



#GetHullActive



GET HULL ACTIVE

Hull's Conversation about Physical Activity



YOUTH VOICE & INFLUENCE

May 2025



@StreetGamesSportsCharity



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BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

Background Overview & Aims

Partners across Hull have been undertaking activities to better understand what drives people's current activity levels and what changes are needed to create a healthier environment for young people to be active.

As part of this work, StreetGames, together with community organisations have been working to engage and listen to the voices of young people aged 11-18 years across the City, with a key focus on young people who are typically likely to be less physically active. In particular, the work has looked to gather young people's views in relation to their:

- Perceptions of physical activity;
- Current activity levels and barriers; and
- Motivations, ideas and suggestions on what needs to be changed or improved.

Methodology

The work was undertaken using a range of facilitative and creative methods, in partnership with trusted adults and steered by young people, which included:

- Mapping provision across the city in order to engage with a wide range and diverse network of people and organisations working with young people.
- Engaging a broad network to ensure widespread engagement with a focus on priority groups
- Hosting discussion groups with young people (10 led by community organisations / Youth Services and 14 led by StreetGames);
- Hosting discussion groups with at least 250 young people
- Distributing a feedback survey which was completed by over 500 young people
- Commissioning 6 partners to develop youth led insight work
- Distributing materials which supported creative feedback activities (including 'lightbulb' ideas, 'hand' feedback on 5 key topics and barrier blocks) resulting in over 100 unique engagement sessions.
- Check and challenge sessions with youth organisations and young people to test the findings.

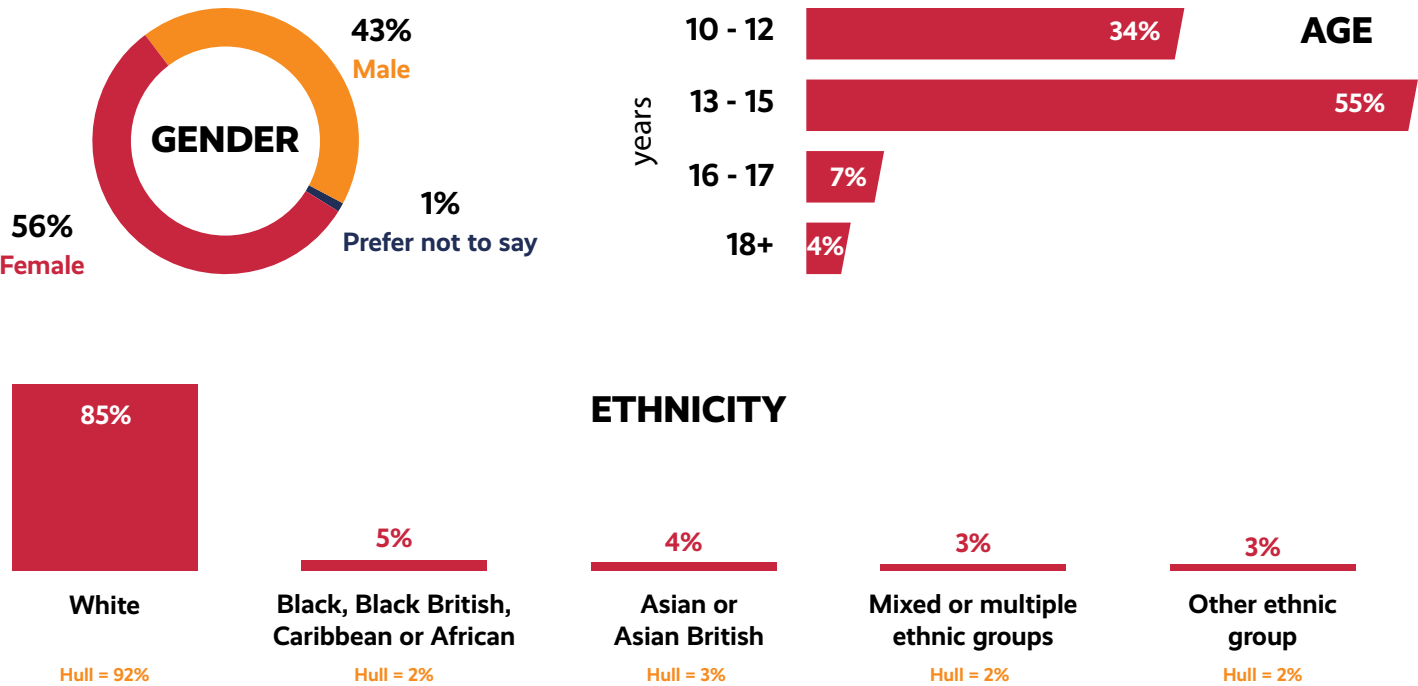
These activities have captured the views of young people from across the City – but with a specific focus on engaging and listening to young people who typically have low activity levels and underrepresented groups, including: young people with a disability, young people from culturally diverse communities, care experienced young people, carers, neurodiverse young people, LGBTIA+, girls and young leaders.

This document provides a summary of the feedback captured via these activities. See [here](#) for an overview and timeline outlining the approach and methodology.

WHO ENGAGED

Due to the collaborative approach to engaging young people and the barriers faced in relation to disclosing personal information, there is not comprehensive demographic data across all engagement. However, mapping provision, relationships building and partnership approach ensured we were engaging young people that represented the population in Hull, with a focus on priority groups.

Engagement in the survey is shown below;

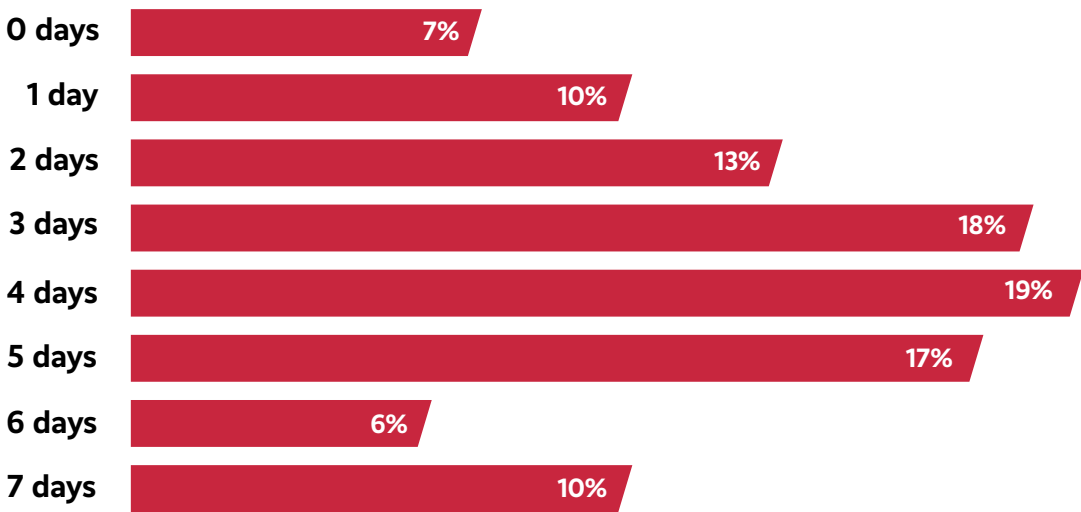


WHAT WE HEARD

Current Activity Levels

Feedback captured in both the discussion groups and survey highlighted that most (90%) of the young people we spoke to are not currently active enough to meet Chief Medical Officer (CMO) physical activity guidelines in terms of the average number of days they are active 60+ mins each week – as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Number of days each week typically active for a total of 60 mins or more, which was enough to raise breathing rate



Perceptions of Physical Activity

Feedback captured in the focus group discussions highlighted, that whilst some young people had broad understanding of what physical activity is and how active they ‘should’ be to benefit their health, many were surprised at the broad range of activities that ‘count’ as physical activity – with some sharing that they thought it had to be ‘traditional sport’ or ‘cardio fitness’.

Many were also surprised that they ‘should’ be doing an average of 60 minutes each day and by the wider potential benefits which physical activity can bring – as highlighted via the illustrative quotes below from the discussion group facilitators:

‘Young people understood that physical activity counts as sports and active ways to travel but had more of an association with it having to be hard as they didn’t see easy things such as walking the dog as physical activity’

‘Young people were surprised they should be doing 60 mins a day’

‘Most expressed that they should be doing an average of 60 minutes per day or more across the week’

‘....they were a little more shocked with some of the effects physical activity can have, such as improving sleep, mental health and improved concentration and learning’

Physical Activity & Future Intentions

Young people's views and intentions were mixed in relation to future activity levels – whilst around half of the young people we spoke to said that they would like to be more active, others shared that they 'had no desire to increase physical activity'.

However, in some discussion groups facilitators shared that '...once the interaction started and ideas of what counts were shared, the majority of the group expressed and wanted to do more'.

The desire amongst some young people to be more active was also evident in the feedback gathered via the creative activities, which asked young people what their 'promises' were, which included:

'Walking more', 'walking for longer' 'walking to school' and 'getting outside and walking'

'Keeping up with golf'

'Cycling to school'

'Getting up earlier to exercise'

'Going to the gym'

'Taking my dog out'

Key reflections / what we heard:

Most of the young people we spoke to are not currently active enough to meet CMO guidelines for physical activity.

Not all young people are aware of the broad range of activities that 'count' as physical activity, how beneficial it can be and how active they 'should' be each week, to benefit their health. Many expressed a desire to be more active, however, some did not have an interest or desire to increase activity levels in the future.

Considerations:

In future planning, it may be beneficial to consider approaches aimed at raising awareness of the varied ways to be active and benefits from doing so, in an engaging and relatable way for children and young people and one where they can see 'people like me' doing different activities. [Taking into consideration CMO guidelines that for children and young people include ensuring that that they engage in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week designed to develop movement skills, muscular fitness and bone strength].

Barriers:

Young people were asked to share what 'barriers' currently prevent them from being active /more active – with responses on this captured in the discussion groups, creative activities and survey.

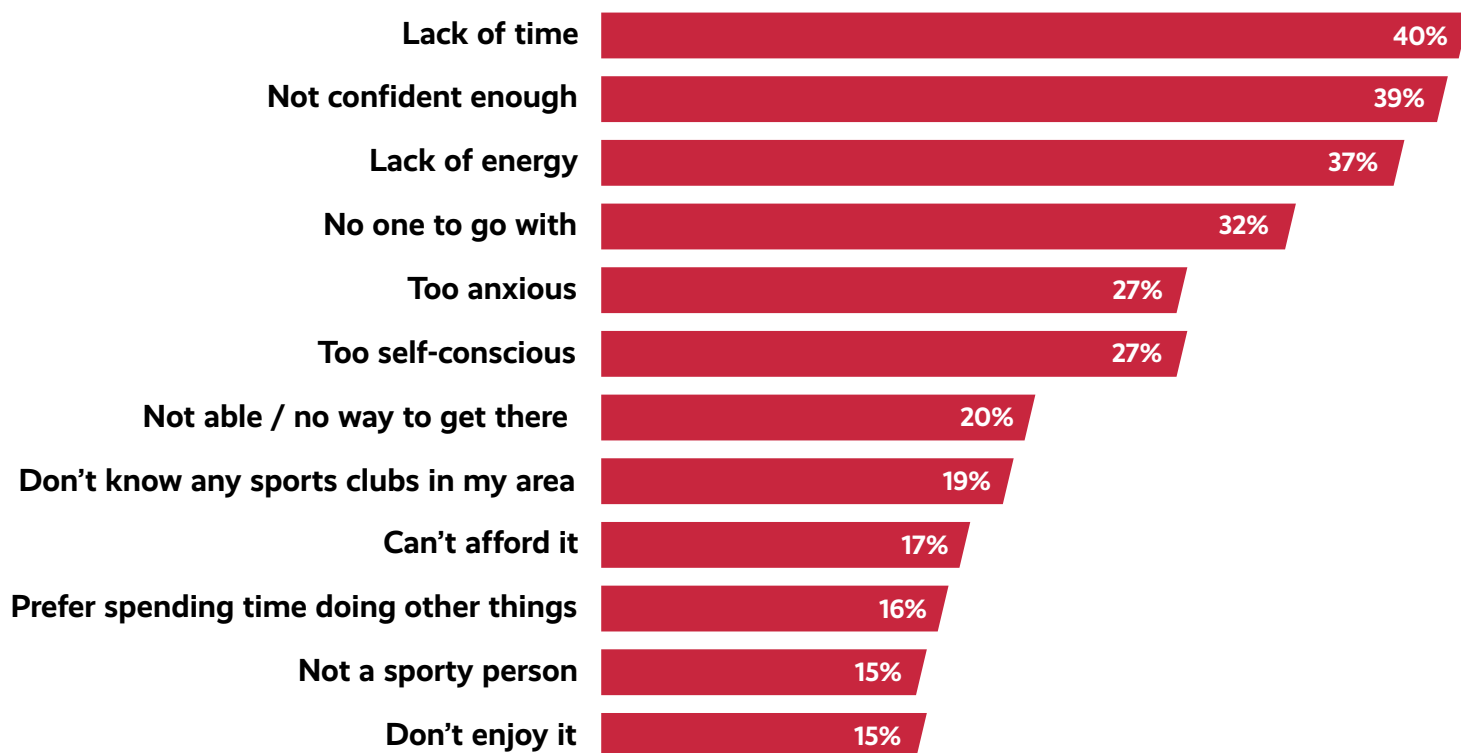
The feedback highlighted that the barriers faced by the young people we spoke to were varied, spanning:

- Psychological factors (e.g. a lack of confidence, feeling anxious, feeling self-conscious or not feeling that they are a 'sporty' person)
- Physical factors (e.g. not being able to afford it, not being able to get there and not knowing what is on)

- Individual factors (e.g. a lack of time or no-one to go with)
- Motivational factors (e.g. preferring to do other things, not enjoying sport and a lack of energy).

The most cited barriers typically related to: a lack of time, a lack of confidence, a lack of energy, having no-one to go with or feeling too anxious or self-conscious, as highlighted via the survey feedback shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: From the list below, which are the five most important aspects that stop you or make it difficult for you to take part in sport / physical activity?



Feedback captured from the creative activities and within the discussion groups helps to bring deeper understanding around these barriers.

For example, in relation to having a **'lack of time'**: many young people shared how 'pressures' related to school/college work impacted on their ability to be more active: *'I don't have time to do something out of college, I set off at 8 and get home after 6pm'* and also highlighting that there is less 'free' time during the school day to take part in activities in break or lunch times, with some young people sharing that they *'feel drained after school meaning they didn't want to take part in physical activity'*.

Some young people also shared that they had **wider commitments** which drew on their time – typically related to family, friends, caring responsibilities and helping others. As one discussion group facilitator commented *'the realities and responsibilities mean that even when young people want to be more active, they struggle to find the time'*.

Young people who shared that they **lacked confidence** in relation to sport/physical activity also shared their feelings in relation to style and format of current activities – which can feel *'too serious'*, make them feel *'intimidated'* and *'fear judgement'* - and put them off taking part, as highlighted by the illustrative comments below:

'...cliques at sports clubs, making it hard to make friends or making the club feel unwelcoming'

'People are mean and fight'

'I wouldn't go anywhere I didn't know anyone'

'the coach/leaders need to provide opportunities for people to interact and get to know each other'

Some young people shared that they don't like 'getting sweaty, smelly and hot' and fear 'getting injured' with a desire for more informal activities, 'non-competitive and single gender sessions' and 'leaders who are less sporty'.

Feedback also emphasised how the barriers which impact young people are highly individual and that for some young people certain barriers were particularly heightened – see below:

- Care experienced young people and carers particularly highlighted how the cost of activities was a particular barrier;
- Getting 'hot and sweaty' went beyond vanity and was a sensory challenge for some neurodiverse young people and contributed to anxiety and fear of 'being stared at' by others.
- A lack of appropriate/accessible opportunities – was highlighted by young people with a disability, neurodiverse young people who shared the need for more inclusive spaces;
- For some young people their religion/God or having 'strict parents' who prefer them to prioritise other commitments was a key barrier.

Key Reflections/What we heard:

The barriers experienced by young people are varied and personal – spanning issues related to: Capability (physical and psychological factors), a lack of opportunity (social and physical factors) and Motivational (reflection) and for some young people the key barriers highlighted were particularly 'heightened' / 'dialled up'.

Considerations:

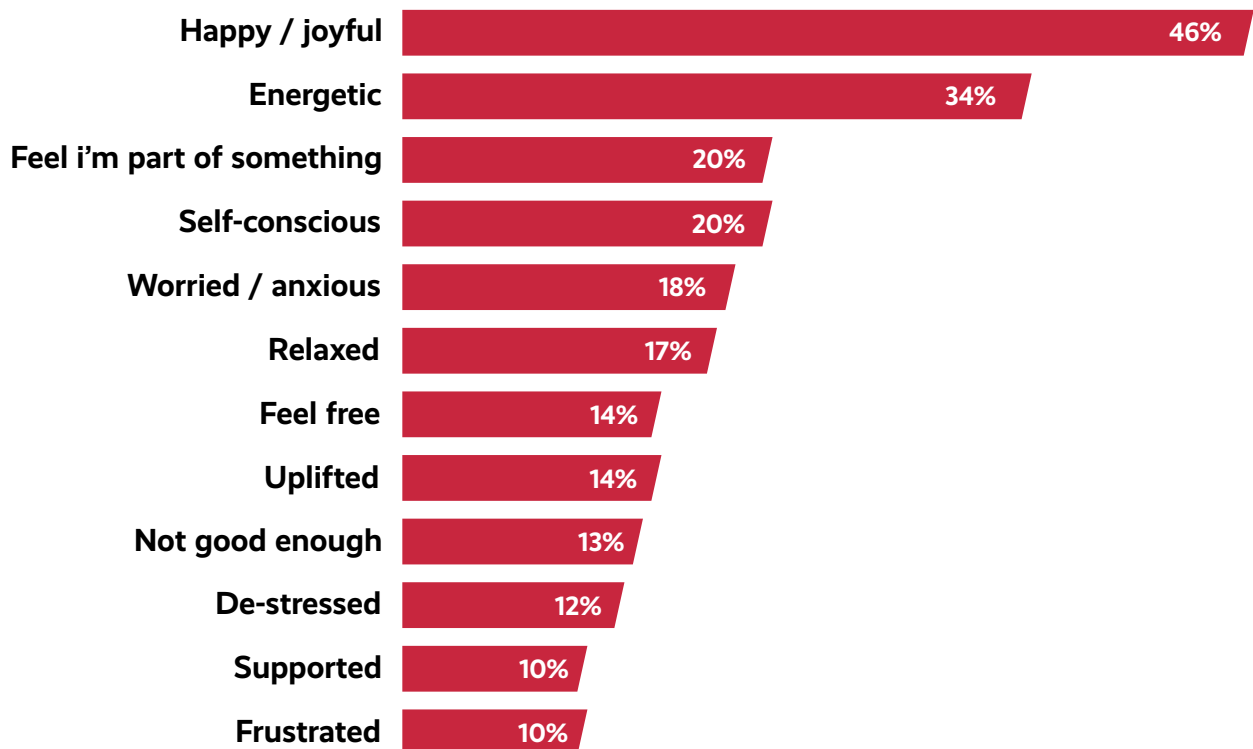
Responses aimed at addressing these barriers will need to look at affecting change across the different 'layers' of influence within the local eco-system and utilise mixed method approaches – see Table 3 below and considerations within the final section.

Emotions:

Further insight was also gleaned from the survey data, in which young people were asked to share the most common emotions they feel when they have taken part in sport and physical activity.

As can be seen in Figure 3 – whilst the top answers were positive emotions, including feeling happy/joyful, energetic, part of something, relaxed and uplifted – it is clear that for some young people they experience less positive emotions, including feeling self-conscious, worried/anxious, not good enough and frustrate.

Figure 3 – Most common emotions felt when taking part in sport/ physical activity



Meaning that for some young people supportive approaches, and the skills of the workforce in being able to create a welcoming and supportive environment will be vital in helping these young people to feel more positive and confident to take part in physical activities.

This was further emphasised in the feedback gathered through the creative activities which highlighted the key 'enablers' for some young people was the need for:

- 'advice, support and encouragement from other people'
- 'opportunities to start slow and build up' and 'persuasion'.



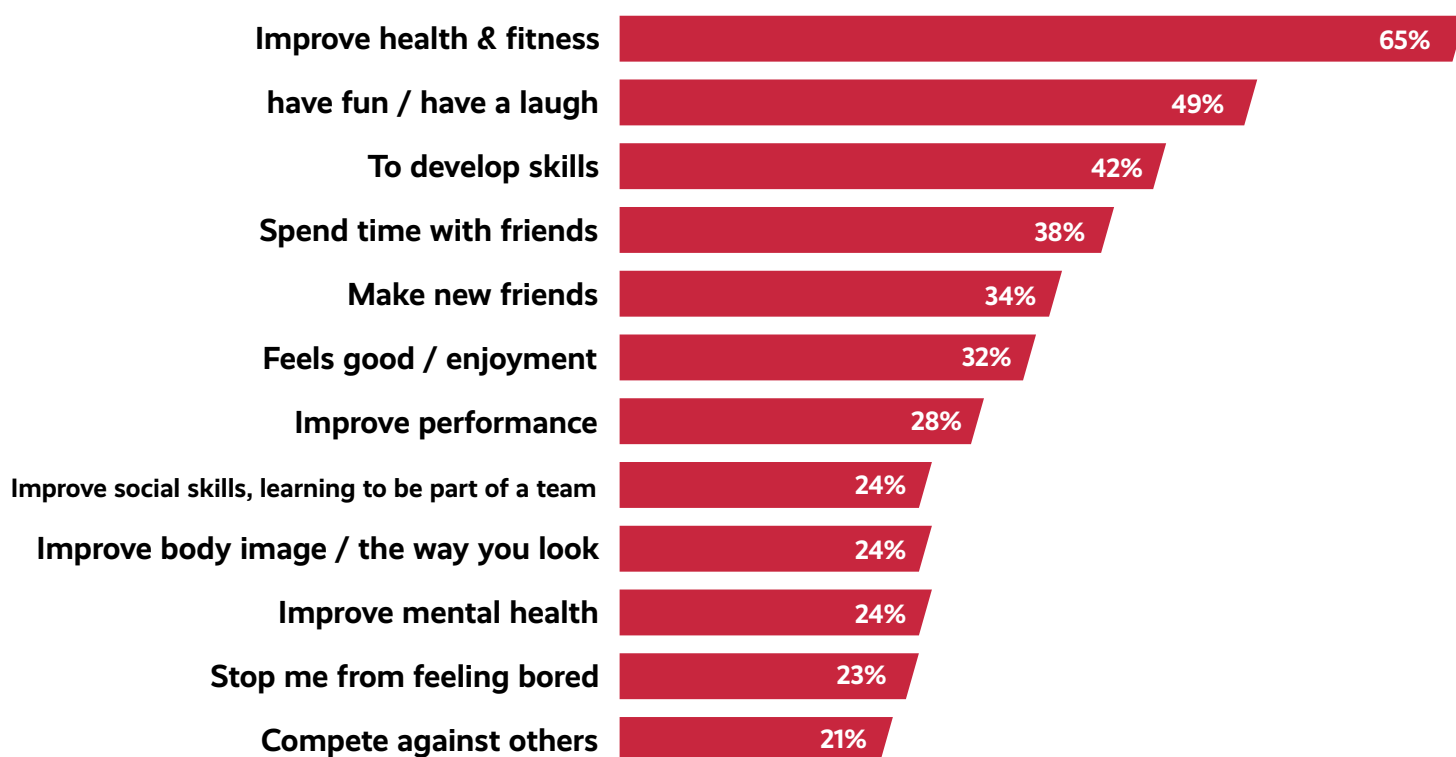
Motivations

Most of the young people we heard from, acknowledged the potential benefits of physical activity and were motivated by a range of aspects, which spanned:

- Social aspects (such as being with friends, making friends and having fun)
- Aspects related to health and well-being (e.g. improving health and fitness, body image, mental health, to 'let off steam' and feel good)
- Opportunities for personal development (either within that specific sport/activity or more generally in aspects such as improved social skills.

This is illustrated via the survey data in Figure 4 below, where young people were asked to share 'the five most important reasons why they take part, or would want take part in sport/physical activity'.

Figure 4: Reasons for taking part in sport and physical activity



WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT BEING ACTIVE?

Further insight re the perceived benefits from physical activity and young people's motivations were also shared via the creative 'hand' activities, which asked young people to share 'what's good about being active' – with feedback including:

- *'Being with friends', 'socialising', 'fun'*
- *Feeling 'healthy', 'being fit', 'good for mental health', 'getting out', 'feeling you get afterwards it - gives you energy', 'chills me out', 'stops you feeling bored'*
- *'you feel accepted'.*

Youth Segments

Further understanding around young people's motivations and types of activities and offers which are most likely to appeal, was also gained from the survey data.

Data analysis of the responses young people shared in relation to their key barriers, motivations and emotions they feel when taking part in sport and physical activity, and insight from [StreetGames 1,000 Young Voices](#), provided data re which of the [seven Youth Segments](#) the young people most closely align with – see Table 1 below.

GROUP	YOUTH SEGMENTS	%
Reluctants	Segment 1: I'd love to but can't a lack of confidence stops me	19%
	Segment 3: It's not for me...sport is boring I'd prefer to do other things	12%
Opens	Segment 4: Sport is a laugh, let's not get too serious	21%
	Segment 6: Keep calm and let off steam	6%
	Segment 7: I'm all about looking and feeling good	7%
Develop & Maintain	Segment 2: Like what sport does for me	17%
	Segment 5: It's for me, results matter	18%

What this data highlights, is that young people across the city are not just one 'homogenous group' and that different approaches will be required to meet their differing needs. So, for example, efforts to increase activity levels amongst young people who align with Segment 1 and Segment 3 require greater intervention and support and possibly even a 're-brand' so that they feel that physical activity is 'for them' and they feel confident to take part.

Whilst young people who align to segments 4, 6 and 7 are 'open' to being more physically active – most are typically motivated to do so by extrinsic reasons - i.e. to have fun, let off steam or to look/feel good although, whilst factors such as the cost of activities, having no-one to go with, a lack of time and energy often act as barriers.

Young people who align most closely with segments 2 and 5 tend to be physically active and feel positive towards sport/physical activity. However, their future participation relies on them being able to access engaging opportunities over the long-term that enable them to develop skills, compete, work towards goals and spend time with friends – so access to more 'traditional sports and activities are critical to keeping these young people active.

Key Reflections/What we heard:

Young people across the city are not one 'homogenous group' - motivations for being active were varied.

Considerations:

Approaches aimed at increasing activity levels will need to consider the different motivations young people have for wanting to be active and how these can be met through different opportunities, which for some are all about being able to socialise, have fun, meet friends and make new friends, for others it's about improving health and well-being, whilst for others it's about how physical activity can help them to develop personally. The Youth Segments profiles and insight provide some useful insight to support future discussions.

Ways To Be Active

Young people in the discussion groups were asked to share information on the ways they like to be active. Responses spanned both 'informal' activities and 'formal' sports and fitness activities – those most typically mentioned included:

- Playing sports: including team sports such as football, basketball, rugby, netball, tennis, ice skating and table tennis and cycling/BMX, dance boxing and martial arts
- Informal physical activities: going for a walk, walking the dog, going for a bike ride or scooter and playing
- Fitness: fitness activities, dance, going to the gym/workout.

Places To Be Active

Reflecting the different ways young people are / want to be active, so too were the places they shared where they currently do or would like to be active, which span:

- Parks and the outdoors/countryside
- Leisure centres, fitness gyms, sports clubs and swimming pools,
- Schools and colleges
- Youth clubs.

Young people shared a need to be active 'where they are', 'on their doorstep', and reducing the need to travel across the city. But there was little 'appetite' for being physically active on the local roads and pavements amongst children and young people.

For some young people the opportunity to 'get outside' and be in 'fresh air' was a real motivating factor to be active/more active.

However, many of the young people also shared feedback re the poor quality of existing facilities and safety concerns had a negative impact on their activity levels and motivations to be more active – see below:

- *'Parks don't feel safe'*
- *'Facilities in public spaces getting vandalised and not maintained'*
- *'The roads don't feel safe...need bike paths'*
- *'I feel self-conscious in kit on the pavement or road'*

In addition, some young people also felt that the current opportunities available at schools and colleges weren't appealing /inclusive:

- *'Need more opportunities at school'*
- *'Put off by PE and the narrow curriculum which feels shaped for more sporty young people'*
- *'Because of school buses [I] can't stay behind'*
- *'After-school clubs [it] is the same sporty kids dominating'*
- *'Needs to be less Competitive.'*

Access issues were also highlighted in relation to leisure centres and sports clubs:

- *'..not being able to afford membership'*
- *'..age restrictions at the gym'.*

Key Reflections/What we heard:

Many young people currently do /want to use the existing provision in Hull (including both informal spaces such as parks, outdoor spaces, roads and pavements and purpose-built spaces such as leisure centres, swimming pools and sports clubs). However, concerns related to safety, the quality of current provision and variety of offer available were cited as off-putting.

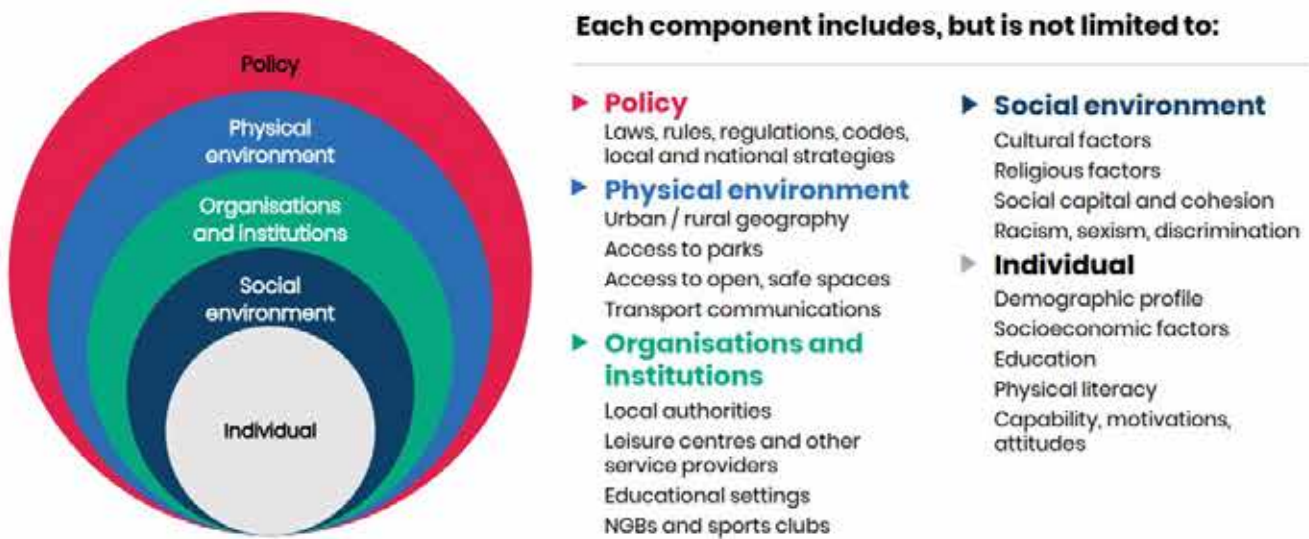
Considerations:

To help create a healthier environment for children and young people to be active, improvements are required to the built and natural environment – with specific consideration re the provision of safe spaces for young people with trusted adults (see table 3 below).

Ideas & Suggested Changes:

Through discussion at the focus groups and feedback captured in creative activities, young people shared their ideas and suggestions on what they think needs to change to help more young people to be more active in Hull.

Responses are shown in Table 3, grouped across the different ‘layers’ within the Socio-economic Model (SEM) framework.



Source: Socio-ecological model

The SEM framework explains how individuals are influenced by multiple levels of their environment, including the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and public policy levels and emphasises the interconnectedness of these levels and their impact on behaviour, health, and development.

The SEM promotes a whole-systems approach, recognising that changes in one level can have ripple effects across others and provides a framework for designing interventions that address health behaviours and outcomes by targeting multiple levels simultaneously.



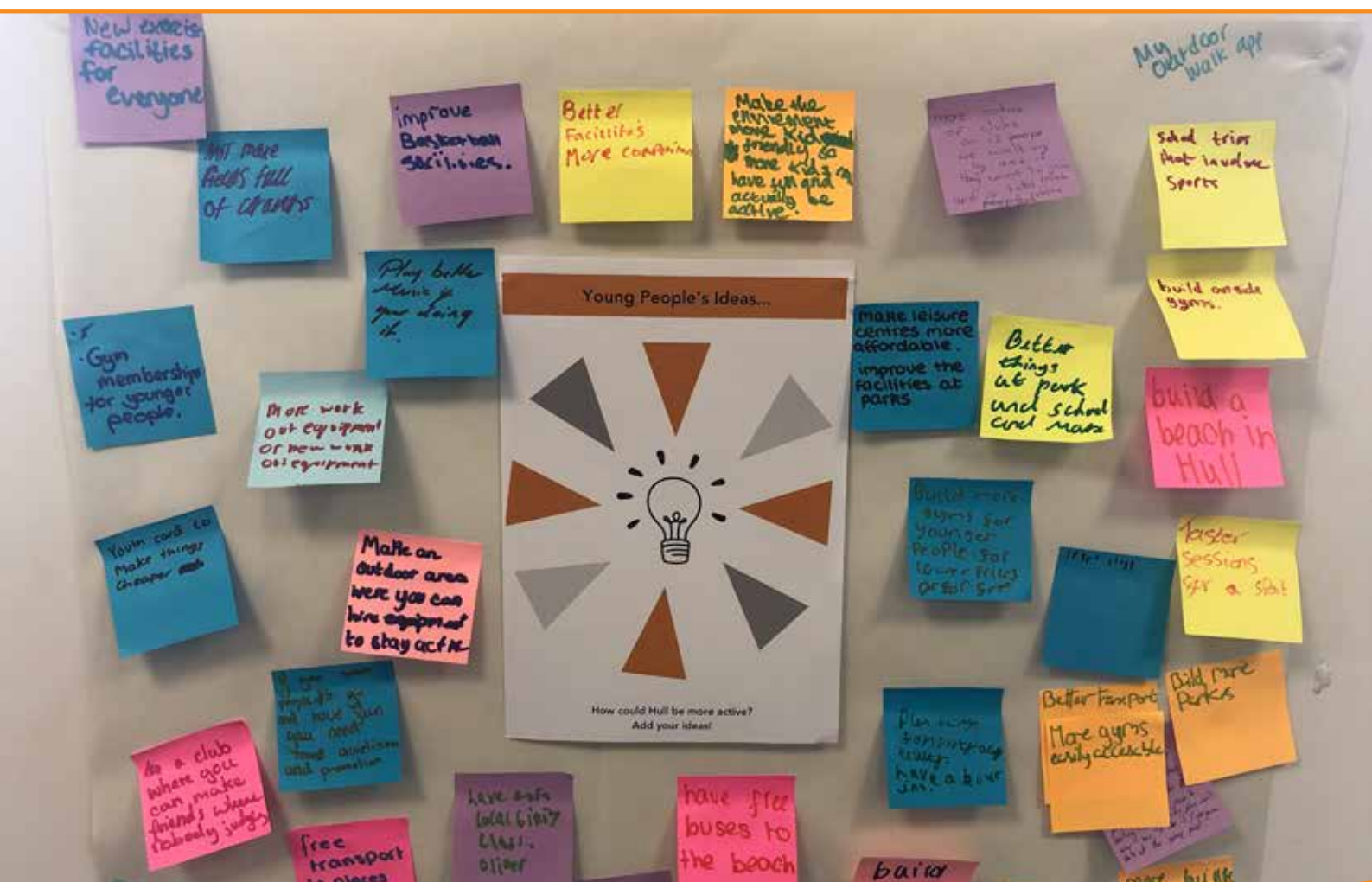
Table 3: Suggested Ideas & Changes

SEM LAYERS	IDEAS & SUGGESTIONS
Individual (demographic profile, socio-economic factors, education, physical literacy, capability, motivation & attitudes)	- Starting slowly and building up - Frame sport as fun with friends - More fun stuff - Food at session
Physical Environment (urban/rural geography, access to parks, access to open, safe spaces, transport, communication)	- Renovate spaces & places (e.g. add floodlights, football nets, equipment for ping-pong on streets) - Make parks safe - Trusted adults in parks - More outdoor things - Cycle paths (roads not safe) - Better transport/ Walking in groups [to help young people to get to and from activities]
Organisations & Institutions (local authorities, Leisure centres, service providers, education settings, NGBs & sports clubs)	- Reduce the costs of clubs and leisure centres for children and young people - More information about what's on where and for whom - Culture of clubs: less formal - More opportunities at school (longer break times and more inclusive clubs) - Gym & fitness for teens - Activities at youth clubs - Community events to try different activities - Advice, support & encouragement - Change the PE kit, curriculum and timetabling - Workforce development
Social Environment (cultural factors, religious factors, social capital, cohesion, racism, sexism, discrimination)	- Female only sessions - Disabled friendly opportunities - Inclusive spaces for Children and young people with complex needs
Policy (laws, rules, regulations, codes, strategies)	Ensuring that all students get access to a minimum of 2 hours PE per week - a number of CYP shared with us that they are 'always getting taken out of PE to do catch up in other subjects'

Considerations:

Responses aimed at increasing activity levels will need to consider ways that will influence and affect positive change across the different 'layers' of the local eco-system and consider using mixed method approaches. Based on what we heard, this may require consideration of:

- Marketing/comms approaches to emphasise the range of ways to be active and promote the multiple benefits of physical activity and ensuring young people can see 'people like me' being active or perhaps as Activators.
- The Physical Environment: and the need for improvements to the built and natural environment so that they feel appealing, accessible and safe to use
- Service provision and whether the current range of opportunities meet the different ways young people want to be active
- The need for additional training and workforce development – one that is able to engage and support the needs of less confident young people as well as those who want to take part in competitive activities and improve technical skills/ performance.
- The need for a diverse eco-system of providers - that are needed to support different young people, which comprises not only grass roots sports organisations and leisure providers but wider youth and community providers too, who may be better placed to support some young people.
- Culture Change – to take into account requests for more informal opportunities, more relaxed approaches to kit and equipment and 'bite-size' activities to support those who have minimal time or are unable to commit week in and out.



Reflections On Approach

The information below provides some initial reflections and learning from the approach taken in this work.

Pace. The timeline of the engagement meant that some groups and young people were unable to engage; including capacity issues, underdeveloped relationships. Purdah limited inclusion in some communications.

Ripple Effects

Sport and Physical Activity Attitudes. Some of the organisations we connected with have reflected on their own understanding around the impact of sport and physical activity and its positive impact on wider health determinants and social outcomes, and therefore their role in developing a sporting offer across their service provision.

Capacity building. StreetGames have developed new relationships with organisations who have subsequently integrated into the network and engaged in events, Inspiration activities, and access to funding support.

Youth Voice Practice. The local workforce has engaged in training and support to deliver youth voice activities. The approach has been embedded within community provision AND observed by other institutions who invited StreetGames to share how to embed it within other local institutions. This approach is being developed into a toolkit and shared nationally.

Young Leaders. Young people have been trained and supported to lead youth voice activity in third grade community and across local provision.

Thank You

Thank you to Hull City Council for the opportunity to lead this piece of work, and all the departments who got behind us to reach as many people as we did.

Crucially, we would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the community groups, schools, organisations and the hundreds of young people who took the time to share their views as part of this important work, which is helping to shape ideas and actions for change to create a vibrant and appealing environment to be active in Hull.

