

UNDERSTANDING THE MOTIVATIONS & NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN WALES

sportwales
chwaraeoncymsu



PHASE 1 – DESK RESEARCH SUMMARY PAPER
PREPARED BY STREETGAMES FOR SPORT WALES
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BACKGROUND CONTEXT

National surveys analysing sports participation trends¹² in Wales reveal that rates of participation have remained largely static over recent years and that age, gender, disability and Welsh speaking characteristics are associated with varying participation rates. The impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown restrictions have impacted further with surveys³ undertaken at five different points during the Pandemic showing, that overall sports/physical activity levels have remained broadly static, but with some groups (including children, older adults and those from lower socio-economic groups tending to take part in less sport/physical activity than they had previously done.

Against this backdrop of stubborn participation levels, there is a strong desire amongst the people of Wales to be inspired to be active through sport. From people who don't see themselves as sporty to those who want to go on and win medals. There is a desire for a vision for sport in Wales, which responds to the needs of the individual at different stages of their lives and focuses upon creating a wide range of positive experiences so everyone can enjoy sport.

In response, Sport Wales is working with a range of partners to support participants who are currently less active, to become more active, by looking to understand better, their needs, motivations and the barriers they face in accessing high quality provision.

Working with a collective group of partners, Sport Wales aims to:

- Learn together through using insight and research to understand the challenges the sector faces and what resources are available
- Deliver together through effective collaboration which focuses upon getting the less active, active through innovative and forward-thinking practice and through building capacity
- Celebrate together through sharing successes and monitoring impact through implementing a range of evaluation tools
- Develop a participation pathway for schools and the community
- Utilise partners to create exit routes from one setting into another.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In order to help grow understanding around the motivations and needs of young people in Wales in the Post Pandemic world, StreetGames was commissioned by Sport Wales in February 2022 to undertake a two-phase research project.

¹ The Sport & Active Lifestyles Survey forms part of the National Survey for Wales – the latest results were gathered in 2019-20

² The Schools Sports Survey captures the views of young people – the latest results were gathered in 2018

³ Sport Wales in partnership with Savanta ComRes undertook research with adults in Wales at five different points during the Pandemic between May 2020 – February 2022 to monitor activity levels

Phase one comprised a desk-based review to gain increased understanding in relation to young people's behaviours, views and motivations in relation to sport. The review looked to specifically draw answers to the following questions:

- Whether the sporting offer has changed?
- Whether there is a need to move to a health and wellbeing/non-traditional offer?
- What do young people want and how we gain that insight?
- Why are young people not engaging in the current offer provided to them?

The reports included within this initial desk research phase focused on a number of key insight reports published between 2019-22 that were identified in partnership with Sport Wales (i.e. this was a small-scale, focused desk review rather than an exhaustive academic literature review).

Phase two of this study, which will be undertaken between April – July 2022 involves developing and supporting three groups of young people to act as Peer Researchers who will explore with their peers the key findings from the Phase one desk review; to understand if these findings are reflective of the opinions of young people living in three different communities within Gwent. (See next steps section for further information).

This report provides a summary of the key findings from the Phase one desk review. Summarising the key findings in each of the documents reviewed, what this tells us, in terms of the questions posed above and the potential implications re future sporting offers to be explored further via the Peer Researchers in Phase two.



DESK REVIEW



Plan for all Children and Young People, 2019 – 2022'Children's Commissioner for Wales

Key Findings

Overview: The commissioners plan was developed from three phases of consultation work. Phase 1 included face to face consultation with practitioners and young people. Phase 2 included reviewing national information collected about young people. Phase 3 involved young people, parents/carers and professionals, completing a 'Beth Nwar' survey to seek their views about issues that are important to them.

Mental Health- The mental health of young people was an issue that emerged frequently during the three phases of research. Concerns were raised about the provisions and accessibility of services for young people as well as the impact of social media on children's mental well-being. Findings from the Beth Nwar survey highlighted that 85% of children aged 7 to 11 and 72% of young people aged 11 to 18 stated that having the right support for mental health should be one of the commissioners' priorities. Having the right help for mental health or emotional problems was the most common 'top priority' for both professionals and parents/carers who completed the survey.

Bullying- Bullying in schools was raised as a key concern. It was highlighted that those with protected characteristics were especially

Key Learnings

Do we need to move to a health and wellbeing/non-traditional offer?

Young people stated that activities are needed to help them be happy, healthy and safe. The report mentions some activities young people enjoyed which included mindfulness and doing daily miles. This highlights activities that support general well-being may have become increasingly important to young people.

What do young people want? Young people and professionals frequently discussed the importance of being and feeling safe. The young people mentioned the importance of having people who 'listen to you' and 'look after you'. As safety was placed at such high importance, it would be argued that sports practitioners also need to be able to ensure the young people they are working with feel safe, based on the report this can be achieved by being approachable, listening to young people and setting boundaries. Having safe locations in communities was also identified as being important to young people, which highlights the potential need for sports clubs to act as community safe places.

at risk of being bullied. The Beth Nwar survey results showed that this issue was particularly prevalent amongst children aged 7 to 11 with 40% stating they worry about bullying. Bullying was also a concern to those who accessed the survey for children with additional learning needs with 44% saying they worry about bullying.

Poverty and social inequality- Was another prevalent challenge throughout the research. Those living in rural areas were considered at a disadvantage in terms of accessing services and extra-curricular activities due to poor public transport. Issues were raised facing children from the poorest families including food poverty, limited access to additional support and difficulties affording school trips and uniforms.

Safety- The issue of safety within families and communities was commonly discussed. Young people discussed the importance of family and also having safe play in their communities. The young people discussed specific locations that should feel safe, such as playgrounds, schools, and home. Professionals discussed the importance of keeping children safe from harm and abuse.

Why are young people not engaging in the current offer provided to them? Poverty and social inequality were highlighted as a barrier to participation. Persistent income inequalities remain as a key underlying factor associated with different experiences and outcomes for children. Unless changes are made to eligibility rules for free school meals and implementation of Universal Credit, the prospect for child poverty in Wales are likely to worsen. To engage more young people, barriers to participation such as cost and transport need to be addressed.

The report highlighted that there are a wide range of socio-cultural issues that are affecting young people, such as bullying, mental health, perceived safety and discrimination. Many of these issues are likely to act as a barrier to participating in sport, and therefore the issues must be considered when providing a sporting offer.

In Wales there has been a steady increase in sports participation among children. However, these positives are constantly under threat with local authority funding pressures leading to the closure of some play, youth and leisure services in Wales.



Student Health and Wellbeing in Wales' School Health Research Network 2019/20

Key Findings

Overview: The report presents findings of the School Health Research Network's (SHRN) 2019/20 Student Health and Wellbeing Survey in Wales. Undertaken every two years, the survey provides a regular snapshot of 11-to-16-year olds' health behaviours. The research was undertaken prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, meaning many of the issues discussed below may have become increasingly prevalent since.

Mental Health and well-being- Almost 2 in 5 (39%) young people reported mental health symptoms classed as at least slightly raised, with almost 1 in 5 (19%) reporting 'very high' mental health symptoms. For all groups life satisfaction and mental wellbeing decreased with age and loneliness and mental health symptom's increased with age. Those from less affluent families were more likely to show poorer mental health and well-being.

School Life- Overall, 61% of young people reported liking school and 18% liking school a lot. Liking school declined considerably with age, students in year 7 were almost four times more likely than year 11 students to report liking school a lot. Liking school was socio-economically patterned, with young people from more affluent families more likely than those from poorer families to report liking school a lot.

Physical activity & Diet- Less than 1 in 5 (17%) of young people met the recommended physical activity guidelines of at least 60 minutes per day. The amount of time young people reported spending sitting during their free time on weekdays ranged from none (1%) to 7 or more hours a day (16%), with over half (52%) sitting for at least 4 hours a day.

1 in 2 young people reported eating breakfast every weekday, while around 1 in 4 reported never eating breakfast on weekdays. Breakfast consumption declined with age and increased with family affluence. There was an age-related increase in consumption of sugary soft drinks and energy drinks and a decrease with family affluence.

Relationships- Overall, 1 in 10 young people reported sending someone a sexually explicit image of themselves. Among year 11 students, 1 in 4 reported that they have had sexual intercourse. More than 2 in 5 students in year 11 reported using a condom during their last sexual intercourse. Boys and girls were equally as likely to send sexually explicit images and report having sexual intercourse (In year 11), but less likely than those identified as neither boy nor girl. Boys were more likely than girls to report having used a condom, while young people who identified as neither a boy nor a girl reported much lower levels of condom use (28%). Those from less affluent families were less likely to report using contraception.

Substance and gambling: Current (at least weekly) tobacco smoking was reported by 4% of young people. More than 1 in 5 (22%) young people reported having ever tried an e-cigarette. Over half (54%) of young people reported that they never drink alcohol, while nearly 1 in 10 (8%) drink alcohol at least weekly. Almost 1 in 10 (8%) young people reported having ever used cannabis in their lifetime. Fifteen percent of young people reported having ever used drugs in their lifetime with laughing gas and cannabis the most commonly used

Key Learnings

Is there a need to move to a health and wellbeing/non-traditional offer? Young people continue to face many health challenges and findings indicate that issues persist across a range of health behaviours, including fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity, alcohol consumption and contraceptive use, whilst other behaviours, such as social media use, present new challenges. The report suggests that a wide range of statutory and third sector organisations have remits that explicitly include, or have potential to influence, the health and wellbeing of young people and therefore there should be a focus on health interventions outside of school settings. It would be argued that the sporting sector is in a strong position to influence health behaviours amongst young people, particularly in regards to physical activity levels, highlighting the potential need to move to a health and wellbeing offer.

Why are young people not engaging in the current offer provided to them? The survey results indicated that boys were more likely than girls to meet the daily recommended guidelines of physical activity, as were those who identified as neither boy nor girl. Physical activity levels decreased with age for all groups and increased with family affluence. Highlighting that both gender and lower levels of family affluence can act as a barrier to being physically active.

Increasing use of social media may also play a role in preventing young people engaging in sport. The survey results indicated that 1 in 10 young people were classified as a problematic user of social media. Problematic social media use increased linearly with age up until year 10, before falling in year 11. As well as other factors problematic use of social media was associated with regularly neglecting other activities (e.g., hobbies, sport) due to wanting to use social media. It would be argued that as technology improves these types of issue may become increasingly prevalent amongst young people and become an increasing factor in preventing young people from engaging in sport.

Poor mental health is another factor that is likely to prevent some young people participating in sport/physical activity. Almost 2 in 5 (39%) young people reported mental health symptoms classed as at least slightly raised, with almost 1 in 5 (19%) reporting 'very high' mental health symptoms.

Are there any key specific barriers or issues relating to Females? The survey results highlighted certain issues were more prevalent amongst girls, than boys. On average girls were more likely than boys to have lower life satisfaction, lower mental wellbeing, feel lonely and report elevated mental health symptoms. Despite a similar number of boys and girls reporting to like school a lot, girls were more likely than boys to feel pressure from school work and were less likely to feel accepted by their teachers, feel as though they had a staff member they could confide in, feel like ideas were taken seriously and agree that there is sufficient mental health support at their school for students. Girls were more likely than boys to be classified as a problematic social media user and to have been cyberbullied.

drugs. One in 10 young people reported having spent their own money on gambling activities in the past 7 days, with 'fruit machines' and 'playing cards for money with friends' the most common gambling activities reported. Boys were more likely than girls to use an e-cigarette, drink alcohol once a week, be offered cannabis, use drugs and spend their own money on gambling.

However, many of these issues were far more prevalent amongst young people who identified as neither a boy nor a girl, who had the lowest life satisfaction and mental wellbeing, and were most likely to report elevated mental health symptoms. They also were the least likely to like school a lot, feel accepted and cared for by their teachers, feel like their school had sufficient mental health support, feel as though their ideas are accepted and were most likely to feel pressure from school work.

Many of the issues young people from these gender groups are facing will likely make engaging them in sport and physical activity more complex. Therefore, it is important for practitioners to have a knowledge of the nature challenges outlined.

Physical Activity in Wales in the time of COVID-19 and beyond: What do teachers and young people want and need? March 2021

Key Findings

Overview: Young people and PE practitioners in Wales were invited to complete an online survey that explored the current situation, their attitudes towards being active and what support needs to be in place for the future. In total, 7,269 young people and 121 practitioners completed the survey. Follow up focus groups were also conducted with a sub sample of practitioners, primary and secondary aged young people.

Activity Levels- Very few young people are achieving the Chief Medical Officer guidelines for levels of physical activity despite knowing that exercise and sport are good for them (Only 9% young people are active for 60 minutes or more every day). Some young people have found alternative ways to be active during the pandemic, however many are finding it harder to be physically active. Those who were already less active have been most effected by the pandemic.

Extra-curricular activities- There is concern over the lack of extra-curricular activities available for young people at this time. A large proportion of schools are not providing an extra-curricular sports or physical activity at the moment, this both due to a lack of clear guidance and it not being deemed a priority for schools.

Young people's priorities- Young people want a variety of informal and formal opportunities to be physically active. Particularly they want physical activity to be fun and something they can do with their friends.

Practitioners- Most practitioners are accessing external support to help with curriculum planning, and not all feel prepared. Practitioners are keen for more support, in particular curriculum resources, online resources, and opportunities to network and share practice.

Key Learnings

Is there a need to move to a health and wellbeing/non-traditional offer? A theme that emerged for both primary and secondary students was that they want activities that enable them to have fun with their friends. For primary aged young people team competition was deemed less important as a factor that motivated them to be active. However, when discussed in focus groups, the primary aged young people did acknowledge and enjoy competition, highlighting the importance of understanding each specific cohort and what motivates them. The report recommends having a variety of activities on offer, with a good mixture of traditional and non-traditional sports with sessions varying whether they are focused on skill development or games.

What do young people want and how we gain that insight? Generally young people want more opportunities to be active, as they are aware of the importance of being active and exercising. They also desire the opportunity to do things with their family and friends, which has been amplified by the pandemic.

Young people want the opportunity to succeed and feel a sense of achievement through physical activity, which can be done by providing competition, an individual challenge or just opportunities to feel as though they are succeeding.

Better access to equipment and facilities, both in school and in the community was also given as a factor that would make being active and playing sport better for young people.

The report suggests practitioners should empower young people to shape what their sporting offer looks like and ensure mechanisms are in place to consult young people to understand how their motivation, competence and confidence has changed, in order to provide them with a meaningful offer.

What are the barriers - why are young people not engaging in the current offer provided to them? It was highlighted that many young people have lower levels of fitness and confidence since they returned to sport after lockdowns. This highlights that for some young people changes in levels of competence and confidence since the pandemic could be a key factor that is preventing them from re-engaging in the current offer provided to them.

Are there any key specific barriers or issues relating to Females? Girls were more likely to have found different ways to be active that they prefer during the pandemic (60% girls agree vs 51% boys agree). Boys were more likely to disagree that they were more active (43% boys disagree vs 36% girls disagree). No significant differences between males and females were shown in other survey questions.

StreetGames: Youth Voice 2021

Key Findings

Overview: In March 2021, conversations were held with close to one hundred young people, comprising of doorstep sport participants and volunteers through virtual focus groups and opportunities to complete an online survey.

Local Area- Parks and open spaces were identified as a part of their local area that was particularly important and something they valued.

Key Learnings

Has the sporting offer changed? The young people involved wanted a 'vibrant and varied' offer which involved accessing wider opportunities. There was keen interest, in opportunities to access: holiday activities, play matches/tournaments, group trips and group socials. Some of the participants had previously undertaken similar activities with StreetGames and spoke passionately about how much they enjoyed them, highlighting that young people want more than just to participate in sport sessions.

However, many discussed how parks are often vandalised or inaccessible after certain times.

Mental Health- Concerns were raised around a deterioration in the mental health and well-being of some young people. The role that sport and being active can play in this issue was discussed.

Personal development- The importance of providing personal development opportunities through sport was discussed, via opportunities to help out, volunteer, attend training, gain qualifications and routes into employment.

Is there a need to move to a health and wellbeing/non-traditional offer? The participants discussed how they had been put off by the environment at some traditional sports clubs, as they felt they often had a 'cliquey feel', which they did not see at their Doorstep Sport sessions. They also found coaches could be overly forceful in these environments. They preferred attending sessions with more of a casual nature where they could just 'turn up and play'.

For many of the participants there was interest for personal development opportunities linked to sport. In particular, they wanted opportunities to attend training, qualifications, residential and to take on volunteering and leadership roles.

What do young people want? Generally, the young people wanted more opportunities to be active in their area. They discussed a need for cheaper options to be active, more facilities, more provisions, better access, and safer and tidier areas. They also want opportunities to see their friends and have the 'right' coach delivering their sessions.

Why are young people not engaging in the current offer provided to them? For some young people there were limited provisions within their locality, for others access was an issue, due to price, the activities on offer or a perception of 'not fitting in'. In the online survey 64% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that gyms are too expensive, or only offer contracts with huge commitment.

Are there any key specific barriers or issues relating to Females? Female participants believed that 'cliquey' team mates were more prevalent in female sport and had bad experiences with this in netball teams. The female participants also said having female only sporting opportunities would make them feel more comfortable.



StreetGames: On-line Diary - 3 Waves 2020-21

Key Findings

Overview: The research involved collecting three waves of feedback from some of the young people who have taken part in different community initiatives in Liverpool, Merthyr and Newcastle.

Effects of lockdown- In the first wave of the research the young people discussed being worried about not being active enough due to procrastination. In the second wave the young people reported a lack of motivation to be active due to having no school activities or friends to encourage them. In the final wave most of the respondents involved also shared that lockdown negatively affected their routine and motivation and although on-line and virtual sessions had helped some young people, others shared that they missed the face-to-face contact and opportunities to socialise that 'in person' sessions usually provided, as well as not always having the right equipment or space. However, for most, this meant they were more determined to get into a healthy routine when restrictions eased. Most shared that they would like to be more active than they currently are due to a genuine enjoyment and understanding of the benefits it has.

Young people's priorities- Young people's priorities are currently centred around relationships and personal wellbeing and development. They also shared their inspirations, which typically come predominantly from family and friends, and people who have worked hard (sometimes against the odds) to achieve their dreams.

In lockdown the young people stated that missing family friends and feeling lonely was one of the main challenges and now restrictions have been eased they are especially grateful for the time they get to spend with them. Young people also mentioned physical and mental wellbeing and had an understanding of how they impact each other. They also want more opportunities to practice hobbies and develop themselves personally and academically. The young people valued their community sessions as they contribute to improving their health as well as helping them with confidence, developing skills helping others and becoming part of a community. They also found the sessions improved their self-esteem.

Local Schemes- The majority of the young people believed themselves to be 'as active' or 'more' active than their friends. Most are exercising for more than 2 hours per week, highlighting that local community initiatives have continued to build positive relationships with being active.

Key Learnings

Has the sporting offer changed? The community sessions the respondents attended provided them with a non-pressured environment to facilitate the exploration of new and familiar sports/activities, whilst also helping them to develop essential life skills and giving encouragement to reach their full potential. Throughout the research there was little mention traditional aspects of sport, such as competition, rather sport was seen as vehicle to improve mental and emotional wellbeing, be fitter and healthier, which in turn led to the young people having a more positive outlook on life.

Is there a need to move to a health and wellbeing/non-traditional offer? For these young people, improved physical and mental wellbeing were the main factors motivating them to being involved in sport and physical activity. They discussed how they wanted to be more active as they believed it led to being healthier, having a 'better' lifestyle, escapism, socialising, enjoyment of activity, building confidence and gaining a sense of achievement. Looking at the feedback from the young people it could be argued that the sporting offer should be centred around these factors. The local provisions these young people were part of achieved this by making involvement easy and enjoyable by providing safe, inclusive environments to explore interests. The sport sessions they attended also encouraged them to take part in volunteering, leading or coaching sports and speaking to others of all ages to help develop their social skills. Allowing them to experience this without judgement, helped them realise they can do this in all aspects of their life.

What do young people want and how we gain that insight? Aside from the physical and mental benefits of being active, they wanted to make new friends and meet like-minded people, try new things, have supportive no pressured environments, spend time with friends, have a feeling of community and an opportunity to learn and develop life skills. Making sessions 'easy' to attend was also deemed important. The sessions were considered 'easy' because they were inclusive, had friendly staff, low cost, no requirements or expectations, their friends also attended and it was easy to find out information.

The research recommends giving young people a voice via inclusive research that fits with their lives, understanding what is working well, and exploring what extra support is needed to further optimise a programme. Practically this can be done by tracking a participant's journey over time, reviewing and monitoring data, and completing project reviews and assessments.

What are the barriers – why are young people not engaging in the current offer provided to them? In all three phases of the research the barriers discussed included the weather impacting enthusiasm to take part, friendship groups and their willingness to take part, access (lack of opportunity and cost), their levels of motivation and available time due to other commitments such as study and family and also confidence (fears around skills/abilities) The covid restrictions were also outlined as a main barrier in the second wave of research and not all schemes' surviving lockdown was discussed in the third wave.



StreetGames: Us Girls Wales – Peer Research

Key Findings

Overview: The project offered young females the opportunity to become peer researchers within their communities, across Caerphilly, Powys, Bridgend, Merthyr and Blaenau Gwent.

The research question they were tasked with was: 'What does an attractive sport and physical activity offer look like for girls and young women in a post pandemic world'.

The groups chose to use questionnaires on Google Forms to conduct and analyse their research. Following this, they produced business plans in preparation for their Dragon's Den pitches in February 2022.

SEWSCAP (The South East & Mid Wales Collaborative Construction Framework), the funders for project awarded almost £80,000 of investment to deliver new physical activity/sporting activity sessions aimed at engaging more women and girls in sport and physical activity.

The offer - With this funding, the girls are now working towards putting their business plans into action in their local communities.

These include:

1. Girls only sessions at local leisure centres primarily starting with activities such as swimming, badminton, football and netball. Transport will be provided for girls wanting to attend and flexibility will be maintained throughout to cater to the girls needs.
2. Free girls only sessions providing a range of activities alongside social time, with food and drink available for participants. External partners will also be involved to extend the range of sports on offer e.g., Wales Golf.
3. Weekly girls' sessions available in school and in the community during term time and opportunities for young females to travel elsewhere and participate in new sports during school holidays.
4. Converting a disused room within their organisation into a dance and fitness studio to enable girls to participate in gym, dance, circuits and yoga. This will create a safe space for girls to feel comfortable outside of the main sports hall used by all members.
5. Fortnightly session at a purpose-built facility to learn how to dance and cheerlead, alongside kit, food and merchandise to encourage participation. Transport will be provided for 12 months as well as leadership courses for the peer researchers to upskill themselves with the aim of delivering sessions.

Key Learnings

Has the sporting offer changed? Despite the variation in activities requested by young people, the overriding consensus suggests the principles of doorstep sport remains essential for engaging young people. This alternative style of delivery allows young people to create youth led opportunities and adapt their sessions, without over competitive games. Additionally, the offers included 'bolt-on' extras to increase engagement and remove barriers to participation. Examples of these 'bolt-on' extras include, transport to sessions, having food and drink available, providing alternative trips or activities during holiday time, kit and merchandise. The provision of 'bolt on' extras allow young people to access opportunities otherwise not available to them, such as a trip to an outdoor adventure centre away from their usual community setting.

Is there a need to move to a health and wellbeing/non-traditional offer? The need to move to a health and wellbeing offer is dependent upon where the community activities are being offered. The proposed business ideas reflect this and cater to the variety of needs across the communities involved. Whilst consultation to explore this with your target audience remains crucial, we can conclude a non-traditional offer should be available as an option for young people. In this research, fitness and wellness-based activities make up either all or part of 60% of the projects funded by SEWSCAP. However, this research has also highlighted the need for traditional activities to remain as an option for young people within the relaxed, safe, informal environment they require.

What do young people want and how do we gain that insight?

Overall, young females want opportunities to participate in a range of physical activity and sports in a safe space, away from other young people. The exact activity, location and style of sessions is dependent upon the girls in the community in which the project is operating. To gain a deeper insight into what these young people want, peer research is a valuable tool. Peer research has the ability to get honest reflections on what young people want in their community and get a truer picture by empowering young people to speak to their peers. Moreover, young people trust their peers who are a constant in their life and communities.

What are the barriers – why are young people not engaging in the current offer provided to them? The barriers highlighted echo those identified during the StreetGames: Online Diary research. Young people suggested they struggle to overcome a lack of confidence in themselves, feeling out of place, poor accessibility and the impact of friends/peers within sessions.

Further barriers include:

- Lack of motivation, poor mental health and feeling embarrassed.
- Lack of facilities/clubs/equipment.
- Cost.
- Fear of being judged and/or having boys around.
- Fear of failure.
- Friends not attending.
- Lack of time.



SUMMARY – KEY FINDINGS

The desk review has highlighted that there are many different **reasons why some young people are not engaging with current sporting offers**; spanning: individual factors, aspects relating to the social & physical environment they live in as well as factors related to the way organisations and institutions provide their offers. In particular, the research has highlighted, that for some young people experiences during the Pandemic have:

- Impacted negatively on their **health and mental well-being**; leaving some with **low confidence and fitness levels**; meaning they are nervous of returning or joining sports sessions
- Impacted on the family budget and with household bills set to rise yet further during 2022, the **costs of taking part** in sport is a real barrier.

Other barriers highlighted in the research include:

- **Access difficulties** – due to closure of facilities, a reduction in extra-curricular activities, transport difficulties or a lack of kit/equipment
- Concerns around the **formality and commitment** required to take part in some sporting activities
- Concerns related to a lack of **safe spaces** to take part or **feeling unsafe getting to and from activities**
- Other **competing commitments** (work/study) or interests.

In terms of whether the **sporting offer has changed and whether there is a need to move towards a more health and well-being / non-traditional offer** the research has highlighted, that for many young people, sport is an appealing activity and a ‘hook’ to engagement. However, the research also highlighted, that young people clearly value sport’s wider benefits – and that it is the wider benefits of taking part in sport/exercise that are more likely to appeal and motivate attendance.

In summary, the desk review highlighted that the type of **sporting offers that young people want**, need to incorporate opportunities for:

- Young people to **socialise, build friendships and connect** with other young people – which was really missed by young people during periods where Covid-19 restrictions limited social interaction
- Young people to try **new/ a variety of activities** – for ‘escapism’, to have fun and to make the most of ‘freedom and seize the opportunities they missed’ during the Pandemic
- Enhancing **physical health & mental well-being**
- Young people to **develop personally, build a sense of achievement** and challenge – either through the sports participation itself, opportunities to have their voice heard or via competition, volunteering or leadership opportunities etc.

As well as ensuring that offers address the structural barriers identified, such as costs, access and safety.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS / POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

Whilst outside the scope of this brief, community organisations in the StreetGames Network have also shared similar feedback in their work with young people. For example, when distributing delivery funding to locally trusted organisations (LTOs) in the network (e.g. Winter of Wellbeing Fund/Tackling Inequalities Funding) LTOs have shared with us:

- The importance of **incorporating social aspects** into their sporting offers as a means of both initially engaging and retaining young people. For example, both via 'bolt-on' offers that may include the provision of food, music or social trips etc. and also via in-built opportunities within activities to socialise and build friendships. One group for example, developed 'Chattercise' sessions where participants could walk, cycle and talk with other group members.
- Demand from young people for opportunities through sport, to **develop personally**, through empowerment opportunities which have spanned: youth voice, volunteering, leadership and qualifications.
- An increased number of young people attending or being referred into sessions with **low mental well-being** and the need to shape their sporting offers to help meet their needs, ranging from:
 - Simple buddying schemes
 - Offering one-to-one mentoring within sessions or in addition to sports sessions - often delivered in collaboration with youth workers and/or trained mentors
 - Developing a sporting offer that is specifically designed to promote well-being. For example, in the North West of England a 12-week **yoga and mindfulness** offer has been piloted by two LTOs. Through yoga and mindfulness, the programme has looked to provide participants with increased tools, skills and coping strategies for managing distressing feelings, reduce feelings of anxiety, stress and low mood and improve feelings of wellbeing and relaxation post activity.
 - Building partnerships and links that enable the sign-posting of some young people on to specialist support services such as CAMHS.
- How valuable it has been, to be able to access funding that has enabled LTOs purchase **additional equipment** so that either LTOs themselves are able to deliver a wider variety of activities within their sessions or so that they can distribute or loan equipment and activation ideas directly to young people and their families, who often do not have sports equipment themselves, so that they can be active at home or in the community.

NEXT STEPS

The second phase of this research project, which will be undertaken during April – July 2022 involves training and supporting three groups of young people in Gwent to act as Peer Researchers – comprising: one school-based group, one sports club-based group and one community-based group.

As part of this process, the key findings from the desk research phase will be shared with the Peer Researchers, so that they can discuss the issues raised, create their own research questions and explore these further, by undertaking further research with their peers. Thus providing further opportunities for young people to share their lived experiences and to put forward their views in their own words about the type of sporting offers they want.

