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1. Background

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Youth Sport Survey – Autumn/Winter 2001

A questionnaire was produced to obtain the views of young people with regard to sport, both in school and in their spare time. Questionnaires were distributed using the internet and paper copies.

2. The Focus Group Project Brief

It was agreed by the Youth Sport Steering Group that, in order to supplement the questionnaire, further targeted consultation was required. It was agreed that a series of focus groups would be undertaken with young people. The following were identified:

- Looked After Children
- Young Ethnic Women
- Rural Schools
- Socio/Economic Deprivation
- Urban School
- Young People with disabilities
- Travellers
- Pupil Referral Unit
- Gender Issues
- Health Issues

The following questions were used in the focus groups:

- Do you think it is important to take part in sport/physical activity? If yes why, if no why not?
- Do you take part in any sport or physical activity at present, both in school and out of school?
- If not, what are the reasons – cost, travel, facilities, access, enjoyment, safety, peers?
- What would encourage you to become more involved or get more involved in sport and physical activity?
- If you were Head Teacher how would you improve PE/Sport in schools?
- If you were in charge of local sport how would you get young people involved?
- Have you ever been a member of a sports club? If you were in charge of a club what would you do to make it attractive and accessible to young people?
- When you become an adult do you think you will still play or be involved in sport?
- If not why not, if yes why?

3. The Main Findings

3.1 Looked After Children

Venue: Victoria Road – Wisbech
Group Profile 6 males in 14-16 year age group

Findings:

The staff were very keen to allow the young people the opportunity to discuss sports participation as they see it as an integral part of life for the young people in their care. The impression on the visit was one of a strong commitment by the staff to provide sporting opportunities, even running activities and teams on a voluntary basis in their spare time.

The staff felt that it was important for them to receive regular information about sports courses, events and local clubs in the area.

They were unsure about where to direct young people on to clubs and training if they thought that the young person had a particular talent.

Response to the questions:

1. All the group felt that it was important to take part in sport and physical activity. The reasons given were:

- It keeps you fit
- You get a six pack
- Enjoyable
- Good for your heart and lungs

2. Five of the group were in school and all took part in PE including football, fitness and trampolining. They would like to play rugby but were unsure about its availability.

All six took part in sport out of school – five playing football and one doing fitness training. The one doing the fitness training admitted that he gets bored and motivation to continue is a problem.

3. We asked the group why they thought other young people did not play sport. The reasons they gave are:

- Lazy
- Not good enough
- Not interested
- Not motivated
- Girlfriends
- Play Station
- Depends on what their friends like

- This group said their parents would not take them or have the money to let them play sport if they were at home

4. The one young person who struggles with motivation said that he preferred activities that were more stimulating and made you think e.g. archery and go-karting.

5. The group said that they would provide a wider range of sports including snooker and go-karting.

6. If the group were in charge of local sport then they would make local open spaces more accessible. They gave the example of a nearby school field that has a football pitch but they “kicked off” if they try and use it in the evenings and weekends.

They felt that there was not enough for older children to do after the age of twelve.

They would like to see more to do in local parks. We had a discussion about how to make these areas more interesting for young people. The key issues were provision of basketball posts, a skateboard track and football areas. The facilities do not have to have exact measurements just somewhere to play and “chill out”.

7. Five of the group belong to a local football team which was instigated by a member of staff. They admitted that they would not have known how to get involved without the member of staff and that clubs need to be advertised in schools and shops to get young people involved. They also pointed out that you only go to a club if your friend does.

The staff also pointed out that a lot of sports clubs – football, hockey and netball are often based around pubs which does not help this age group.

8. Five of the group will still do sport when they are adults, one will not

9. The one that won't play sport said that it was boring and other things were a higher priority. The others would because they enjoyed playing football.

3.2 Young Ethnic Women

Venue: Bretton Woods Community School

Group Profile: 7 female Year 9

Response to questions:

1. All of the young women felt that it was important to take part in sport/physical activity. The majority felt it was important for health reasons - particularly body image and body weight.

- Helps you keep fit, learn new things by taking part in sport.
- They disliked running and athletics because it made them tired.
- They liked team games, but it depends who they play with.
- They play with boys with certain teachers, but they don't really like it.
- The boys pick on them if they aren't very good.

- The boys tend not to take part in sports such as dance.
- They don't like playing rugby, even though it's none contact.
- There was only one young woman who "loved" PE.
- The others would like to get out of it if they could.

2. All of the young women took part in sport/physical activity during curriculum time. However, some sports were more favoured than others. They would prefer to choose what activities they can do within their PE lessons (like the year 11 students).

- One young woman did basketball last year, but she was the only female so she got bored. None of the others went to basketball because they don't like it.
- They did not like participating in running and athletics.
- Favourite sports included cricket and badminton. Although they don't get to play these a lot at school.
- None of the young women liked doing mixed PE sessions at school, mainly because they felt belittled by the male students. All felt that the boys laughed at them, picked on them when they could not do something and did not play fairly, and this de-motivated them.
- They felt that this continued when they had mixed PE sessions in what are considered to be "feminine" sports such as dance and gymnastics.
- The majority liked swimming, but felt that this caused a problem as they could only swim in a female group. Another problem with swimming (but not just with Asian girls) was that they didn't like having wet hair after the session.
- None of the young women were members of extra-curricular clubs. There were three main reasons why:
 - they were not particularly interested in the sports that were on offer
 - their friends did not go
 - they were unable to get home afterwards
- The majority of the Asian communities live in the Central Ward of Peterborough. Because of the distance between school and home the students are transported by their parents. Therefore, they find it difficult to attend after-school activities, as they are unable to get home.
- Many attended the "Gladstone Community Centre" on a Wednesday night for the "Girls Session". The young women play all sorts of sport, but mostly cricket, trampolining and badminton. Male members of staff are allowed in the sports hall while they are playing, but they tend not to go in while the activities are taking place.
- The boys go on a different day.
- They don't have to pay for the session.
- The session is local so the young women walk, not many participants come from other areas of the city.
- The young women who attend sometimes get changed into sports kit, but sometimes they do the sport in their sari.
- They prefer going without the boys as they criticise.
- One young woman felt that the male members of staff would also laugh and criticise.

- ❑ Even though this is a female only environment some of the young women didn't like being told what to do by the older females at the session.
- ❑ They sometimes changed from their cultural dress into sports wear, but most of the time they did the activities in their sari.
- ❑ Some went to the Asian Ladies swimming session at Jack Hunt Pool. But none of them would go to a swimming session that was mixed. One girl's father did not allow her to go to Jack Hunt Pool although she was allowed to go to Gladstone Community Centre as it was within their community.
- ❑ Some felt that their parents would let them go to Jack Hunt for swimming, but they didn't really want to go without a friend.
- ❑ Only one young woman went swimming outside of school.
- ❑ One young woman had attended a basketball session at a sports centre within the city, but didn't continue going as she was the only Asian female at the session. She would have continued to attend the session had there been some other girls there or if a friend went with her.

3. The group said that if someone went with them they would take part in sport more often. They liked going to Gladstone as it was community orientated but they wouldn't attend another sports centre in the city, as they would be an outsider.

4. The group made the following suggestions:

- ❑ Allow a choice in what activities they participated in.
- ❑ New equipment – some of the equipment is quite old.
- ❑ They shouldn't be forced into doing activities they don't like.
- ❑ To be put in-groups with their friends and not ability groups. Then they could help their friends improve.
- ❑ They would like less English and Science and more PE as long as it was activities they liked.
- ❑ They would like to do ice skating and bowling like the year 11's do.

5. The group would improve Gladstone Park by putting people into year groups so that the older girls didn't boss them about.

6. The group gave the following response:

- ❑ None are members of a sports club.
- ❑ One young woman would like to go swimming – it is offered at lunchtime but she keeps forgetting to go.
- ❑ Because none of them went to a club they didn't really know how to make it attractive and accessible.

7. All the group said they would still be involved in sport as an adult

8. Six felt that they would still take part in sport/physical activity when they were adults. One insisted that she needed to carry on doing sport because of her weight. When asked if she would attend sessions outside her community she replied yes, she thought that she would be more relaxed than her parents with regards to cultural boundaries

3.3 Rural Schools

Venue: Sawtry Community College

Group Profile: 4 male, 4 female Year 10

Response to questions:

1. All the group thought that it was important to take part in sport and physical activity. The two reasons they gave was that it was healthy and good fun.

2. All the group took part in PE. Seven of the group took part in sport out of school. Five of those played for local clubs – 3 for football, 1 netball, 1 rugby, and the other two both swim for fun and fitness.

3. The one person that did not take part had absolutely no interest in sport and no intention of taking part. The group felt that young people in Peterborough had better facilities and could get to those facilities easily. The feeling was that in Wisbech the facilities were poor and you had to walk to any activities or get taken by your parents. Those who are part of clubs walked to the sessions. Cost and safety did not feature as reasons for non participation.

4. The majority of the group were already involved in sport but said that friends were important when getting involved in sport; they tend to be the same people you “hang around” with at school and in your free time.

5. The group felt that the sports facilities at school were okay but that the equipment could be improved and bent badminton racquets replaced with new ones. If they were in charge then they would provide more PE sessions as “most people like it”.

6. If the group were in charge of local sport then they would provide more local courses and activities as they felt there was nothing to do in Wisbech, especially in the holidays.

7. Those that are members of a sports club felt that the cost of membership could put people off. They also felt that their clubs should advertise in schools and places where young people hang out. This should tell people how to join and where and when to meet.

8/9. Six of the group felt that they would continue to play sport as an adult. One who didn't was the one who did not play anyway, another thought that a future job would mean less time to play sport.

3.4 Socio/Economic Deprivation

Venue: Queen's School, Wisbech

Group Profile: 3 male, 4 female Year 10

Findings:

1. All the group saw the benefit of taking part in sport and PE, the reasons they gave were:

- To keep fit
- To stay healthy
- Fun
- A laugh

2. All the group did PE in school, activities included rugby, football, basketball, swimming, gymnastics and table tennis. Four of the group participated in some sport and physical activity out of school, they were:

- Horseriding
- Aerobics
- Football
- Swimming
- Skating
- BMX
- Athletics

3. The reasons the group gave for non participation were:

- Their friends didn't go
- Boring
- New to the area
- Lost interest because not very good
- Can't get to any activities unless taken by parents
- Nothing to do in the villages

4. The group felt that if there was more local provision in the villages they would participate. They also felt the local parks were unpleasant because of broken equipment, dog mess and broken glass.

5. If they were Head Teacher then they would make the actual PE lessons longer because there is not enough time when you have to get changed. One hour lessons would be ideal.

6. The priority would be to provide more in the villages – basketball posts, skate parks and also more holiday activities for the 13+ age group at local sports centres. These activities would be a mix of organised and casual sessions.

7. Two of the group belonged to football clubs. To make clubs more accessible the group would get existing members to tell their friends, hold trials and advertise in the local newspapers.

8/9. All the group felt that they would be involved in sport as adults to keep fit and because they enjoyed it.

Rural/Transport Issues

There is definitely a rural isolation issue as the following emerged from the discussion:

- All the group were transported to activities by their parents, if this didn't happen then the group felt it would affect their motivation and attendance because of the time and difficulty of getting to activities.
- If there were any after school activities at the sports centre then the group would not be able to attend because the school buses leave after school and transport later in the evening is poor and also costs.
- There is junior netball being developed at Hinchingsbrooke School, Huntingdon, but again transport is an issue from Sawtry.
- The group definitely felt that they did not have the same sporting opportunities and access as people in Cambridge and Peterborough.

3.5 Urban School

Venue: Manor Community College, Cambridge

Profile: 6 male, 3 female Year 10

Findings:

1. Eight thought that it was important to take part in sport because of the following reasons:

- To keep fit
- It is better to be healthy
- Develop friendships

One person had no interest in sport or health and felt that there were more important things in life.

2. All the group did PE in school including tennis, hockey, football, table tennis and volleyball.

Out of school three of the group took part in sport – two male and one female. They were all members of football clubs. Another boy wanted to play rugby but was unsure about how to go about it

3. One male quit playing for his local football team as he found it boring and it ruined his social life, which seemed to consist of hanging around with his friends.

The other reasons given were:

- Not enjoyable
- Friends don't play sport

4. Nothing would get one of the group interested in sport. A suggestion from some of the group was to see go-karting facilities provided.

5. In the position of Head Teacher the group would increase the choice of activities and go out to places to play golf, for example.

They would also improve the school facilities. In particular the drainage on the football field and better tennis courts and changing rooms which were seen as poor.

6. The group would get young people involved by advertising activities in school and local shops. They were also interested in obtaining coaching qualifications so they would put on more of these courses.

7. The group were of the opinion that if the facilities they used with their clubs were better e.g. the changing facilities then more people would be encouraged to play.

8/9. Eight of the group would continue to be involved in sport and physical activity as an adult. One wanted to play professional football and one to train as a teacher.

General Comment: The young people were very focused on football. Transport was not really an issue as they stayed very local for their activities and walked.

3.6 Young People with Disabilities

Venue: Littleton House
Profile: 7 male Year 11

Key Findings:

1. All the group thought that it was important to take part in PE and Sport for the following reasons:

- Keep fit
- Lose weight
- Stops legs seizing up
- Don't get a gut
- Fun
- Keeps heart in good condition
- "Birds look at you"

2. All the group take part in a wide range of sports activities in school including football, cricket, fishing, swimming and athletics.

Out of school six of the group are involved in sport involving the following activities:

- Fishing
- Football – recreation and clubs
- Cricket

3/4. Those not involved out of school are not interested and find it boring and the cost also deters them. Nothing would encourage them to get involved

5. The group would improve PE by:

- Getting some running machines for the gym
- Having PE all day
- Getting new football goals
- Putting lockers in the changing rooms
- Getting a deeper swimming pool
- Having a school football league

6. The group would:

- Make better use of open spaces for sport, they currently get kicked off all the time
- Provide more to do for older children
- Go Karting areas
- Basketball posts and courts

7. The group would ask their mates and advertise locally.

8/9. Five of the group would continue to play sport after leaving school because they enjoyed it. Two would not because they found it boring.

3.7 Young People with Disabilities

Venue: Impington Village College
Group Profile 2 male, 5 female all with a range of physical disabilities

Response to questions:

1. All the group agreed that it was important to take part in PE and Sport because:

- It keeps you fit
- It keeps the heart going
- It gives you more energy

2. All the group play sport in school including swimming, a range of activities in the sports hall (table tennis, boccia, rounders, snooker and football) and athletics on the grass. The entire group played sport out of school including horse driving and swimming with one of the group being a national swimmer.

3. The group felt that it was important to have someone to take you to sport otherwise it would be difficult to take part.

4. The group felt that a proper athletics track and facility on the site would encourage more people to play sport as the bumpy grass was a problem. They also watched sport on television, particularly football, swimming and horse driving and found that quite motivating.

5/6. The group would introduce other sports if they were in charge of PE to include cricket, horse driving, more wheelchair racing and badminton.

7. Two of the group are members of a local swimming club and two belong to a horse driving club.

8. All except one of the group felt that they would play sport after leaving school.

9. The sports they will take part in are swimming and horse driving.

3.8 Travellers

Venue: Cottenham Village College
Group Profile 5 female

Response to the Questions:

1. All the group thought that it was important to take part in PE and sport in order to keep fit.

2. All the young women take part in PE and participate in netball, table tennis, trampolining, hockey and basketball. Out of school the young women are involved in the following activities:

- Dance
- Kickboxing
- Swimming

The dance is arranged by a youth worker and the other activities are close to where the young people live.

3. The group felt that the reasons for people not taking part in sport are that it means giving up free time and also there are not a lot of facilities in local villages.

4. More local facilities in the villages would encourage greater involvement in sport and physical activity.

5. The group would make PE more fun and have less running. They would have more swimming, netball and trampolining.
6. If the group were in charge of local sport they would provide more indoor and outdoor activity sessions in local parks and more activities for young women.
7. None of the group is involved in sports clubs.
8. All the group felt that they would be involved in some kind of sport and physical activity after leaving school if they have enough time.
9. They hope to go swimming and to the gym to keep fit.

3.9 Pupil Referral Unit

Venue Cambridge
Profile: 4 male from Key Stage 4

Findings:

It was difficult to keep the attention of the group long enough to go through the questions so there was a general discussion about improving local sports facilities.

The main PE Policy is to introduce disaffected students to the available sport and leisure facilities in the locality.

There are no facilities on site so they have a variety of bookings with local facilities mainly for five a side football at the Meadows Centre and Kelsey Kerridge.

Year 11 students use Mepal Outdoor Centre, Year 19 use Cambridge Lakes for golf.

They thought that it would be useful for them to see the facilities at Littleton House and get some ideas from there.

The students want to see the following on site:

- A half pipe for skating
- Basketball Post
- Football goal
- BMX track
- Punchbag

It is important to note that when talking to the young people they are very dependant outside school on local youth workers organising activities so it is important they know what is available and how it can be accessed.

3.10 Gender Issues

Venue: Sawston Village College
Profile: 3 male, 3 female, 3 Year 10, 3 Year 9

Findings:

1. Three of the group thought it was good to socialise and for fitness and three thought it was a waste of time.
2. All the group took part in PE at school. Three of the group were involved in sport outside school all at clubs or groups for football, dance and rugby.
3. There were two girls in the group who did not like any form of sport or physical activity and preferred TV, cinema and hanging around with friends.

The boys thought this was because “boys are stronger and girls are smarter”.

4. The group felt that basketball posts and half pipes in their local area would encourage more people to get involved in sport.

5. The group would implement the following:

- A deeper swimming pool
- Separate swimming sessions for boys and girls
- Invest more money in school sport generally
- Provide a wider choice of activities
- Improve the changing rooms as they are too hot and smelly
- Provide new equipment especially mats
- Give students a choice about having a shower after PE as they were often not allowed to due to time constraints or make PE the last lesson of the day
- Get proper referees for matches to stop teachers being biased

6. The main issue is to improve local facilities and provide more activities in the holidays.

7. The point was made that clubs should come and give talks to schools and offer trials.

- 8/9. Three boys will continue to play sport because they enjoy it. The girls felt that they would not have enough time to play sport after leaving school.

General:

It was apparent during the discussion that the boys were more involved in sport whilst the girls were not interested and felt uncomfortable in the sport/PE setting.

3.11 Health Issues

Venue: Stanground College
Profile: 3 male, 3 female Year 11

Key Findings:

1. All thought that PE and Sport was important to:

- Keep fit
- Learn new skills

The group were also very aware of the benefits to health of participating in sport and also the importance of eating the right foods and avoiding dehydration.

2. Everyone took part in PE in school. Out of school five are involved in sport. Three are involved in football, netball and martial arts clubs. Two play badminton and swim on a recreational basis.

3. They felt that other people might not participate in sport because:

- There are not enough facilities
- Can't get there if mum won't take you
- If friends don't you won't

4. The group felt that there should be more advertising and information on television about minority sports.

5. The group would:

- Improve the facilities, particularly swimming
- Add new sports e.g. lacrosse and water polo

6. The group would do the following:

- Hold taster sessions for new sports
- Keep prices reasonable
- Have more events in the summer – a mix of coaching and casual sessions

7. The group felt that they would advertise using flyers and posters and tell their friends who might be interested to come along.

8. All the group felt that they would do sport in later life because they enjoy it, for keeping fit and as a break from work or study.

4. Summary of Key Issues

The following are the main key issues arising from the consultation meetings:

1. Information, advice, support and motivation for Looked after Children, Pupil Referral Unit and Littleton House students is very dependant on the staff. If the staff are knowledgeable and support the young people then they will participate. It is, therefore, important that local authorities work closely with the staff to ensure information and opportunities are available. Students at Impington Village College were more motivated to take part in sport outside school on their own initiative, however, still require support from parents, carers etc. in order to get to facilities.
2. All the groups demonstrated a strong awareness of the importance of sport and PE and the health and social benefits.
3. A lack of transport in rural areas makes it difficult for young people to get to sports sessions and facilities. They have to rely on parents being able to take them.
4. It is clear that young women feel uncomfortable doing PE with boys, particularly swimming, but also dance etc. Young ethnic and traveller women have to undertake, first and foremost, family responsibilities. These include looking after younger family members and domestic tasks. Traveller boys are expected to work in the family business.
5. For young ethnic women and travellers, there is an issue about how far they are allowed by parents to go out to play sport.
6. There was a general view that open spaces could be made more interesting to include basketball posts and half pipes for skating.
7. The main reasons young people gave for not playing sport were that they found it boring and preferred hanging around with their friends.
8. In terms of improving PE in schools there were some issues about the poor state of the equipment, needing to allow time to have a shower and lengthening PE sessions.
10. A significant number of young people said that they would still play sport when they leave school as they enjoy it and it keeps them fit.