



Report Subject:

Young Male's attitudes and engagement in sport/physical activity

Title:

Research study to explore attitudes and engagement in sport/physical activity amongst young males attending Further Education (FE) Colleges in areas of high deprivation

Background

The study was conducted by marketing agency, diva creative on behalf of StreetGames and Sport England between October 2011 – January 2012.

The study focused on exploring attitudes and engagement in sport/physical activity amongst young people (aged 16-19 years) attending FE Colleges within disadvantaged areas. It also looked to identify how best to communicate effectively to promote the benefits of sport/ physical activity and ultimately encourage them to take up and maintain a healthy level of physical activity in adulthood.

Students involved in the study were from a range of geographic areas across the country including: Chesterfield, Leicester, Durham, Sunderland, Darlington, Warrington and North West London; with the study looking to predominantly capture the views of students on



vocational courses, such as mechanics, brick laying, construction, public services and plastering.

The research methods¹ included an on-line survey, focus groups and creative workshops. This briefing paper provides a summary of the key findings amongst males. The full report is available to download from the StreetGames website: www.streetgames.org/young-people-attitudesandengagementinsport

¹ The research methods included an on-line survey (469 completed questionnaires submitted – including over 240 males), 10 focus groups (5 male/ 5 female groups) and 2 creative workshops (1 male/1 female group).



Summary Findings

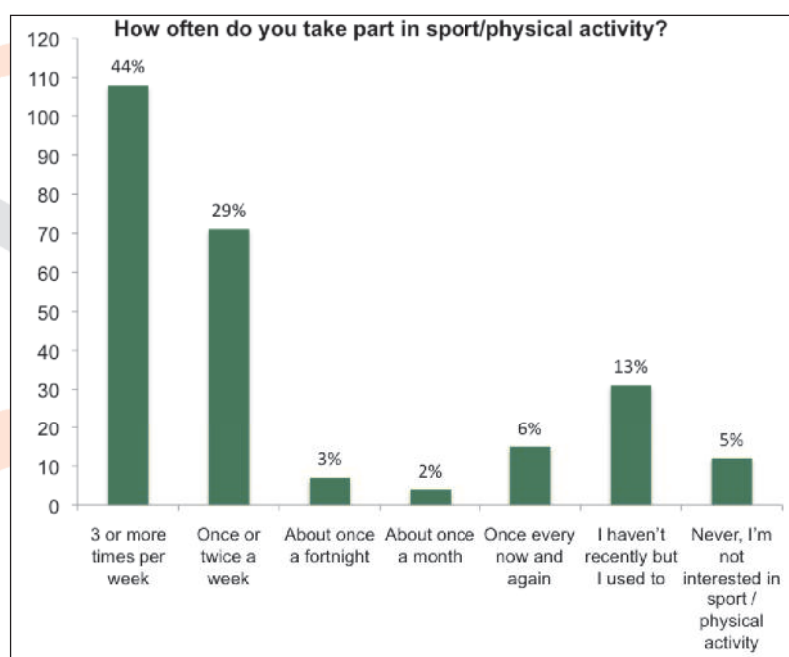
The findings showed many similarities amongst this group, with the Sport England Market Segment: *Jamie* and not surprisingly some clear differences between the males and females.

Significantly, the research findings show that there is latent demand amongst this group. By positioning the right types of sporting activities for the target audience in a way that will appeal to their motivators, should help convert this latent demand into participation.

Current Participation Profile

The survey results show that this group is reasonably active - 44% of male respondents said that they take part in some form of sport/physical activity three or more times per week, 29% take part once a week, whilst 22% take part less often.

By comparison, the female students – were active on a less regular basis, with 40% of females taking part in sport/physical activity less than once a week.



Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Team sports are played by nearly half of all these males, with individual activities such as swimming/cycling/running and keep fit/gym sessions also proving popular – see Table 1.

Table 1: Main activities respondents currently take part in

Activity	% Males
Team sports (e.g. football/rugby)	48%
Individual activities (e.g. swimming/cycling /running)	47%
Keep fit/gym (including aerobics/yoga classes)	35%
Martial arts	10%
Dance (e.g. street dance/cheerleading/modern)	6%
Others (e.g. walking)	18%

N.B: Respondents were able to select more than one response to questions, therefore responses sum to >100%

The main difference between the males and females was that nearly three times as many males (48%) are taking part in team sports as females (17%).

This trend was reinforced by the responses in which the males told us their one favourite activity. As Table 2 shows, activities such as football, going to the gym, cycling/BMX, swimming, martial arts, rugby and running were most popular followed by basketball, cricket.

Table 2: Favourite activities respondents currently take part in

Activity	% Males
Football	25%
Gym	7%
Cycling/BMX	6%
Swimming	6%
Martial arts	5%
Rugby	5%
Running/jogging	5%
Basketball	4%
Cricket	4%

Barriers to Participation

A lack of time/too much college work and cost are the two factors which are most likely to prevent these males from taking part in sport/physical activity more often— see Table 3. Although a range of other factors also play a part, such as:

- Having no one to go with
- Being too busy socialising
- A lack of confidence and concerns over their ability
- A lack of knowledge about what's on and where to go; and
- A lack of opportunity.

Table 3: Key factors preventing respondents from taking part in sport/physical activity

Barriers	% Males
Too much college work	46%
Too expensive	27%
No one to go with	22%
Too busy socialising	18%
Not confident enough	13%
Nothing on at the right time	12%
Don't know where to go	11%
Too far away	11%
Don't have/can't afford right kit	10%
Am not good enough to play for a team/club	7%
It's too competitive/serious	3%

Comments captured via the focus groups emphasise these findings:

"I don't know how to get involved"

"I want to do the gym thing but I don't know how to get the slips you need"

"It would help if they knew where stuff was going on"

"If you don't turn up they'll notice and ask, but if you just go to the park you don't have to worry about that"

"I think people can be intimidated by those who are better at the activity"

"Swimming used to be £2 a session and now it's double that"

"You don't want to be on a losing team"

"I don't think it's really publicized enough"

Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Given the competing time pressures amongst this group, it is useful to understand their priorities. Table 4 below shows that college, hobbies/interests, friends and family were seen as the main priorities, whilst being active was only seen as a key priority by 20% of males.

However, it should be noted, that more than twice the amount of males (22%) prioritised being active as females (10%).

Table 4 – Main priorities for respondents

Priorities	% Males
College	68%
Hobbies/interests	49%
Friends	44%
Family	43%
Relationships	37%
Part-time job/work	32%
Playing sport/ being active	22%
Shopping/fashion/image	5%

Motivations and Requirements

Factors which are most likely to encourage these young males to take part in regular sport/physical activity include **affordability of sessions and ease of access** – see Table 5.

However, there were a many other factors which were also considered important, such as:

- A good instructor/coach
- A wider range of activities/alternative formats – not just traditional team sports
- Sessions which focus less on competition and more on getting fit
- Opportunities for social time to talk and meet friends
- Opportunities to learn new skills e.g. team work that might help with employment
- The provision of kit/equipment.

Plus the inclusion of music provides a real motivating factor.



Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Table 5: Key factors that would encourage respondents to take part in regular sport/physical activity

Factors	% Males
Cheap to do	61%
Easy to get to	54%
A really good coach/instructor	35%
Wider range of activities	32%
If sessions focused on getting fit rather than competition	27%
If sessions included social time	26%
If taking part helped learn skills	26%
If kit and equipment provided	24%
If there were more opportunities for competitive matches	24%
If there were more social leagues/fun matches	18%
If there were incentives for attendance	14%
If I could turn up changed or knew changing rooms were clean	13%
Girls/Boys only sessions	4%

The respondents main motivations for taking part were predominantly based around **fitness, fun/enjoyment, losing weight and feeling better** – see Table 6.

Table 6: Main motivations for taking part in sport/physical activity

Motivations	% Males
To keep fit	69%
For fun/enjoyment	36%
To lose weight	28%
To feel better	27%
To improve performance	23%
To gain new skills	22%
To challenge myself	17%
To train/compete	14%
To meet friends/socialise	14%
To relax/as a release or diversion	8%

Motivations around losing weight were far more significant amongst females, whilst circa twice as many males as females are motivated by improving performance and gaining new skills.

Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Comments captured via the focus groups emphasise these findings:

“You have a kick about for fun and meet new people”

“You can keep yourself healthy”

“A footy tournament. A massive footy game with all of us, right here, right now”

“It would look better on your CV ‘cos if someone had the same stuff as you, you might have that one extra thing”

“It shows you’ve got dedication to achieve a goal”

“Trophies and medals – if you’ve got something to show for it you’re more likely to go back”

Latent demand

There is clearly an interest in sport/physical activity amongst these males – demonstrated by the survey results which show that:

- Only 5% said that they never take part/not interested in sport and physical activity
- 65% said that they would like to know more about where they can take part in sport/ physical activity locally.

Most males were interested in taking part in some form of sport/physical activity in the future; with the **most popular activities including: going to the gym, swimming, football, running/jogging, cycling, martial arts and adventure sports** - see Table 7.

Table 7: The main sports/activities respondents would like to take part in

Activity	% Males
Gym	40%
Swimming	35%
Football	33%
Running/jogging	31%
Cycling/BMX	27%
Martial arts	24%
Adventure sports	23%
Boxing	22%
Badminton	20%
Tennis	19%
Boot camp style fitness	18%

Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Activity	% Males
Basketball	17%
Table tennis	17%
Rugby	13%
Golf	13%
Cricket	13%

In addition, around two thirds of the males said that they would be more likely to take part in sport/ physical activity if they had something to work towards, such as a fundraising event or fun run. This was confirmed via discussions within the focus groups, with a particular interest in sports tournaments or a fun run.

London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics

The London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics does not appear as yet, to have had a significant impact on inspiring participation – particularly outside of London. 42% of respondents from London and only 16% of respondents from the rest of England said that forthcoming Olympics had inspired them to take part in sport/physical activity. Discussions in the focus groups also revealed only limited interest, and for some a clear disinterest!

Communication

Although respondents in the survey stated that they would be most likely to look for information on posters and leaflets at college, discussions within the focus groups revealed that in practice – posters and leaflets were often not noticed or read (except on the back of toilet doors) and that there was a lack of clarity about what activities were on offer within the college settings.

The males consulted were **far more likely to attend sport/activity session if someone they knew recommended it or encouraged them to go.**

Having someone to go with and taking part in friendship groups was really important; with participants most likely to respond to word of mouth from peers or tutors, taster sessions and Facebook.

Messages which appealed most were often fun, short and to the point.



Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

- Be led by a coach/instructor who makes sessions fun, is friendly/approachable and that they can relate to
- Include sessions which last circa one – two hours
- Be organised for them
- Include the provision of kit/equipment
- Consider the inclusion of music – which provides a real motivating factor
- Include social time
- Include incentives to reward attendance, improvement and achievement etc. Males were attracted to medals, trophies, hoodies and sports shirts to reward achievement and trip opportunities and residential weekends to take part in outdoor/adventure sports.

Implications for doorstep sport

Area	Suggested Actions
Doorstep sport basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basics of doorstep (right time, right place, right price, right style) sport remain of paramount importance with this group – particularly ensuring that sessions are affordable, easily accessible and run by coaches/leaders who can relate to the participants and make sessions fun.
Programme of Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Coordinators need to ensure that programmes reflect demands for a wider range of activities. This may require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linking up with wider sports providers/instructors ▪ Additional training for coaches/leaders in different sports/activities. ▪ The provision of demonstration and taster sessions as sometimes it is the non-traditional activities and/or activities with a 'twist' that appeal which may never have been tried before.
Encourage and develop a sense of independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects need to help young males to develop a sense of independence to assist participants wishing to take part in solo/informal sport such as swimming/running and going to the gym. This may involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simply showing participants where to go and how to find such activities and where sport can be read about and watched. ▪ Physical visits to sports venues/leisure centres – to teach young participants how to use them. ▪ Liaising with leisure centre staff to help engender a welcoming environment for new/young users. ▪ It may also be useful to discuss with leisure centre staff the communication channels and messages that young people are most likely to respond to – ie word of mouth, Facebook and taster sessions.

Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Area	Suggested Actions
Foster links with NGBs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering links with NGBs: many NGBs have developed new products aimed at appealing to the 'informal sport' market, where participants do not have to commit to the rigours of formal training, matches, affiliation and competition; such as Just Play football, Run! – athletics, No Strings – Badminton or Cardio Tennis.
Identify and supporting peer champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research data highlighted the importance to young men of going to activities with friends or in friendship groups; a peer champion could build this bridge. A peer champion is a local leader of formal and informal social groups. Peer champions do not have to be outstanding at playing sport, but they will be at the hub of local social groups for young people with a willingness to advocate the benefits of participating in sport to their peers.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects need to use the 'right' communication tools and messages. Simply putting up posters and leaflets around college sites, is unlikely to successfully engage these groups. Having someone to go with and taking part in friendship groups or with other family members was really important; with a lack of confidence being a key issue. Messages that appealed most were often fun, short and to the point and emphasised fitness, improving skills, affiliation, fun and competition. Messages should demonstrate the expertise of a coach / instructor Messages should be direct, bold and sharp Communications materials should use illustration and have an urban feel. Communication channels and tools include peer influencers, tutors, Facebook, taster sessions and student intranet. Offer group discount schemes for bringing friends.
Provide opportunities to develop leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects need to ensure that young people have the opportunity to mature and develop leadership skills and confidence through coaching, volunteering and devolved decision making.

Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Area	Suggested Actions
Support young people to look for opportunities to join sports clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects need to support young people to look for opportunities to join sports clubs and attend events in their local community – helping them to identify where these are and how to join them. In addition where a young person has the skills in a particular sport and a desire to progress it is important to highlight the appropriate player pathways/exit routes. Signposting and follow up contact are important aspects of this work as are identifying the opportunities to create new informal groups e.g. jogging groups.
Increase motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects need to try and helping to increase young peoples' understanding of why a sporting and active lifestyle is good for them. Explaining the value of lifelong activity. Gentle health and lifestyle advice from coach/sessional staff can be 'drip fed' into sessions over a period of time and built into additional activities.
Develop sports specific skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst it is important to provide informal 'join in /have fun' sessions within doorstep sport programmes, for those males which are potentially interested in progressing within a particular sport, it will be important to provide opportunities for participants to develop activity specific skills. This may require the provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured coaching opportunities; delivered via a relaxed manner, with participants given the opportunity to learn basic skills, build confidence and be able to put their skills into practice via a game-led approach and small-sided games. Setting participants skills or tricks to practice between sessions Recognition, rewards and incentives – such as player of the week or month Access to competitive opportunities - this may be as simple as internal round-robin competitions, friendly games or challenges. Additionally it may include home and away matches, involvement in tournaments, festivals and local Central Venue Leagues. Thus providing young people with the opportunity to develop their playing skills, tactics and confidence in a competitive environment. Whilst also helping to get participants used to making the commitment to taking part on a regular basis, visiting new places and meeting new people to help build resilience and learning that in sport 'sometimes you win, sometimes you lose'.

Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

Area	Suggested Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To facilitate this, coaching staff may require access to additional training/qualifications or support from experienced sports specific coaches. Courses within the StreetGames Training Academy can support these needs.

StreetGames

StreetGames is a national partner of Sport England and a centre of expertise for developing doorstep sport in disadvantaged communities.

The charity supports community based sports projects that deliver sport and volunteering opportunities to young people living in the 20% most deprived wards in the UK.

StreetGames works with National Governing Bodies of Sport to establish and develop links between community and mainstream sport. Recognised by the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games Inspire Mark, StreetGames is creating a lasting legacy of doorstep sport in the UK.



streetgames.org