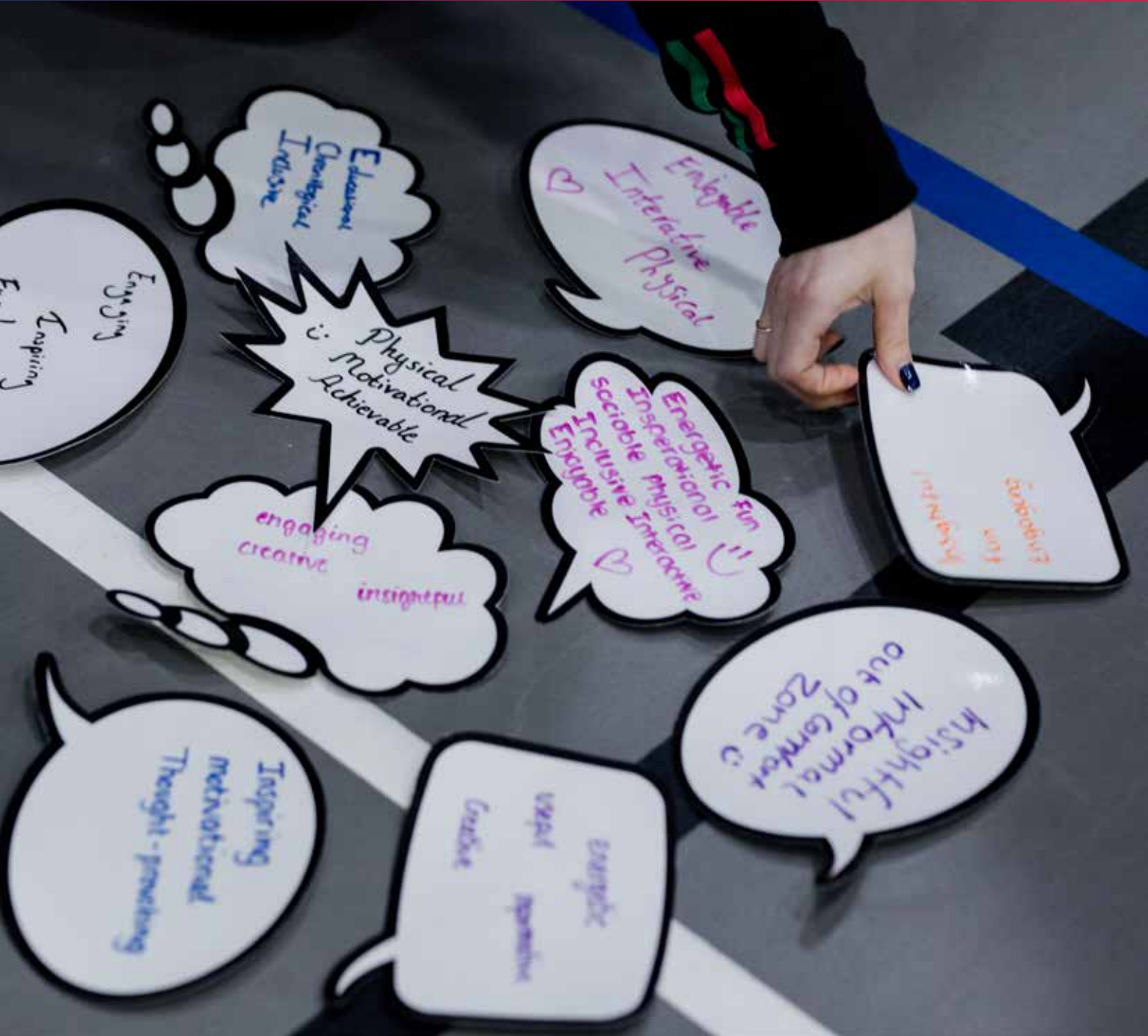




Embedding Youth Voice at the heart of the Opening School Facilities programme



2024



OVERVIEW

In October 2022 the DfE commissioned Active Partnerships in collaboration with StreetGames, UK Active and Youth Sport Trust to undertake work over a three-year period aimed at helping schools to open their facilities outside of the school day in areas where it is most needed.

The Opening School Facilities (OSF) investment is allocated to schools by all 43 Active Partnerships across England, working locally to identify the areas of greatest need. Locations are being targeted where health and social inequalities exist, to enable better access to physical activity opportunities for those who are currently least active.

As a consortium partner, StreetGames have been delivering on three distinct aspects:

- 1- Helping schools to embed youth voice at the heart of the opening schools facilities programming.
- 2- Enabling schools to think more broadly about the people needed to implement the types of activities to ensure they align with the preferences of the young people.
- 3- Connecting schools to our extensive network of locally trusted organisations (LTOs) that provide Doorstep Sport for young people in local community settings, to assist with delivery and engagement with young people.

This report details the findings that have emerged from embedding youth voice into the heart of the OSF programme.

YOUTH VOICE CONSULTATION

Between October 2023 – March 2024, StreetGames conducted 74 youth voice consultation sessions, in schools across England.

The sessions explored young people's: current engagement with sport and physical activity, their motivations for becoming more physically active and their barriers to participation. The sessions also aimed to identify 'enablers' that will support an effective OSF programme. The sessions were primarily focused on gathering feedback on these areas from young people who were in-active or not engaged in sport and physical activity. The sessions were delivered over 1-2-hour periods, with groups of 10-20 pupils and aimed to get the young people moving and sharing feedback in an engaging way, through use of a variety of interactive facilitation activities.

At each session, the youth voice facilitators recorded the feedback shared within these activities. Then after each session, StreetGames shared the feedback in a consultation report with both the school and the Active Partnership to help them to shape and guide the implementation of their physical activity offer, based on the feedback provided by the young people.

HEADLINE DATA



74

CONSULTATION SESSIONS



59

SCHOOLS ENGAGED



1,021

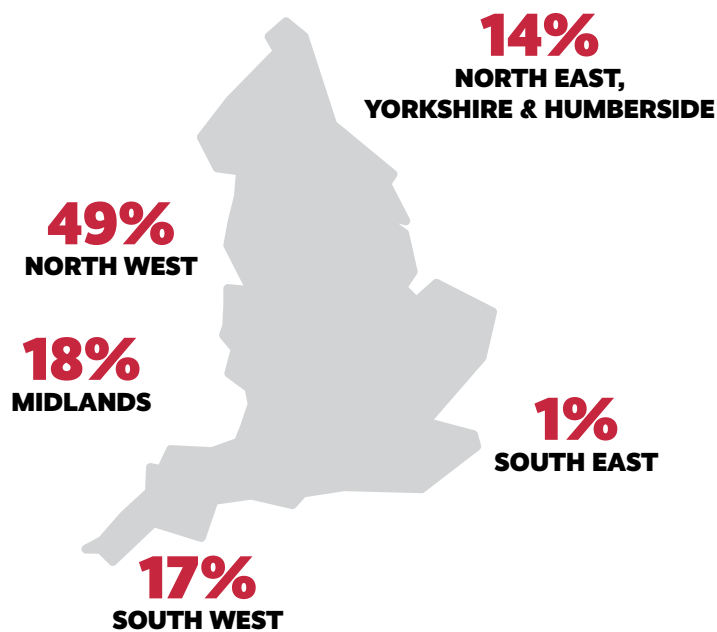
YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED

SESSIONS BY REGION

Youth voice sessions were offered to all Active Partnerships and their OSF schools as part of the StreetGames universal offer, and the sessions delivered were in response to demand, which was higher in some areas. As such there are some regions where significantly more youth voice sessions were conducted than others.

However, it is important to note, that in analysing the data we have found that whilst the challenges faced by young people in each area may be affected by local issues, what the young people shared in terms of what they like and dislike about sport and physical activity remained consistent across groups over different regions and there were no significant differences between regions.

This report shares the aggregated findings across all schools. In addition, individual reports have been provided to each school that took part, which included only the feedback shared by young people attending that specific school.



PARTICIPANTS

For the youth voice sessions, priority was given to OSF schools who had identified target groups; schools encouraging women and girls to be more active, those that help disadvantaged and culturally diverse communities, and those supporting special educational needs, disabilities, or long-term health conditions. Schools were asked to provide a reason as to why they wanted to conduct consultation with a group, below provides examples of responses:

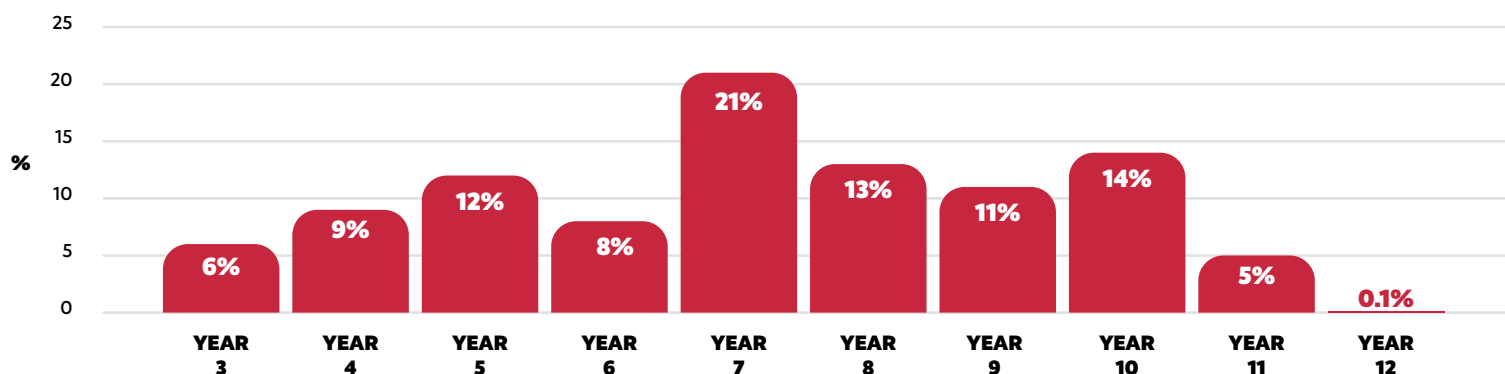
“The girls in year 10 are the least active children in the school due to image and self-confidence being an issue for these pupils - not wanting to look silly in front of people when being active.”

“The group have Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and do not participate in sport or physical activity”.

“The group were identified to help establish activities girls want to take part in after school”

In total, **1,021 young people took part** in the youth voice sessions. Below provides a summary of the demographics of the young people involved:

Year Group



Gender



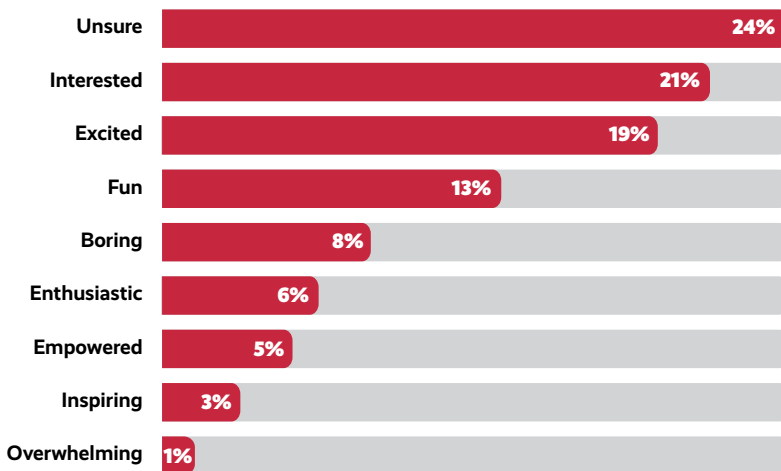
48%
MALE



52%
FEMALE



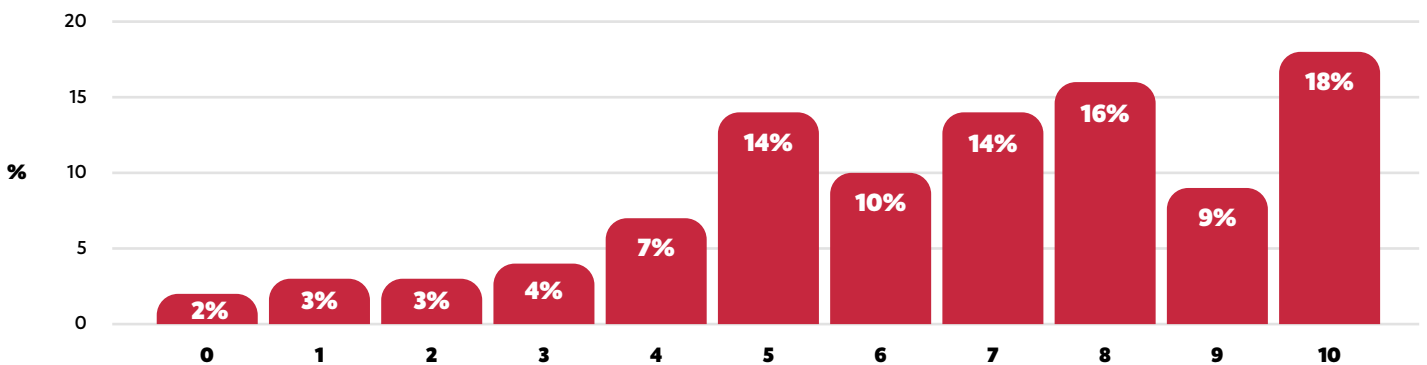
At the start of the consultation the young people were asked to pick a word from a range of options that summarised how they felt about taking part in the workshop and engaging in youth voice:



The facilitators highlighted that many of the young people were initially unsure about what the session was going to entail or what 'youth voice' meant, and whilst many stated they were 'unsure', this was often accompanied by feeling 'Interested' or 'excited'.

Activity Levels

The young people were asked 'On a scale of 1-10, how active are you', below provides a summary of the responses:



There was varied responses across the groups, with some young people sharing that they frequently engage in physical activity whilst others engaged in little to none. Those who ranked themselves highly, tended to engage in a variety of activities. However, it became clear that whilst some young people participated in formal sports clubs outside of school, the majority of young people only took part in sport and physical activity in school, either in PE lessons or through the OSF programme.

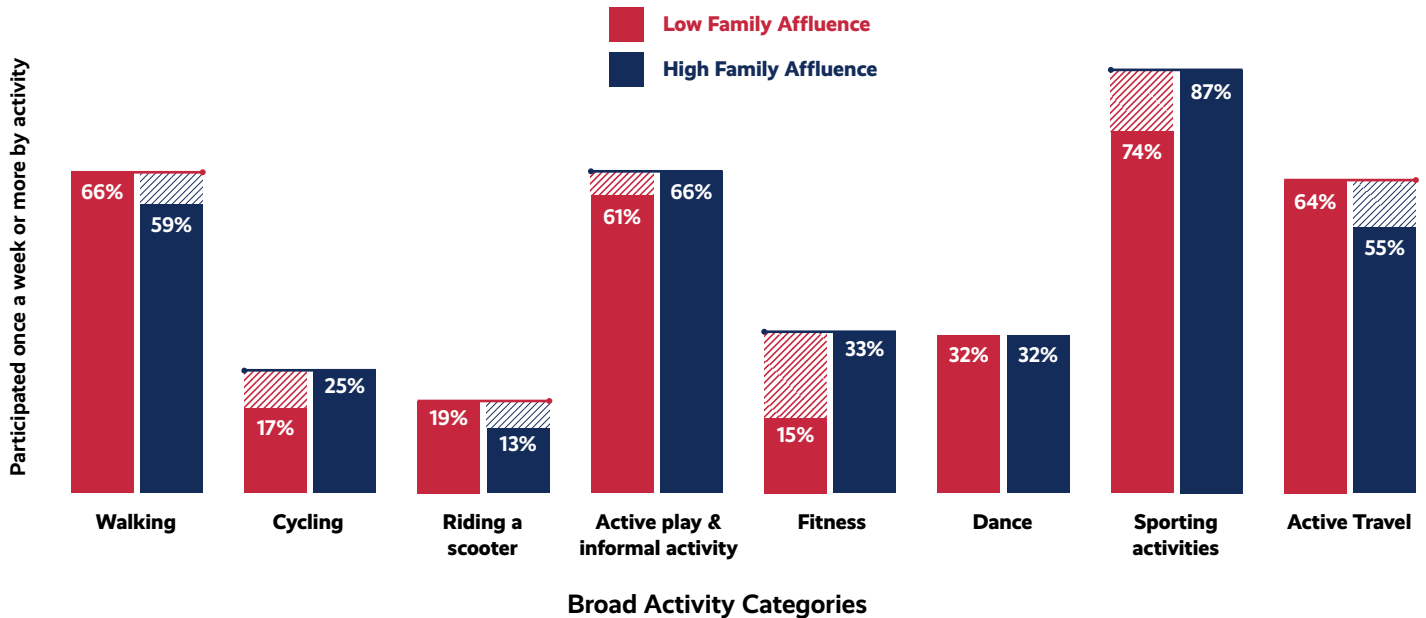
Through further discussions, it also became clear that for some of the young people being 'active' did not necessarily mean engaging in sport or physical activity, rather it was more associated with being busy or engaging in lots of activities, but not necessarily those that would elevate their heart rate. Some of the younger children also seemed to confuse being active with having large amounts of energy.

"My mum says I never sit still"

Many young people also shared how they undertook 'informal' activities like walking to school, going out with friends, walking the dog or cycling to get from A to B but did not engage in 'formal / structured' sport or physical activity sessions. This is a pattern which is also evident in national data captured in the Sport England Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, which shows that children and young people from low affluence families are much less likely to be taking part in sporting activities and fitness than those from high affluence families (and this is true across most sports), with those from low affluence families only over-indexing in relation to active travel. The conversations that took place within the consultation sessions indicate this is more due to necessity than choice.

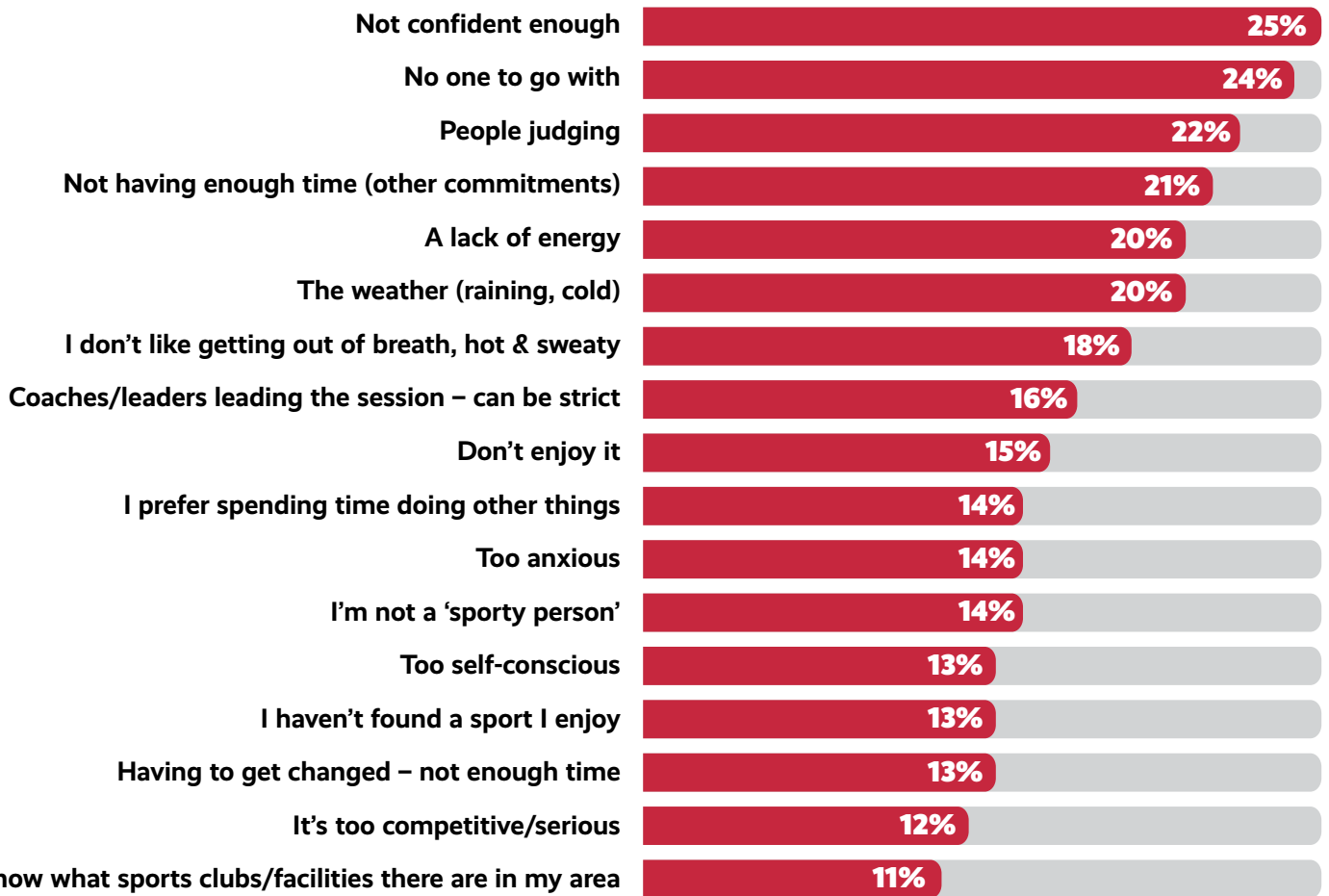
Activity Levels & Affluence

Children & Young People (School year 1 to 11)



Barriers to being active:

The young people were asked 'what stops you being more active'. The graphic below provides a summary of the main barriers to participation the young people shared that they experience – spanning psychological, physical, social and motivational factors:



Further discussions within the youth voice sessions provided additional depth and understanding around the barriers cited above including:

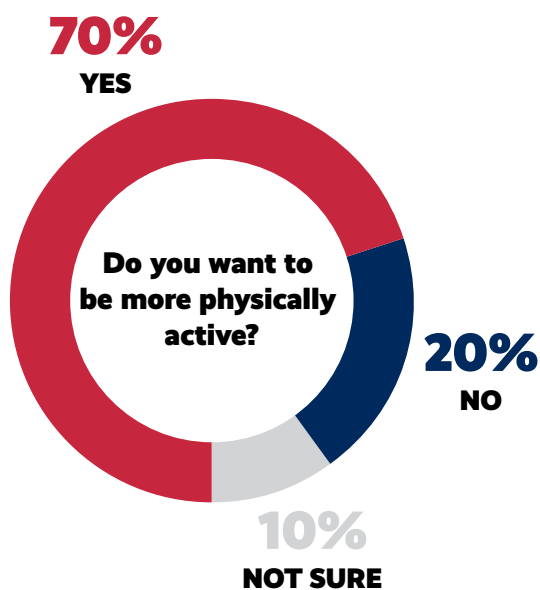
- A lack of confidence or feeling self-conscious often being heightened due to young people not feeling comfortable in the PE kit they were required to wear, with some commenting on how their compulsory PE kit was poor quality which led to them being 'see-through' and 'easy to rip'. Alongside this, having to change in and out of PE Kit in the school changing rooms, was a factor that put them off sport, with some commenting on how the allocated changing rooms were 'small, cramped and smelly'.
- Confidence was also linked to sporting ability, with some stating they did not want to feel like they were the 'worst' in a group. Those who felt that they were not 'good' at sport, feared being criticised or laughed at by peers.
- For those in the older year groups, a lack of time was often due to studying for exams. Plus some of the young people shared that they also had other commitments such as picking up siblings from school that prevented them from engaging in sport and physical activity.
- Some were reluctant to allocate time away from hobbies/ activities they preferred, such as socialising with friends, gaming, or arts, and felt engaging in sports and physical activity would take time away from these activities.

- Having a lack of energy contributed to some of the young people not enjoying sport and physical activity, due to being tired from the school day.

Barriers such as the weather, coaches/leaders leading the session being strict, not liking getting out of breath/hot & sweaty and not enjoying sport were more prominent in female only groups.

Secondary school pupils were more likely to be affected by barriers such as not having the right kit/equipment /nothing to wear and preferring spending time doing other things. Primary school pupils were more likely to be affected by sessions being too competitive, not liking getting out of breath/hot & sweaty and people judging.

The young people were also asked if they would like to be more physically active:



The responses from the question highlighted that despite the barriers many of the young people faced, there was an appetite to be more active – with 70% stating that they did want to be more active.

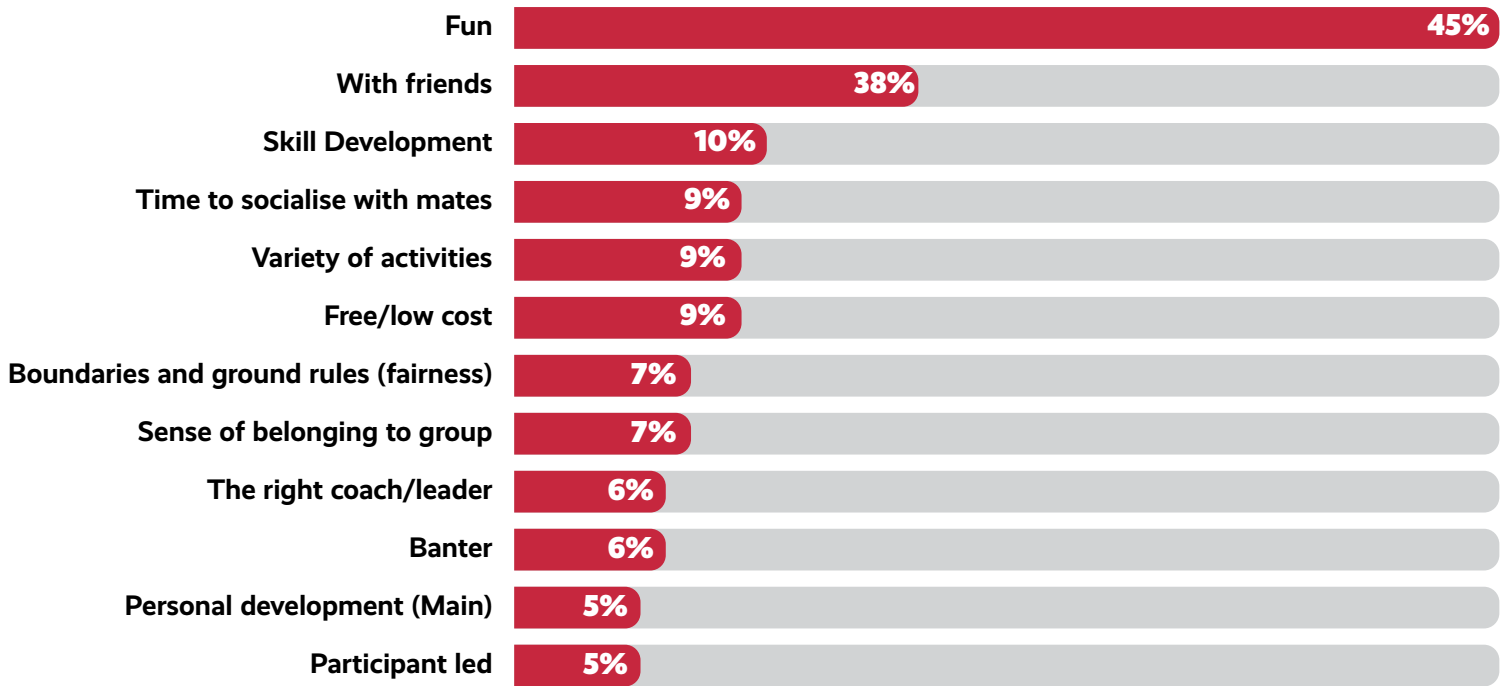
For many of those who said they did not want to be active, this was often due to them feeling they currently engage in a sufficient amount of sport and physical activity. However, some felt sport and physical activity was just not for them and did not have a desire to attempt to do anymore.

For the 70% that did want to be more active, it was highlighted that they just needed the 'Right' offer.



Priorities For Young People Wanting to Participate in Sport and Physical Activity

The young people were asked for their number 1 priority for a sport and physical activity offer:



Only 2% of students stated they wanted their community sports offer to include a competitive element.

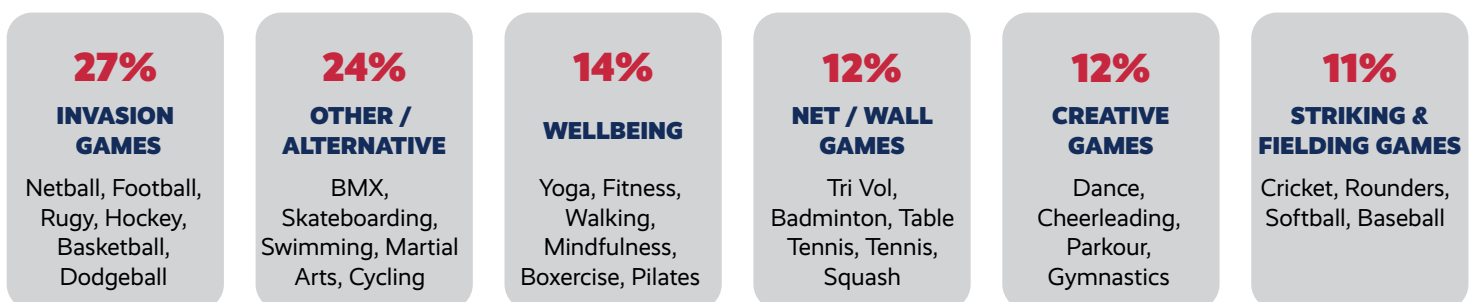
Across most groups fun was the primary motivation, for many this meant that the focus was not on competition. Through conversations with the tutors the young people indicated elements that contributed to sessions being 'fun' included being with friends, being able to work in a team and having the opportunity to help design the session. Some of the young people highlighted that they felt school PE lessons sometimes lacked some of these elements.

Having the right style of session was a priority. Those that were slightly more active and enjoyed sports, felt skill development and improvement was an important aspect of this, however this was not shared across all groups. For many the right style was the session being informal and flexible, including opportunities to play games rather than a heavy focus on skill development. Fostering a sense of Inclusion and belonging was an important aspect for many of the groups, as not feeling included was a barrier to their participation.

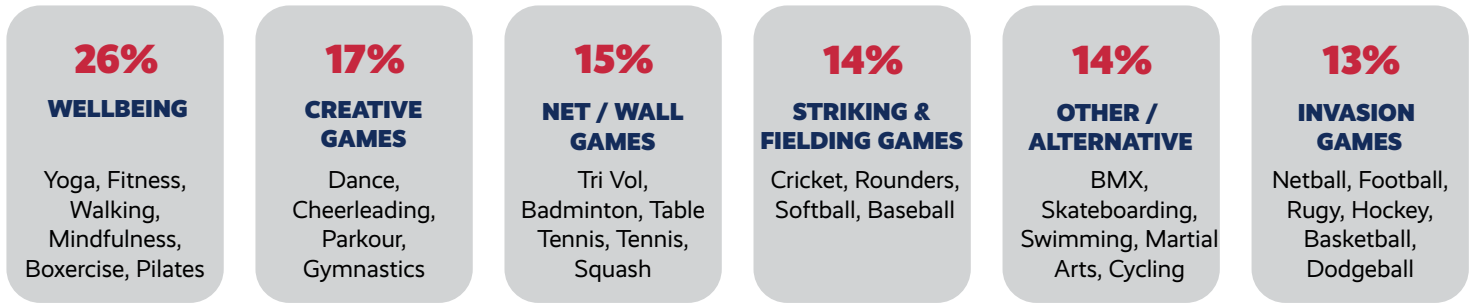
For older participants health and fitness was more likely to motivate them, and they had a greater understanding of the role physical activity has on wellbeing.

Female only groups under-indexed in placing skill development as a number 1 priority. Alternatively, they over-indexed in wanting to have music as part of their physical activity sessions. This referred to both having activities to music such as Zumba or dance and having music on in the background when they are participating in any activity.

Having a variety of different activities on offer was a key priority across many of the groups. This was further explored by asking the young people 'Which sport would you most like to try?' ...



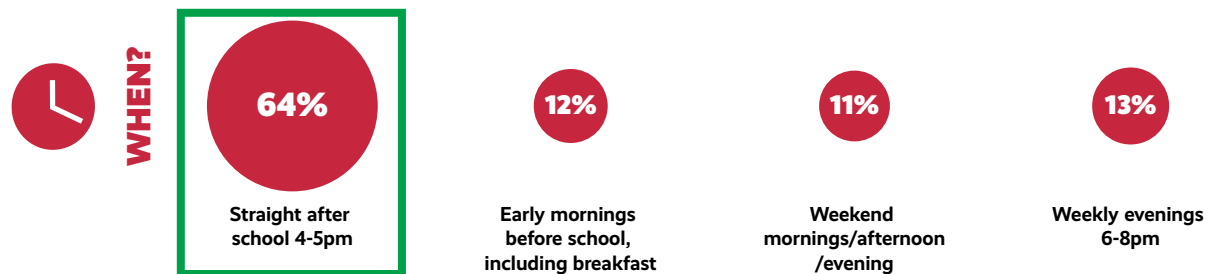
... & 'Which sport would you least like to try?':



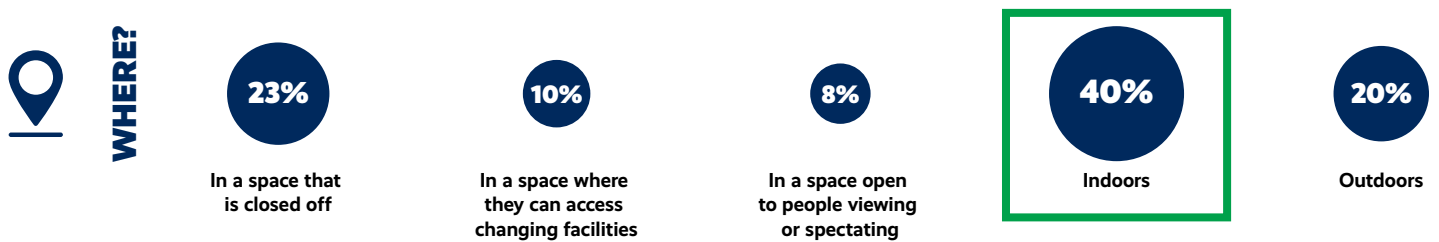
There were no consistent patterns that appeared across all groups, highlighting the importance in understanding individual cohorts and providing a varied offer.

For many of the young people, they were drawn to a specific activity rather than the overarching group, for example some stated they would enjoy playing dodgeball, but not necessarily other invasion games.

The young people were also asked what the right 'time', 'place' and 'price' was for a sport or physical activity session.



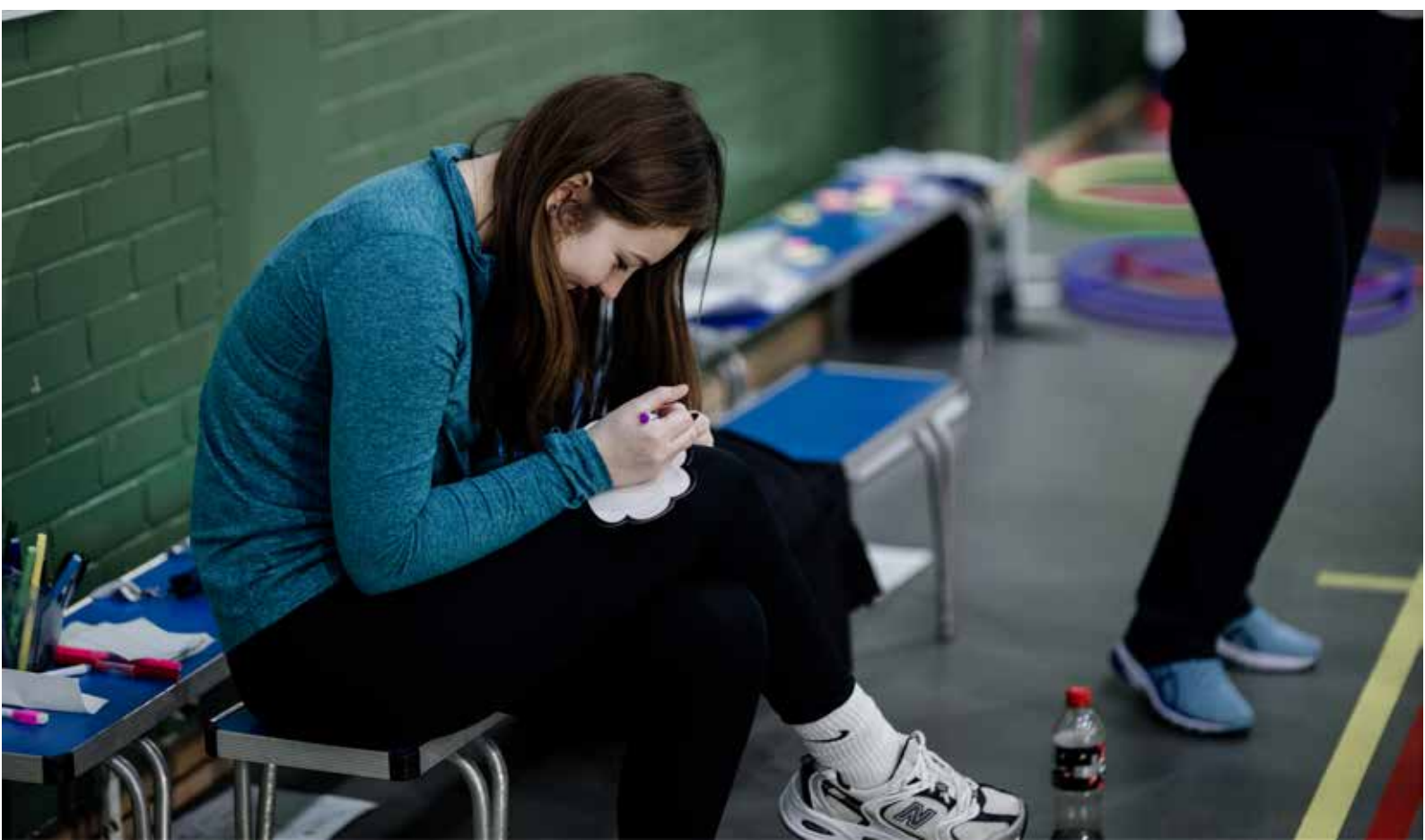
The most common time young people wanted to engage in a sport or physical activity offer was straight after school. However, this wasn't universally preferred, as it presented issues for those who relied on school transport which often left shortly after the school day had finished.



Whilst the right place for being active was most commonly indoors, the young people highlighted that this was dependent on both the weather and the activity. Many suggested that it would be ideal if the place could be flexible, so adaptations could be made (i.e. moving indoors in poor weather) and for some young people being outdoors in the open air was the main appeal. Other factors that were important to the young people was feeling safe, having places where they felt comfortable getting changed or them being gender specific whilst the session is taking place (e.g. only open to females).



For 63% of the group the right price was free (nothing to pay). The majority did not want to pay more than £1 (95%). For those that were willing to pay a small fee, they commented on how they would be happy to do this if it was enhancing the quality of sessions (i.e. meant improved equipment or able to access better facilities).



RESOURCES, INSIGHT AND NEXT STEPS

The youth voice consultation has highlighted that many young people (70%) want to be more active and it has helped to provide schools with insight around the type of 'offers' and preferences which young people are demanding and the 'people' needed to implement these activities.

In particular, the young people's feedback highlighted the need for more varied offers in order to appeal to their motivations. For many of the young people we spoke to – their motivations focused predominantly on social aspects, although for others it was more focused on the health and well-being benefits, whilst for some they were motivated by competition and opportunities to develop skills – thus emphasising the importance of understanding individual cohorts of young people.

Of relevance, are resources recently created by StreetGames 1,000 Young Voices which has analysed data from 1,000 young people to create seven youth segments which include detailed information about their attitudes, motivations and the sporting offers which are most likely to appeal to each of the seven segments. The feedback also highlighted important information in relation to the key barriers which currently prevent the young people from being more active. Addressing these barriers needs a tailored and considered approach - StreetGames Doorstep Sport approach can provide some useful learning to support implementation.

Over the next year through the StreetGames OSF universal offer, we will be building upon our youth voice research by supporting schools to interpret the youth voice research and develop their community sports provision for young people in their school and wider communities.

THE ROLE OF DOORSTEP SPORT

Doorstep Sport is StreetGames tried and tested methodology for engaging young people in underserved communities in sport and physical activity, ensuring that sport is delivered in a way that is enjoyable and accessible to young people. Key to the success of Doorstep Sport is its adaptability. Delivered in the right way, this approach can be modified to achieve a wide range of positive impacts in the communities. This approach is underpinned by the '5 rights':

Right Price:

As highlighted above most of the young people felt access to sport sessions should be free or heavily subsidised. The Doorstep sport approach is that access is either free of charge or very low cost, with unwritten policies of sessions being free of charge for young people who cannot afford to pay. This approach also requires no formal sporting dress code, personal sports equipment and additional personal resources are provided to young people.

Time:

The feedback from the young people highlighted that most would like to take part in sport straight after school. The doorstep sport approach is that sessions should be arranged on a day and time that suits young people, which varies for different age groups.

Place:

The young people highlighted that the type of place they would most like to engage in sport and physical activity was most commonly indoors. Some of the young people raised issues around being able to access transport to and from sessions. The Doorstep sport approach is that sessions should be locally based in the young person's own community, on the doorstep, within walking distance and not usually dependant on public transport or parents.

Style:

The feedback from the young people highlighted that the style of the session is often more important than the activities being delivered. For many this meant the session being informal and flexible. Fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging was an important aspect.

The doorstep sport approach is that sessions are informal but structured (e.g. with 'hidden' coaching and 'know-how' tips. This can take the form of playing fun games with the aim of developing skills without young people realising that they have developed and improved their playing skills. Providing a variety of activities to build awareness, knowledge and understanding across different activities – as well as maintain interest.

This informal approach builds in opportunities for social aspects including music, food, talking and building friendships and may include 'high' points such as trips, events and rewards.

People:

Feedback highlighted that some of the most common barriers the young people face are a lack of confidence and a fear of judgement. This underscores the importance of having the 'right' coach or leader. To enable young people to feel confident and comfortable in sessions some key characteristics the 'right' coaches and leader embody is being young person centred, caring and non-judgmental, able to listen to and being interested in the young person holistically (i.e. not just as a player), able to build positive relationships and be seen as a 'trusted adult' – not just to develop technical skills / talent. A coach who lives locally in the same community as the young people or has grown up in the area often has a greater understanding of the young person's life, the challenges they face and how to interact with them.

ADDITIONAL LEARNINGS

Undertaking the youth voice consultation as part of the OSF programme also highlighted a number of positive learnings, including that:

- Some schools sharing how valuable the sessions had been and that they planned to undertake further youth voice to build onto the findings from these initial sessions;
- Undertaking youth voice sessions with a focus on sport and physical activity had for some schools been new/different to the usual topics they would look to cover.
- The results had created some 'surprises' for some teaching staff – particularly the high percentage of pupils who said they would like to be more active.

WHAT NEXT?

A series of informative webinars will be delivered to Active Partnerships and other sector partners throughout August and September 2024. Following this, StreetGames, UK Active and the Youth Sport Trust will collaborate with Active Partnerships to ensure that schools can effectively interpret the research and use it to positively inform their community sport provision, on their school site.

