

Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Football Project

As part of the continued partnership work between Croydon's Sustainable Communities team, the Crystal Palace FC Foundation and Croydon's Disability youth project, the two disability weekly football coaching sessions continue to go from strength to strength.



These football coaching sessions are for young people aged 11-18 with learning difficulties, disabilities and additional needs. Over 30 young people with varying abilities are now receiving regular football coaching at Bensham Manor School youth club in Thornton Heath on Mondays and at Waddon Leisure Centre on Tuesdays. Young people attend from across the borough and the groups are not exclusively for those who live or go to school in that area.

Apart from the fun and enjoyment these young people gain from participating, other developments have seen them gain in confidence, improve their fitness levels, learn to be part of a team and even seen a few grow into potential leaders and future mentors to the younger members.

Through this project, one young man has discovered he has real ability and has been scouted to take part in CPFC Foundation's disability adult team whilst the 2 young men in the photo (who were not really into football before the coaching began) have improved so much, they've been included in Bensham Manor School's football team.

Their efforts were rewarded recently with a trip to the Copper Box at the Olympic Park to take part in a 5-a-side football tournament. Representing Crystal Palace they showed off their skills against other teams of similar ability including Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur, Charlton Athletic and Queens Park Rangers.

For further information on these football coaching sessions, and other youth club activities aimed at children and young people aged 8-25 with disabilities and additional needs, please contact paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk Tel no. 07990 790 183 or check out the link - <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs/sen-leisure>