



Proper
Active

Young People Transitioning from School to Community Environments Stage 1: Insight Pack

Sport Wales: West Wales Research

April 2022



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chwaraeoncymru



Contents

Introduction	
Background	Slide 3
Research Approach	Slide 4
Summary of key findings	Slide 5
Part 1: Defining the question?	Slide 8
Part 2: What do we already know?	Slide 13
1. Young people's lives 2. Influencers 3. Communication & awareness 4. Current activity 5. Expectations of activity 6. Emotional barriers/enablers 7. Practical barriers/enablers 8. Delivery Challenges	• Slide 14 • Slide 25 • Slide 29 • Slide 32 • Slide 43 • Slide 52 • Slide 56 • Slide 58
Part 3: Where now?	Slide 62
References & further reading	Slide 68

Introduction: Background

The West Wales area comprises 4 Local Authorities (LAs): Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. LA Physical Activity Leads across these areas have collectively raised the following question: ***What motivates young people around age 13-14 (Y9) to transition from being physically active in school programmes into regular community participation opportunities?***

SLC and Proper Active were asked to work with West Wales LA Leads to further explore this question.

Why is this of interest?

This question has arisen due to the known drop-off in participation for young people at around this age, along with a recognition that, once young people leave education settings, they are no longer compelled to take part in physical activity within the education setting. At this point, many of their connections with opportunities to play sport are lost.

It is recognised that overall drop-off is an elongated process, with increasing numbers of young people becoming less active throughout primary and secondary education; however, it is thought that age 13-14 perhaps presents a more notable drop. The LAs would like to understand whether this is the case and, if it is, why are this age group in particular dropping out.

Further to this, they would like to understand what motivates those young people who do take part in physical activity outside of school to do so and how this influences their longer-term relationship with being active.

The major value in this learning would be to inform the design & implementation of future local interventions to support young people. It might also be useful in influencing wider strategy/spending and for sharing/learning.

Introduction: Research Approach

- The first stage in the research was an ideation session with LA leads to explore their question in detail, define what they most wanted to know and understand how the findings might be used. This session included the beginnings of some system mapping exercises¹, to start to build a picture of young people's worlds and what influences their behaviour.
- A desk review was then undertaken to explore the issue of teenage dropout and the broader questions raised by West Wales LA Physical Activity Leads in the ideation session.
- Whilst this is not a systematic review, more than 60 articles and reports have been reviewed with more than 40 included. Findings have been synthesised thematically against each area of interest.
- The majority of reports and data were freely available online and were accessed between 14th February and 28th March 2022.
- This work will enable a broad view of the lives of our target audience, what matters to them, their physical activity habits, their relationship with sport and what they want from a sporting activity.
- Whilst local data has been included where available, much of the data is Wales or UK wide. Additional sources have also been included where it enhances our general understanding of young people and the questions raised by the West Wales PA leads. Sources which consulted directly with young people have been prioritised.
- This insight pack and its recommendations will act as a platform for a future research phase, involving primary data collection within the LAs and direct engagement with young people and those who support them.

Summary of Key Findings

- Young people live rich and complex lives and are experiencing more influences and pressures than any generation before.
- Today's teenagers are the first to be born into a fully digital world and the expectation to be a connected digital native is high. The internet gives endless access to knowledge, but to potentially harmful influences too. Social media can be a haven, and has been a lifeline for many young people during the pandemic; however, it can also create unrealistic expectations of what young people should look like and what they should be achieving.
- As with previous generations, there is pressure to have the right brands and be part of the right groups; however, social media in particular creates a culture of *always on* and *needing to be seen*, which can cause feelings of anxiety, depression and isolation for many teenagers. The need to *fit in* and gain *peer approval* is powerful. Parental influence does still play a role too, particularly mum's, but may not always be the main decision driver.
- Against this backdrop, physical activity is not always a top priority, and how sport and physical activity is perceived by peers is important in shaping teenagers' desire to take part.
- This review suggests that the problem of teenage dropout is not limited to a specific age, but is a gradual process which happens over a number of years. It is shaped by each young person's circumstances, their influencers, and their personal experiences of being active. That said, transition points (from primary to secondary school, and school to further education & training, work or unemployment) do seem to be key turning points.
- It is also particularly notable that declines in participation are much greater in extracurricular settings, with the number of young people doing community sport at least once a week holding steady at ~60% from age 8-15.
- This correlates with a significant drop in enjoyment of sport, both in PE and extracurricular sessions; however, enjoyment in community settings declines much more slowly. Wider research suggests that school experiences of sport can have a lasting effect on people's long-term relationship with being active, so this is worthy of some consideration.

Summary of Key Findings

- Nonetheless, age 12-15 is identified as a particularly crucial stage in young people's development, when they begin moving from child to adult and start to exert greater independence. This means it remains important to understand what this age group is looking for in order to provide positive experiences in all settings.
- Various studies suggest there is a disparity between current available provision for physical activity and what YP say they want. Current opportunities are often seen as *too traditional, overly structured, and not enjoyable*.
- Whilst it appears most young people in our target age range do recognise the health benefits of being active, particularly in light of the pandemic, this alone is not enough to drive behaviour. Rather, YP say that they want low-cost, local, social, informal and enjoyable sessions and they want to feel listened to about what they will be doing.
- Whilst price is cited by most young people as important, this is most significant for those from the lowest income families, who may feel other expenditures take priority over paying for sport. The principles of proportionate universalism are worthy of consideration here, as highlighted in the Marmot Reports (2010, 2021).
- There is significant latent demand amongst young people to do more physical activity; however, a frequently cited barrier for not doing more amongst this age group is not having time. As young people reach early adolescence other pressures, such as schoolwork, start to play a role. When this happens, for those that can afford to take part, the question becomes one of perceived value – do they feel the activity is worth the time and the price versus other ways to spend it.
- In addition to practical barriers, there is a complex array of social and emotional barriers at play which govern whether teenagers take part. These are particularly pronounced for girls, for disabled young people and for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. More provision and making it free or cheap will not be enough to tackle these, as discerning teenagers seek to feel welcome, included and stimulated. It is also vital, especially for girls, that teenagers can take part with their friends.

Summary of Key Findings

- Even in this climate, competition has an important role to play. It can be an effective engagement tool for many teenagers, indeed for some it is essential; but it has to be used appropriately for the audience to ensure it does not become a zero-sum game, where emphasis on winning makes those who do not win feel inadequate.
- In light of all this, listening to YPs' voice and applying co-creation to the design of activities and interventions is essential; however, this still does not appear to be the norm, with young people frequently reporting they do not feel listened to.
- Of course many of the barriers experienced by young people are beyond the control of those who seek to engage them in sport and activities, and a degree of drop-out is inevitable, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds who face additional life challenges. This means that the experiences young people have when they are taking part is even more crucial. Positive experiences will mean that, if they do step away, when they reach a different situation in life, they can feel comfortable, capable and confident to come back.
- In terms of what this means for transitioning from school to community activity, the term *transition* implies that the two are always connected. This can be the case, for example in Sport Wales' *Active Young People Programmes (AYPP)* or in Sport England's *Satellite Clubs* model, where opportunities are set-up in partnership with schools to intentionally allow young people to experience community sport through a connection with the trusted environment of their school. However, there is plenty to suggest that some young people take part outside of school on the basis of other influences, for example, family activities, support from parents or peers; or by referral from other community groups and services.
- This implies that building stronger links between schools and community sport could be one avenue to encourage young people into community sport, but there are also many others. For example, working with parents and families, co-creation of attractive opportunities with young people who currently do not take part, or working in partnership with other community groups to deliver physical activity as part of a wider programme of support and opportunities.
- Understanding and addressing why young people fall out of love with school sport, and making use of the wellbeing agenda (e.g. physical activity to support young people's mental health) could also present valuable opportunities.



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Part 1: Defining the question

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Defining the question

To ensure any research could be focused on the questions of most value to West Wales LAs, an ideation session with LA Physical Activity Leads took place in February 2022. A number of key points to consider emerged from that discussion.

Independence It is recognised that at age 13-14 young people exhibit more autonomy and become less reliant on their parents to choose and facilitate free time activities.

Curricular v extracurricular participants

It is acknowledged that young people taking part in extracurricular activities may already have a more positive relationships with physical activity and hence be more likely to transition to activity outside school.

If that assumption is true, it is especially important to understand how those participating in curricular activities only (i.e. compulsory) feel about community sport.¹

Role of technology As the majority of young people are highly connected and technologically savvy it will be vital to consider the role of digital platforms through this work.

Type of community activity?

At the centre of this question is a desire to support young people to establish and maintain positive relationships with physical activity to give them the skills and motivation to remain active into their adult lives. As such, as long as they are active it doesn't matter what activity they do.

Further to this, activities could be:

- Online OR offline
- In organised settings e.g. clubs OR informal opportunities
- With friends/family OR with other participants OR alone
- In young people specific OR general activities
- In sport focused environments OR any community setting

However, it is important to understand the type of activity young people want to do, where, when and with who.

What do we want to know?

7. Practical barriers/enablers

- Are there things to do close to them?
- Are they things they WANT to do (doorstep model)?
- How do YP pay for activities?
- How do YP travel to activities?
- How do they want to pay/travel?
- How is red tape restricting deliverers' ability to accommodate YP's needs?
- Is physical activity aligned with their digital expectations?

6. Emotional barriers/enablers

- What is their past experience of PA?
- How appealing is the environment? Particularly Sport Clubs/Leisure Centres?
- How able (competent) do they feel in a PA environment?
- How do they feel about themselves when they take part (e.g. body conscious)?
- Do they feel listened to in a PA environment?

1. Young People's Lives

- What is important to YP?
- What do they enjoy?
- What gives them value in their free time?
- Is being active important, enjoyable, a valuable way to spend time?
- What in their lives enables/disables them to be active?
- How are barriers changing in the world?

YP
transitioning
from school
to
community

5. Expectations of activity

- What do YP want/enjoy from activities?
- What venues/locations are YP comfortable in?
- Who should be delivering an activity?
- Are tasters effective? What is their role?
- Are adventure activities a sustainable option?
- Do YP want to design (co-create) activities?

2. Influencers

- Who do YP trust/listen to?
- What channels do YP use?
- Who inspires them?
- How much are parents influencing YPs decisions at this age?
- Who do they want to take part with?
- What do their influencers think about being active?
- What makes a good role model?

3. Comms/awareness

- What opportunities to be active are YP aware of?
- Where do YP look for information?
- What type of info do they see/find?
- How do they perceive the info they find?
- Who should information come from?
- Is comms to their parents important?

4. Current activity

- What PA are YP doing at the moment?
- Do YP want to be (more) active?
- What difference does this make to what they want from a community PA activity?
- How has Covid affected their activity?
- Do those doing compulsory school activity want different things to those in extracurricular activity?

Draft Network Analysis

Outdoor Spaces

- Public parks
 - MUGAs/tennis courts
 - Playgrounds
 - Skate parks/cycle tracks
- Playing fields/pitches
- Beaches
- Canals/waterways
- Car Parks
- Town Centres/bus stations

Home

- Own home
- Garden
- Relatives' homes
- Friends homes

This analysis was created during the ideation session and will be further developed in the process of this work.

Indoor Spaces

- Youth Clubs
- Sports Clubs
- Community Centres
- School/Education Settings
- Shopping Centres

Where do YP go
and who is providing
opportunities for
them?

PA Partners

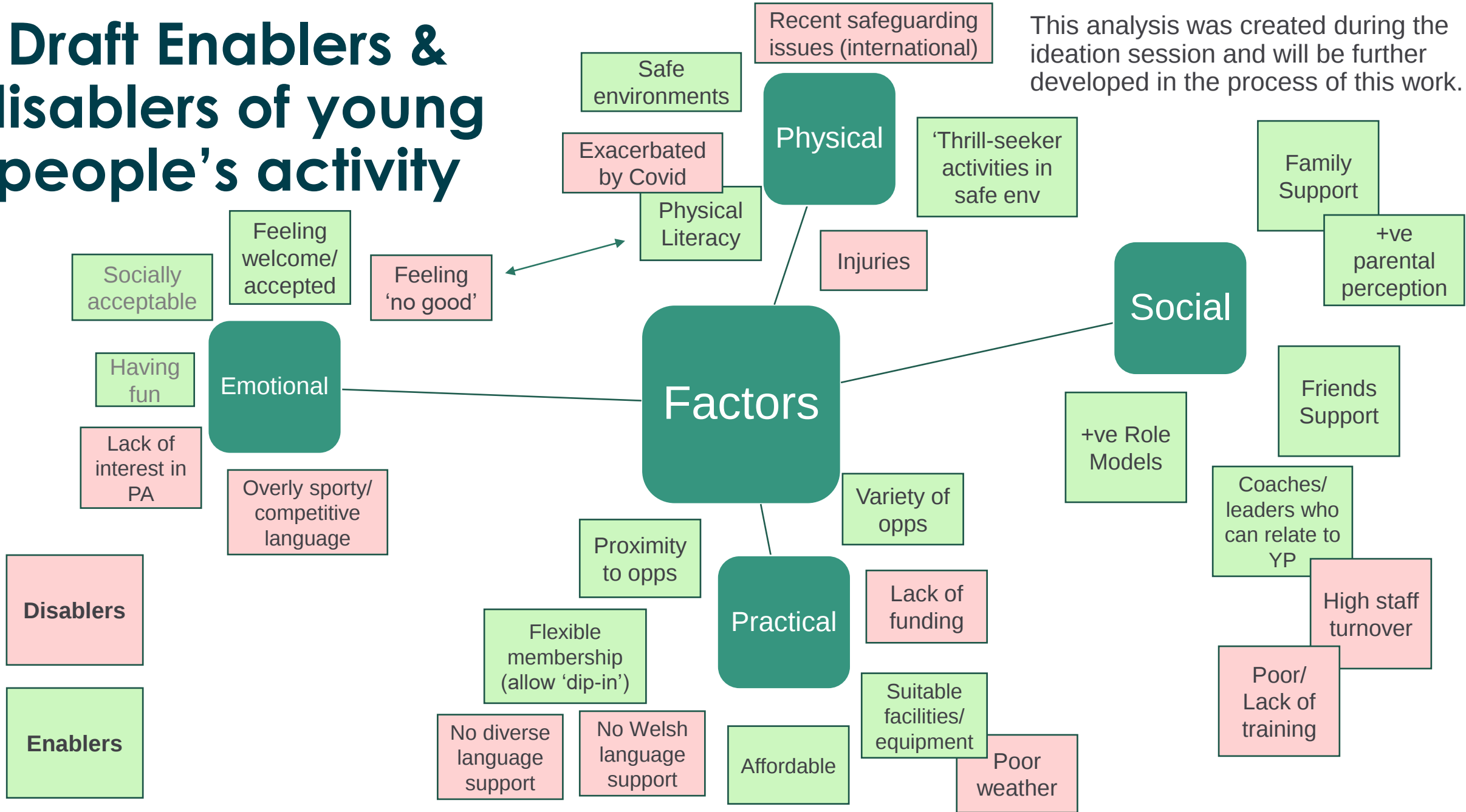
- Clubs
- Leisure Centres
- NGBs
- Commercial Facility Providers
- Coaches/coaching networks
- Charities/CICs delivering PA (e.g. Street Games)

Community Partners

- Youth Services/youth workers
- Charities supporting young people
- Parks Management
- GPs
- Social Prescribers
- Schools/education institutes
- Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)
- Community Groups

Draft Enablers & disablers of young people's activity

This analysis was created during the ideation session and will be further developed in the process of this work.





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Part 2: What do we already know?

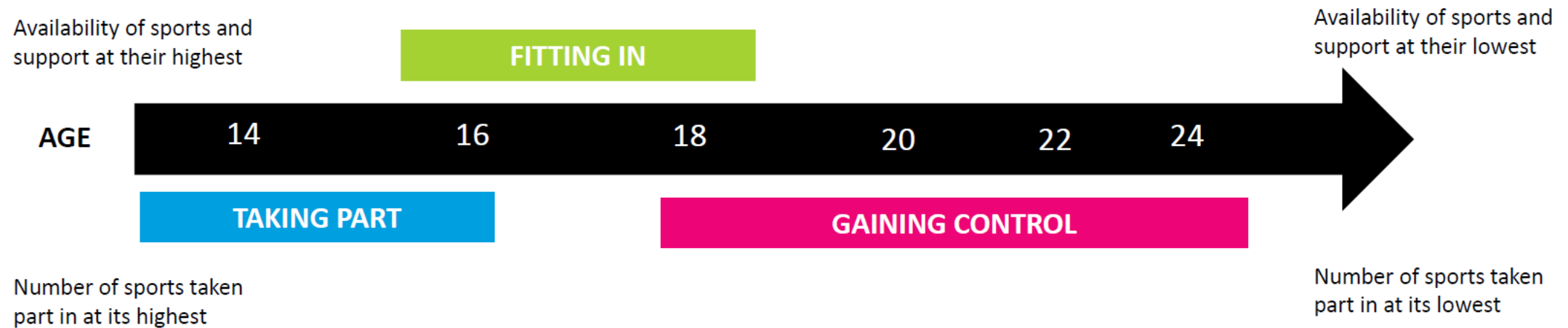
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1. Young People's Lives

Street Games *Exploring Sports Pathways* (2016)

This report supports the assertion of the West Wales LAs that adolescence is a life defining period, with many transitions. YP shift first exist as their child self; **Taking Part** in a way which is more influenced and managed by external forces such as parents and teachers. They next become an adolescent self, where **Fitting In** is very much the priority. Here it depends whether sport fits with their peer group. They then become their young adult self, where they are **Gaining Control**, taking full responsibility for themselves, their money and their future. Depending on where they live and their key influences, having children of their own can also start to become a feature.



1. Young People's Lives

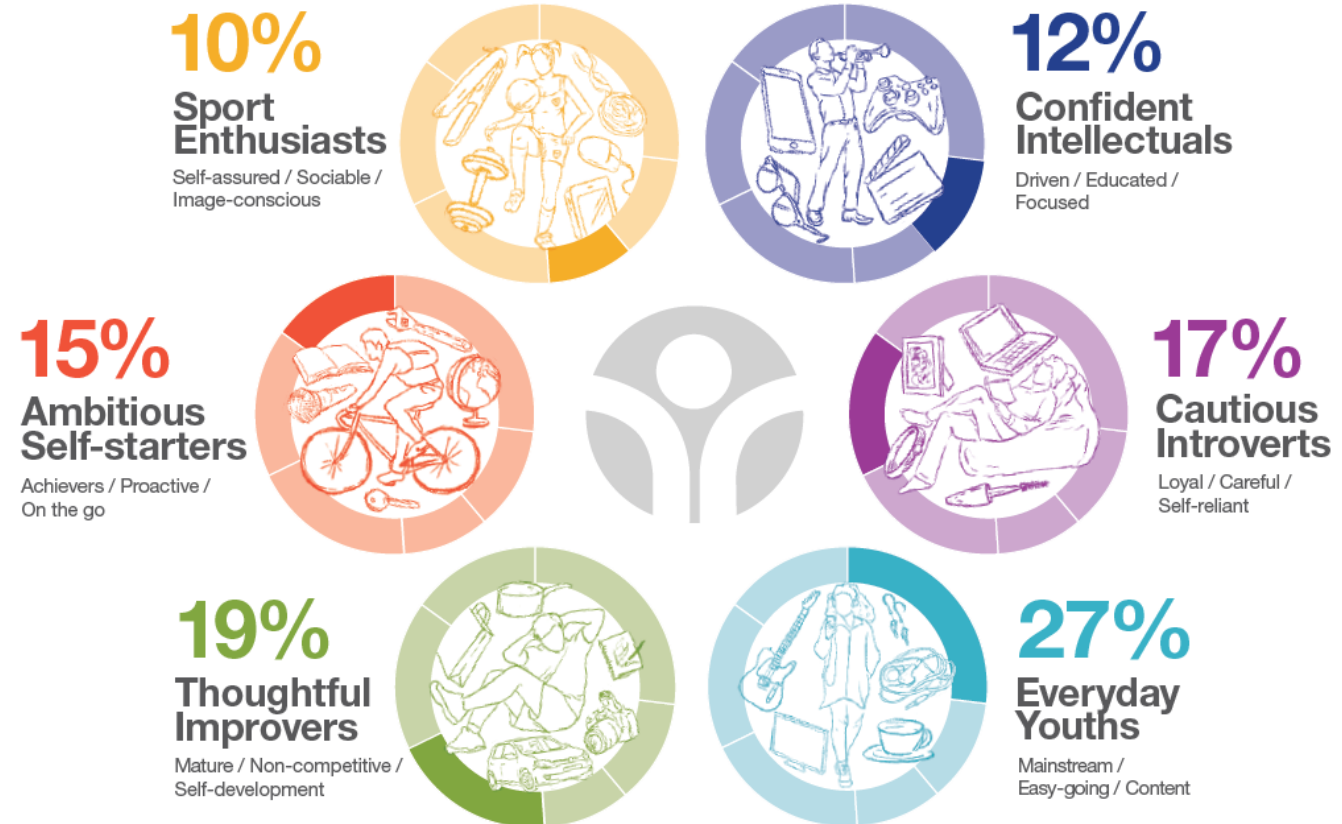
The six youth personalities

Key traits and group size

Young People's Personalities

A report from **Sport England in 2016** identified 6 broad youth personalities. Whilst these were not developed for Wales, they were based on a detailed segmentation of lifestyle factors, attitudes and behaviours with a sample of over 2000 young people. The report found that, for all young people, improvements in technology are altering how they experience the world. They want experiences which are interactive, social, rewarding and tailored to them. It also identified how young people's decision making (in life and in sport) is guided by both emotional and rational factors.

N.B. 14–15-year-olds feature in all 6 groups.



The group size shows the proportion of young people aged 14 to 25 in England in each personality

1. Young People's Lives

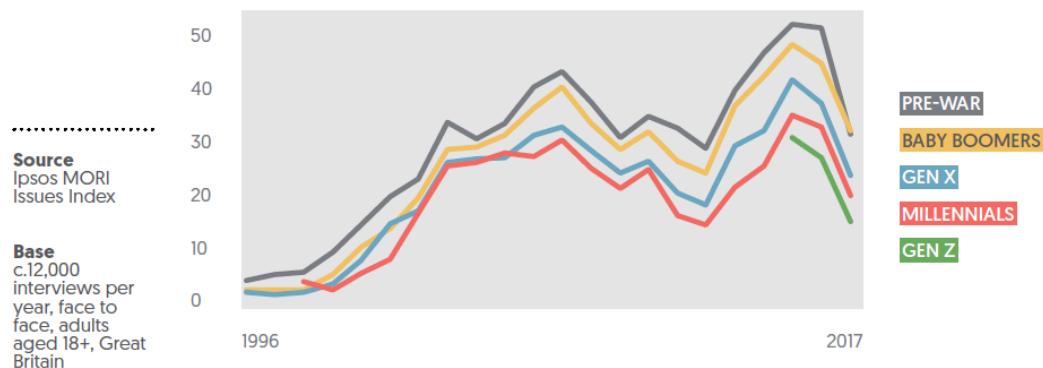
Ipsos MORI's *Beyond Binary* report (2018) highlighted a number of interesting insights about what is important to young people in the UK today.

Saturday jobs are dying off. In 1997, 42% of 16-17 year old students were studying and working at the same time, compared with just 18% of 16-17 year olds in 2014

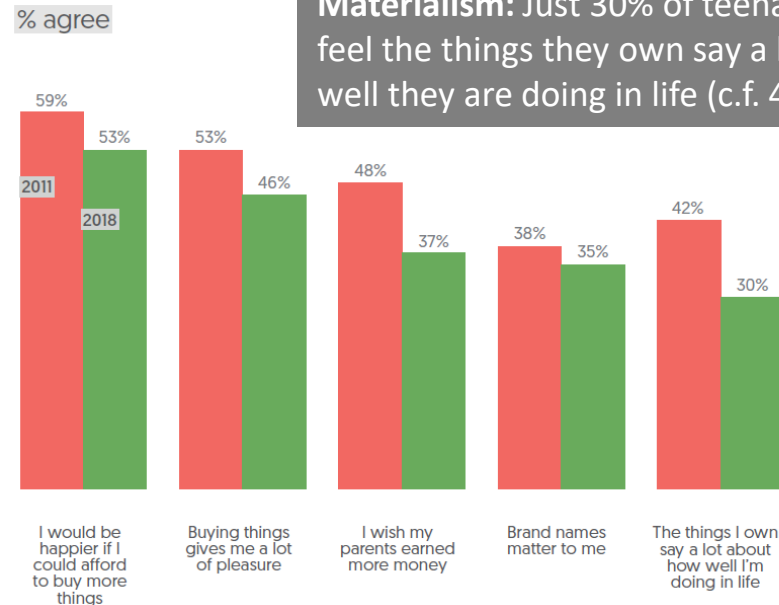
Conscientious Shoppers: A quarter of British teenagers say they have avoided certain products because of the conditions under which they were produced or what they are made from (c.f. 19% Millennials at the same age).

Immigration: Whilst attitudes to immigration have improved across all generations in the UK following the Brexit vote, there has remained a significant generational divide, with Gen Z least likely to see it as an issue.

What do you see as the most/other important issues facing Britain today?
% Immigration



Materialism: Just 30% of teenagers (11-17) feel the things they own say a lot about how well they are doing in life (c.f. 42% in 2011).



Drinking: In 2016, 36% of 13-15 year olds had experienced alcohol compared with 72% in 2000.

1. Young People's Lives

Females

A report from **Women in Sport (2019)** found there were 5 key anchors that were important in teenage girls lives.



“Instead of seeing family and going out, I'm just trying to make the most of going to school and seeing my friends...having reason to go out every day and not be stuck inside.”

- LESS ACTIVE, 15

“I've been feeling distant from my friends recently and this has caused a lot of overthinking and general sadness as I don't want to drift away from them.”

- LESS ACTIVE, 16

Further research (**WIS 2021**) found that the pandemic heavily impacted these anchors in a number of ways. 70% missed hanging out with friends most during lockdown and many reported feeling less close to their friends. 58% said they spent more time with family and that the pandemic brought them closer. In particular girls described their mums as an important source of support.

55% said being on social media is fun and relieves boredom, but 39% said too much made them feel anxious.

Girls have also missed out on important opportunities to develop their independence like going to friends houses, going shopping, or trips to the cinema. Although as restrictions have lifted it has also made them take-up and appreciate opportunities that they otherwise might not have.

55% reported that it is more difficult to feel positive about life since the pandemic started and many report feeling bored, lonely or anxious.

1. Young People's Lives

The **School Sport Survey (2018)** did not include questions on how students spend their free time; however, in the **Sport Wales FE Sport Survey (2018)**, students reported a wide range of activities. The top 10 activities they spend time on by gender are shown in Table 3. 'Play Sport' was noted by 29% of students (42% male, 16% female). It should be noted; however, that a range of other physically active pursuits were reported, such as walks (58%), cycling (21%), dancing (12%), home workouts (10%), gym (35%), swimming (26%). There were also activities, such as ice skating, ten-pin bowling, skate park, outdoor activity centre in which smaller numbers participated. Additionally, 31% of young people reported spending time in the park.¹

This lends support to the idea that young people like to spend their time on a wide range of activities, including physical activity, in a way that suits them.

Table 3: Leisure activities that FE students take part in – by gender

Male students	%	Female students	%
Listen to music	69	Listen to music	80
Play computer games / Wi / PlayStation / Xbox	66	Spend time with family	78
Go on the computer / use the Internet	58	Spend time with friends	72
Spend time with friends	58	Walks	68
Watch TV	57	Go out with friends	67
Go out with friends	57	Watch TV	66
Relax	54	Relax	65
Spend time with family	54	Go shopping	63
Walks	48	Go out for meals	62
Out for meals	47	Go on the computer / use the Internet	58

According to a **report from Street Games (2014)**, for disadvantaged young people, more leisure time is spent in town centres, parks, fast food restaurants, shopping centres and anywhere that is free to 'hang out'. There is equally a great emphasis on listening to music.

1. Young People's Lives

Prior to the pandemic, the rise in poor mental health for young people was already of concern. The **School Health Research Network Student Health and Wellbeing Survey 19/20 (SHRN)**, conducted with secondary pupils (Y7-11) showed 39% of young people reporting mild symptoms of poor mental health, with 19% reporting 'very high' symptoms. A third of students reported feeling lonely 'all' or 'some' of the time during school holidays and 20% of students reported a life satisfaction score of 5 or less (on a scale of 1-10). All of these indicators worsened with age, family affluence, and for females. They were worse again for students identifying as neither a girl or a boy.

A report from the **Welsh Youth Parliament** in Summer 2020 showed that 61% of young people (age 11-25) who took part in their survey were struggling with their mental health and experiencing feelings like low mood, anger, fear and anxiety at least once a week. The report called for more support for young people struggling with poor mental health, better signposting to help people access it, and more work to reduce the stigma around asking for help.

Welsh Government's Mind Over Matter: 2 years on report, published in October 2020, lent further support to these findings, and particularly called for earlier intervention. It found that some changes had begun to happen since their original report in 2018, with young people's mental health receiving much more air time and many examples of partnership working to achieve a more joined-up approach. Nonetheless, that change wasn't felt to be happening quickly enough to match the scale of the crisis.

"NORMALISE MENTAL HEALTH!!!! even the smallest things are HUGE."
(16-year-old respondent, Wales Youth Parliament survey)



1. Young People's Lives

James *et al* (2021) conducted a survey with 11-25-year-olds, between Sept 2020 and Feb 2021. Secondary pupils reported significant stress and anxiety associated with pressure to learn effectively online, to catch-up on lost learning and to achieve academically. These effects were notably worse for girls and those not specifying their gender.

Sport for Development charity Sported run a regular **Community Pulse Survey** with member organisations, who have repeatedly cited young people's mental health as one of their greatest concerns for their participants. In the last edition (October 2021) 27% raised this as a significant concern and 56% said they were focusing on young people's health and wellbeing as their current priority. Young people responding to **Sported's consultation with young people in Wales** in December 2021 reported high levels of anxiety, including about more lock-downs, bullying and personal safety.

"Young people have had their financial, emotional, and vocational wellbeing inordinately affected by the pandemic. In addition to job losses, educational disruption and financial pressures, young people have also experienced increased family strain, heightened anxiety, and exacerbated mental health issues as a result of the pandemic. These areas are interlinked, and further compounded by the overall uncertainty of employment prospects."— Sported Member

Interestingly, the **Happen Survey** reports that for many younger children (age 8-11) the lockdowns actually had a positive impact overall on wellbeing c.f. 2018 and 2019. They reported higher levels of sleep, more physical activity with their family (e.g. walking, cycling), and parents reported fewer emotional or behavioural issues. For more deprived children, however (indicated by Free School Meals [FSM] status), they ate less healthy foods, did less physical activity and had more difficulty with school work than their more affluent peers.

There is widespread evidence that physical activity promotes wellbeing amongst adults; however, the evidence base for young people is less well developed. A **systematic review (2021) from What Works Centre for Wellbeing** found promising evidence though that positive effects are mirrored in young people.

1. Young People's Lives

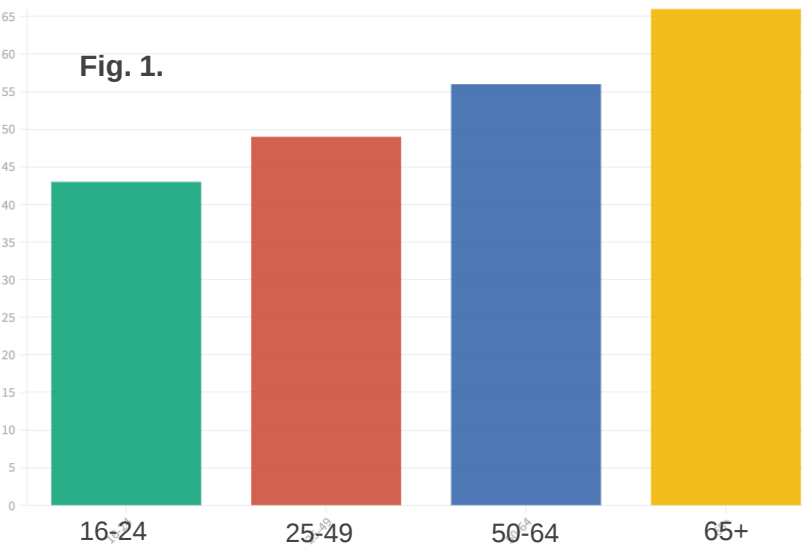
Young People & Politics

Ipsos MORI's *Beyond Binary* report (2018) discussed how political affiliations in the UK have changed. Historically, support for Labour has been largely dependent on current affairs, with greatest support when issues of social inequality are at the fore. Over the last decade this has become much more generational.

Around 40% Gen Z (born mid-1990s to early 2010s) and the same proportion of Millennials (born early 1980s to mid-1990s) support Labour, compared with 30% Gen X (born mid-1960s to early 1980s), 24% Baby Boomers (born mid-1940s to mid-1960s), and 17% of those born pre-1945. Conservative voters have always tended to be older, and they are currently supported by only 17% of Gen Z.

In the May 2021 Welsh Senedd Election, 16 and 17 years olds were eligible to vote for the first time. Less than 50% registered to vote, with 46% actually voting.¹

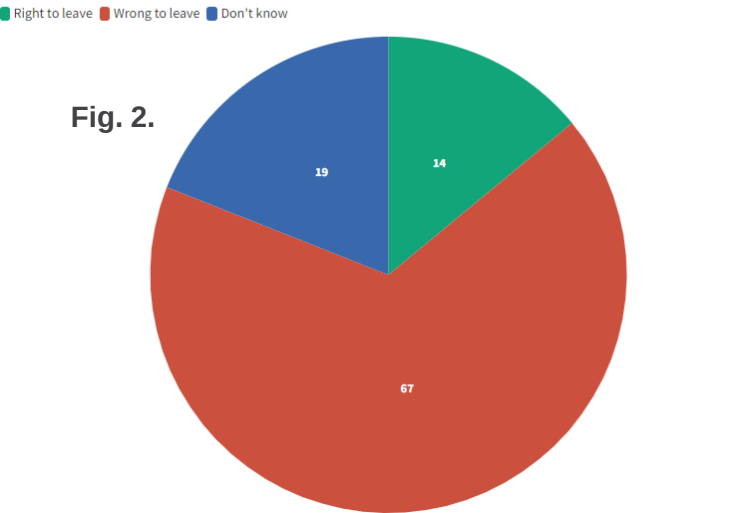
Percentage of respondents answering 'absolutely certain to vote' should a Senedd election be held tomorrow



A **YouGov Poll conducted for Wales Online in March 2021** showed that young people (16-24) in Wales are frustrated with domestic politics. On a scale of 1-10, they were the least likely age group to say they were *certain to vote* (score of 10; Fig. 1); however, 77% indicated they would be *likely or certain to vote* (scores of 6-10).

Two thirds felt Britain was wrong to leave the EU (c.f. 46% for all ages; Fig.2) and 40% are in favour of Welsh independence (c.f. 25% for all ages). 67% felt the Welsh government was handling the pandemic very or fairly well (c.f. only 39% for the UK government).

Do you think Britain was right or wrong to vote to leave the European Union? 16-24 year olds responses in %



1. Young People's Lives

Volunteering

Ipsos MORI (2018) reported that Gen Z in the UK were more likely to volunteer at age 14-16 than the previous generation of Millennials at the same age (Fig. 1), but more likely to do so informally in their community.

The **National Survey for Wales (2020)** found that the proportion of 16 to 24-year-olds who volunteered increased from 22% in 2016-17 to 27% in 2019-20.¹

The UK **Youth Social Action Survey (2019)** showed there had been a decline in the number of young people taking part in meaningful social action since 2016 (Fig.1.2). Boys, those from lower social grades and those in urban areas were less likely to have taken part.

Figure 1.2: Social action participation rates (2014-2019)

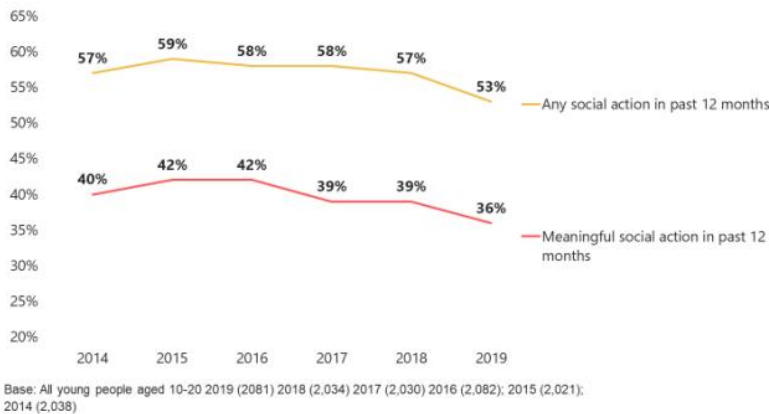
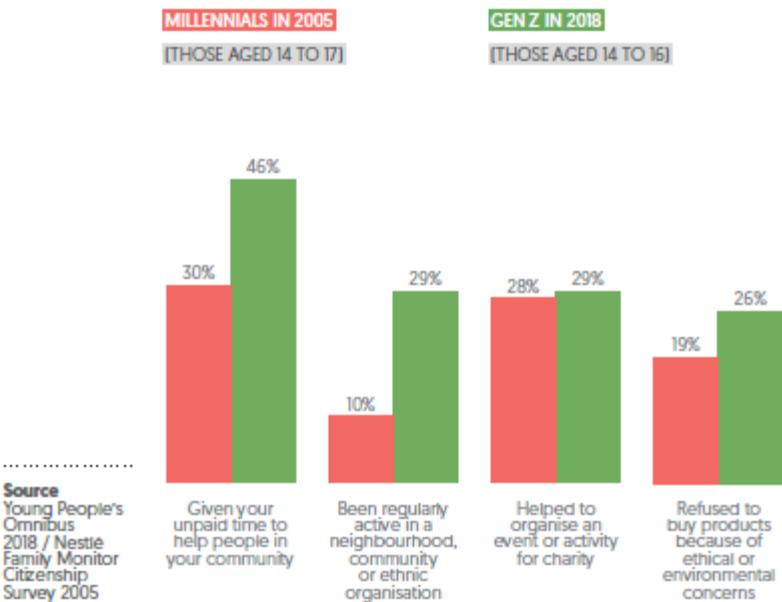


Fig. 1. **TEENAGE GEN Z MORE LIKELY TO BE SOCIALLY ACTIVE THAN MILLENNIALS AT THE SAME AGE**
% who have done the following in the past two years



A study carried out for Welsh Government in Summer 2020 consolidated available evidence on youth work in Wales. The report suggested there was a decline in young people (11-25) accessing statutory provision from 20% in 2014/14 to 15% in 2018/19. The report also noted a greater need to use young people's voices in shaping youth work.

1. Young People's Lives

Sexual Orientation

A study by **Ipsos MORI (2020)** found that diversity of sexuality and related attitudes have become more diverse with each generation. Gen Z are much more sexually diverse than the general population (Fig. 2). 48% of Gen Z are familiar with terms such as pansexual, omnisexual and asexual, compared with 1 in 5 Britons (19%) overall.

Ipsos MORI's *Beyond Binary* report (2018) also found that 73% of 15-16-year-olds thought same sex relationships were not wrong at all (Fig. 2). This is significantly higher than for Baby Boomers (those born between 1945 and 1964).

Fig.1 Sexual Orientation in the UK

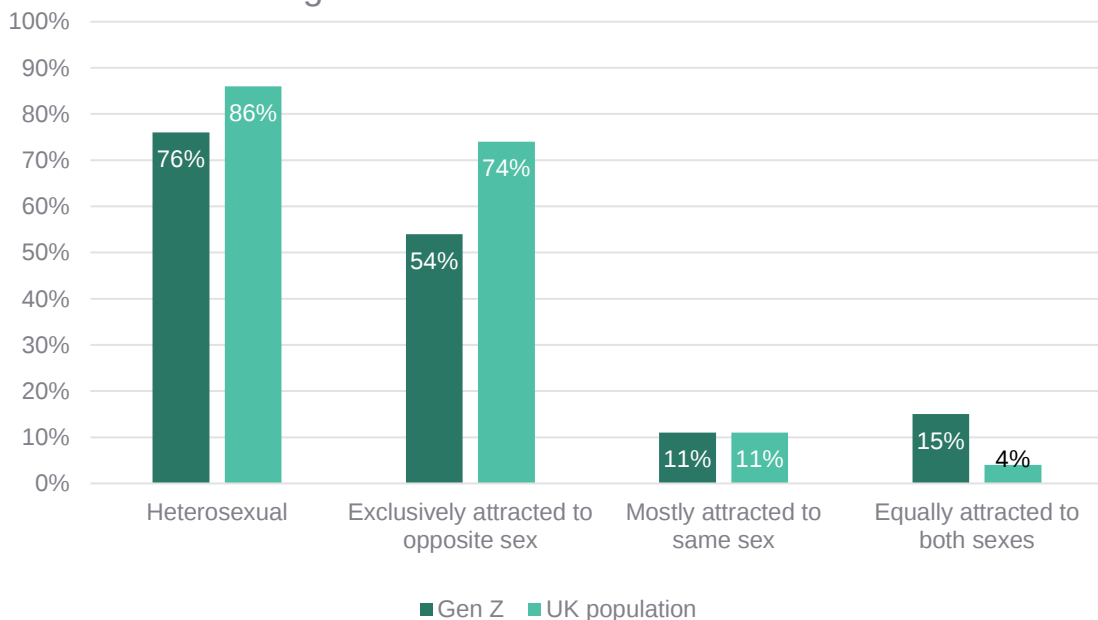
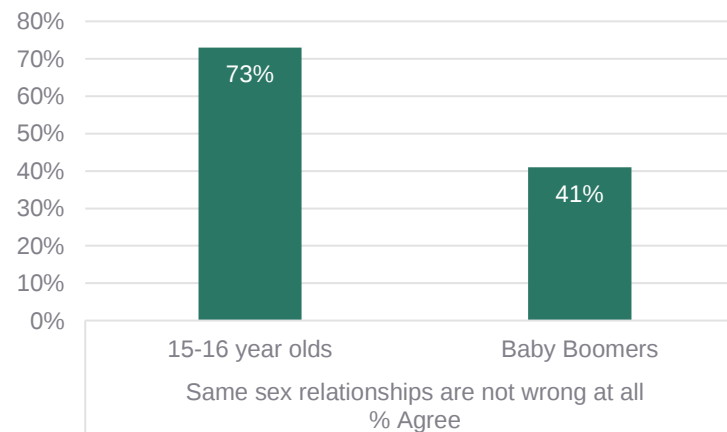


Fig. 2 UK attitudes to same sex relationships



1. Young People's Lives

According to the **Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)**, Wales has the highest level of poverty of the four UK nations, with around 30% children living in relative poverty. This is reflected across all four LAs in West Wales. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this, and now the cost-of-living crisis is set to make things worse.¹ Welsh Government has sought to offset this, at least to some extent, with a support package for the lowest income households.²

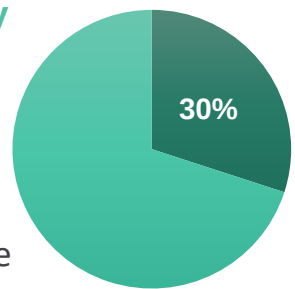
The COVID-19 crisis has also had a significant impact on the mental health of many children and young people. JRF report that traumatic experiences at home, social isolation, the loss of routine, fears about the pandemic and disruption to education have all increased pressure on young people. In many cases, young people with specific mental health needs have struggled to access support. A report commissioned by **Public Health Wales (2020)** describes available evidence that increasing number of young people are experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) due to the pandemic. According to **Hughes et al (2018)**, those who are subject to ACEs have an increased risk of engaging in health-harming behaviours as they become adults; they are also significantly more likely to receive treatment for a mental health condition, to self-harm, or to feel suicidal at some stage as an adult.

A qualitative study from **Street Games/2CV (2014)** with young people living in areas of high deprivation found:

- They feel they are very much the same as any other young person
- Who your friends are, how you present yourself (online and IRL), wearing the right brands and the celebrities they follow are very much part of their identities.
- Whilst influences, attitudes and behaviours are the same, due to limited resources, this group feel even greater social pressure to fit in, live for the moment and have the coolest brands.
- Whilst they are just as aspirational, their world can be more limited by a lack of role models and a lack of resources.

A study by **Morgan et al (2019)** explored the relationship between wellbeing and socioeconomic status on returning to school after the summer holidays for secondary pupils (11-16) in Wales. They found that students from lower income families were less likely to spend time with friends, less likely to have been regularly active and more likely to experience hunger and loneliness during the holidays. All of these led to lower levels of mental wellbeing. These students were also found to experience greater loss of learning during the holidays. Over a quarter of young people in the study reported being active 'rarely' or 'never' during the holidays, rising to a third for those from the poorest families. The report is supportive of the key role played by holiday activity programmes in reducing social inequalities.

Almost a third of children in Wales are living in relative poverty (JRF, 2022)



2. Influencers

Changing Influencers as young people grow up

Street Games Exploring Sports Pathways report (2016) emphasised how young people’s role models change as they get older, with peer influence becoming increasingly more important as they move into our target age group.

TAKING PART	13-16 Parents, Teachers, Coaches, Older Siblings
FITTING IN	15-19 Friends, Social Media, Films/Music
GAINING CONTROL	18-25 Friends, Partner, Children

According to **Sport England’s Under the Skin report (2016)**, young people rely heavily on the advice and recommendations of friends and messengers they see as expert and trustworthy.

Personal relationships are very important so, as well as peer influence, personal role models can come from a wide range of sources, including family members, teachers, youth leaders and coaches.

Although young people value real-life experiences and face-to-face conversations, their connection to the wider world via social media (Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and especially Facebook) has become innate and they feel uncomfortable ever going ‘offline’. Distinctions between virtual and real are irrelevant.

A **Street Games report (2016)** with 14-25-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds found that the two most important factors in starting an activity for that audience were: **who supported them** and what was **visible/available**.

When I was at school one of the coaches took interest in me and encouraged me to join the rugby team because he thought I would be good at it. After school he wasn’t around so I just stopped

If there was a football field near my house I would play all the time- there is no green space where I live, so it’s difficult

2. Influencers

Ipsos MORI (2018) reported that, in 2002, half of 11-15 year olds talked to their mums about things that mattered, by 2015, 65% of children reported doing this at least once a week (Fig. 1).

According to research from **Women In Sport (WIS) in 2022**, parents can be one of the most important sources of support and encouragement to be active for both teenage boys and girls (11-18). However, they also found that, whilst mums support boys and girls equally, dads are much less likely to support their daughters.

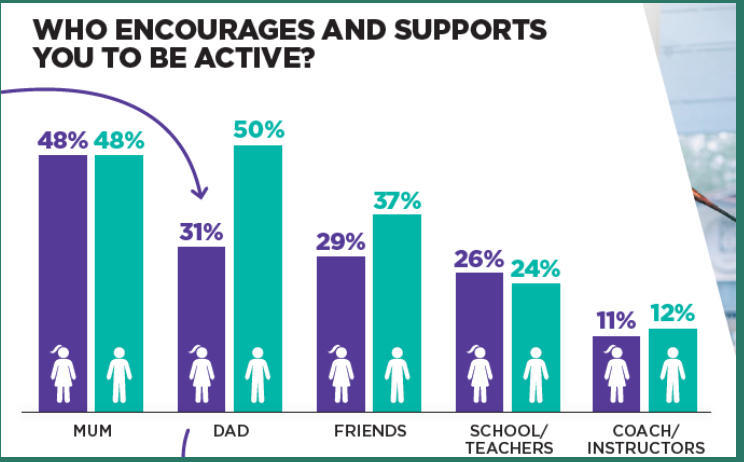
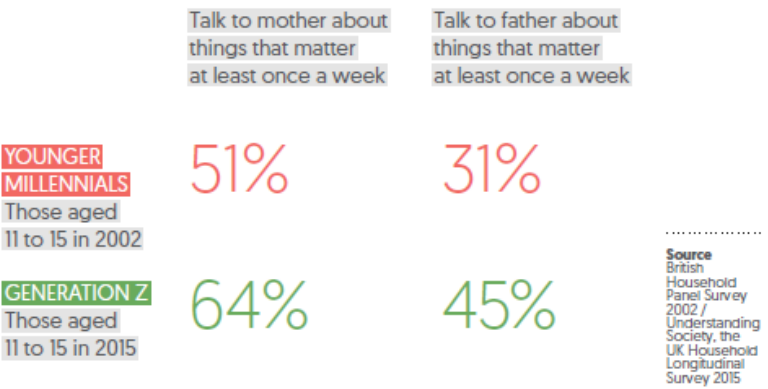


Figure. 1.
SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGE GENERATION Z MORE LIKELY TO TALK TO THEIR PARENTS ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER – UK



WIS (2019) highlighted that, despite growing independence, a girls’ family is still an important source of support, advice and influence during their teenage years. Familial relationships are real and authentic and less likely to be played out online. This is important, as the family unit is where girls feel most free to express themselves without fear of judgement. Mothers hold significant importance, with many girls reporting their mum as their top role model, and ‘Mum and daughter time’ emerging as something girls cherish. A poll suggested that just over 1 in 4 young women would be more likely to join a sport if their mum played

A report from **Activity Alliance (2020)** suggested that disabled children and young people are much more reliant on their parents, and 20% saw sport and physical activity as a way to grow their independence.¹

The report also demonstrated that disabled children and young people were more likely to be active if their parents were also active.²

2. Influencers

In the **Pembrokeshire Secondary Survey (2021)**, **76%** pupils said that since Covid-19 they like to be active with friends.

Peer influence on sport is also evident in the **School Sport Survey (2018)**, where almost **4 in 10** young people say they would do more sport if their friends went with them. This is consistent across all ages and for both Wales and West Wales.

A **Street Games (2016)** research with 14-25-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds identified that for young people in our age range of interest (14-16) fitting in was their greatest motivation. This meant they would only do sport if it gave them kudos with their peers. It also noted that usually this meant being good at the sport they were doing.

When I was younger all I cared about was fitting in and hanging out with my friends- I stopped playing basketball when I started drinking and going out

My friend stopped going so I did too

WIS (2019) identified that the two key relationships that girls value most are their family (their mum in particular) and their friends.

Friends are increasingly important as girls move into secondary school, becoming a vital source of emotional support as well as powerful influencers of behaviour, as girls strive for a sense of belonging beyond their immediate family.

However, they can also be a negative force, as girls become increasingly competitive and judgemental of one another. School PE or sports activities, unfortunately, are often prime breeding grounds for gossip and shaming between girls. Increasingly, friendships are also played out and maintained on social media, with peer-to-peer pressure adding to a sense for many girls that friendships are stressful to manage.

63% 
OF YOUNG WOMEN WOULDN'T PLAY SPORT OR EXERCISE WITHOUT A FRIEND BY THEIR SIDE ¹⁷

2. Influencers

Sport England's Under the Skin report (2016) tells us that young people are influenced by a wide range of people in their lives. Celebrity culture can play a big role, with some young people following sport stars, as well as musicians, influencers and political leaders (e.g. Greta Thunberg).

Street Games (2014) report found that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are under pressure to form identities from an early age and express this online. Consumer society in the form of celebrities, media and brands is having a major impact on the image young people feel they should project. Their geographical spheres of influence can also be quite small.

"Most days I'm either going to/from school, the green at the end of my road or MacDonald's which is about 10 minutes away"
Male, 14, Bristol

"I'm usually on my phone, it's a big part of my lifestyle, I love being on social media"
Female, 12, Bristol

WIS (2019) discussed how social media influencers have become overwhelmingly popular, having millions of online followers and a huge influence on the aspirations, attitudes and behaviours of teenage girls.

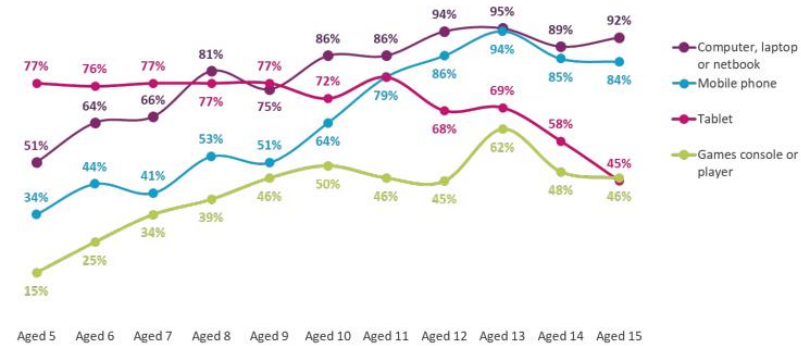
Many social media influencers are self made, every day people and some are young teenagers themselves, so girls feel able to relate to them with younger girls in particular being more likely to aspire to be like their favourite Vlogger or YouTuber when they are older.

Whilst this can have down sides, it also opens up opportunities to inspire and influence girls to be more active through their online icons.

3. Communication & Awareness

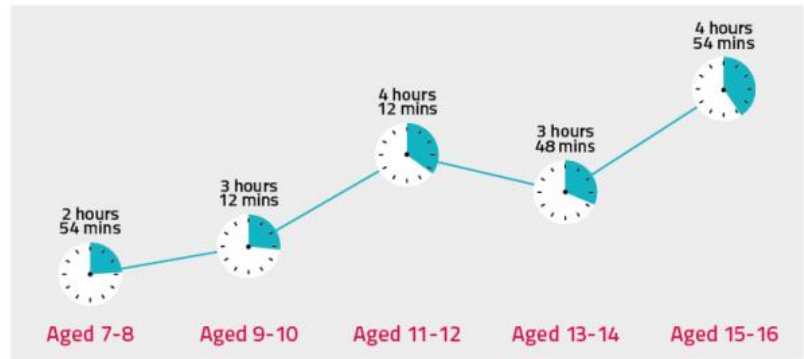
A variety of data from the **Ofcom Online Nation report (2021)** illustrates young people’s digital usage.¹ In 2020, 99% of online 12-15 year olds used social video services. 9 in 10 young people who used social media or chat apps felt pressure to be popular on them. **Ipsos MORI’s Beyond Binary (2018)** report highlighted that, whilst platforms like Snapchat and Instagram (and now TikTok) are popular for this age group, the death of Facebook has been somewhat exaggerated, with many young people taking more of a mixed approach to social media usage.

Figure 2.4: Devices used to go online by children, by age: 2020



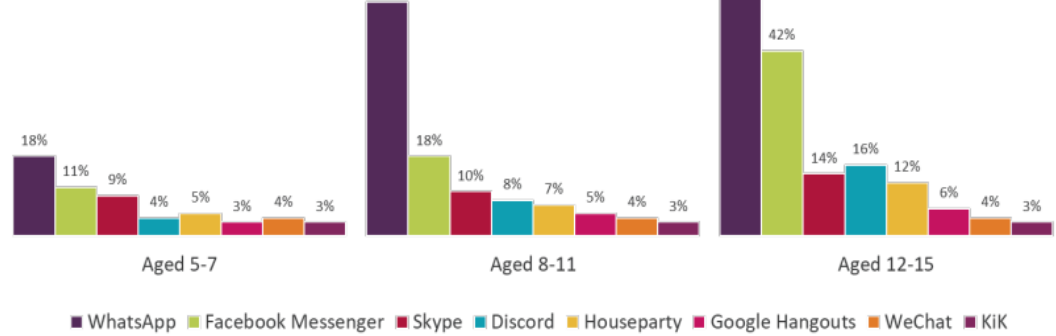
Source: Ofcom’s Children’s and Parents’ Media Literacy Tracker 2020/21, Survey 1. Question: QP23. Now some questions about the internet and going online. Please think about any reason your child may have for going online – maybe to look at a website or use an app, watch a TV programme or video clip on sites or apps like YouTube, to play games online, to visit a social media site or app, or to do school or homework. Does your child ever use any of the following devices to go online at home or elsewhere? (Responses from parent for 5- to 7-year-olds and from children aged 8 to 15) (multi-code). Base: 2190 5- to 15-year-olds

Figure 2.3: Children’s estimated time spent online



Source: CHILDWISE Monitor Report 2021

Figure 2.7: Use of chat or messaging services: 2020



13-17 year old boys		13-17 year old girls	
Property	% favourite	Property	% favourite
YouTube	16%	TikTok	12%
Spotify	6%	Instagram	10%
Snapchat	6%	Snapchat	9%
Netflix	6%	Netflix	9%
Instagram	5%	YouTube	8%
Facebook	5%	WhatsApp	6%

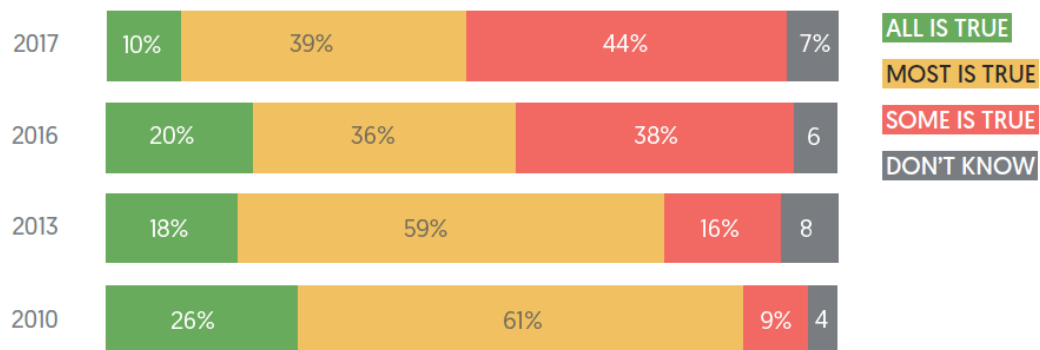
3. Communication & Awareness

This generation is the first to be born and grow up entirely in a digital age. Whilst this means they are spending a lot more time online than any previous generation at the same age, data also suggests they are becoming more savvy about the benefits and pitfalls. **Ipsos MORI's *Beyond Binary* (2018)** report highlighted that the trust 12-15 year olds in the UK have in what they see in online news (Fig.1) and on social media (Fig.2) has been falling.

Trust in people and institutions on the other hand had been increasing, with around 60% Gen Z saying they trusted the average person in the street (c.f. 36% Millennials at the same age). Around 80% Gen Z also say they trust the police and civil servants.

'Do you believe that all the information you see on these sites or apps is true, most of it is true or just some of it is true?' (sites/apps about news and what is going on in the world: 12-15 year olds)

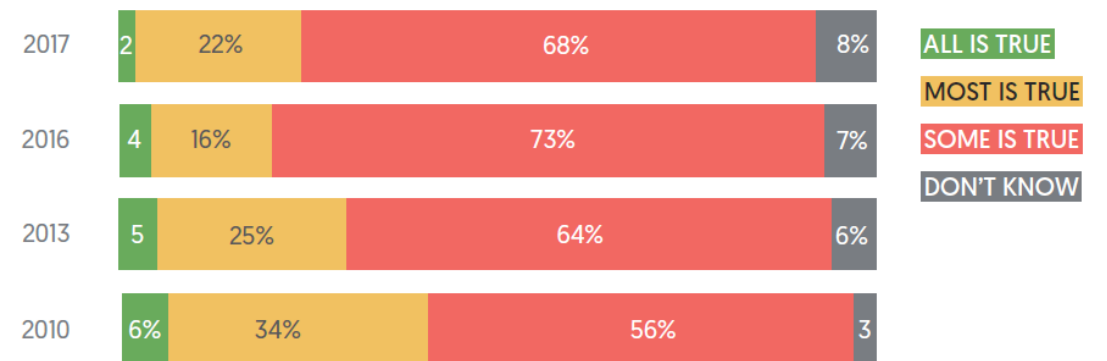
Fig. 1.



Source
Ofcom

'Do you believe that all the information you see on these sites or apps is true, most of it is true or just some of it is true?' (social media sites or apps like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube: 12-15 year olds)

Fig. 2.



3. Communication & Awareness

Street Games: Us Girls Evaluation (2018) identified that it was essential to have a 'fit for purpose' social media platform for young people to communicate with the programme.

The **Pembrokeshire Sport Surveys (2021)** suggested that understanding the benefits of being active is not a barrier, with 94% primary and 97% secondary pupils saying they understood why being active is good for their well-being. A report from Women in Sport (2021) found that 93% girls and 94% boys aged 11-18 said they understood the importance of being active.

Although interestingly, a **Street Games report (2016)** found some young people from disadvantage backgrounds said they didn't make the connection between mental health and being active when they were younger.¹

According to a report from **Street Games (2014)** there is a significant expectation from young people that information should be available online and that contact can be maintained through their preferred social media channels. They also want to be connected whilst taking part, so wifi access is a must.

When I was at school being physically active wasn't that important- I'm only now starting to learn about how it can make you feel better and help with mental health issues. I didn't know that when I was at school

Park Lives Evaluation (2020) found:

Build it and they won't necessarily come

Just because you provide opportunities, doesn't mean people will necessarily engage. They took ParkLives to audiences in high footfall locations (like shopping centres) and created experiential events to show what was available in local parks.

Don't underestimate the power of social networks

Whether it's online or offline, inspiration comes from trusted sources within social groups. Word of mouth is the number one most powerful tool, but social media is a must.

Sport England's Under the Skin report (2016)

suggests young people can have complicated, emotional relationships with sport. The typical language, places and kit get some young people excited but fill others with dread. So, we need to think carefully about how we talk to young people about sport, as well as the experiences we provide. We need to keep asking them what's going on in their lives and what they want from the experience.

4. Current Activity

In Wales, young people doing physical activity three times a week or more is a national indicator for the **Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015**.

The **School Sport Survey (SSS)** shows that, in 2018, 48% of secondary pupils reached this measure. There is a gradual decline from 53% of 11-year-olds meeting the criteria, to 46% of 15-year-olds (Fig.1A).¹ There is also a notable increase in the number doing no frequent activity at age 11 (23%) compared to age 15 (33%). The beginning of this trend coincides with the transition to secondary school, when the structure of school sport changes considerably. Whilst shifts in once or twice weekly activity appear minimal, it is likely most young people stop gradually, transitioning through lower levels of activity, rather than quitting completely out of nowhere.

As we might expect, participation overall in Wales is notably lower amongst young people from Asian/Asian British backgrounds, those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (as indicated by eligibility for free school meals), females, those who identify as 'other' gender, and also those who don't speak Welsh.²

Figure 1A: Frequency of Participation in Sport (Wales)

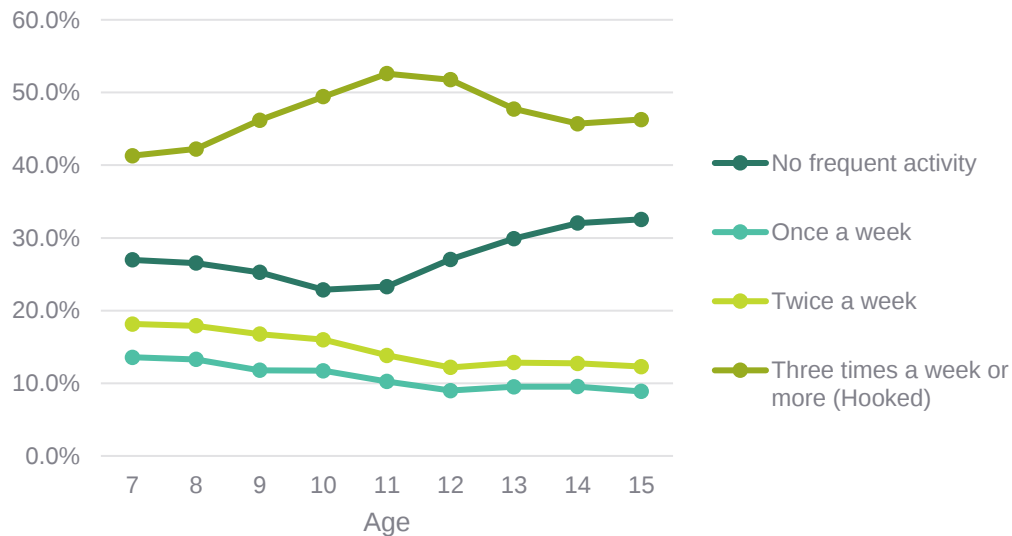
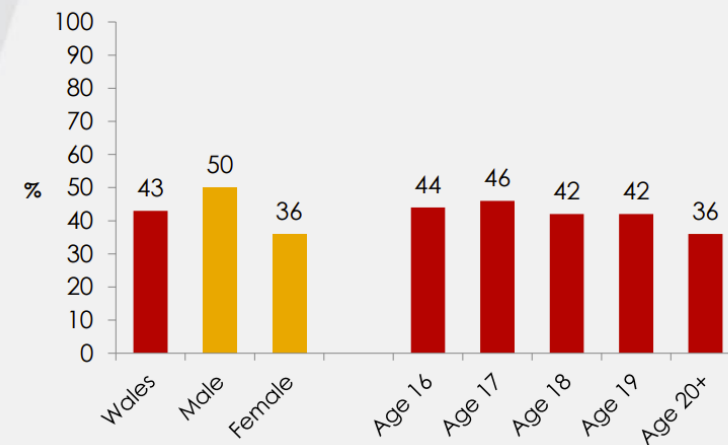


Figure 1: Percentage of students who participating in sport/physical activity three or more times a week – age and gender



Whilst data from the **Welsh FE Survey (2018)** is representative only of those young people who have chosen to go on to further education, it does suggest that the gradual decline continues, with 44% of students meeting the criteria at 16, falling to 36% for those who are 20+ (Fig 1).

4. Current Activity

Figure 1: Frequency of Participation in Sport (West Wales)

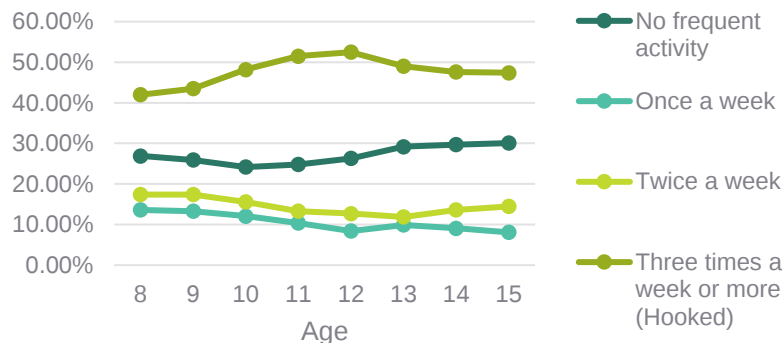


Figure 2: Frequency of Participation in Sport (Carmarthenshire)

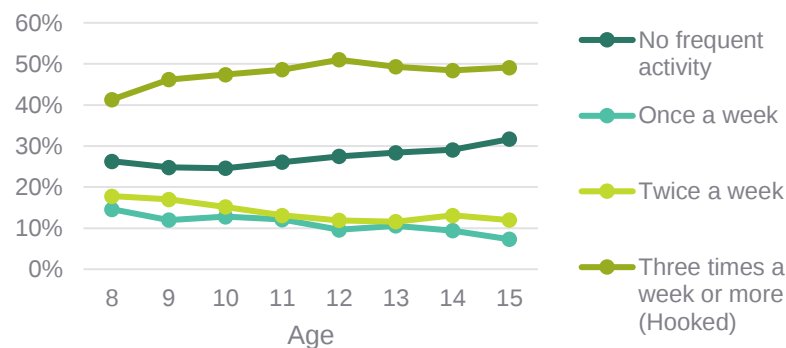
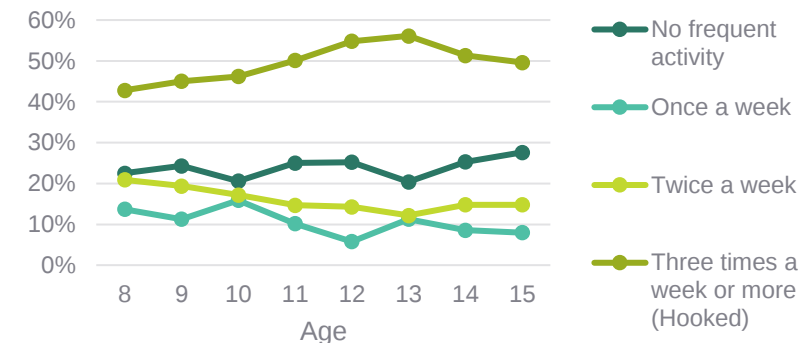


Figure 3: Frequency of Participation in Sport (Neath Port Talbot)



Participation in West Wales and within each LA reflects a similar pattern to that seen across all Wales.¹

What is striking in all cases is the degree of polarisation, with high numbers of young people doing a lot, but also many doing none at all.

These findings reflect the assumptions by LA Physical Activity Leads that the process of drop-out is gradual, and begins on leaving primary school. The fact remains though that 13-14 is a transitional age, when young people start to exert greater independence, and so is worthy of further attention.

Figure 4: Frequency of Participation in Sport (Pembrokeshire)

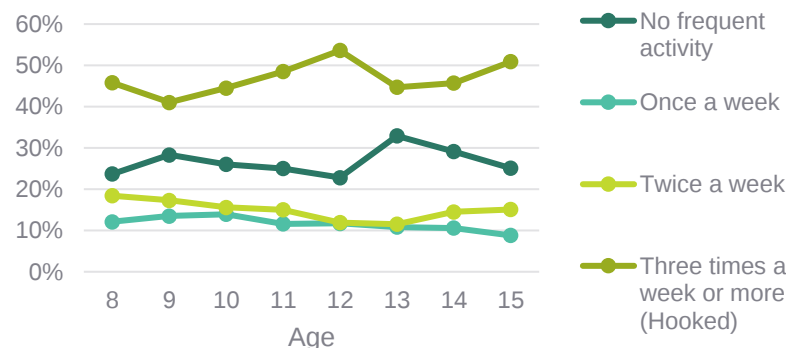
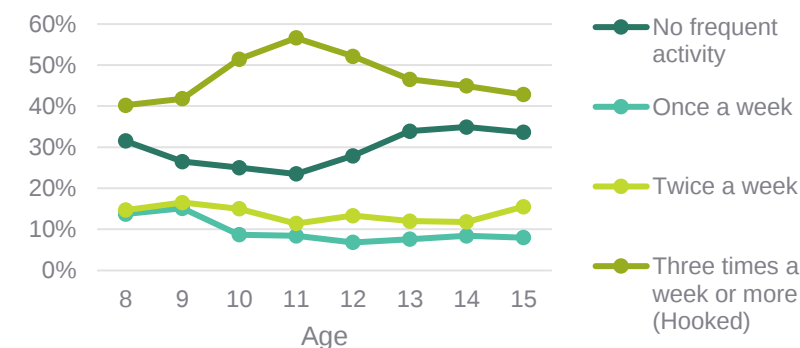


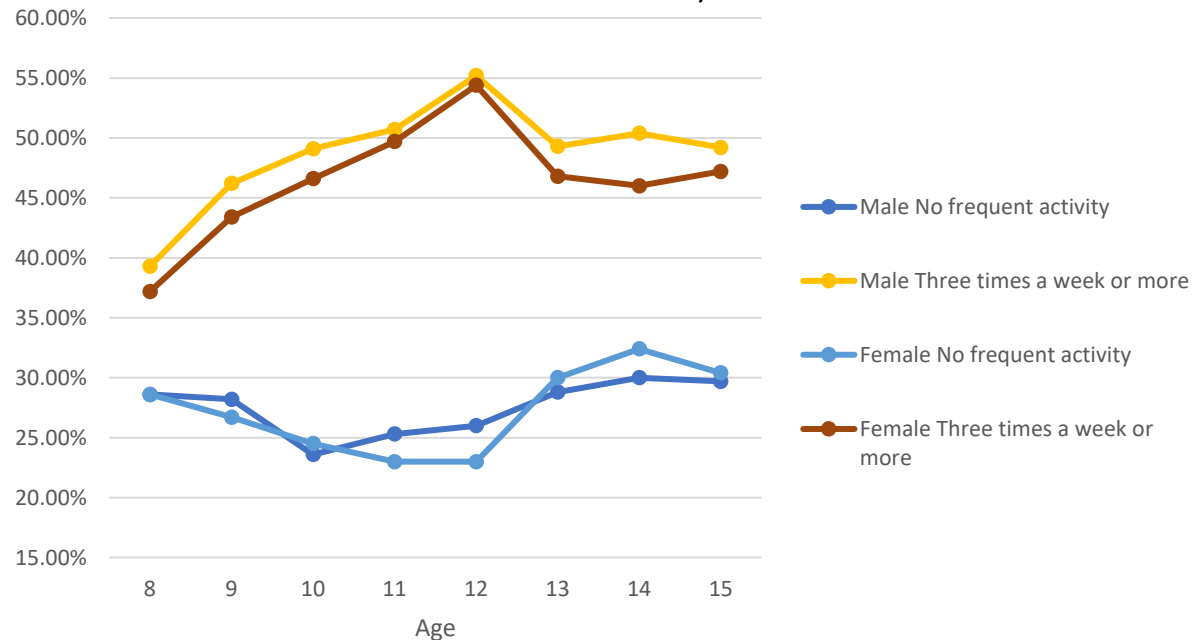
Figure 5: Frequency of Participation in Sport (Swansea)



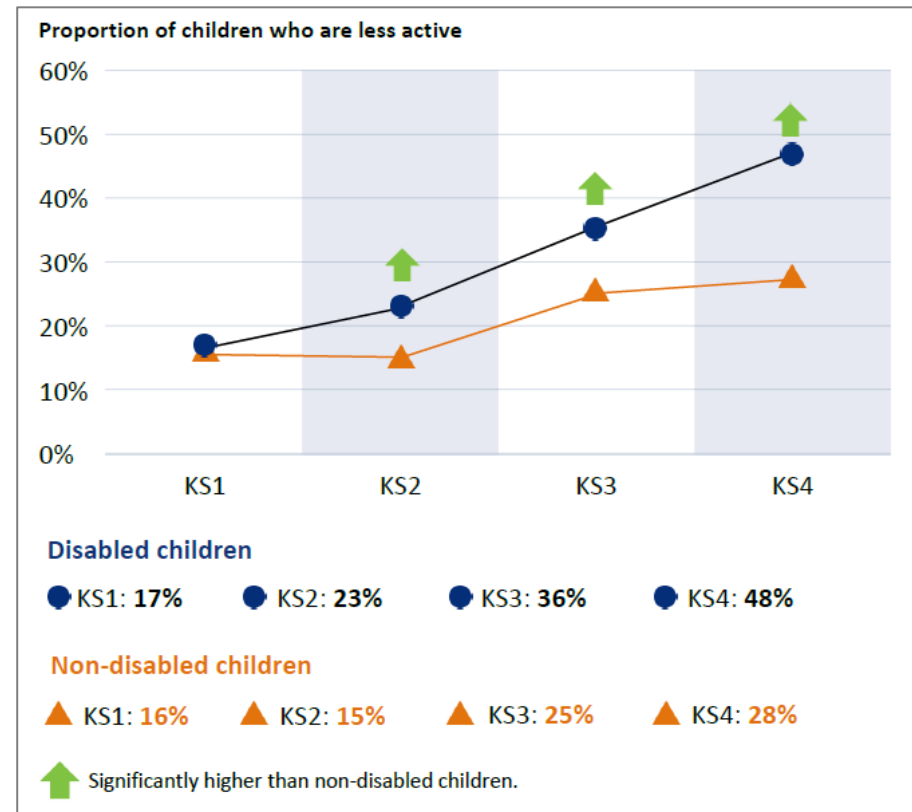
4. Current Activity

Participation by age and gender in West Wales is shown in Fig. 1 (School Sport Survey 2018) and demonstrates a similar pattern to that seen across all Wales. Both genders track the same overall trend of declining frequent participation and increased inactivity on transitioning to secondary school, with years 7 and 8 seemingly the most significant. The gap between girls and boys participation remains clear.

Figure 1: Frequency of Participation in Sport by Gender (West Wales)



Activity Alliance (2020) reported that the rise in inactivity is steeper for disabled children and young people.¹ At Key Stage 1 the number of children who are less active during term time is similar regardless of disability; but by Key Stage 4 the difference has grown dramatically.



4. Current Activity

Figures 1-4 (School Sport Survey 2018) show participation in sport outside of PE lessons in extracurricular (lunchtime or after school sessions) or outside of school in a community setting. The trend for all areas is consistent with that for Wales, whereby participation in the community seems fairly stable throughout school. Extracurricular participation on the other hand sees a steady decline over time.

Figure 1. Participation outside PE - at least once a week (Carmarthenshire)

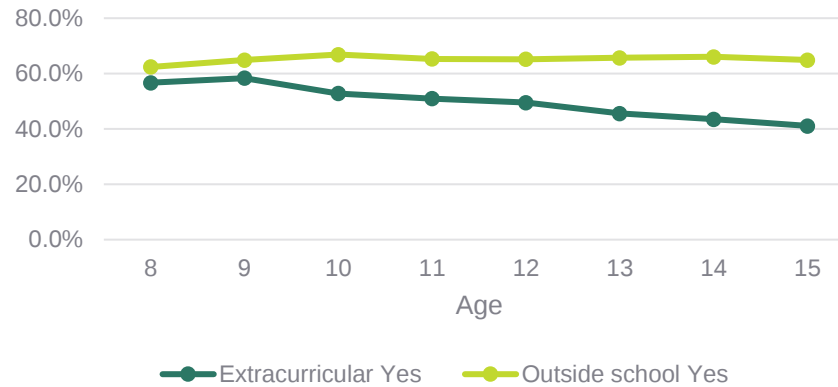


Figure 2. Participation outside PE - at least once a week (Pembrokeshire)

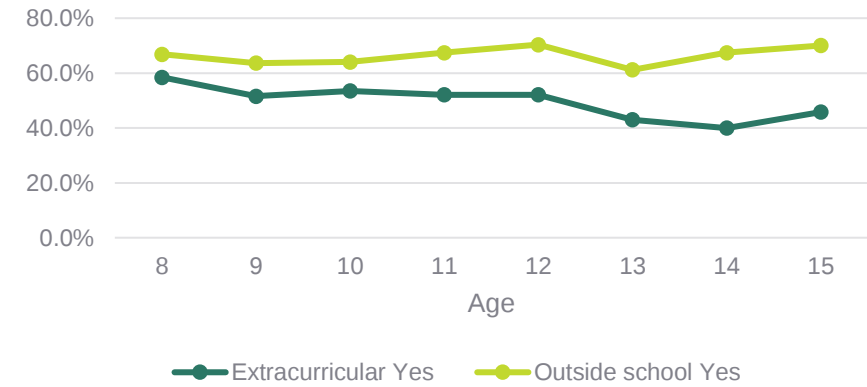


Figure 3. Participation outside PE - at least once a week (Swansea)

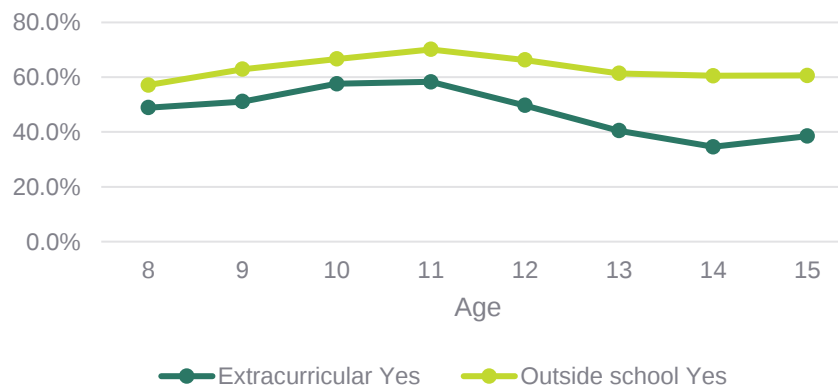
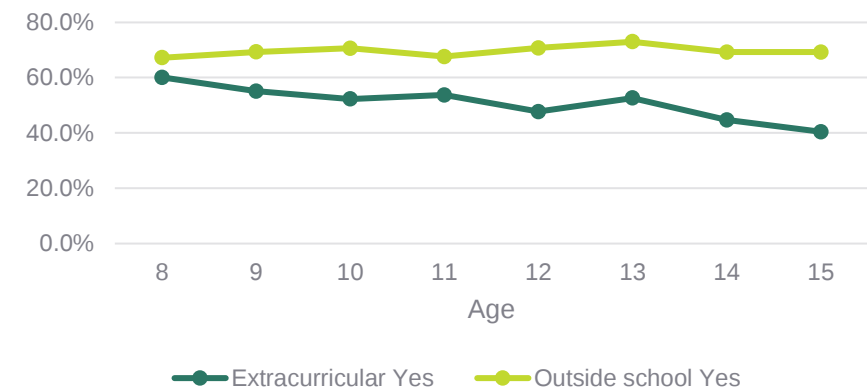


Figure 4. Participation outside PE - at least once a week (Neath Port Talbot)



4. Current Activity

During the pandemic Sport Wales commissioned ComRes to track physical activity levels across Wales. During the early lockdowns, average activity levels across the population were maintained, although with public facilities closed, walking, running, cycling and home fitness dominated. Those most likely to participate before the pandemic, were found to do more, and those who did least did even less. Participation took a hit through the colder months, as you would typically expect, recovering through Spring and Summer 2021, but those from LSEGs continued doing less. Whilst those under 16 years of age were not included in the study, parents were asked about the activity levels of any children under 16 in their households:

A report from Women in Sport (2021) explored teenage girls engagement with physical activity in the UK during the pandemic. It found that, whilst there was an initial upsurge in young people of this age doing more, for teenage girls this fell away, with 62% in Feb 2021 saying they were doing less than before the pandemic.

This ties in with many having an initial interest in the novelty of online activities, but 63% said they lost motivation due to the activities being too serious and not fun. 41% said they had done more walking, as a way to get out and spend time with friends and family.

Many girls reported recognising the value of being active more, particularly to help wellbeing.

May 2020:

- Under 16s were on average doing less than pre-pandemic, ~10% of young people were doing no activity on a typical day. Young people in urban areas and those from lower SEGs* were more likely to have lower levels of activity; as were children whose parents did little or no activity.

Oct 2020:

- Once restrictions lifted, young people on average were doing more than before the pandemic, but the same inequalities persisted.

March & August 2021:

- Young people continued doing more than pre-pandemic overall, however those from lower SEGs were still more likely to be doing less.

Feb 2022

- 11% young people were still doing nothing outside of school on a typical weekday, but only 7% were inactive on weekends. Those from lower SEGs appear to be participating at similar levels to those from higher SEGs.

4. Current Activity

Young people are taking part in a wide range of sport, with a total of 50 activities referenced in the **School Sport Survey (2018)**. The most common for secondary pupils in the last year by gender are shown in table 1.

Five of these (black) are featured for all genders and reflect the most common activities amongst adults too. Twelve activities are more gender specific (blue), with boys leaning towards more traditional team sports, and girls towards more fitness or social activities.

Activities taken part in are also similar across extra-curricular, organised community or other out of school settings; although the diversity of activities within the community is greatest.

The most popular activities in West Wales LAs are drawn from the same pool.

If we look at the most common activities at different ages in for both Wales and West Wales, these are also largely the same as shown in Table 1; but the proportion of children who take part in each activity increases up to age 11, then drops for secondary age pupils. This suggests that children diversify into more activities through primary, but then focus on fewer activities throughout secondary school.

The **National Survey for Wales (2021)** also shows almost a third of secondary school pupils walk to school (c.f. with around half of primary pupils)¹.

Table 1. Top 10 sports participated in by Y7-10 pupils (last year, any setting) by gender (2018 School Sport Survey)

Male (%)	Female (%)	Other (%)
Football (74.7)	Running or jogging (68.6)	Swimming (56.6)
Running or jogging (64.6)	Swimming (67.7)	Running or jogging (54.3)
Swimming (60.2)	Netball (53.6)	Football (53.3)
Rugby (54.5)	Dance (48.4)	Cycling (47.8)
Cycling (52)	Cycling (46.1)	Other sports (41.9)
Basketball (46.3)	Athletics (44.7)	Rugby (39.8)
Athletics (46.3)	Trampolining (43)	Dodgeball (39.7)
Dodgeball (39.4)	Fitness classes (e.g. yoga, circuits) (42)	Trampolining (39.7)
Mountain biking (38)	Football (40.4)	Athletics (39.5)
Cricket (37.9)	Rounders, Baseball, Softball (40.3)	Adventurous activities (38.9)

4. Current Activity

Figure 2, from the **School Sport Survey (2018)** shows young people's enjoyment of physical activity in each of the 3 main settings. We see overall relatively high rates of enjoyment, but lower enjoyment in general for secondary pupils, for females and those identifying as 'other' gender.

If we centre in on how enjoyment changes with age, we see a similar pattern for both Wales and West Wales. Figure 3 illustrates this for West Wales, where enjoyment of PE and extracurricular activity see a gradual decline as children get older. The sharpest drop is between 11-13, consistent with young people moving into secondary settings. Conversely, enjoyment outside of school appears much more stable, even accounting for the fact that 5-10% children at this age group gave no rating as they answered that they didn't do sport outside of school.

Much extracurricular activity takes place in Wales through **Sport Wales' Active Young People Programmes**, and the **evaluation report published in 2019** may shed some light on the reasons for lower enjoyment in extracurricular settings. It describes many successes for the programme, however austerity cuts over the last decade have taken a significant toll on resources available for the programme, leading to inconsistent delivery across different LAs.¹

Figure 2. *Enjoyment of sport – percentage of pupils who answered 'a lot'*

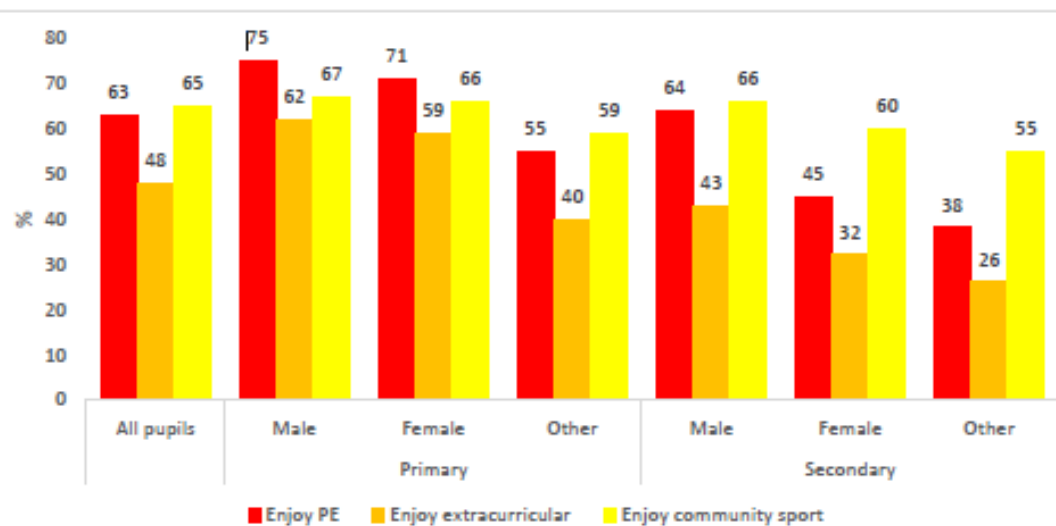
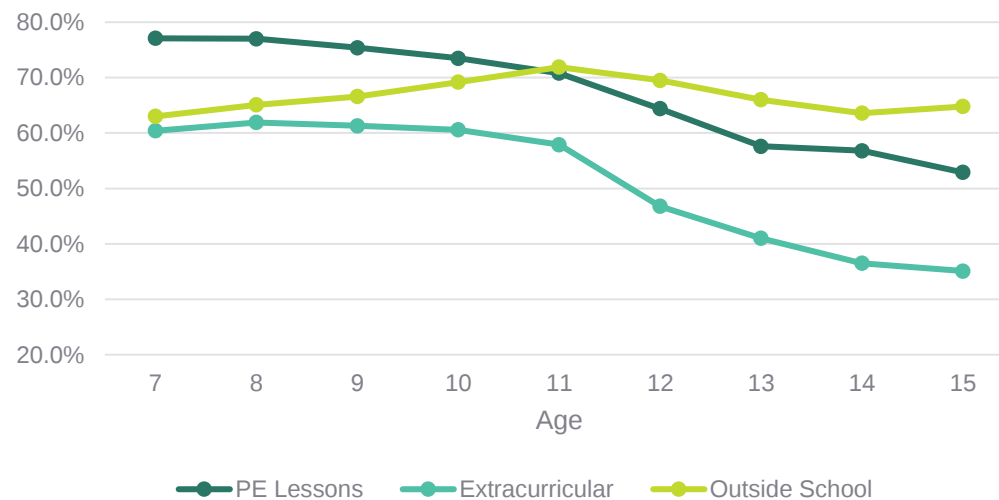
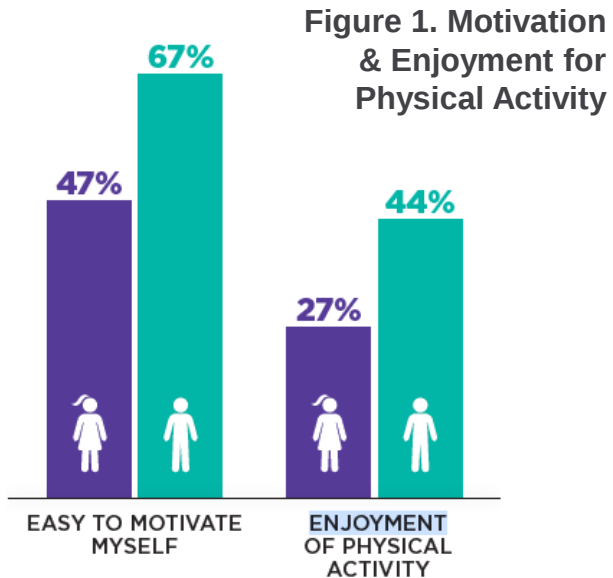


Figure 3. *Young People who enjoy sport 'A Lot' in different settings (West Wales)*



4. Current Activity

DON'T LOVE IT & FIND MOTIVATION HARD



The **FESS (2018)** indicates that levels of enjoyment continue to fall with age, with only 42% of 16–19-year-olds enjoying sport outside college ‘a lot’, and the gender divide persisting. ¹

A report from **Women In Sport (2022)** found that only 27% of girls, age 11-18, enjoyed taking part in physical activity, compared with 44% of boys (Fig.1). Activity Alliance (2020) also found similar drops in enjoyment with age, with disabled young people significantly more likely to say they didn’t enjoy PE. For girls, **James *et al* (2018)** found that if they didn’t like something, they simply wouldn’t do it.

Whilst many young people enjoy sport, we should not ignore this significant proportion who do not, and we might expect these to be those young people who currently participate least. ²

The gap in enjoyment by gender is likely to be a major influence on the gender gap in participation and this pack will go on to further explore what works for girls in PA settings.

The drop in enjoyment in school settings with age should also give us pause for thought, as wider evidence suggests that school experiences of sport and physical activity can have an impact on our relationship with being active throughout the life course.

In the **Pembrokeshire Sport Survey (2021)** we see overall high levels of enjoyment with 89% secondary pupils saying they enjoy taking part in physical activity.

4. Current Activity

The **SSS (2018)** suggested significant latent demand for being more active. More recently the **PSS (2021)** found 42% students would like to be more active in light of the pandemic, with 42% liking activity at home more and 49% liking outdoor activity more. 62% found new ways to be active during the pandemic.

The top 10 sports pupils would like to do (**SSS, 2018**) are shown in Table 2. Only 3 (black) are universal to all genders, with 20 sports included.

The majority of these activities are different to those most participated in at present, although notably 27% males would like to do dance and 31% cycling, whilst 32% of those who identify as ‘other’ gender would like to do running or jogging and 31% would like to do football. The latter may speak to the fact that those who identify as ‘other’ gender do not feel comfortable in predominantly male sports environments.

Interestingly, in West Wales, latent demand was less diverse, with more demand for traditional activities like swimming, football and cycling. Trampolining, climbing and dodgeball also featured highly¹.

As with the activities young people currently do, the number who want to do more of each specific activity increases with age through primary, then drops throughout secondary. There could be a wide range of possible reasons for this, including loss of interest, lack of awareness, lack of self-efficacy or lack of time.

In terms of outdoor pursuits, like canoeing and rock climbing, a **report from Street Games (2015)** found that, for disadvantage young people, these were of interest, but were seen as more a one-off due to costs and accessibility.

Table 2: Latent Demand: Top 10 sports for Y7-10 pupils by gender (2018 School Sport Survey)		
Male (%)	Female (%)	Other (%)
Climbing (47.6)	Bowls (not ten-pin) (48.5)	Martial Arts (36.5)
Bowls (not ten-pin) (37.6)	Sailing (40.6)	Bowls (not ten-pin) (32.9)
Archery (36.5)	Canoeing or Kayaking (40.5)	Running/jogging (32.4)
Tennis (35.7)	Other sports (38.1)	Trampolining (31.6)
Trampolining (35.5)	Badminton (32.7)	Football (30.9)
Surfing (35.4)	Golf (32.1)	Mountain biking (30.2)
Mountain biking (32.3)	Tennis (31.8)	Rounders, Baseball, Softball (29.5)
Cycling (31.4)	Trampolining (31.2)	Climbing (28.9)
Martial Arts (30.7)	Parkour (30.5)	Archery (28.6)
Dance (26.9)	Volleyball (30.3)	Tennis (27.8)

4. Current Activity

The **Enquiry into Physical Activity of Children & Young People (2019)** highlighted that gender stereotypes around sport also start to form from an early age and can lead children to feel they shouldn't be playing certain types of sport.

"It's phrases like 'you throw like a girl' that very much make girls aware from an early age that they're not as good as boys. And having that kind of thought in your mind really will put girls off from wanting to get involved in sport." "

Insight & Policy Manager, Women in Sport

A 2021 paper from **Griggs & Fleet** highlighted some of the issues with traditional PE activities experienced by young people, particularly team games. They proposed that **two sports**, which prove popular with this age group, could be particularly valuable to **create positive experiences of being active** for secondary age pupils:

1. **Parkour:** focuses on developing core skills of movement, balance, fitness and strength in a context of respect, self-discovery and self-improvement, both physically and mentally. It also has the online 'shareability' factor.
2. **Ultimate Frisbee:** is a high energy, tactical game which is usually played with mixed genders and is self-refereed. It embeds qualities such as teamwork, fair play and equality alongside physical fitness.

In the **Calls for Action (C4A) programme (Achievement, Change & Learning Evaluation Report 2019)**, funded by Sport Wales, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority delivered a project, using geocaching, to engage young people in physical recreation in the natural environment. The project particularly focused on young people age 10-15 living in disadvantaged communities around the National Park. They found that the natural environment provided an ideal space in which to engage young people, and that **geocaching** was highly accessible for both inactive and active young people. It offered skills development, leadership training and enjoyment for a range of young people, including girls and those with disabilities.

4. Current Activity

A report from Street Games (2016) with 14-25-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds explored young people’s pathways through sport. They found that young people tended to ‘drift’ from one activity to another (e.g. being asked by a friend to go along) rather than making active choices in definitive moments. Whilst many enjoy sport, it is also seen as something which can easily be picked up or put down when other priorities start to bite, particularly as they get older. This means they are susceptible to even small barriers (Figure 3).

Leaving school is seen as the biggest drop-off point, driven by:

- Loss of structure for sport provided by parents & school
- Some never having really enjoyed sport and only did it because they had to
- New priorities – e.g. money, work, college, parenthood

For many getting back into sport can then feel too difficult or they don’t know how.

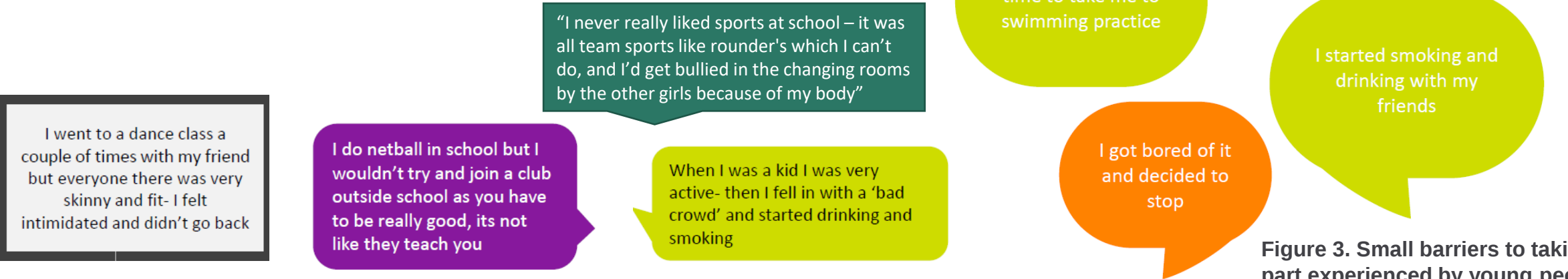


Figure 3. Small barriers to taking part experienced by young people

5. Expectations of Activity

In a **consultation with young people across Wales by Sported**, published in December 2021, young people reported that what they liked about sessions was:

- Being back socialising in a place they felt safe
- Learning from coaches and peers
- Sense of family
- The supportive, non-judgemental and welcoming environment (which was different to previous competitive experiences)
- It being easy to fit in and make friends
- Having fun

A **Women in Sport report (2022)** found that 64% of teenage girls and 74% of teenage boys said they enjoyed competitive sport; however, it was important to have the opportunity for competition at the right level. Girls in particular often felt the only opportunities were for those who were really good, with anyone else being left feeling out of their depth.

I think competition gets so many more girls involved... I never knew I was competitive until I really enjoyed the games where you're on teams and can win!

In the **Pembrokeshire Secondary Survey (2021)**, pupils said that since Covid-19

- 42% enjoy home activity more
- 49% like outside activity more
- 51% like team sports a lot
- 46% like running, walking & cycling
- 32% dislike following a workout on screen

ParkLives was a partnership between Coca-Cola GB and 10 local authorities in England and Wales to offer free activities in parks for communities where it mattered most. Activities included rounders, den building, tennis, yoga, skateboarding, rollerskating and family fun sessions.

In a further 50 locations, including Swansea and NPT, ParkLives adopted the StreetGames Doorstep Model to support more young people from disadvantaged communities. According to the **Park Lives Evaluation (2020)**, this model was a success with 99% participants saying they now felt more motivated to engage in activities. 95% young people who took part also wanted to see more done in parks and green spaces to support young people.

5. Expectations of Activity

James *et al* (2018) consulted with 13–14-year-olds in deprived communities in Swansea to understand their recommendations for improving physical activity provision for teenagers. They established six recommendations to improve physical activity for teenagers:

1. Lower/remove the cost of activities without sacrificing the quality
2. Make physical activity opportunities more locally accessible
3. Improve the standards of existing facilities
4. Make activities more specific to teenagers
5. Give teenagers a choice of activities/increase variety of activity
6. Provide activities which teenage girls enjoy

Activity Alliance (2020) reported that the main motivations to take part were the same for disabled and non-disabled young people.

- Improve health
- Spend time with friends
- Have fun

In terms of how they want to take part, the report found that some disabled young people wanted to take part with others with a similar impairment to themselves, some preferred to take part with other young people with a mix of impairments, and almost half wanted the opportunity to join activities with a mix of disabled and non-disabled young people.

According to a report from **Street Games (2014)** young people from disadvantaged backgrounds want sports opportunities to be part of their social lives. They are looking for friendly and informal activities with a variety of options. They want sessions which allow them to take part with peers and feel like social time in itself. They are open to building new relationships too, but only on their own terms.

It is essential to ensure that all young people feel included in a session and nobody feels singled out. Buddying can be helpful and specialist kit or equipment should not be needed, or should be provided if it is.

Young people also want to be connected whilst taking part, so wifi access is a must.

5. Expectations of Activity

Street Games Walking and Cycling Insight Study (2018) found that it was more socially acceptable for boys to cycle than girls at our target age. Walking was seen as a way to get from A to B by both genders however, girls were more likely to embrace the social opportunity of walking to chat with friends.

Feedback from teenage girls in the **Tackle Programme (Dec 2021)**, which uses sport to improve employability for disaffected young people, revealed that participants enjoyed the programme and felt it helped with building confidence, improving social skills, listening skills and teamwork.¹

Girls in the **Street Games Exploring Sports Pathways research (2016)** were more likely to feel ‘forced’ to do sport even at age 14. For them sport lacks the social credibility it has for boys and they feel self-conscious about being sweaty. As they reach 16 and 17 they are more aware of physical activity as a way to look good or lose weight and lean to activities that they think will achieve those goals (e.g. gym).

For boys, sport can hold more social currency (e.g. boxing, football) but as they get older expectation increases to only participate if you are ‘any good’.

A report from **Women in Sport (2021)** highlighted that teenage girls are more likely than boys to label themselves as “not sporty” (15% c.f. 12%) or “used to be sporty” (43% c.f. 24%).

James et al (2018) found it was key for girls (13-14) that the purpose of the activity was not to be active *per se*, rather it was more a way to have fun and was inclusive.

- Street Games: Us Girls Evaluation (2018)**
Some of the key ingredients which worked well for disadvantaged females (age 13-19) in this programme were:
- A fun informal feel to the session
 - A welcoming safe space
 - Not just the same traditional sporting activities
 - Taking part with girls their own age
 - Girls could attend with their friends
 - They could bring along their mum or sister
 - Time for socialising and checking messages
 - There is an opportunity to come and watch before joining in
 - Incentives, rewards and festivals
 - Session leaders understand the girls’ lives and adapt sessions to support them in the right way

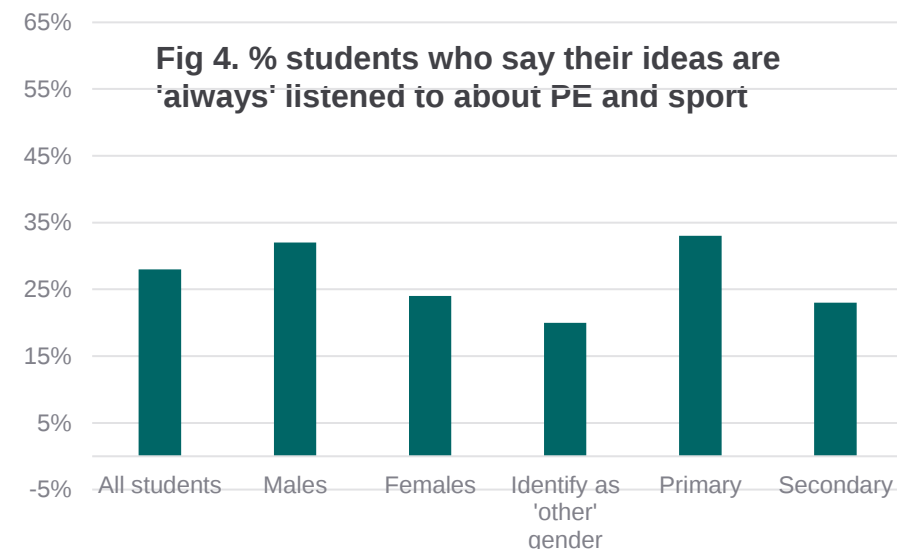
- In terms of session leaders, disadvantaged females (age 13-19) wanted:
- Session leaders who the girls could identify with – this means women or girls like them and likely from the local community
 - They were also deemed to be fair and consistent in their approach
 - They take time to build a genuine relationship with the girls

5. Expectations of Activity

Street Games (2014) Understanding the Lives of Disadvantaged YP found it was essential to success for young people in their programmes to be involved in decision-making.

James *et al* (2018) discuss how designing interventions with target populations increases their legitimacy, justifiability and feasibility. They result in programmes which are more attuned to users needs and can be more effective in achieving their aims. The young people in this study expressed that they were interested in co-creation and were comfortable to self-organize in informal settings.

Pupils in the **School Sport Survey (2018)** were asked whether they feel their ideas about PE and sport are listened to. Only 28% felt they were 'always' listened, with significant gender and age differences (Figure 4).



In the **FE Sport Survey** 28% of students reported that they gave their ideas about sport 'always' or 'sometimes' (31% of males and 25% of females). Of those, only 12% said they were 'always' listened to (Fig 5).

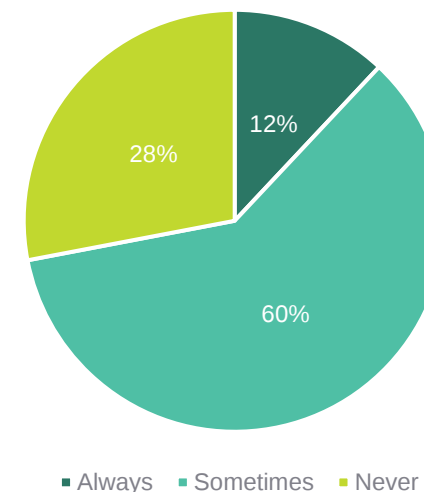


Fig 5. how often students say their ideas are listened to about PE and sport in FE

5. Expectations of Activity

Street Games: Us Girls Evaluation (2018)

For girls (13-19) from disadvantaged backgrounds it was important that leaders took time to listen to what they liked, disliked and wanted, both before the project began and as it continued.

Sported's consultation with young people in Wales (2021) found that young people wanted to be respected and were supportive of more youth consultation. Ideas proposed included more youth leadership and young people working in partnership with teachers, coaches, parents and mentors. The young people also wanted more help to understand how they could influence things that impacted their future, like the environment.

Mental health came through as a major area where YP were trying to support one another, and they would welcome support to do more. Participants were also clear about their frustration when they are asked for their views but then ignored.

A small number of young people also expressed a lack of confidence in giving their views, feeling it was easier to go along with everyone else.

The **Enquiry into Physical Activity of Children & Young People (2019)** heard evidence that there is a lack of opportunity for girls in particular to engage in a broad range of activities, and that open discussion about what girls want still wasn't the norm.

"When I talk to girls, they generally say that they tell their teacher that they'd like to play football, say, and they're told, 'No, that's not part of what we offer here.'

Some [girls] have had success in...saying what they would like, and their teachers have listened, but it's not really encouraged...to have that kind of open discussion and dialogue about it.."
Insight & Policy Manager, Women in Sport

5. Expectations of Activity

PE practitioners in the **Pembrokeshire Lead Practitioner Survey (2021)** felt the most important ways to engage students in extracurricular activities were:

- Make it **FUN** and engaging to capture interest even from previously disengaged YP.
- Provide a good **VARIETY** of activities, combining traditional and non-traditional, including walking.
- Use sport to **STRENGTHEN FRIENDSHIPS**, particularly as students have missed face to face contact.
- Understand what success look likes for individuals to give everyone a **SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT**.
- Ensure that the **PUPIL VOICE** is used to shape activities.
- Capitalise on the **NEW CURRICULUM** to rethink how PE, health and wellbeing are taught.
- **INCLUDE AND INFLUENCE PARENTS** to be active and act as role models for their children.

In **Sport Wales' Active Young People Programme Evaluation (2019)**, the Cricket Without Boundaries project engaged South Asian Communities from age 13-25. They found:

- trusted 'activators' with connections in the local area were key to attracting participants from target communities.
- Parental engagement is important, and different approaches may be necessary to engage different ethnic groups.
- Smaller projects allow greater tailoring for the target community, rather than trying to be all things to all people.
- Demand for cricket existed for both males and females.

ParkLives Evaluation (2020)

The 'winning formula' for the ParkLives programme is shown here. Advocacy was also cited as a vital ingredient for success, with regular updates for key stakeholders and even engagement with Westminster.

The ParkLives Winning Formula



5. Expectations of Activity

1



NO JUDGEMENT

Take pressure off performance and give freedom simply to play.

2



INVOKES EXCITEMENT

Bring a sense of adventure and discovery.

3



CLEAR EMOTIONAL REWARD

Reframe achievement as 'moments of pride', not winning.

4



OPEN EYES TO WHAT'S THERE

Redefine sport as more than school sport.

5



BUILD INTO EXISTING HABITS

Tap into existing behaviours in other spheres.

6



GIVE GIRLS A VOICE & CHOICE

Allow girls choice and control to feel empowered.

7



CHAMPION WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM

Make it much more than just about health.

8



EXPAND IMAGE OF WHAT 'SPORTY' LOOKS LIKE

Create truly relatable role models which inspire.

A report from **Women In Sport (2019)** identified a number of *Principles for Success* to help sport & physical activity better meet teenage girls needs. Applying these principles was expanded upon in their 2021 report on tackling teenage disengagement.

Street Games (2014) identified that sport is an excellent way to provide positive role models, through coaches, support staff or peers. This is especially true for those young people who lack them in their day-to-day lives. This can enable opportunities to develop confidence and leadership skills, through involvement in decision-making and volunteering.

PE practitioners in the **Pembrokeshire Lead Practitioner Survey (2021)** felt it was important to deliver targeted interventions for specific groups. Although note that many consultees in the **Enquiry into Physical Activity of Children & Young People (2019)** felt that there was a need to move away from defining sports by gender.

"In our view, every effort should be made to ensure that, irrespective of gender, every child and young person has access to their preferred sport or activity – whatever that may be – and that as individuals they receive encouragement to take part and pursue that activity.."
BMA Cymru Wales

5. Expectations of Activity

Walking & Cycling: Street Games (2018) Research (12-25 year olds)

Street Games found that disadvantaged young people’s geographical spheres can be relatively small. They often stay close to where they live and go to school. Their lack of resources can mean they have limited access to cars or the means to pay for public transport.

This can mean walking and cycling play a more significant part as their way of getting around; however, for many young people in the study they felt they have nowhere to go. They didn’t see the point without a destination.

“If I want to do something outside, I will meet my mates to play basketball. It’s fun, good exercise and we can do it together. That’s what I want more of.”
Male, 12, Wrexham

“I just stay at home as there is nowhere to really go – there used to be this youth centre thing but it shut down, so my friends just come to mine.”
Male, 13, Wrexham

“My house is so hectic with my sister and her kids – I always want to get out of the house but there’s nowhere really to go.”
Female, 17, Cardiff

“Generally, it’s a means to an ends, you don’t really think about it. Can be cool if you’re walking with friends though somewhere as a chance to chat”
Female, 19, Wrexham

A report from **Activity Alliance (2020)** found that disabled young people were significantly more likely to travel to school by car or taxi (39%) than their non-disabled counterparts (24%). They were also much less likely to walk (32% v 52%).

Many of the young people saw walking and cycling as a means to an end and didn’t really consider it as fun, as exercise, or as something that is good for their health. They also didn’t perceive there was anywhere nice to walk near them. **Walking can though be seen as an opportunity to socialize when there is nothing to do or a way to “clear your head”. It can also be seen as a good entry level activity for those who aren’t very active.**

Boys were more likely to cycle than girls and it can be seen as “cool” for those under driving age. However, the cost of a bike, as well as practical issues like carrying things and where to park a bike presented barriers. Girls also worry about how they look and what people will think.

5. Expectations of Activity

The Enquiry into Physical Activity of Children & Young People (2019) highlighted the potential for active travel as a way to increase young people’s overall activity levels, but said this wasn’t yet being fully exploited.

Sported/British Cycling (2021) Understanding the motivations, opportunities, and capabilities of young people from lower socio-economic groups and diverse ethnic communities to take part in cycling

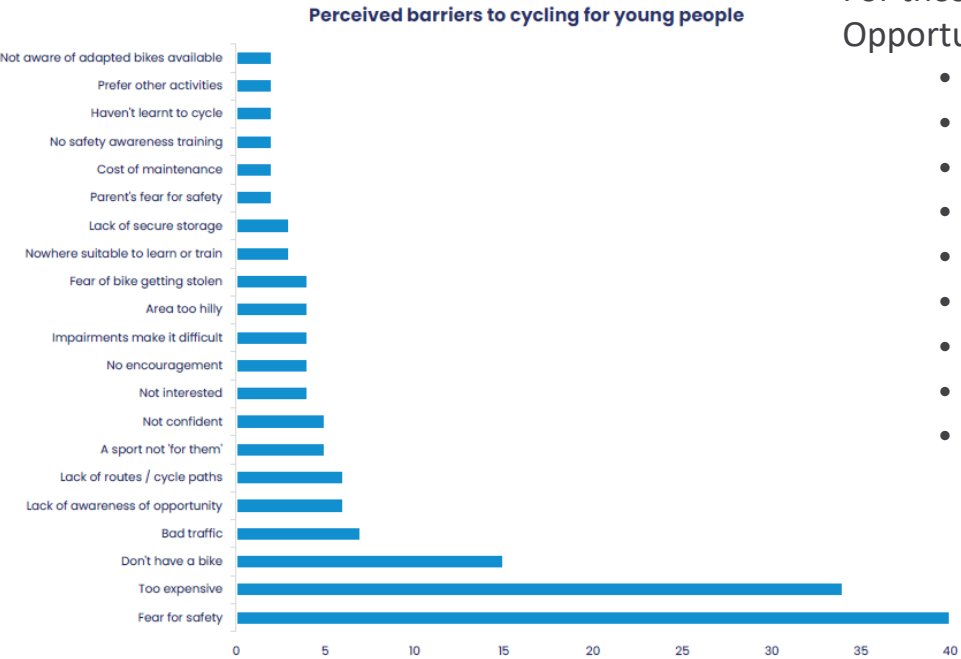
Research with 11–18-year-olds across the UK, through Sported’s network of member organisations, identified a variety of challenges to cycling:

- Road safety
- Costs of bike and equipment
- Lack of confidence in ability or knowing where to go
- Lack of diverse role models

For those who didn’t cycle, it was seen as not particularly high profile and not as “cool” as other sports. Opportunities to support this audience into cycling did exist:

- Provide access to bikes and equipment free of charge
- Activity takes place locally & low-cost or free to attend
- Offer leisure cycling in groups
- Providing cycling as part of a wider offer
- Showcase role models and imagery of ‘people like me’
- Group cycling opportunities are flexible and inclusive
- Provide safe spaces for practice and learning skills
- BMX riding can be attractive to younger males
- Female only sessions may be preferable for females

“See the image of a typical cyclist is usually a man. And that doesn’t really include teenage girls like ethnic Muslim. So, just that image might put people off, and they might not consider that cycling is for them.” – **Cycling Group Participant (Female)**



6. Emotional Barriers/Enabler

The **School Sport Survey (2018)** identifies several things which young people in West Wales¹ say would help them to do more sport. Some of the most prominent are shown in Figure 1. We see that, at all age groups, the three which consistently stand out are ‘If my friends went with me’, ‘If I had more time’, and ‘If there were more sports that suited me’. This reflects the lack of value young people place on sport as a priority for their time, their lack of engagement with what is on offer, and the influence of peers, which are consistent themes in this pack. There are other enablers identified by around 1 in 5 young people, including lack of confidence and feelings of not being good enough; as well as practical barriers, such as cost and transport, which are further highlighted in the next section. Table 1 shows that these are shared across all LAs in West Wales, as well as more widely; however, some are more prominent in Carmarthenshire.

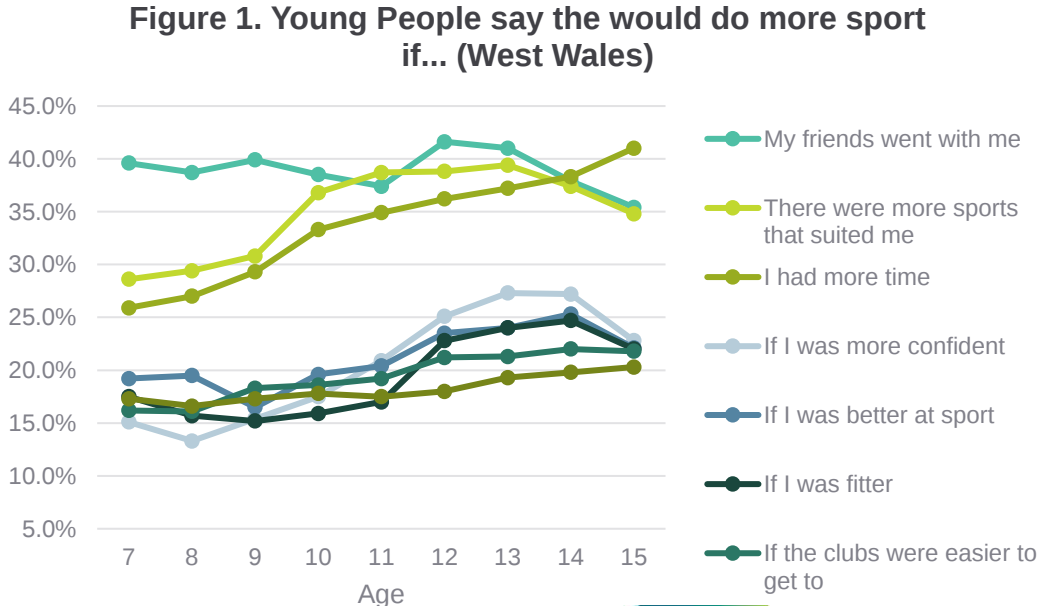


Table 1.

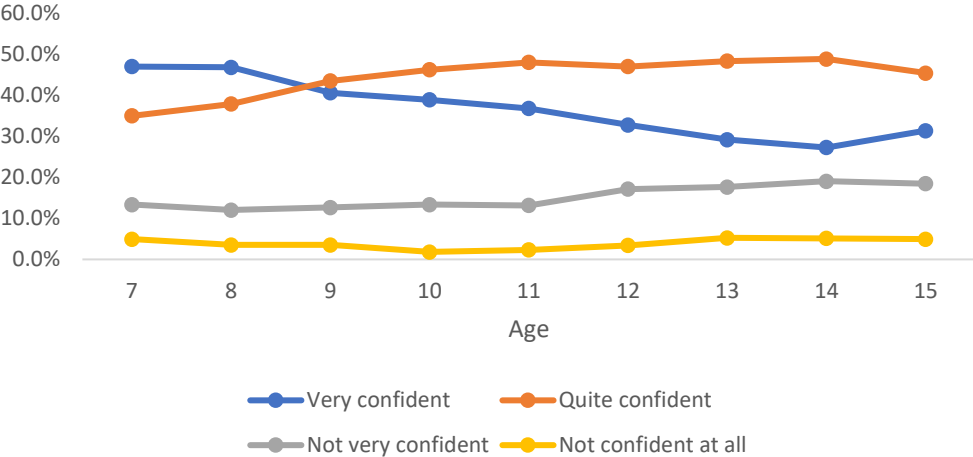
	% Agree					
	Wales	Mid & West Wales	Pembrokeshire	Carmarthenshire	Swansea	Neath Port Talbot
I would do more sport if...						
My friends went with me	38.3	38.4	37.8	39.3	37.9	38.0
There were more sports that suited me	34.7	35.7	35.7	36.1	35.2	35.0
I had more time	34.4	35.5	34.3	37.0	33.1	34.1
If I was better at sport	21.2	21.9	21.9	23.5	20.7	19.1
If I was more confident	20.8	21.4	22.1	23.2	20.2	19.0
If the clubs were easier to get to	20.0	20.5	21.1	20.9	18.7	18.8
If I was fitter	19.5	20.1	19.7	21.8	19.2	17.8
It was cheaper	19.0	18.9	18.4	21.0	17.8	15.9

6. Emotional Barriers/Enablers

In the **School Sport Survey (2018)** **84%** of male secondary pupils said they were ‘very confident’ or ‘quite confident’ trying new activities, c.f. **76%** females and **68%** of those identifying as ‘other’ gender. Confidence is also lower for non-Welsh speakers (**73%**) and those with a disability (**73%**).

This relationship between confidence and age is particularly interesting as many young people in West Wales move from ‘very confident’ to ‘quite confident’ as they get older (Figure 1).¹ This switch could be sufficient to prevent some young people from getting involved in new activities, particularly considering how this age group experience peer influence.

Figure 1. How confident are Young People to try new activities? (West Wales)



A report from **Women in Sport (2021)** found significant emotional barriers for all teenagers in taking part, although these were more common for girls¹. **7 in 10** girls also avoided being active when on their period.

A line graph showing the percentage of girls and boys who agree or strongly agree with four emotional barriers to physical activity. The y-axis represents the percentage from 0% to 65%.

Barrier	Girls	Boys
DON'T LIKE OTHERS WATCHING THEM	65%	44%
DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT BODY SHAPE	45%	35%
DON'T LIKE GETTING HOT AND SWEATY	50%	37%
DON'T LIKE WEARING SPORTS KIT/CLOTHING	28%	24%

6. Emotional Barriers/Enablers

Sport Wales' Active Young People Programme Evaluation (2019) discussed the Geocaching project undertaken by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority with 10-15 year olds. At the outset of the project, leaders anticipated the main barriers would be awareness, lack of opportunity and limited resources. In practice they found that confidence and motivation were more significant issues and, if anything, these were greater than the practical barriers.

FE Sport Survey (2018):

What would encourage students to do more activity?

Students were asked from a list of options what would motivate them to do more sport.

- **32%** said if 'my friends went with me' (**35%** females, **28%** males)
- **23%** said 'If I was more confident' (**31%** females, **16%** males).

Women in Sport's 2022 research found that 74% males (11-18) felt confident being active, versus 58% females.

6. Emotional Barriers/Enablers

According to a report from **Street Games (2014)** females from disadvantaged backgrounds felt they had ‘missed the boat’ if they were not sporty early on in school and feared being embarrassed. Girls are even more influenced by peers and a key motivator for females was if their friends took part. Losing weight can also be a key motivation, although obviously this needs to be carefully managed.

Street Games: Us Girls Evaluation (2018)

Some of the key emotional barriers that were overcome by Us Girls sessions for disadvantaged females (age 13-19) were:

- Not being made to feel ‘no good’
- Not wanting to be seen as ‘sporty’, even after attending for a while
- Being able to wear what you want without being judged
- No mirrors in the sessions
- They couldn’t be watched by male peers

A report from **Women in Sport (2019)** found significant emotional barriers to teenage girls taking part

BARRIERS	HOW GIRLS FEEL
FEELING LIKE SHE’S NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO TAKE PART AND ONLY THE TALENTED ARE VALUED	29% of girls aged 14-16 say not being good at sport stops them from taking part in school sport ⁸
LOW SELF-WORTH AND A PREDETERMINED SENSE OF FAILURE	50% of girls feel paralysed by the fear of failure at puberty which stops them trying new things ¹⁵
LACK OF CONFIDENCE OVER BODY IMAGE AND APPEARANCE	8 out of 10 girls with low body esteem avoid seeing friends and family or trying out for a team or club ¹²
PRESSURE TO PRIORITISE FUTURE GOALS FROM SCHOOL, FAMILY AND THEMSELVES	Only 29% of girls aged 14-16 say the skills they learn in PE are relevant to their day to day life ⁸
FEELING PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY VULNERABLE DURING PUBERTY	42% of 14-16 year olds say their period stops them taking part in physical activity inside school ⁸

7. Practical Barriers/Enablers

The **FE Sport Survey (2018)** asked students what would motivate them to do more sport. The option selected most was if 'I had more time' – **43%** students (**38%** males and **48%** females). If 'it was cheaper' was highlighted by **30%** students (**22%** males and **37%** females).

According to a **report from Street Games (2014)**, for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, low-cost activities are essential. Due to limited resources this group will prioritise socialising, clothes and repaying debts, so sport has to come after that. Activities which are close to home in familiar community venues are also successful to avoid the cost and uncertainty of travelling outside of known areas.

James et al (2018) reported the particular importance of low-cost activities to young people from deprived communities. However, teenagers in this study also highlighted that this should not be at the expense of quality of provision, citing environments which were dirty, felt unsafe or were cold as particularly off-putting.

"I feel bad when I have to go up to my parents and ask them for money, because their face is just like, right, and then you can see them as they pass the money over and they don't like it"
Female, 13-14, Swansea

"..they've got like one indoor pitch which costs a lot to play in, or they've just got outdoor pitches which are, like, really cheap to play but it's, like, really cold. They don't put, like, any lights on."
Male, 13-14, Swansea

Evidence from the **Enquiry into Physical Activity of Children & Young People (2019)** stated that young people living in deprived areas experience greater practical barriers to taking part, including:

- Unable to afford kit
- Unable to afford travel to activities and/or poor transport links
- Unable to afford fees or subscriptions to pay for activities
- Fear of bullying due to old or lack of sports gear.

The enquiry also highlighted that a number of NGBs and delivery organisations were critical of the short-term (1-year) funding model of Sport Wales, as it makes long-term strategic planning, development and sustainability virtually impossible.

7. Practical Barriers/Enablers

The challenge of focusing only on the removal of practical barriers is illustrated by **James et al (2019)**. They provided vouchers to spend on physical activity to teenagers for a 12-month period. Whilst some small improvements in physical fitness were seen over the time, qualitative interviews with participants revealed more complex factors at play. These included low take up (only 26%) of vouchers and a perceived lack of local options. Peer support also had little effect and was felt not to have been well implemented.

Research by **James et al (2018)** with 13–14-year-olds living in deprived communities in Swansea identified access to more local provision as particularly key for this audience. The need for less travel feeds into the cost theme for these young people, in addition to the fact that, at this age they are testing their boundaries beyond the home and may not yet feel confident travelling distances without adult support.

Maintenance of these local spaces was also key, with teenagers feeling that councils currently prioritised other areas (e.g. transport provision) over facilities for their age group. There was also a strong sense that there was very little to do aimed specifically at teenagers.

"Just like a little gym, in the park or something, 'cos I would go then 'cos it's like really close."
Female, 13-14, Swansea

"So there's the travel, but if it was, like, in your community, then it wouldn't be so bad."
Female, 13-14, Swansea

"Yeah, council investing in, like, one-way systems and everything...when they could be looking at our age and start investing in buildings that we can go to and enjoy ourselves after school."
Male, 13-14, Swansea

The increasing pressure of schoolwork came up in a number of reports as a key barrier, including the **Women in Sport (2021) research**, where 41% girls and 30% boys said they were too busy with schoolwork to play sport.

“Studying is way more important than it ever was, so sport has taken a drop in my priority list.”

In addition to inadequate volumes of provision for young people **James et al (2018)** also found teenagers were underwhelmed by the variety that was on offer. Many felt the offer was always the same things “like football, hockey, you know...” and that offers were too structured.

Similar issues were identified within school provision, with young people reporting the offer was too structured and traditional. They wanted the opportunity to input suggestions at the start of the year. Although for boys it was often a case of wanting additional activities rather than disliking those already on offer.

8. Delivery Challenges

Whilst this wasn't one of our original questions, it came up several times in discussion with LAs. It was important to understand the challenges which are facing those trying to deliver to young people; including the red tape they face on a day to day basis in trying to make things happen.

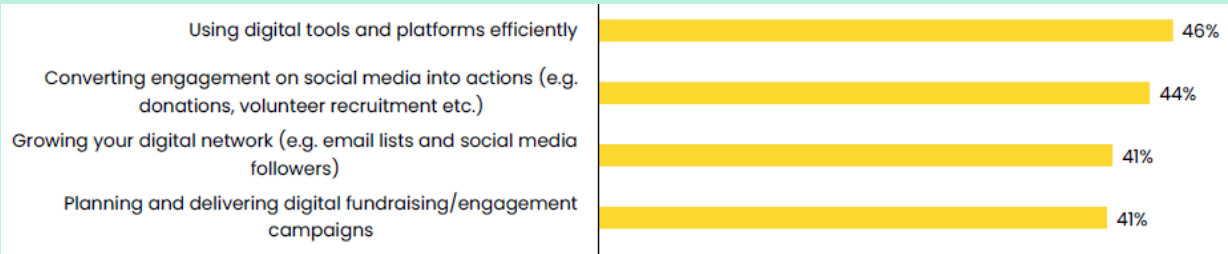
Sported network groups who took part in **British Cycling's research (2021)** to understand young people's motivations to cycle identified a need for more funding, more support, and access to equipment as the biggest barriers to delivering cycling opportunities. They also felt there was little communication from British Cycling or elite facilities with community groups. They advocated for an open network of partners working together =to make it easier for groups to get involved.

"So, if five organisations come together, potentially, we can cover a huge amount. One organisation on its own can't do it. We have to pool our resources and say, you've got a building...we might have the bikes and resources, so we use your building and our resources."
Non-cycling Group Leader, Sported

The **Us Girls Programme Evaluation (2018)** highlighted challenges with data collection, including young people not wanting to give full names or demographic details. Sporadic attendance also made it had to administer follow-up surveys, and sharing learning is highlighted as invaluable but hugely time intensive.

Only 23% of schools in the **Pembrokeshire Practitioner Survey (2021)** currently open their school for community use outside of school hours

In the **Community Pulse Survey (2021)**, more than 80% of Sported member organisations wanted more help with digital capabilities, although reported confidence levels weren't exceptionally low. They particularly wanted help with:

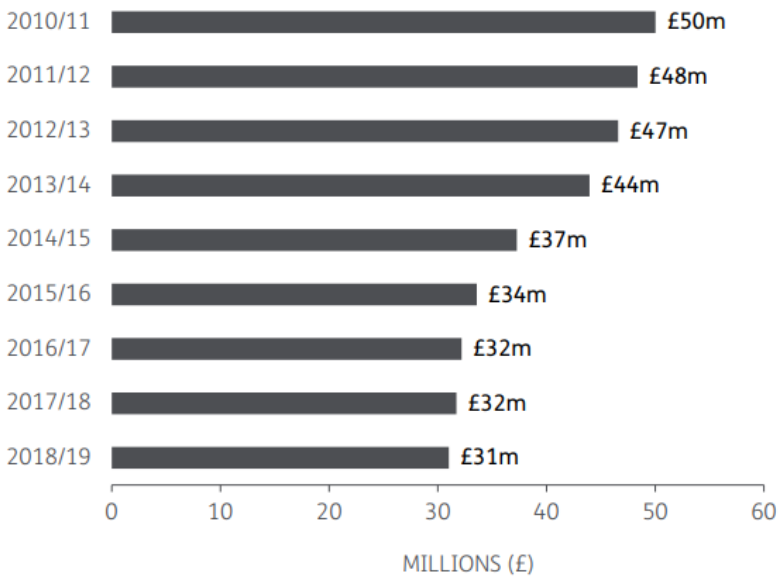


8. Delivery Challenges

Stakeholders in a **study carried out for Welsh Government (2020)** felt that young people (11-25) were less frequently accessing statutory provision due to funding cuts, and an increased focus on targeted forms of youth work. Stakeholders emphasised that, whilst targeted services were important, particularly for those in crisis, access to support with personal, professional and social development for all young people was also needed. Engagement in youth work at an earlier stage could even prevent some young people from reaching crisis. Data on the role played by voluntary and third sector organisations was not systematically collected and this was also felt to be a problem in understanding overall provision.

Sport Wales’ Active Young People Programmes Evaluation Report (2019) featured case studies with a number of localities including Carmarthenshire and Swansea. Interviews with LA and regional staff praised the workforce, but highlighted numerous delivery challenges being faced:

TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENDITURE IN REAL TERMS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN WALES ON YOUTH SERVICES (EXCLUDING ISLE OF ANGLESEY)



Youth Services in Wales

The **Out of Service** report from YMCA in January 2020 reported spending by Local Authorities on youth services in Wales had been cut by almost 40% since 2010.¹ Mid-Wales is reported to have been hit hardest but no region of Wales has avoided the cuts. This was of course before the pandemic and the increasing challenges this has presented.

- The remit of the AYPP is extensive, which can mean a lack of clarity on overall aims for staff.
- This leads to capacity issues in the AYPP team and prioritising can be difficult.
- Schools have capacity issues, leading to more focus on teams and other opportunities for the already ‘sporty’.
- The end of the PESS programme² means more schools request support for both PE and extracurricular activity.
- This further limits capacity to focus on community sport.
- Large class sizes can limit what activities are delivered.
- Access to facility space for delivery can be a problem.

8. Delivery Challenges

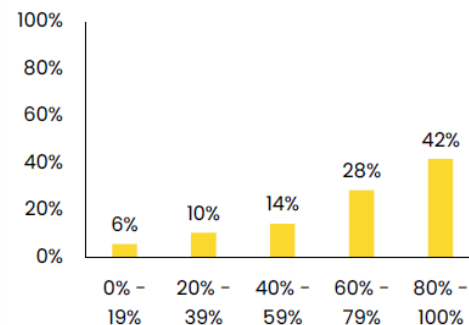
Sported member organisations responding to the **Surviving a Pandemic** survey (2021) cited various practical challenges:

- Greater difficulty finding facilities
- Lack of resources and financial support
- Decreased volunteer engagement

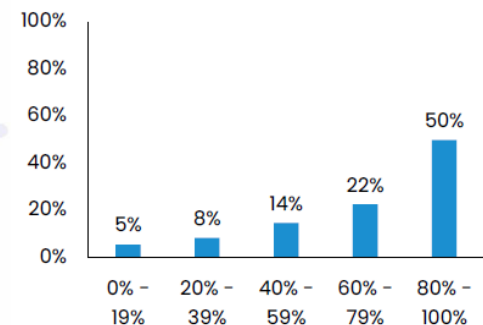
61% PE practitioners in the **Pembrokeshire Lead Practitioner Survey (2021)** felt the biggest barrier to extra-curricular delivery was the COVID-19 bubble

Sported members reported to the **Community Pulse Survey (2021)** that young people are not returning in the same numbers as pre pandemic. Only 42% of groups stated that 80-100% of young people had returned with 30% of groups stating that less than 60% of their participants had returned since reopening (38% for groups in most deprived areas).

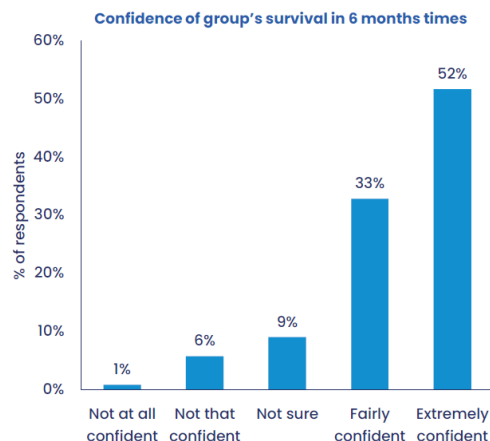
% of young people who have returned



% of staff/volunteers who have returned



Over half of groups were extremely confident they would survive in 6 months time in January 2021



For Sported member organisations, who responded to the **Surviving a Pandemic** survey (2021), confidence that their organisation would survive the pandemic had increased in early 2021 compared with 2020. Nonetheless, 1 in 6 could still disappear. In Wales, the average confidence level was one of the lowest in the UK at 3.9, on a scale of 1 (Not at all confident) to 5 (Extremely confident).

Young people's mental health is one of the greatest concerns raised by Sported member organisations in the **Wales consultation with young people (2021)**. Some organisations had found additional structure in their sessions was well received, whilst many talked about creating safe spaces for young people to talk.



Tea, Talk and Toast sessions. Completed either as a group or individually. Giving young people the chance to share.

8. Delivery Challenges

Practitioners in the Us Girls Programme (2018)
found success by:

Working with
non-traditional
partners, like
housing
associations and
homeless
shelters to reach
a wider audience
with diverse
activities

Building
volunteer
infrastructure for
females from the
ground up

Developing a
social media
platform
designed
specifically for
females

Ensuring that Us
Girls was publicly
celebrated and
promoted

Supporting
reflective,
honest feedback
about what
hasn't worked
(this is as
important as
understanding
what has
worked)



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Part 3: Where now?

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Gaps in Understanding

Whilst we have gathered significant learning through this desk review on many of the questions of interest to West Wales LAs, there are a number of areas for which limited evidence has been identified. There are also, as with all research, new questions which have arisen.

- Young people's free time priorities
- Impact of the pandemic
 - On participation
 - On attitudes to participation
- Communication and information seeking experiences for young people, especially around physical activity
- Experiences of PA and the role of emotional barriers
 - Particularly for those young people doing little or no activity
 - What “fun” “inclusive” “welcoming” “safe” “social” “informal” “supportive” looks like for young people in practice
 - Emotional barriers for boys are also much less frequently explored
- Further data on how much YP are walking (and further breakdown of cycling)
- Obesity, smoking, drug use and other risk taking behaviour for YP available at regional or LA level
- Why fluent Welsh speakers more likely to take part in regular sport than non-Welsh speakers
- More local data is also of value

Recommendations for Future Work (Stage 2)

Based on the research to date and feedback from LA leads, SLC and Proper Active would make a number of recommendations for the next stages of work. These will be further discussed with LA leads before agreeing what should be progressed.

First and foremost, the evidence base in this space continues to grow and monitoring new and emerging insights about this audience will be a valuable activity. A small number of ongoing research projects which have come to our attention during the course of this desk review are highlighted in the Further Reading & Future Research section at the end of this report.

In particular, a detailed exploration of the 2022 School Sport Survey data, when it becomes available later this year, should be a priority. Whilst the 2018 School Sport Survey has provided a wealth of valuable insight, significant world events have taken place since that time which will have had a major impact on young people's experiences, feelings, preferences and priorities; not least the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, there are a number of areas where we feel primary research could be undertaken, in order to expand the breadth of local knowledge about the questions of interest within West Wales LA areas:

1. Engagement with Young People The insight shows that many young people are not satisfied with what is currently available and are keen to be more involved in deciding what will work for them (*Nothing about me, without me*). Research directly with young people, particularly those who are currently least active, should play a big role in the next phase and, wherever possible, co-creation should be employed in the design of future inventions. Some areas which we feel would add value to explore are:

- What matters to young people, how do they want to spend their leisure time and how might physical activity be used in support of their priorities (e.g. wellbeing)?
- Communication & information seeking: How much awareness of different types of provision do young people have? How much are they looking for this? How/where do they look? What does appealing look like to them? What is their impression of current sport marketing?

continued...

Recommendations for Future Work (Stage 2)

...Engagement with Young People continued

- What experiences of being active have those who are currently least active had in the past, how does this make them feel? Co-creation to design alternative opportunities for them to revisit being active in a way that they feel comfortable.
- Exploring young people's sporting journeys. Working with young people who are most engaged and least engaged to construct timelines of their experiences and how these have changed since primary school. What they did, how they felt about it, who or what influenced these experiences and evolving feelings about being active.¹
- For those currently or previously taking part in community activity – how did they come to go in the first place? What made them continue/stop? An ethnographic approach may be possible here, setting young people the task of identifying an activity to do, and then going along as a *mystery shopper*.
- The distinction between experiences of taking part within and outside school to understand where lessons can be learned and shared.
- The knowledge, skills and initiative which young people have to drive their own engagement with sport as they move away from parental reliance, and ways to help them build self-efficacy in this space.
- Review existing and emerging delivery and look to identify opportunities for co-creation within work already being done.
- Identify or work with existing youth ambassadors as a *check and challenge* group to test emerging ideas before wider work takes place.

Recommendations for Future Work (Stage 2)

2. Engaging with those who support young people In addition to direct engagement with young people, some insight from those who support young people may add value.

- Working with parents/families throughout secondary school to co-create ways for families to be active together and support parents to become role models and facilitators for their children's activity.
- Work with schools to understand their perspective on the drop-out of extracurricular activity and how to tackle the fall in enjoyment of sport in school settings.
- Interviews with local deliverers to understand their structural and process challenges (red tape) with supporting young people.

3. LA Capacity building There would also be value in collaborating with LA officers to extend the tools and knowledge available to them to help them guide local infrastructure and provision for young people.

- Dissemination of the findings from Stage 1 with wider teams and brainstorming sessions about what it all means.
- Undertaking further system mapping exercises with each LA area (N.B. This could also be done with YP for comparison).
- Research and co-creation skills: session on easy to apply methods for data collection, analysis and co-creation.

Limitations

- This review covers the available evidence identified within the timing of the project. It should not be seen as a comprehensive review.
- Sources included were those freely available to access online or provided by project stakeholders. Grey literature is not included.
- Some included reports quote data at the UK level only. A small number of reports based on young people in England are also included, where this aids general understanding of young people's experiences.
- Many data sources do not provide full breakdowns by age.
- Further to the above, school data is often reported as primary (4-11) and secondary (11-16); young people data is often for 16-25 year olds or 14-25 year olds.
- The majority of sources do not provide data tables.
- The majority of sources do not have details of survey questions. This is particularly pertinent in relation to rates of participation (e.g. what is counted as sport or physical activity and under what conditions) and means direct comparison between datasets is not possible.
- Related to the above, the School Sport Survey focuses on how much *sport* young people take part in. It does not encompass all forms of physical activity which could contribute to an active lifestyle. Most notably, walking is not included.
- Whilst direct comparison of datasets is not possible, consideration of direction of travel is feasible where longitudinal data is available.



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References & Further Reading

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9. Sport England (2017) Satellite Clubs Evaluation report⁵
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Further Reading & Future Research

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14. UK Coaching, as part of the Children's Coaching Collaborative, a group of young people's coaches, physical education experts and policymakers, is undertaking research to understand how deliverers work with children and young people (0-18) and how they want to be supported (March 2022)
15. Us Girls Half-Term Evaluation (Swansea) – TBC (expected March 2022)
16. Welsh Youth Ambassador Programme Review – TBC (expected April 2022)
17. Wales School Sport Survey 2022 is taking place (full reporting expected Autumn 2022)
18. Youth Sport Trust (2019) Using Competition to Support Transition Infographic¹
19. Youth Sport Trust (2019) Active in Mind Evaluation Infographic²

Other Possible Sources of Insight

- Further evaluation of Healthy and Active Fund (HAF) projects focused on young people (e.g. Family Engagement Project)
- Further evaluation of Call for Action (C4A) projects focused on young people
- Further evaluation of Active Young People Programmes (AYPPs), including 5x60 programme, Young Ambassador programme, or other secondary school focused elements



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