

Adult Learners Week Winners from the Eastern Region

National Opening Doors to Adult Learners Award Winner

Street Life Soccer, run by Blue Cat Initiative and Football in the Community, began as a workshop at Norwich's main homeless hostel three years ago, and has since seen more than 200 homeless and vulnerable learners step out onto the football pitch.

Working with Norwich City Football Club's Football in the Community team, Street Life Soccer now runs daily Team Talk sessions of learning and a further hour of football coaching. Many of the learners have gained a first qualification and some have gone on to become coaches.

An example of the success of this programme can be seen in another winner: Michael Douglas - the East of England Outstanding Lerner of the Year. After a difficult start in life, Michael realised he was going off the rails in his twenties and sought help, completing a course of cognitive behavioural therapy and gaining accommodation with the YMCA in Norwich. Homeless and on Job Seekers' Allowance, Michael took the decision to join Street Life Soccer in September 2007, despite a 13-year break from education.

Michael completed the 30-week Street Life Soccer course and received four Open College Network progression qualifications in team-working, decision-making, communication and personal development.

The coaches recommended him for further training and he took the FA Level 1 Coaching qualification and the Level 1 OCN certificate in mentoring with the Norfolk Volunteer Service. Since September 2008, Michael has used his skills to support new students at Street Life Soccer and has also worked as a volunteer with Football in the Community coaching children. He has got two part-time jobs – with NCFE and another as a support worker for the YMCA.



Michael Douglas receives his award from HRH Princess Anne.