

# Sport England's Youth Insight

A SUMMARY



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A high proportion of young people regularly take part in sport but participation amongst 14 - 25 year olds has remained static since 2008.

This is a summary of Sport England's new insight into young people and the actions we believe are required to broaden our reach and get more people active and enjoying being active.

This research has been developed to inform you about the recent headline findings and to support you with the following:

- › Designing and delivering the right experience for all young people.
- › Who are you targeting?
- › What could you do next?
- › Ideas to use with social media.



# Headline Findings

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## Times have changed (the environment in which young people have grown up is different to previous generations)

Some change in delivery is required to maintain levels of interest in sport amongst each new generation. Technology is an integral part of young people's lives these days; they do not separate online and offline activities.

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## Young people's behaviour does not always reflect their attitude to sport - we need to focus on changing behaviours not attitudes

Many young people feel positive about sport but don't think of it as a fun activity to do. They are happy to go and watch the football but aren't necessarily looking to take part; for them, the opportunities need to be more visible and accessible, with stronger reminders of their positive associations. Other young people are uninterested in sport but find wider reasons to take part. Promoting the benefits they are looking for is more effective; i.e. to lose weight, selling sport as fun does not resonate with them.

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## For many, there is a shift in teenage years towards taking part for more 'functional' or lifestyle reasons

Motivations change as young people grow up, with health, fitness and looking and feeling good becoming more important. The shift towards fitness-related activities is occurring at an earlier age than previously. We need to keep engaging and providing feedback to young people, particularly girls, on what actually matters to them.

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## Don't underestimate passive participation

Playing sport is a passive act for many young people who are carried along by what their friends/family are doing or what's happening in their educational setting. As they grow up more proactive choices are required. What will help them take part in activity as part of their everyday life e.g. can they cycle to college/work along with friends.

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## Sport comes with emotional baggage for some people, show them a different side to activity

Young people's previous experiences can affect their decision to participate in sport later in life. There is a lack of confidence and competence which stops people taking part, many think they won't be good enough to take part. New or unusual sports or a different image can change people's attitudes to taking part. Whilst the activity can be sport, the message that sells it doesn't have to be.

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## Why should I take part?

There needs to be reasons for young people to keep coming back to make sport a habit e.g. make friends, keep fit, or help themselves develop.

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## We need to attract new people.

Sport tends to only attract those already taking part. We need to think differently when considering marketing for those who are not involved in sport. Imagery in particular needs to be attractive to someone who isn't already taking part.

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## So what do I do next?

We have learned that 15% of young people are positive about taking part but need an easier route (ideally one that involves their social group). A key audience are interested in the 'functional' benefits of participating - are we selling this? Based on the youth insight data; how do we market and put on our activities to encourage new people to take part?

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# Designing and delivering the right experience for all young people

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Young people are seeking experiences which are:

## **SOCIAL**

Allowing them to maintain their social lives and connect with like-minded people

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## **REWARDING**

Give them something back (an achievement e.g. losing weight/ gaining friends)

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## **PERSONALISED**

Tailored or able to make their own and fitting with their lives (able to drop in and out depending on work commitments)

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## **INSPIRING**

Unique, different, something they can be proud of or help them stand out and grasp their attention in the first place)

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## **CREATIVE**

Entrepreneurial, allowing them to go further to create their version of sport e.g. free running is a consequence of this

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## **INTERACTIVE**

Through the use of technology and/or gaming

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## **Remember**

Coaches and deliverers are influential on young people. Those who have shared experiences, attitudes, or similar backgrounds are more likely to deliver the 'right' experience for young people. Look at the 'What makes your session unmissable for young people?' resource for more examples.



# Who are we targeting?

## There are 3 key audiences

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### AUDIENCE 1

#### Young people who are positive about sport but (mostly) not participating

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These young people enjoy(ed) sport, either the activities themselves and/or the social side, however, they are more likely to drift in and out of participation or stop altogether for a variety of reasons. For example:

- › Their friends are collectively less interested in sport.
- › Increased pressure to “study/work more and play less” shapes their priorities.
- › They weren’t supported to form a new habit when their life changed (e.g. starting a new job).
- › They can find it hard to motivate and organise activities for themselves (and others).
- › A perception that they might not be good enough as they haven’t played for a while.

#### What they might say

“My friends are so important, they are always there to support me and I tell them everything”

“I like to play hockey now and again but it is quite competitive, I don’t like playing it at school but clubs are expensive and my parents can’t always afford that”

“I have got keener about sport since leaving school however now I work it is harder to commit due to my hours”



Designing and delivering the right experience; things that these type of participants will consider:

#### How easy have you made it for me to attend?

Look at the transport links to the venue from the local area.

Consultation on the time and day of the activity.

#### Is it really for me (and my friends)?

What research have you done? Who have you asked? What imagery have you used to advertise?

#### Don't expect too much from me but help me find (and stay at) the right level

Involve the participants in moulding the sessions.

How flexible is it for participants to attend when it suits them?

No hurry to progress to competition, the social side is important.

#### What makes it unmissable?

Consider your audience and the content of the session they want.

#### How much have you prompted, reminded and rewarded me?

Think about social media groups, texts/ reminders and incentives i.e. discount memberships, sports equipment.

#### Can I afford this?

Think about offering different payment methods i.e. per session, per month, per annum.

## AUDIENCE 2

### Young people with a functional relationship with sport/activity

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These young people recognise the benefits of sport and activity. For example both young women and young men know it can help them look and feel good. Some are interested in how sport makes them feel healthy. Others see skills development adding value to their search for a job. These benefits are enough to keep them trying to be active. We call this having a functional relationship with sport.

Motivations are less likely therefore to relate to the activity itself and they may gain little enjoyment from taking part. This makes them quite vulnerable to participating for only short bursts, particularly when it relates to an immediate goal e.g Race for Life. Sport and particularly exercise are therefore treated as a functional activity.

However, our sector often tries to sell them enjoyment and fun rather than reinforcing the benefits they are seeking. Although young people are looking for experiences to be fun, many in this group are less likely to perceive that sport can be fun.

### What they might say

"Something that fits in with my life so quick classes and knowing I will look good in six weeks' time"

"I have a gym membership but rarely use it. Maybe twice a month but it's hard to find time when I am working"

"I want to look good for Ibiza this year. I need to do more to get my bikini perfect body"



### Designing and delivering the right experience; things that these type of participants will consider:

#### **I want to see results**

Give examples before and after. What benefits might they enjoy?

#### **Don't make me feel uncomfortable**

Think about your marketing, show pictures of others in a comfortable environment i.e not too sporty.

#### **I may need help to maintain a habit**

Incentives, reminder texts and joining social media groups.

#### **Don't tell me to do it and don't say it will be fun**

Point out the benefit and don't sell it as fun.

#### **Give me something I can share with my friends**

Social media, offer a bring a friend discount.



## AUDIENCE 3

### Young people uninterested, but not necessarily inactive

Taking part in sport does not engage these young people, many of whom recall a negative experience in the past. This attitude can be the result of a having a narrow definition of sport e.g traditional competitive sports from school. Many have reached the age where they can choose not to take part.

Some may enjoy watching sport but believe that taking part is not for them. Many are however engaged by other (less active) pursuits/interests e.g. recreational cycling to work.

They are much more likely to be girls than boys in this group. Participation in alternative activities such as skateboarding or BMX tends not to change their negative perceptions of sport.

The goal with this group is to find, create and repackage activities that can be used to change their behaviour rather than changing their attitude to sport. Continuing to keep them active is then reliant on identifying opportunities that fit their changing needs as they grow up.

### What they might say

"I wish we could do more extreme sports at school, stuff like BMX and skateboarding would be cool. More of an adrenaline rush"

"I can't really remember the last time I did sport - probably about a year ago. It's just not my thing, I would rather diet to look good, I just think about the end result"

"I used to like playing loads of sport and was in a football team but then it all got a bit competitive and my mates left the team so I did as well"

"Anything that doesn't get in the way of me missing out on things with my friends would be cool"



### Designing and delivering the right experience; things that these type of participants will consider:

#### Choose your language carefully

Don't use the word sport, research other terminology.

#### Don't try to change my mind - I just don't love sport

How else can you sell the activity?

#### Talk to me about my life - make the offer attractive to me

Make it personal, treat the participant's as people with real life stories.

#### Give me reassurance

Use taster sessions to add confidence. Meet and greet sessions.

#### What's in it for me?

Promote benefits, health, social factors and sense of achievement. Time for you.



# What could you do next?

Have a go at jotting down some notes around your potential project

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| <p><b>Who are you targeting?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Young people 14-25 (young girls, young boys, young professionals, young mums BME and disability groups)</li> <li>› Concentrate on one area for each different approach in your marketing.</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p><b>Why are you targeting this group?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Is there a need in your local area? Do you have good links with businesses, schools, colleges and universities?</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>How will you advertise your activity e.g. is it social media, poster, press etc...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Refer to social media guides to determine how you develop your social media campaign.</li> <li>› Guide 'What makes your session unmissable for young people?</li> </ul>                           |  |
| <p><b>Have you considered the images you would attach to your advert?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Images are very important, think about this carefully and do your research.</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>Did it work? If not why not? What would work better?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Accept losses and gains and learn from these.</li> <li>› Remain focused on what you can change and achieve and not what you can't.</li> <li>› Use any negative outcomes as motivation.</li> <li>› Learn and move on.</li> </ul> |  |

## Top Tips

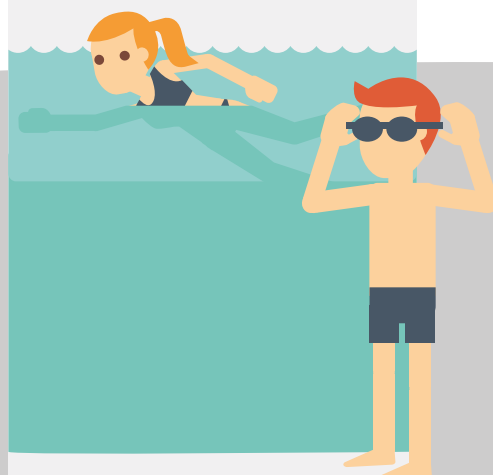
**Find an advocate** (staff/student) to identify/recruit young people face-to-face, particularly those who already attend the club. Use Freshers' Week, taster sessions, noticeboards, assemblies, parents' evenings, open days, fairs and sports days.

**Use your existing communication channels** to let everyone know what's happening. Make sure the activity gets a mention in your club emails, newsletter or website. Members will feel a sense of connection with the activity and tell others.

**How do you recruit**, support and recognise people who give their time to the activity? Ensure you include your volunteers, coaches and young leaders. New activity provide an ideal opportunity for new coaches, leaders and volunteers to gain valuable experience.

**Use young people** already attending the sessions and hub club. They'll provide fresh, innovative and really effective marketing ideas and their word of mouth is valuable! Be careful about promotional images you use and highlight you don't need to be athletic or have specialist equipment to attend.

**EMPHASISE NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY.**





# Ideas to use with social media

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Social media provides unique opportunities for clubs to engage and connect with young people and spread information about an event/campaign messages rapidly. Most effective posts are photos, videos etc. Ask participants and volunteers to do the same.

## ASK QUESTIONS

For example, predictions for a winner on upcoming event/challenge, views on previous events, input for future training sessions or an option poll. Run a Q&A session on your wall, where anyone can ask a question of you/your trainer/a celeb etc, take questions from participants. Ask participants to post up if they do any sport in between sessions - with photos if they have them.

## PROVOKE A REACTION

Get a conversation or discussion going that people want to contribute to.

## VISITORS

If you have a noteworthy visitor to your club, ask if you can take their photo, or even record a quick interview.

Look at the SASSOT social media guide resources for ideas and tips.

## Useful Links

[www.sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk/developing-sport/insight-hub](http://www.sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk/developing-sport/insight-hub)

Please see the above link for more information on:

- › Satellite Club Guide
- › Youth Insight Packs
- › Social Media Guides
- › What Makes Your Session Unmissable

## Information for Sportivate, Satellite Clubs and Clubs

[www.sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk/developing-sport/sportivate](http://www.sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk/developing-sport/sportivate)

[www.sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk/developing-sport/satelliteclubs](http://www.sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk/developing-sport/satelliteclubs)

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