



**EMERGING
CLUB
LEADERS**



BUCS
British Universities
and Colleges Sport

EMERGING CLUB LEADERS IMPACT REPORT

This report provides an overview of the impact of the
BUCS and FA Emerging Club Leaders programme
2024/25 pilot.



CREAS
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INTRODUCTION TO THE EMERGING CLUB LEADERS PROGRAMME

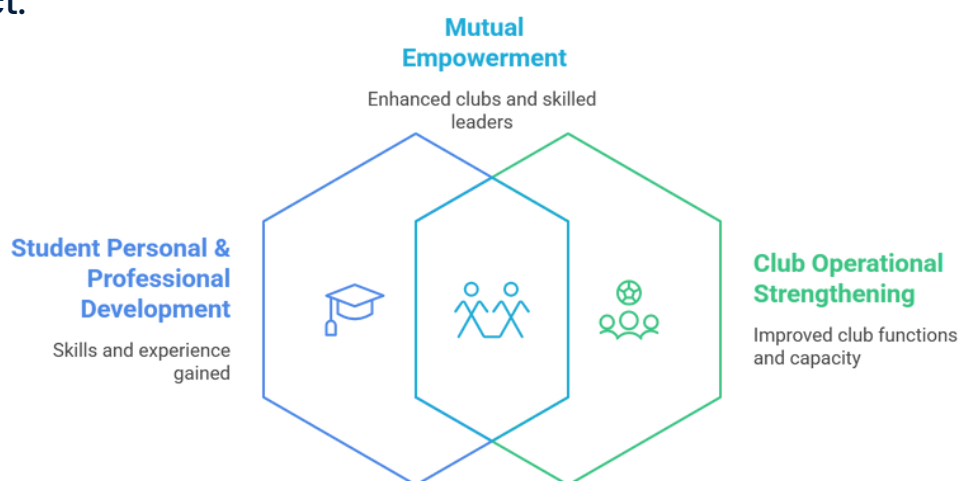
The Emerging Club Leaders pilot programme, delivered by BUCS, has been designed to support and upskill student leaders to complete a volunteer placement in non-league football clubs. Through a series of workshops, mentoring, and their club placements, the programme aimed to strengthen the club workforce and build a greater affinity to volunteering in football across the student network.

Below is a map of the universities and football clubs that took part in the pilot year of the programme:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

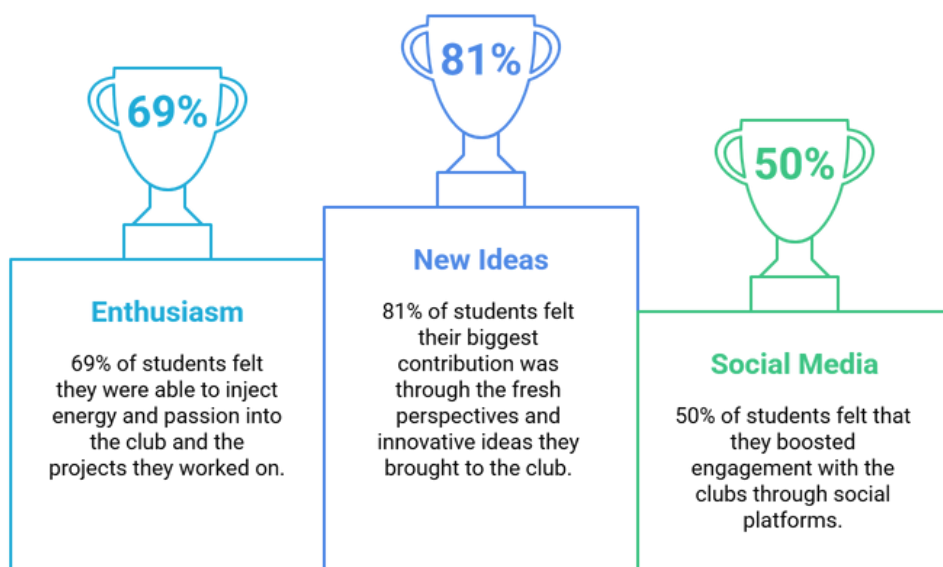
The Emerging Club Leaders programme, delivered in collaboration with BUCS and The FA, has made a profound impact on students, clubs, and the wider football community. With over 1,250 hours of volunteer work logged across a network of non-league clubs, the initiative provided meaningful real world experiences that not only strengthened club operations but also significantly contributed to participants' personal and professional development. This report outlines the programme's achievements, participant contributions, skills development, and long-term impact.



STUDENT IMPACT AND CLUB CONTRIBUTIONS

1250+ reported hours were contributed across the network of non-league clubs by the Emerging Club Leaders students.

100% of students felt that they had a positive impact on their host club through the time they invested and the tasks they took on.



STUDENT IMPACT AND CLUB CONTRIBUTIONS

Participants focused heavily on creative input and digital engagement, while fewer contributed to operations, partnerships, or revenue, suggesting their greatest value was in the energy and innovation they brought into the club.

Social Media Growth & Engagement

Many participants were instrumental in enhancing their clubs' digital presence:

*"We got 150K views across the new TikTok account."
"Created the TikTok account" or "started up a TikTok account for the club."
"Increased followers, views, and engagement on Instagram and X."*

Marketing, Communications & Promotion

Participants led creative campaigns to improve club visibility:

- Designed posters and infographics.
- Launched supporter email newsletters.
- Promoted new food and beverage offerings.

Fundraising & Sponsorship

Participants also contributed to commercial growth:

- One participant raised £500+ via GoFundMe.
- Organised sponsorship events within a set budget.
- Developed sponsorship tracking systems.

Matchday & Community Operations

Involvement from students included:

- Supporting matchday logistics.
- Supporting the set up of charity match days.
- Attending board meetings and community days.

Volunteer Infrastructure & Capacity Building

Some student volunteers helped strengthen internal systems:

- Created volunteer induction packs.
- Wrote volunteer role descriptions.

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE AND PROGRAMME SATISFACTION

100% of participants would recommend the Emerging Club Leaders programme to fellow students.

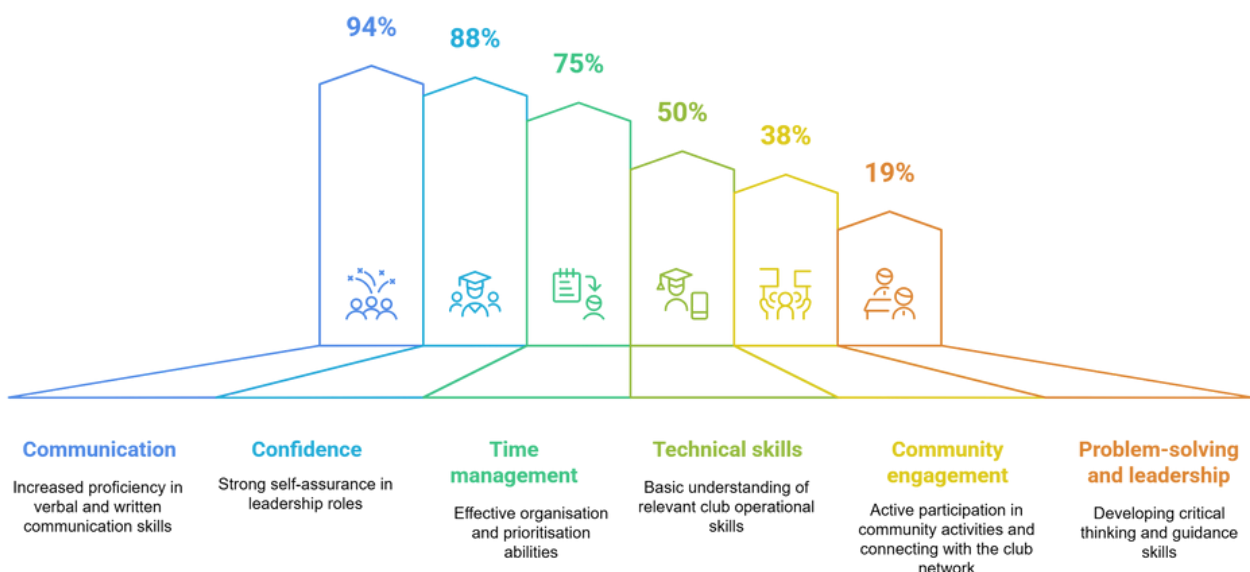
94% of students agreed that the programme either met or exceeded expectations.

"It's been great experiencing the operations within a real football club."

"I got further opportunities to work pitch side across other clubs too, thanks to the connections I made through this programme."

Skill Development

Students reported developing a number of skills throughout the process of completing the programme...



Career Confidence and Employability

81% of participants believe that the skills they have developed through this programme will benefit their future careers.

A number of participants have reported using this club placement programme to secure year-long placements and secure interviews.

"This programme helped me get a job... I spoke about my volunteering at the club and I believe that made the difference."

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE AND PROGRAMME SATISFACTION

Memorable Moments

Participants shared a mix of impactful, educational, and celebratory experiences:

Viral TikTok success

Building new friendships and professional connections

*Matchday thrills "3-2 comebacks"
"90+ min goals"*

Attending masterclasses, board meetings and away days

Ongoing Commitment to Volunteering in Football

75%

of participants want to continue volunteering in football beyond the programme.

100%

of participants have shared that they are going to remain involved in football in some capacity following their role in the programme.

"I'd love to keep building my portfolio with the club. I like the people. I feel a part of something here."

Programme Workshops & Learning

100%

of participants found the sessions delivered by BUCS and the club consultants very helpful.

They thought the sessions offered a great place for networking, idea generation and understanding their own roles with the club.

"Great to network with amazing people in industry."

"Helped to explain our roles and generate new ideas."

IMPACT ON CLUBS

Two of the clubs involved in the Emerging Club Leaders programme shared more about the impact the student volunteers had in their environments.

Both clubs shared that...

- The Emerging Club Leaders programme met their expectations.
- They would recommend the programme to other clubs.
- They would like to host more students next season, and have offered for some of their current Emerging Club Leaders students to stay on beyond the programme.

"The students provided much-needed support for our club but also helped generate new ideas."

Both clubs also agreed that the programme...

*Supported them to gain new ideas
and perspectives*

Had a positive impact on their club

*Is a good way to attract new
volunteers*

*Is a worthwhile investment of their
time and resources*

"The students were able to gather feedback from spectators which we then used to make some changes."

Overall, the programme had a meaningful and largely positive impact on the participating clubs, offering both practical, hands-on support as well as fresh perspectives. Students contributed across multiple areas within the clubs, from media & communications to community engagement and facility support, helping clubs to increase their capacity and trial new ideas. Crucially the pilot has demonstrated for clubs that with the right support, student placements could be the way forward to a sustainable pipeline of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers.

EMERGING CLUB LEADERS CASE STUDIES

Woody Ford

Media and Marketing Officer at Ashton United Football Club

Woody Ford, is a first-year Sports Media and Communications student at UA92, having transitioned from a football academy background he is now aiming to pursue a career in sports media. With previous volunteer experience at Walsall's media team, Woody sought opportunities to develop his professional skills in football media through the Emerging Club Leaders programme, alongside his academic studies.

Key Achievements on the Programme

- Created and grew the club's TikTok account, generating over 60,000 views
- Developed new design templates for match day social media posts
- Implemented weekly match day round-up videos
- Participated in board meetings and club strategic discussions
- Supported club marketing efforts, including partnerships with local organisations



"Within a non league club, the freedom to explore and do so much feels easier... they're much more relaxed, and it's easier to speak to people and just get involved in a higher level than I potentially would else where."

"It's definitely encouraged me to volunteer even further and provide all the skills I have to a club like Ashton United... It's made me a much better person, and has set me in good stead to go into the industry I want to go into."

EMERGING CLUB LEADERS CASE STUDIES

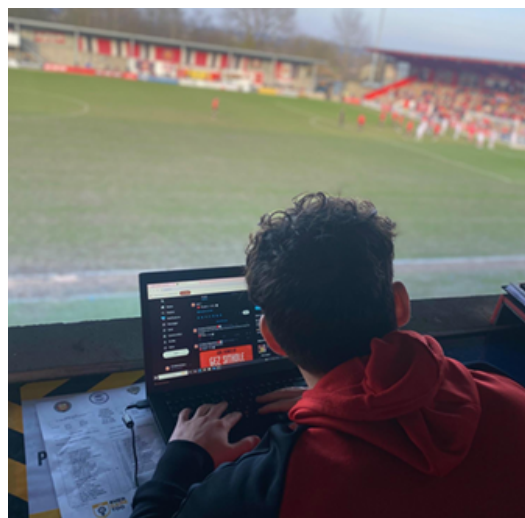
Daniel Atkinson

Media and Marketing Officer at FC United of Manchester

Daniel, a passionate Leicester City fan and aspiring sports media professional, joined the BUCS Emerging Leaders programme with a clear goal of gaining practical experience in football media. With prior experience in local radio and social media, Daniel sought an opportunity to develop his skills in a non-league football club environment.

Key Achievements on the Programme

- Conducted 8 player and manager interviews
- Managed Twitter updates for match days
- Developed content for the club's bi-weekly marketing email
- Created video content and interview series
- Integrated into the club's communications committee



"I am keen to stay on with the club and they are happy to have me for another year. So by the end of uni, I'll have two and three-quarter years at a football club to be able to go to people and say here's a huge array of what I can do, on top of my uni assignments."

"It's been amazing. It's helped in every aspect that I could imagine. It's given me a huge portfolio of content to be able to show to people, interviewing skills, Twitter updates. What all the students have done this year... It's really been amazing. I couldn't imagine many clubs at this level who wouldn't want the extra help."

EMERGING CLUB LEADERS CASE STUDIES

Nathan Hopkins

Sponsor and Fundraising Officer at Bedfont Sports FC

Nathan, a second-year law student with an interest in football, participated in the BUCS Emerging Leaders programme, seeking to bridge his academic background with sports administration looking ahead to his future career aspirations in the game.

Key Achievements on the Programme

- Supported the organisation of the first-ever sponsorship comedy evening for club sponsors
- Developed innovative marketing materials, including custom beer mat invitations
- Collaborated with fellow university students to support club operations on matchdays

"I think it's definitely taught me how important volunteering is. I think every role is so important, before we went to the club, it was literally just two or three people who had to do everything."

Lola Arribas Rodríguez

Fan Experience Officer at Liverpool Feds

Lola is a student who had initial hesitations regarding the programme due to prior experiences in men's football. However, her perspective of football transformed during the Lionesses successful Euros campaign which has sparked a passionate journey into the women's game. Leading her to support Liverpool Feds through the Emerging Club Leaders programme.

Key Achievements on the Programme

- Sold 50 additional match tickets in just two days
- Networked with ex-players and industry professionals
- Developed coaching and administrative skills
- Expanded understanding of grassroots football operations

"I couldn't have imagined where I am right now... It's been career changing and life changing. My perspective on volunteering has changed, I used to think I'm working for free, but now I think I'm actually getting the opportunity to grow professionally."

"I've always been told the more you put in, the more you get back. But I've honestly felt like I've gotten back a lot more from this programme"

EMERGING CLUB LEADERS CASE STUDIES

Daniel Adesina

Facilities Officer at Darlington Town FC

Daniel Adesina, a Sports Business Management student, has a lifelong passion for football, and participated in the BUCS Emerging Leaders programme in order to gain practical experience in sports management.

Key Achievements on the Programme

- Improved the facility booking process by creating a place on the website to enquire
- Enhanced club brand recognition by knocking on doors locally and advertising the club and their birthday party offer
- Created new facility offers to bring in additional income for the club when the facility would normally not be in use

"Without experiencing it, you don't know if you will know how to deal with the pressures a football environment can bring. You need to find creative solutions. You need to be the one to work through it, make those decisions and find creative ways on how to build the business. This role has given me an insight to that."

Liverpool Feds FC

The Emerging Club Leaders programme had a highly positive impact on Liverpool Feds FC, sharing it met all their expectations, and with the club describing the experience as "inspiring."

Students took on lead roles in matchday operations and played a key part in community liaison work. They actively gathered feedback from spectators, which provided the club with valuable insights and informed operational changes.

Two new initiatives were directly organised by the students, demonstrating their ability to take initiative and contribute meaningfully. The club praised the students not only for providing much-needed support but also for generating fresh ideas that enhanced the matchday experience.

EMERGING CLUB LEADERS CASE STUDIES

Ashton United FC

Ashton United FC had a largely positive experience through their involvement in the Emerging Club Leaders programme. Students supported a wide range of club functions including community engagement, customer service, communications, and marketing, as well as stepping into any task the club could offer.

In the early stages, students were still finding their feet, developing confidence and learning how to contribute effectively, but their involvement quickly became a valuable asset. The students created copy for programmes and the club website, took on matchday media roles, assisted with fan engagement, and supported community initiatives.

Overall, the placement was seen as a meaningful contribution to the club, adding extra hands and fresh energy to day-to-day operations.

CONCLUSION

From all of the data shared throughout this report, the Emerging Club Leaders programme has proven to be a powerful entry point into the football industry for students, offering authentic club experiences, confidence building, and laying a strong foundation for career development. Through creative projects, operational support, and volunteer capacity-building, participants added significant value to their host clubs, all whilst strengthening their affinity to volunteer within football both now and in the future. The overwhelmingly positive feedback highlights the programme's success this season, as well as the potential for continued growth in the years ahead.