (4-6 weeks)

- People register and their individual dashboard shows individual and team performance, maps, events, rules, downloadable activities and Leaderboards.
- Players travel around their locality, collecting points using a game card or app, to boost their individual and team scores.
- Players are incentivised to win individual or community prizes for their school and workplace.
- Each week has a different theme with content based around the five ways to wellbeing and supports motivations to get active.

Legacy (2 - 3 months +)

- When the game ends, Intelligent Health provide bespoke reports including qualitative and quantitative analysis from players.
- Signpost players to existing local organisations and services to help sustain their new activity levels.



Example Costs

Harwich & Dovercourt game engaged 2,817 players and cost a total of £39,683



Planning (1-2 months)

Leaderboard Seasons (3 months x 4)

Two seasons for schools and two seasons for the community, both the schools and community leaderboards can run back to back or a short break period of up to 10 weeks can take place in-between the two seasons. All toolkits and resources are provided to the school

Data Reporting (1-3 months)

- Monthly - Automated stats that will come straight into your email to include: Total Steps, Total Tags Collected, Total Miles, Total number of players etc
- End Of Season (within 2 months after season 1 of 2) - An in-depth report produced by our data science team.
- Yearly (covering all the 2 seasons) - An in-depth report produced by our data science team.
- We use Sport England's Active Lives questions to capture a baseline for every user and follow up bi-monthly.

Virtual tags are placed in popular walking routes and areas with green space to encourage participatory and physical activities. Families walk, run or cycle to virtual tags which are placed on the interface of the apps.

Virtual Tags are worth an average of 50 points per tag. Once a user is within a 40-meter radius of a tag, the user will receive the points value of the tag. The points help the user's team to move up the community, school or workplace leaderboard. Tags change colour to red once they have been collected, and cannot be collected again for another hour, thus encouraging the user to explore other tags around that are not yet collected.

Users can also sync their step counts into the app, the Street Tag app will automatically convert the steps into additional points towards the team total score. At the end of the leaderboard season (12 to 14 weeks long), the top 15 teams are given performance bonus prizes for the community leaderboard, and the top 3 school teams receive prizes for the school's leaderboard. The positions on the leaderboard that receive prizes are flexible and subject to change.

In Essex, 63% of our users reported to have used the Street Tag app to increase their physical activity levels, and 25% reported spending more time with their family and friends.

Our focus on reaching residents in highly deprived areas has been successful, with 57.41% of our Essex users residing in high-deprivation areas (IMD 1-5).



The cost of a 1 year programme with multiple leaderboard seasons is £55,000 (excl VAT) including prizes.

An unlimited number of primary schools and an unlimited number of community users.



Andrew is a keen cyclist and has seen the benefits of cycling on his mental health and wellbeing. Andrew enjoys a challenge and when he heard about Beat the Street he set himself the goal of topping the leaderboard.

Andrew joined a team with other Essex Pedal Power bike recipients. He really enjoyed meeting people each day, chatting at boxes and cycling together. Playing Beat the Street enabled him to build friendships, while also having some healthy competition with those trying to 'keep up'!

“ You know it has increased my social side massively, I think that’s the biggest gain I had from it. ”

Friars Grove Primary School embraced Street Tag as a way of bringing the school community together. They have seen many families get out in the local community both walking and on bikes to get points for the school.

There have been many success stories including weight loss, lower blood pressure, mental health improvements and children taking up other opportunities to be physically active.



Lorraine heard about Beat the Street through her connections with the local Parkrun. Lorraine felt playing had offered more benefits than just increasing how active she was. She felt playing had led to local groups meeting, connecting-up the community, which may not have happened without everyone’s involvement in the game. Lorraine also explored more of the local area, visiting places she may not have usually gone.

“ It made us go out and do lots, me and my husband did lots of walking which we probably wouldn’t have done. Our team was quite competitive so you felt like you had to up your game a little bit, to make sure you were doing your bit. ”





Street Tag's MOVE IT is designed for care homes to help get residents up-and-moving. "MoveBoxes" were placed at specific locations within the care home, which residents then tagged with a lanyard, earning points, winning pin badges and climbing the leader board.

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The scheme has shown significant improvement with residents' mobility. Their spirits have been lifted and their determination to walk that little bit further each day has been inspiring. Seeing them actively engaging and participating through their own free will is so rewarding and satisfying to see – especially one resident who chose not to leave her room at all prior to the scheme being in place.

(Care Home Wellbeing Lead)

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Learnings

- 1 Allow sufficient time for planning
- 2 Identify a local coordinator
- 3 Engage with the community early
- 4 Schools are key
- 5 Create a buzz
- 6 Use the game to link to other services and opportunities



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