



Report Subject:

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

Title:

Research study to explore attitudes and engagement in sport/physical activity amongst young people attending FE Colleges in areas of high deprivation

Background

The study was conducted by 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 attending Further Education (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.

The research methods¹ included desk research, an on-line survey, focus groups and creative workshops.

This briefing paper provides a short summary of the key findings from this study. The full report is available to



download from the StreetGames website:

www.streetgames.org/youngpeople-attitudesandengagementinsport

¹ The research methods included an on-line survey (469 completed questionnaires submitted), 10 focus groups (5 male/ 5 female groups) and 2 creative workshops (1 male/1 female group). 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 hairdressing, beauty, travel and tourism, mechanics and plastering etc.





Key Findings

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

- Males were far more likely to be participating in sport/physical activity on a regular basis [44% of males compared to just 25% of females take part in sport/physical activity 3 x per week; with 35% of females taking part less than once a week].
- Males are far more likely than females to be currently taking part in team sports [48% males and 17% females].
- The females were most likely to be taking part in: individual activities (e.g. swimming, running/jogging), keep-fit and gym and dance.
- Favourite activities for females were: dance, swimming, walking, running, football, gym and horse riding.
- Favourite activities for males were: football, gym, cycling/BMX, swimming, rugby, running, basketball and

cricket.

- Males prioritise sport to a much greater extent than females [20% of males and 10% of females said playing sport/being active was a key priority]
- The main motivations for taking part are around fitness and fun/enjoyment. However motivations around losing weight are far more significant amongst females, whilst twice as many males as females are motivated by a desire to improve performance and gain new skills.

Taking part in sport/ physical activity is seen as a much lower priority than college, family, friends, hobbies/ interests, relationships and part-time work.

A lack of **time/too much college work and cost are the key barriers** to participation. Although other factors such as a lack of knowledge about what's on/where to go, a lack of confidence or concerns over their ability and a lack of opportunity also play a critical role.

Evidence of latent demand

Significantly, the research findings show clearly 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, we should be able to convert this latent demand into increased participation.

The research findings show demand for a wide range of activities and for *informal* participation opportunities.

Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

- The activities the females would most like to take part in are swimming (47%), fitness classes (46%), gym (41%), dance (37%), running/jogging (33%), trampolining (25%) and badminton (20%).
- The activities the males would most like to take part in are gym (40%), swimming (35%), football (33%), running/jogging (31%), cycle/BMX (27%), martial arts (24%), adventure sports (23%), boxing (22%), badminton (20%) and tennis (19%).

There was also some demand for cycling, netball, tennis, martial arts, volleyball, football and boxing amongst the females and for basketball, table tennis, rugby, golf and cricket amongst the males.

Factors which are most likely to encourage participants to take part in regular sport/physical activity include **affordability of sessions and ease of access**. However, many other factors were also considered important, such as:

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



Plus the inclusion of music provides a real motivating factor.

The main motivations for taking part were predominantly based around **fitness, fun/enjoyment**, weight loss and feeling better.

Learning skills and volunteering

Around a quarter of the survey respondents said that they would be encouraged to take part in activities that would teach them new skills and that might help them to get a job. Plus focus group discussions identified an interest in volunteering and helping out at sports sessions with younger children.

Communication

Simply putting up posters and leaflets around college sites, is unlikely to successfully attract these groups.

Background Facts for Doorstep Sport



The young people consulted, said that they were most likely to respond to word of mouth from peers or tutors, taster sessions and Facebook. Having **someone to go with and taking part in friendship groups** was really important. Plus for the females – taking part with their mums, sisters or other female family members was appealing.

Appropriate language and imagery is important. Messages that appealed most were often fun, short and to the point. The females were most attracted to promotional images which included photographs of 'real people' taking part in activities with bright colours and clear wording, rather than posed models or urban style graphics. By comparison, the males liked images which used urban style graphics, adventure style action shots and eye catching wording.

Conclusion

The research findings, suggest that there is significant latent demand amongst these groups. From a behaviour change perspective, a significant proportion of the young people from the target audience are in the 'contemplation phase' of participation (i.e. inactive, but interested in doing some sort of sport). Therefore, by positioning the right types of sporting activities for the target audience in a way that will appeal to their motivators, we should be able to move them along the stages to change towards preparation, action and maintenance.

The young males were likely to be driven to participate in sport by a mix of task oriented goals (skill development, accomplishment, affiliation and fitness) and ego oriented goals (social, status, competition and recognition).

Therefore, offers need to appeal to young men's desire to improve skills, be part of a team and improve fitness, as well as taking part in competition.

The young females need activities which focus on social activity rather than a competition and consider involving friends and family members in sessions. As young women are concerned about their appearance (both how they look whilst participating in sport and how they imagine they will look as a result of participating) sessions should focus on looking good, keeping fit/losing weight.

In summary, opportunities which are most likely to appeal



Background Facts for Doorstep Sport

to this market need to be:

- Low cost/affordable (£2-£3 per session was considered acceptable, with opportunities for promotional and loyalty discounts)
- Easy to access
- Informal, focused on fitness/fun, with 'hidden coaching' plus opportunities for skill development, social matches/leagues for those who wish to take part
- Led by a coach/instructor who makes sessions fun, is friendly/approachable and that they can relate to
- Organised for them
- Includes female only opportunities
- Includes the provision of kit/equipment
- The inclusion of music provides a real motivating factor
- Includes social time
- Includes incentives to reward attendance, improvement and achievement etc. Females were attracted to loyalty discounts, whilst males were attracted to medals/ trophies to reward achievement and trip opportunities and residential weekends to take part in outdoor/adventure sports.



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.

