

The challenge of growing youth participation in sport

Youth Insights Pack
August 2014



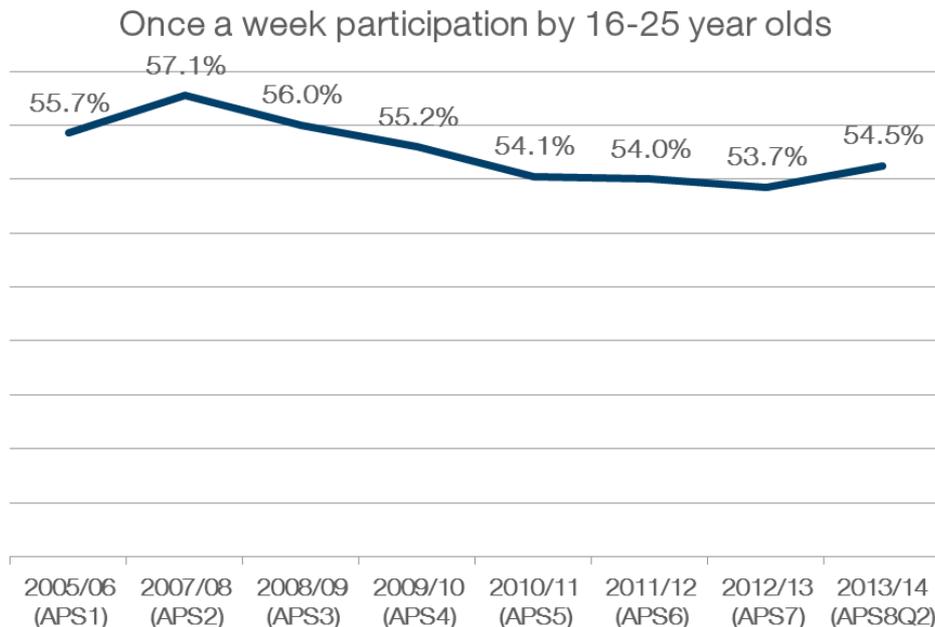
Youth insights – summary

A high proportion of young people regularly take part in sport but participation is not yet growing above its historic norm. This is a summary of our new insight into young people and the actions we believe are required if, as a sector, we are to broaden our reach with this key audience and grow participation levels:

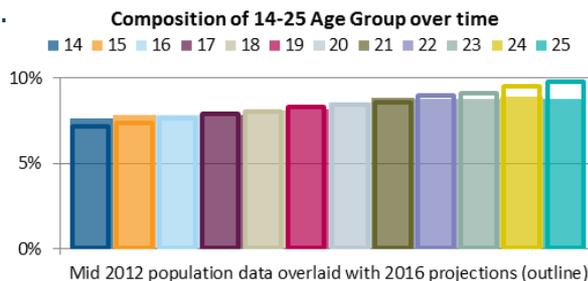
- 1. The context and environment in which young people have grown up is different to previous generations**
 - Some change in delivery is required just to maintain levels of interest in sport amongst each new generation. Technology is an integral part of young people's lives, they do not separate online and offline activities. Sporting activities need to reflect this.
- 2. Young people's behaviour does not always reflect their attitude to sport – we need to focus on changing behaviours not attitudes**
 - Many young people feel positive about sport but aren't necessarily looking to take part; for them, sport and physical activity needs to be more visible and accessible, with stronger reminders of their positive associations
 - Other young people are uninterested in sport but find wider reasons to take part. Promoting the benefits they are looking for is more effective; selling sport as fun does not resonate with them
- 3. For many, there is a shift in teenage years towards taking part for more functional or lifestyle reasons**
 - Motivations change as young people grow up, with health, fitness and looking and feeling good becoming more important. The shift towards fitness-related activities is occurring at an earlier age than previously. We need to keep engaging and providing feedback to young people, particularly girls, on what actually matters to them not what matters to sport
- 4. Don't underestimate passive participation**
 - Playing sport is a passive act for many young people who are carried along by what their friends/family are doing or what's happening in their educational setting. As they grow up more proactive choices are required. Sport therefore has to compete or connect to other interests and priorities
- 5. Levelling the playing field can help to overcome the emotional baggage of sport**
 - Young people with negative associations, driven by previous experiences and a perceived lack of competence, are more likely to have a narrower definition of sport focussed on traditional, competitive activities. New or unusual sports or different positioning can provide more of a level playing field. Whilst the activity can be sport, the message that sells it doesn't have to be
- 6. Young people are seeking meaningful experiences**
 - There needs to be reasons for young people to keep coming back to make sport a habit which benefits them as an individual, reinforces their place in their social group or helps them develop themselves
- 7. The supply of sport tends to reach those who are already engaged**
 - There is a need for a broader offer which meets more diverse needs to break the norms of sport participation
- 8. From insight to action**
 - We have developed design principles for the type of experience different groups of young people are looking for. Interventions and programmes should be tested against these 'must-haves' principles

The challenge of youth participation

- Whilst the **number of 16-25s taking part has remained flat in** recent years, the rate of participation (as measured by the Active People Survey*) has declined. At the same time, the central commitment of Sport England’s 2012/17 strategy is to **“raise the percentage of 14-25 year olds playing sport once a week”**.
- More recently the rate has stabilised and we have done a good job at **maintaining the high participation rates for** this age group (58% for 14-25s).
- But a participation rate approaching 60% means **there are few easy targets to increase that figure further.**
- Moreover, the age profile of the youth market will get older until 2016. As participation declines with age, this will make growing the overall participation rate across the 14-25 year old age range more challenging in the short-term.

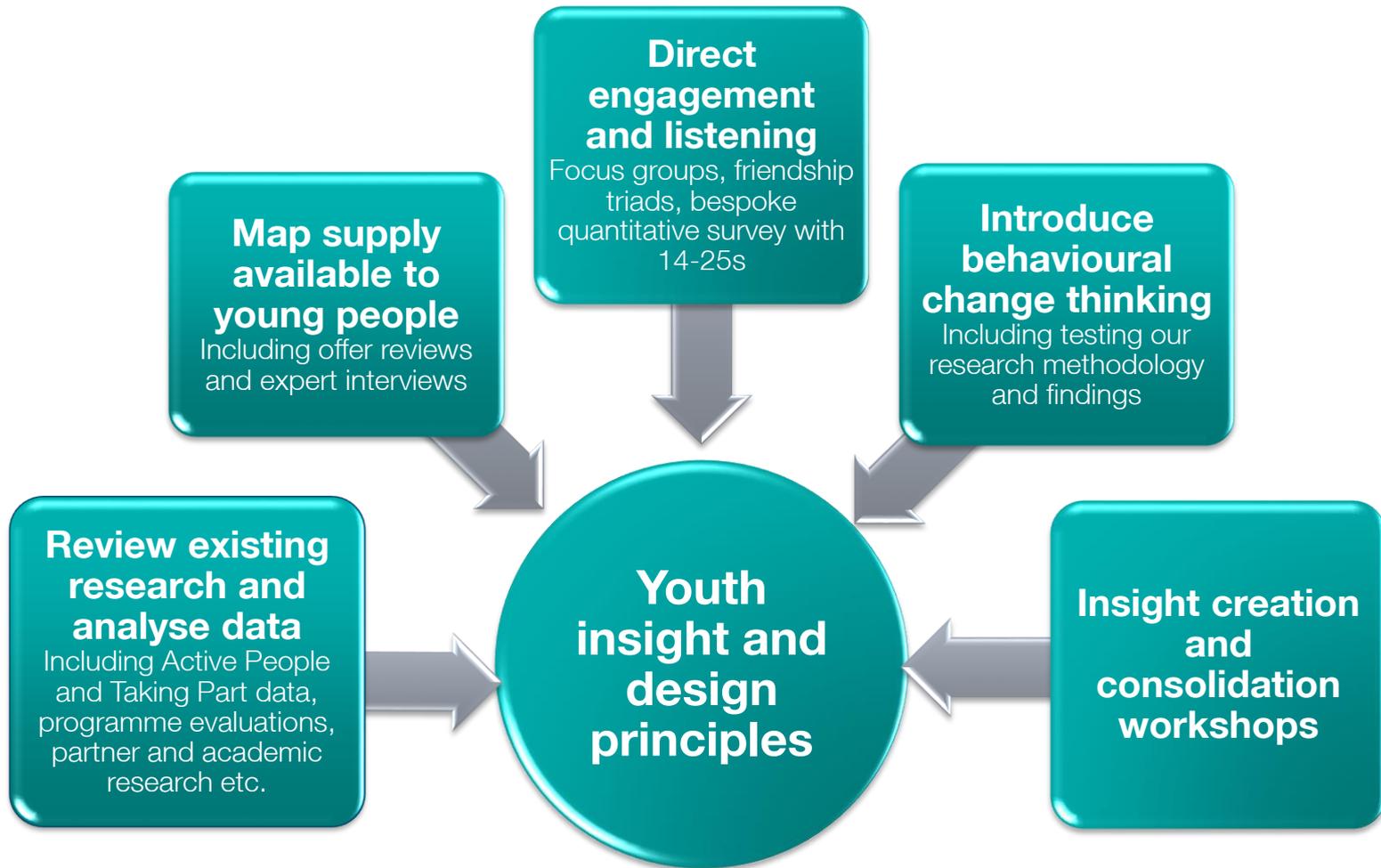


* Once a week participation is at least four sessions of at least 30 minutes each at moderate intensity in the last 28 days



If we are to achieve our goal of increasing the participation rate amongst young people, we need to make sport and activity relevant to more of our target audience and reach the groups not traditionally served by community sport

How we've enhanced our understanding of young people and their needs



Youth insights – a user's guide

The result of our recent research is this pack of insights, which is divided into sections to break down the material into more manageable chunks:

1. Understanding young people - their context

- The first section provides an overview of life as a 14-25 year old today to set the context for their relationship with sport
- This includes the challenges of growing up in a recession, the changes that young people go through, the role of their peers and the importance of technology in their lives

2. Understanding young people - their attitudes and behaviours

- The second section introduces and explores what we have learned about young people's attitudes towards sport and the relationship these have to their behaviours
- It concludes we need to take action to break the norm if we are to increase youth participation
- Partners and deliverers should use this information to consider which groups of young people they want to target and who they are currently reaching through their interventions

3. Engaging young people – reaching new audiences

- The third section explores in more depth the characteristics of three key audiences; young people who are positive about sport but mostly not participating, those who recognise the benefits and have a functional relationship with sport/activity, and those who are uninterested in participating in sport
- It then provides a set of design principles which detail the type of overall experience each audience group is looking for
- These principles set out the must-haves for any intervention seeking to reach each audience. They should be used to test and benchmark the customer experience that is currently being delivered or planned for young people

4. Engaging young people - putting the insight into practice

- The pack concludes with examples of programmes and approaches that are already successfully engaging different audiences through applying some of the insights
- We will expand this section over time, highlighting more examples of good practice, as good design is turned into effective implementation.

Understanding young people

Their context



What is it like to be a young person today?

- **A challenging economic environment has added pressure to this generation. They feel more stressed and believe that experiences need to help them develop and progress in life.**
 - Sport is **perceived as becoming more serious** and placing greater demands on young people's time just as life gets more serious too
 - Young people are increasingly **aware of their own wellbeing**. They give equal weight to the quality of their mental health, alongside academic prowess, career and physical fitness, in benchmarking their personal success
 - With time squeezed, sport needs to emphasise its benefits for the individual young person and its potential for providing social experiences for the group. Otherwise it will too easily be traded out of lives
- **There is greater willingness to accept support where it's available (from parents or the government), but also an assumption that support won't be there and a drive to seek out entrepreneurial opportunities.**
 - Young people today are **more aware and informed** than previous generations and believe, as digital natives, they have the skills to succeed.

Generation recession

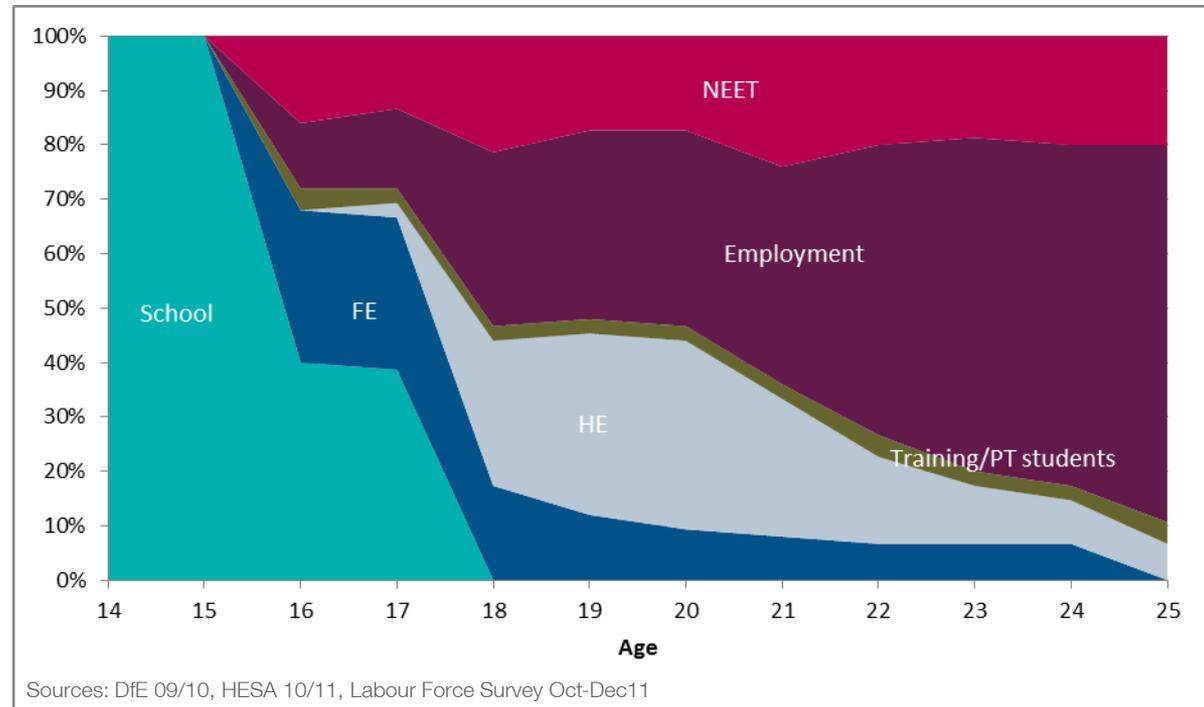
- Pressure to over achieve, getting as much onto your CV as possible before even finishing education
- Finding employment is a struggle, although improving (16-24 unemployment at 18.5%)
- Rising cost of living (especially relevant for 18-25 year olds)
- A degree no longer guarantees a job
- High university fees = big debt at the end of it.

Anything is possible generation

- The web provides instant access to the world
 - anyone can create a platform to launch their future
- Google provides immediate answers to any of their questions ,no youth generation has ever been so informed
- They feel like they can change the world and their digital intuition gives them a super power above and beyond older generations

Young people's lives are characterised by change

- In total, there are **8.3m 14-25 year olds in England**:
 - 2.6m (31%) are at school or in further education
 - 1.2m (14%) are in higher education
 - **The majority, 4.5m (54%) are no longer in the education system**
- By 25, almost all young people (90%) have left education. Transition out of education represents a cliff edge in terms of the tailored sport offer, just as participation moves from being a passive to a more proactive choice.



- Work colleagues are less of an influence on participation than friends. This creates a further challenge to the transition away from an environment of one's peers
- Whilst the number of young adults living with parents has greatly increased over the past 15 years, the majority of young people will have left the parental home by the age of 25.

The importance of emerging identity and peers

Supporting emerging identity

- As young people move through school and into adulthood they become increasingly aware of their self-image and what fits with this
- Sport is perceived by some as having the potential to help them learn more about themselves but....
 - They want to **shape their own experiences**
 - They want to go **at their own pace** – challenge and develop but not fail and risk humiliation

Peers matter

- Young people's lifestyles are structured around experiences with friends and family which are then magnified through social media
- From 14 onwards (and arguably earlier), young people are conscious of how they are **perceived by their peers** and other important people in their lives. These points of reference create the parameters for their personal development
- Young people are committed to their social group and will rarely do something that risks jarring with them. **Engagement with sport is therefore led by what their social group is into** and how sport/activity are seen as fitting in with this
 - **Commitment to sport has to avoid feeling like an isolating experience,** with the levels of dedication suggested by elite stars reinforcing a growing impression throughout teen years that a life in sport requires compromise

Young people's lives are dominated by technology



Free time activities: time spent a week on each activity

- Young people make **extensive use of digital platforms** to organise and live their lives. Their offline lives are subject to greater parental supervision, particularly for younger teens.
- Their online presence is becoming increasingly controlled with a greater focus on **curating their own experiences** and less showing off.
- Online bullying is a real threat and today's youths are well aware of the lasting impact their online identities can have.
- **As digital natives, young people's use of social media is innate and constantly running – they don't dip in and out**

Where sport is part of a young person's life, it tends to play a relatively small role

The difference between boys and girls



Girls
spend more time
phoning and
messaging friends,
watching TV and
films, studying,
reading and
shopping

Boys
spend more
time playing
computer
games and
doing sport



Understanding young people

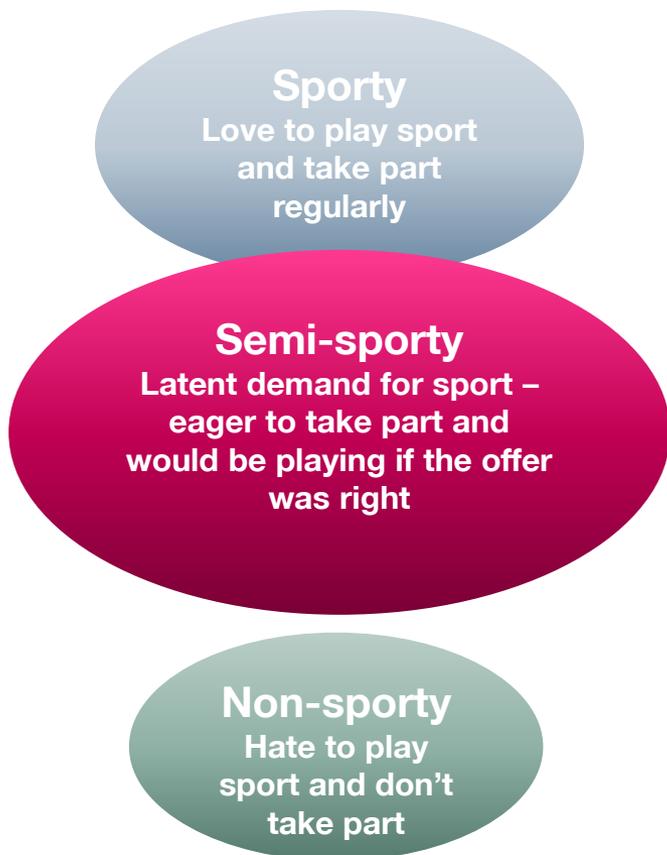
Their attitudes and behaviours



Young people's engagement with sport

The sector has **previously** thought about young people's engagement with sport too much through its own eyes. Seen this way, it has been assumed that attitudes and behaviours always tend to be linked and growth will result from just changing the offer to tap into the large proportion waiting to take part in sport

What was often thought



What we've learned

- **Attitudes to sport and physical activity are more complex.** Young people don't either love or hate sport.
- **Behaviours can vary from month to month rather than always being the same**
- **And attitudes and behaviours do not necessarily align:**
 - Young people who report positive feelings about sport when prompted are not necessarily actively looking to take part
 - Many young people who are positive about sport are inactive at any one time. Some of their more disinterested peers actually find reasons to take part
 - Behaviours and attitudes towards taking part do not necessarily mirror attitudes towards watching sport

Understanding attitudes towards sport

Motivations change – from fun to function:

- Young people are looking for **their experiences to be fun:**
 - But for many, sport was last seen as fun in primary school. Valuing sport for its own sake gets lost in secondary school as it starts to be perceived as a more serious pursuit for those who are “good” at it.
 - Selling sport as fun will not resonate with all young people.
- However, young people are also looking for **experiences to have a purpose:**
 - As young people grow up their motivations for being active shift from having fun to looking and feeling good. What they are seeking is often not a sporting outcome. Competing against others gives way to personal goals (particularly for older teens and girls). Being fit is more appealing than being sporty.
 - There are some negative perceptions of the more adult gym environment. However, the shift towards fitness-related activity begins in the mid-teen years, earlier than previously thought. Eight years ago traditional sports remained more popular than health and fitness ones until the age of 22. Fitness activities now come top for 18s and over.

What outcome
are you selling
young people?



Understanding attitudes towards sport

The power of perception – the baggage of sport:

- **Sport is an emotive word** and topic. How young people perceive what is being offering can depend on their response to that word.
 - Whilst there are positive associations with sport, many young people have a strong negative response to the language of sport. This is a key driver of non-participation
 - Front-of-mind associations with the word “sport” often **focus on traditional, competitive sports**. Narrow perceptions create barriers, linked to past experience, levels of interest and perceived competence. The concern with not being embarrassed in front of your peers is universal.
- Whilst the **activity may be sport, the message does not need to be**
 - Introducing new sports can provide more of the level playing-field that the majority of young people are looking for. Broadening what young people are judged to be “good” at within sport beyond the obvious competitive benchmarks can also help.
 - There also seems to be appeal in activities with age barriers, such as mass participation races, particularly marathons and “adventure races” like Tough Mudder.

What do young people think you are offering them?



Understanding behaviours

Is behaviour passive or active?

- Many young people are carried along in sport by the norms created by their friends, family or education setting (where participation may also be compulsory).
- However, their behaviour can stop when their physical environment or those around them change.
 - When life changes, an active choice to maintain participation or form a new habit is required, even for the most engaged.
 - There is **scope to be more targeted in supporting young people** at these precise moments of change to make continuing to participate or forming a new habit as easy as possible.
- Participation in sport therefore becomes less passive as young people grow up. As horizons broaden, sport has to compete or connect to wider interests and priorities to stay relevant
 - Young people want to **be engaged in shaping their experiences** rather than being delivered to.

How strongly attached are your participants?

How much will their behaviour stick when their life changes?



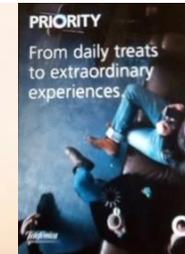
Understanding behaviours

Experiences or habits?

- Young people are seeking **meaningful experiences**
 - Festivals, holidays, events where they can socialise, make memories together, indulge in their own interests and have fun, are all popular for young people.
- Whilst they love experiences they can share, **habits can be less shareable (particularly if you're the only one doing it)**.
 - Young people are acutely aware of wasting time on activities that either don't benefit them as an individual, don't reinforce their place within their social group or don't help develop themselves
 - The rise of **fitness sports** is in part driven by their relevance to the wider aspirations of **looking and feeling good**. But they can lead to **shorter bursts of activity to achieve particular goals**
 - Alternative activities that have an adventurous element, such as parkour, are offering something different to many traditional sports.

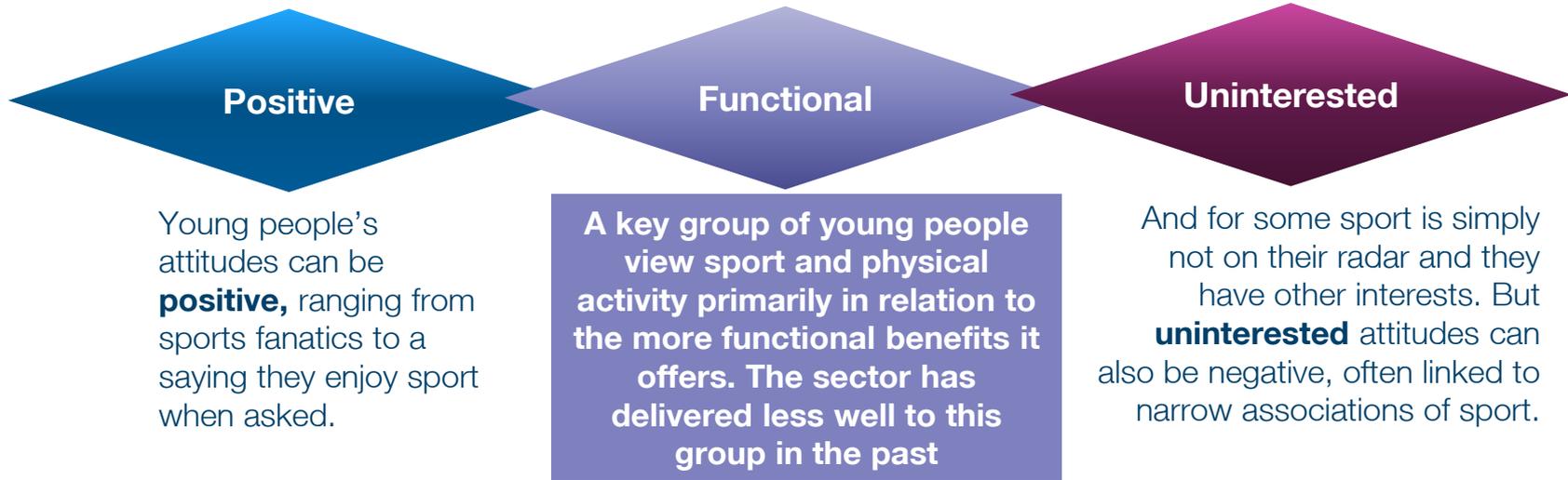
What reason do young people have to keep coming back to what you offer?

What expectations are you building?



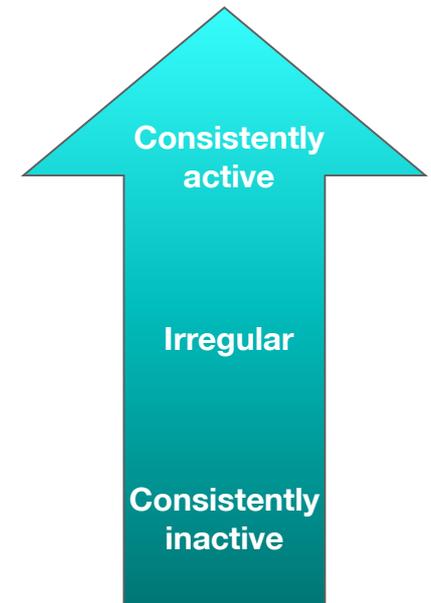
Summarising attitudes and behaviours

Attitudes change

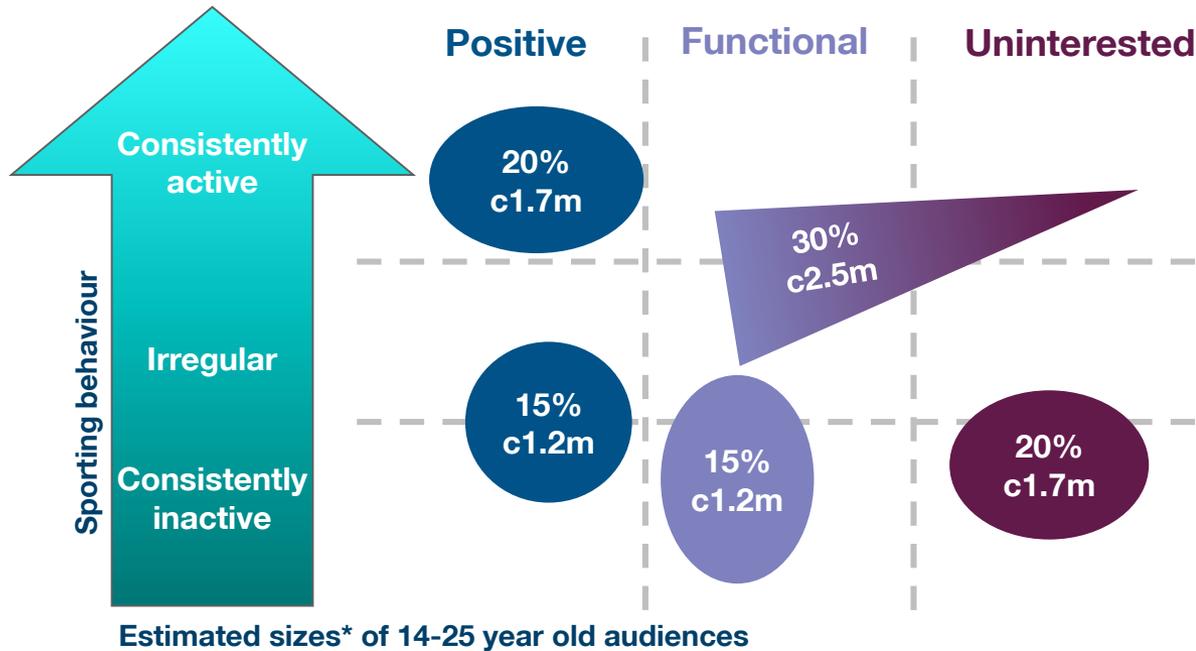


Changing behaviours

- We want to see more young people being consistently active but
 - Relatively small proportions of young people are consistent in either participating or not
 - A small proportion of those who are consistently active do so below the target threshold of 1x30
- For many young people, their **behaviour varies from month to month**
 - There are **high levels of churn** in and out of sport
- **Behaviours and attitudes can change through the life-course**
 - Although a **strong emotional connection to** sport from an early age can be a key driver of continued participation



Sizing the market: young people's attitudes and behaviours



An average 58.0% of 14-25s participate at least once a week each month (1x30).

But two-thirds report doing more or less sport than a year ago. This high level of churn suggests considerable variation in behaviours, particularly amongst teens.

Some regular participation may not therefore be part of a consistent habit.

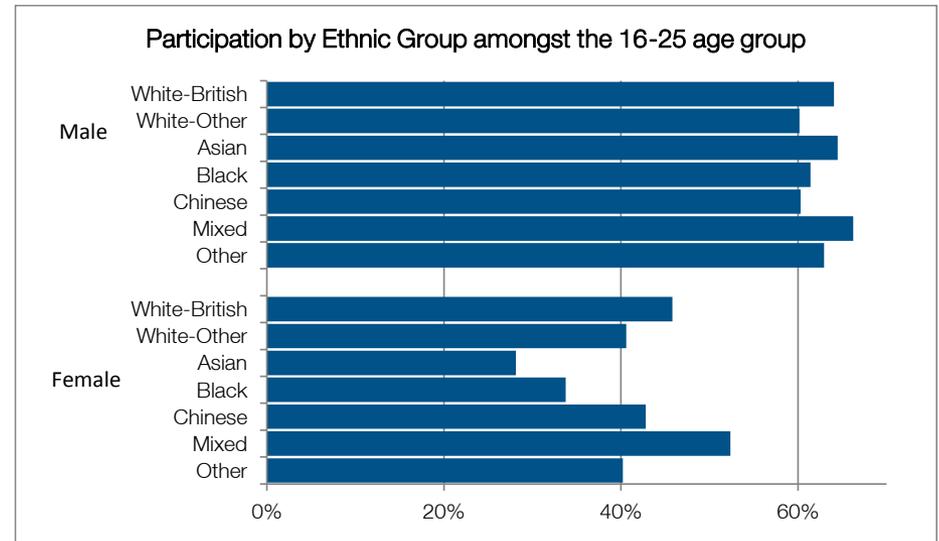
We have learned:

- Around **15% of young people are positive** about taking part but **need an easier route**, ideally one that **involves their social group**. Projects in higher education have successfully socialised the sporting experience and used campus delivery to make it easier to take part.
- A key audience is **looking for something that we're not necessarily selling**. They are interested in the functional benefits of participating but less concerned that it's sport that delivers them.
- A proportion of **already uninterested young people are still taking part**, either compulsorily or passively in response to the norms of their peer group. They are **most likely to stop**.

* Extrapolated from Active People Survey and Habit for Life research data

Demographic influences on sporting attitudes and behaviour

- **The overall pattern of attitudes and behaviours of course varies with age and gender, for example:**
 - At a headline level boys are more engaged than girls
 - Participation levels decrease across the age group as some get the choice to drop out and others find it hard to fit sport into their lives
 - Behaviours become more fixed and the proportion who are consistently active or consistently not taking part in sport at all grows.
- **However, these relatively well-known patterns can mask important subtleties. For example:**
 - **Ethnicity plays a greater role in participation by young women** than men. A growth in the young Asian population between 2001 and 2011 coupled with the low participation rates of Asian females has influenced the overall rate of participation by young women.
 - Although **variety of sports participation** tends to decrease with age, there is a small **revival in early twenties**. More women take part in multiple sports regularly at age 22-25 than when they are younger.



Demographics don't define the attitudes and behaviours in sport of young people but they are linked to variations that we see within them

Key influences on engagement with sport vary as young people travel through life

Teens

Post school

Young adult

Drivers for positive experience and continued participation

- Good school experience with interesting sports
- Time with friends is spent on sport which is spontaneous, self-organised and fun. They enjoy competition
- Family is supportive, flexible and able to provide resources
- Sport makes them more interesting and look fit, others are proud

- Sporting is organised by the friendship group
- Strong peer passion for sporting events and activities
- Sport is part of who they are

- Sport provides adrenaline or relaxation
- Sporting environment seen as welcoming and inclusive
- Sport is part of a routine
- Sport is played by friends and family

Drivers for negative experience and drop out

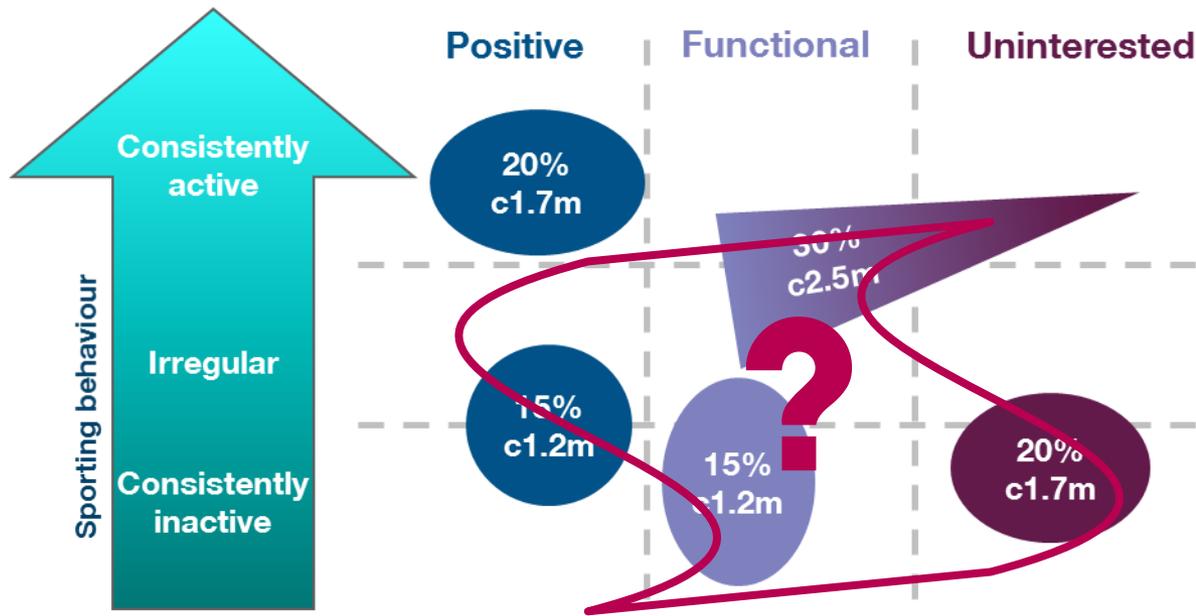
- Bad school experience; no sport they like
- Strong gender divisions
- Told they are no good at sport
- Sport outside school is too structured, competitive or serious
- Family aren't interested, lack resources or apply pressure to succeed in other areas
- Fear being laughed at or disappointing others,
- Sport means getting red/sweaty

- No-one in friendship circle organises sport so its left to individuals which can be isolating
- Prefer social events
- Self-image defined by other activities

- See sport as physically painful or stressful
- Sporting environment seen as unpleasant or intimidating
- Don't feel fit enough
- Friends and family take precedence over other activities

The challenge: supplying the sporty or breaking the norm?

Consciously (and unconsciously) the majority of supply of sport to young people targets the needs of the minority who are already most engaged and in places (e.g. education settings) where they are already more likely to be active. **The current offer often doesn't meet the expectations of the majority**



To break the norm and increase participation overall we need to be clearer about who we are trying to reach and what they think, feel and expect.

We need to focus on changing their behaviour rather than their attitude.

We don't need to replace traditional competitive sport but a broader offer that meets more diverse needs.

And we need to track who we do and don't engage and understand what matters to them.

“ The spectrum of current sporting offers to young people does not appear to fully match what young people typically want. There is still a considerable supply of popular traditional sports offers. These appear to cater more for those already engaged in, and with some proficiency at, the sport.

Deloitte supply review

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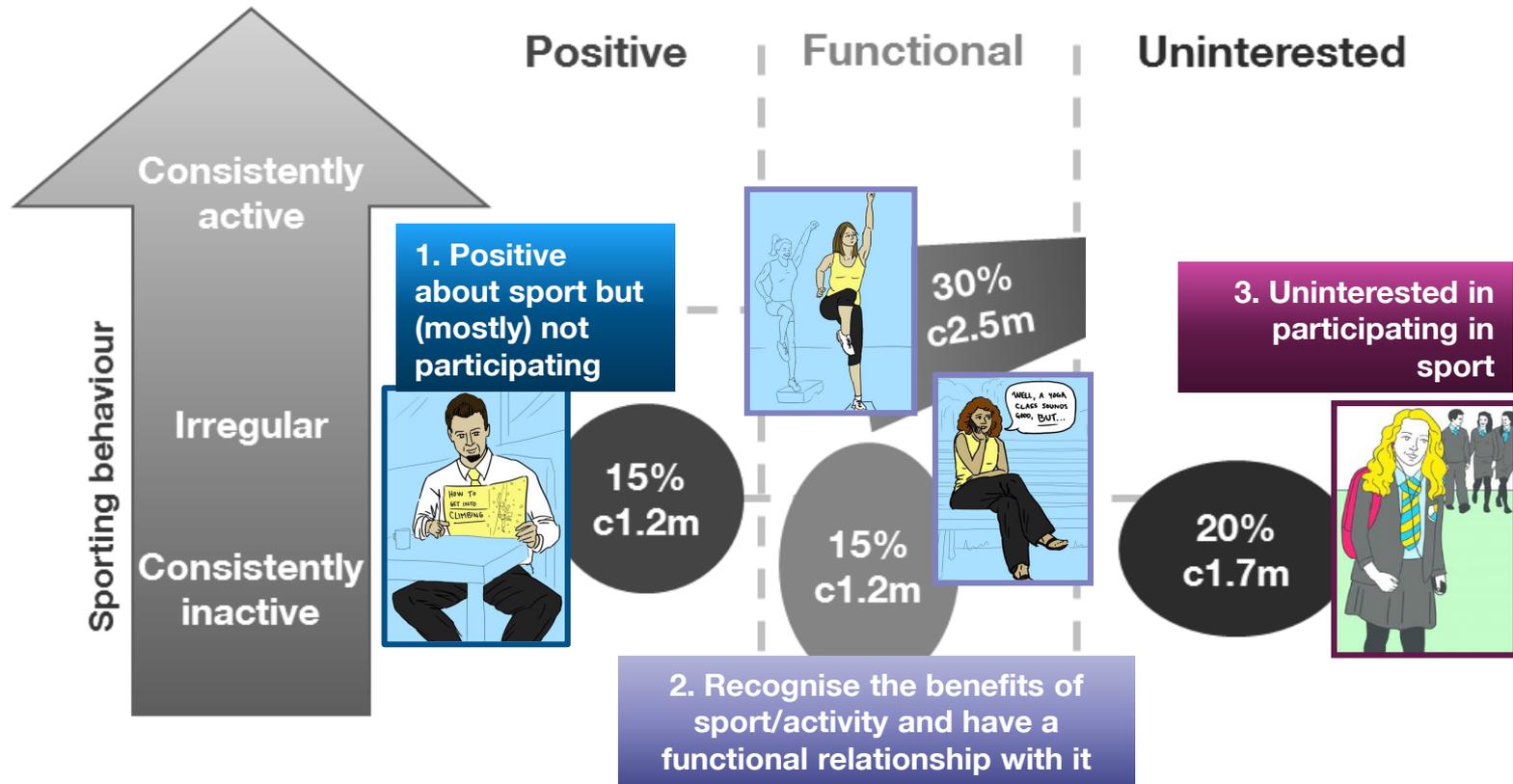
Engaging young people

Reaching new audiences



The three key audiences we need to reach to break the norm

The community sport sector and schools are not consistently engaging the young people below on their terms. However, these are the groups whose behaviour we need to help change if we are to break the norm for participation.



The section that follows describes the characteristics of each group. It then provides the design principles that need to be met by any programme, delivery or intervention if it is going to engage one of these audiences. The section begins with three further principles that are relevant to all young people.

Current and future delivery should be tested against these principles to ensure it is best targeted.

Designing and delivering the right experience for all young people

1. Young people are seeking experiences which are:



2. Messengers are influential on young people when they are:

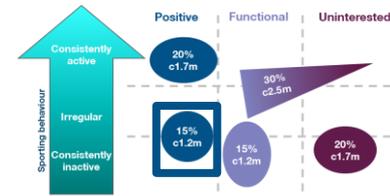


Those who have shared experiences, attitudes, demographics or a common place are more 'like me' eg older siblings, peers of the same gender at the same workplace or educational institution or recent graduates, tutors. Familiarity with sport provides expertise, but to be 'like me' it's important to have shared my behaviour and attitudes to sport

3. Fitting into what's important to young people:

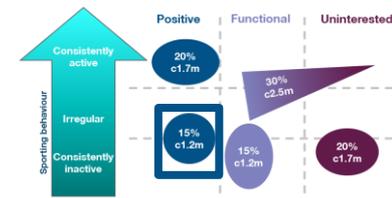


1. Positive about sport but (mostly) not participating



- Taking part in sport has **positive emotional associations**. These young people enjoy(ed) sport, either the activities themselves and/or the social side.
- However, **they are more likely to drift in and out of participation or stop altogether** for a variety of reasons. For example:
 - Their friends are collectively less interested in sport
 - Increased pressure to “study/work more and play less” shapes their priorities
 - They weren’t supported to form a new habit **when their life changed** (e.g. starting a new job)
 - They can find it hard to motivate and organise activities for themselves (and others)
- A perceived **failure to progress** (against sport’s traditional benchmarks of success) can turn even very capable sport lovers away for a time.
- This group is responsible for some of the high **churn** of young people in and out of being active. Some inconsistency in behaviour is inevitable, but it’s key that time away from sport is not based on poor experience and doesn’t become extended.
- These young people don’t think that much sport is actually available for them. And how to get involved is not always as clear as we might think it is.

1. Positive about sport but (mostly) not participating – two examples



My relationship with sport

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



Olivia, 15

A bit about me

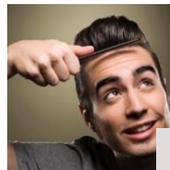
“My friends are so important, they are always there to support me and I tell them everything”



“It would be cool to be able to try new sports outside of school that are not mega expensive”

My relationship with sport

“I have got more keen about sport since leaving school however now I am working it is harder to commit due to my hours”



Mason, 18

A bit about me

“I am training to be an accountant at the moment. It is a big leap from college to working life but I didn’t want the debt of going to uni”

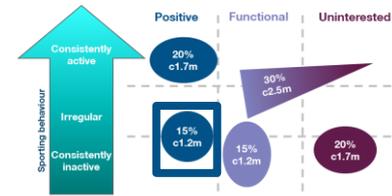


“I wish there would be more opportunities and clubs and stuff for young people in fulltime work to join in with”

Designing and delivering the right experience for:

1. Positive about sport but (mostly) not participating

Most likely to think - "I enjoyed it"



How easy have you made it for me?

How much have you prompted, reminded (and even rewarded) me?

Is it really for me (and my friends)?



What makes it unmissable?

Don't expect too much from me....

... but help me find (and stay at) the right level for me.

Designing and delivering the right experience for:

1. Positive about sport but (mostly) not participating



Continuing to participate in sport when your life changes is hard

- They need particular attention during life transitions
- Consider all the steps they need to take to get involved
- Remove as many practical barriers as possible
- Can you help default them into continuing?

How easy have you made it for me?

How much have you prompted, reminded (and even rewarded) me?



Is it really for me (and my friends)?

What makes the experience unmissable?

Don't expect too much from me....

... but help me find (and stay at) the right level for me.

Making a choice to take part is not front of mind

- They need reminding of the positive emotional associations - how sport made them feel in the past.
- Make sport more visible to them in their day-to-day lives
- Prompts need to be repeated not just used at the start.
- Incentives may also help

They want to shape the actual experiences they have

- Likely to want to continue participating with their peer group not older adults
- Activities with age restrictions can appeal

Unlikely to want to make too many life compromises to fit sport back in

- May want to try things out before committing
- "Taster" deals allow them to discover what they get from the experience and how it fits into lives. It's not just a reduced price.

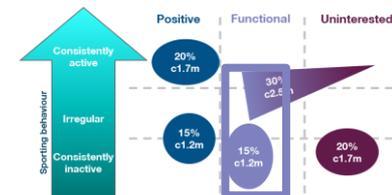
Not necessarily looking to improve/progress

- They may have drifted away as they found they weren't quite good enough to make the team.
- Need to be supported to try something new or find/get back to the right level for them

Participation can be put off until tomorrow

- Fear of missing out is more strongly linked to non-sport activities.
- Be clear on what makes sport unmissable to stand out.
- Create a sense of urgency in taking up the sporting opportunity

2. Young people with an increasingly functional relationship with sport/activity

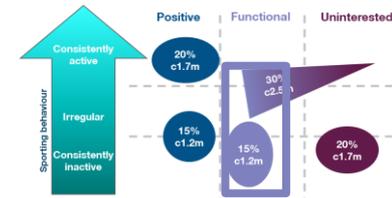


- These young people recognise the **benefits of sport and activity**. For example both young women and young men know it can help them look and feel good. Some are interested in how sport makes them feel healthy. Others see skills development adding value to their search for a job. These benefits are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



- Motivations are less likely therefore to relate to the activity itself and they may gain little enjoyment from taking part. This makes them quite vulnerable to participating for only short bursts, particularly when it relates to an immediate goal. Sport and particularly exercise are therefore treated as a **functional activity**.
- However, the sector often **tries to sell them enjoyment and fun rather than reinforcing the benefits** they are seeking. Although young people are looking for experiences to be fun, many in this group are less likely to perceive that sport can be fun.

2. An increasingly functional relationship with sport/activity - two examples



My relationship with sport

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



Ashley, 25

A bit about me

"Just finished uni and I got my first proper job. Don't really have time to do the stuff I used to so in my spare time I generally watch rugby with my friends"



"I don't have a lot of time so something that helps me manage my time and prioritises stuff for me would be good. I know keeping fit is important"



My relationship with sport

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



Jade, 22

A bit about me

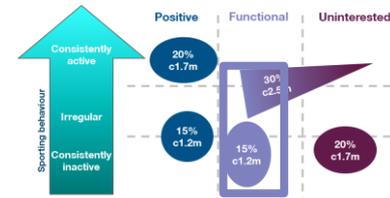
"I like to look good so go and get my nails done and stuff. Going to Ibiza this summer and cant wait"



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

Designing and delivering the right experience for:

2. An increasingly functional relationship with sport/activity



Most likely to think – “I’ve achieved my goal”; “I’m glad it’s over”

I want to see results

Give me something I can share with my friends

Will it give me what I want?



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

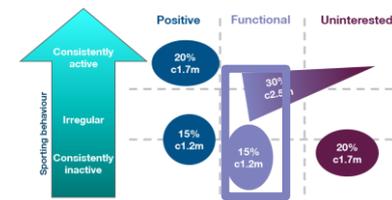
How does this fit into my life?

Don't make me feel uncomfortable

I may need help to maintain a habit

Designing and delivering the right experience for:

2. An increasingly functional relationship with sport/activity



Understand what they think they get from taking part and provide feedback

- Consistent feedback can link activities to their personal goals
- “Performance” data – calories burned, dress-size dropped.
- But might also be feedback from friends that they “look amazing”

Activities have to be recognisably relevant

- Messages should reinforce an activity’s link to their goals. This includes being a better, cheaper, easier alternative than related lifestyle choices, e.g. diet.
- For young women, instructor-led sessions can also provide this trusted, expert reassurance.
- Men may seek “expert” advice from peers.

Will it give me what I want?

I want to see results

Give me something I can share with my friends



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

How does this fit into my life?

I may need help to maintain a habit

Don't make me feel uncomfortable

Young men may be competitive but not in a traditional sport sense.

- Performance feedback should support this desire to share achievements

Don't overplay how fun an activity might be or say it's “good for health”

- Focus on activities being casual and low key rather than “fun”
- It can feel like hard work – they may be there for a “workout”

Make it convenient on a daily/weekly basis

- Recognise how they may want activity to fit into their year, e.g.
 - Looking good in advance of social events or holidays
 - Working towards a particular goal then taking a break

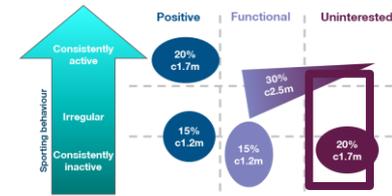
Participation doesn't necessarily bring increased confidence particularly for young women

- They are likely to want activities to have an element of privacy and avoid anything that risks them being intimidated or embarrassed by others
- Activity settings and environments, as well as journeys to them, need to feel safe

Respond to what's important

- Observe and learn what each individual gets from taking part and respond as it evolves
- Recognise that the next motivation to take part may be quite different from the current one
- Don't offer a menu of possible lifestyle goals that may not be relevant

3. Young people uninterested... but not necessarily inactive



- Taking part in **sport does not engage these young people**, many of whom recall a negative experience in the past. This attitude can be the result of a having a **narrow definition of sport**. Many have reached the age where they can choose not to take part.
- Some **may consume sport by watching it** but believe that taking part is not for them. Most are however engaged by other (less active) pursuits/interests.
- They are more **likely to be girls than boys** and some alternative activities or those associated with the “rite of passage” into adulthood may be attractive. Participation in activities such as skateboarding or BMX tends not to change their negative perceptions of sport as not for them.
- Unlike the previous group they don’t recognise that sport is relevant for either enjoyment or more functional returns. For example, other lifestyle choices like dieting may already be providing a tried and tested formula for looking good.
- The goal with this group is to find, create and repackage activities that can be used to change their behaviour rather than changing their attitude to sport. Continuing to keep them active is then reliant on identifying opportunities that fit their changing needs as they grow up.

3. Uninterested... but not necessarily inactive

- two examples

My relationship with sport

"I cant really remember the last time I did sport – probably about a year ago. Its just not my thing, I would rather diet to look good, I just think about the end result"



Martina, 18



A bit about me

"I love shopping, hanging out with my mates and generally having a good time. I still live at home so don't need to worry about bills and stuff yet"



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

My relationship with sport

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



Kieran, 15



A bit about me

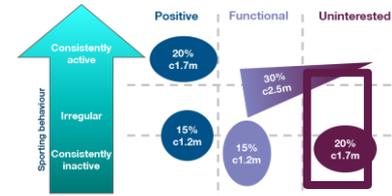
"I like to hang out with my mates and mess about really. We sometimes have a bit of a kick about but mainly play on Xbox, its usually Fifa or something like that. People think its pointless but its how we socialise"

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

Designing and delivering the right experience for:

3. Uninterested... but not necessarily inactive

Most likely to think – “why would I do that”; “what’s in it for me?”



Don't try to change my mind

What's in it for me?



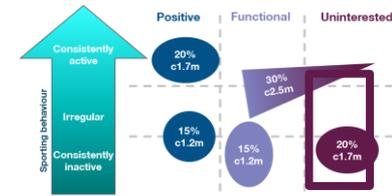
Give me reassurance

Choose your language carefully

Talk to me about my life

Designing and delivering the right experience for:

3. Uninterested... but not necessarily inactive



A mental blockage to the idea of taking part in sport

- Don't try to pigeon-hole activities that they might do (e.g. BMX or Parkour) as sport
- Be bold in creating a clear distinction from previous experiences

Don't try to change my mind

What's in it for me?

There needs to be a clear reason for them to be interested

- Incentives might provide an excuse to get active and involve their peer group
- Being good at something is attractive – breadth of activity creates more opportunities for niche expertise

Choose your language carefully

Be cautious in using language traditionally associated with sport

- They are likely to respond better to words that give a sense of freedom, independence, less pressure and personalisation – e.g. explore, game, play, active etc.
- Use the words they use to describe what they are doing but don't try to mimic all of their slang

Give me reassurance

Limit the emotional risks for younger ages

- Be aware of fears associated with perceived lack of ability
- Use new activities or adaptations to create a level-playing field so young people feel less likely to be embarrassed in front of their peers

Talk to me about my life

Be relevant – activities need to link to their lifestyle

- They might be interested in their health (physical and mental wellbeing) but won't think sport relates to this
- They are looking for experiences to share. For some, activities that provide a buzz or are age-restricted (e.g. 18+ to run a mass marathon) may appeal
- Opportunities to communicate may be magnified during life transitions from one environment to another



Engaging young people

Putting the insight into practice



WHEELSCAPE – putting young people at the heart of decisions about what they do and where they go

Key themes – youth collaboration & co-creation; broadening the definition of sport

Wheelscape is a skater-run company that works with local skate and BMX communities in Bristol to build and improve skate parks based on user consultation

They put skaters at the heart of every aspect of decision making. Focused on innovative, fun and value for money builds – they’ve found that greater innovation in design and construction is what their young (and older) user-groups truly desire.

Five rules to engage young people in physical space

1. **Getting people involved** in design means they ‘own’ and care for their facilities – policing them and promoting them too.
2. **Engage with everyone on their own terms** and on their own turf – from a steering group to workshops outside, getting involved in promotion and fundraising - all helps build a life-long relationship with the sport and scene
3. **Group design** – bring together people who wouldn’t meet but share a passion and help them to mentor each other – they need to share their love and it helps create strong local role models organically
4. **Run events** – celebrate the build and have ‘jams’ - where people meet and skate. It’s about social inclusion and less about winning, a little funding and status can go a long way as it credits young people with their achievements
5. **Stay in touch** – social media and skating with them means they stay connected and know Wheelscape care, it’s not a one off – it’s a link to the UK-wide community and a responsibility to keep the park maintained



“ Young people are drawn by the physical space and being with other young people – the sport can be second to that. It’s a welcoming place to be yourself – you can belong without having to fit in with subculture norms, spend money, go to training or wear a kit. ”

Matthew Hewitt
Wheelscape

RUN DEM CREW – reassessing what’s motivating about sport

Key themes – creating sense of community; safe, positive and supportive

Run Dem Crew redefines a traditionally solitary sport to empower and engage young people - and in turn engage and mentor others too

Charlie Williams (Founder of the East London night running collection Run Dem Crew and RDC Youngers in 2007) is inspired by music and poetry, but motivated by the future. His alternative to traditional running clubs is a commitment to lifting up the next generation through sport and creativity.

The **RDC Youngers** project across London provides mentoring and advice with the added opportunity to explore London in a safe, unique, positive and supportive environment – the only rule; go hard or go home. As well as exploring the streets of London the Run Dem Crew also celebrates the diverse urban environment that surround the 1948 space with post run workshops, films and talks.

Five rules to engage young people and empower them

- 1. It’s not about the running or the winning** – it’s about being in the pack and a valued part of the crew, not ostracizing, competing or being top of the league
- 2. Inspire young people and fit around their life needs** – give advice, mentors (and mentoring) bring together people who want to help or be helped, but don’t know how. Offer work and real-life benefits
- 3. Show the variety of life** beyond their social circle – meet other tribes and see new areas they wouldn’t see otherwise
- 4. Use relatable icons** and set a good example – celebs that resonate that are explaining their process every day, so it’s always relevant and easy to relate to
- 5. Use Social media** – be relevant to them and reach out – sometimes it’s easier to DM than it is to say things in words



“

Sport for young people in the UK isn’t inspirational – in primary school they are always running, but they lose their love of moving.

Competition is ok, but the focus should be on being your best – not comparing to others. Schools are very competitive, it really puts people off for life

”

Charlie Dark
Run Dem Crew

Morning Glory – getting active in a different way

Key themes – lifestyle exercise can be fun; re-packaging the sporting experience; non-judgemental

Morning Glory brings exercise to an existing love of clubbing, getting closer to youth drinking culture. This immersive morning dance experience, thought up by two events producers, plays to the strength of those who love to dance into the night and challenges those who fall out of bed reaching for the alarm.

Its **rave your way into the day** events bring together a shared passion for conscious clubbing, social change and good times. Not to mention they're a fail-safe way to kick-start even the blurriest of gym-hating eyes.

They provide the music, the dance floor and the massage, super-food smoothie and coffee kiosk and the rest is pretty much up to you. You can even wear your pyjamas if you wish - no-one's judging here. Just turn up ready to groove, and your moves will leave you oozing energy and positivity.

Five rules to engage the clubbers

- 1. Welcoming and non-aggressive** – it's about replicating euphoria and the hedonistic unity of going out by enabling participants to enter a new space with new norms and leave their sports baggage at the door'
- 2. Freedom and fun** - this means extras, entertaining characters, a festival-style layout - the opposite of the pressure of a traditional controlled, strict environment such as a gym or sports club where people are told what to do
- 3. Spirituality** is very appealing – helping people be themselves and feel 'in touch' is addictive, it helps them have a new outlook on life and a new frame of mind
- 4. Event exercise** – once a month events are easier to commit to. Also, by flipping the expectations of clubbing upside down, they challenge people who would never go the gym in the morning to come out for an early morning experience
- 5. Cherish diversity** – it's easier to feel 'normal' in a mixed crowd. Bringing a mix of people together is an attraction in itself



“

It's all about... letting people experience something new and move in a way they can't literally anywhere else. We spend 10 hours a day not being ourselves at work we want people to be [able to be themselves] by coming in to our world.”

”

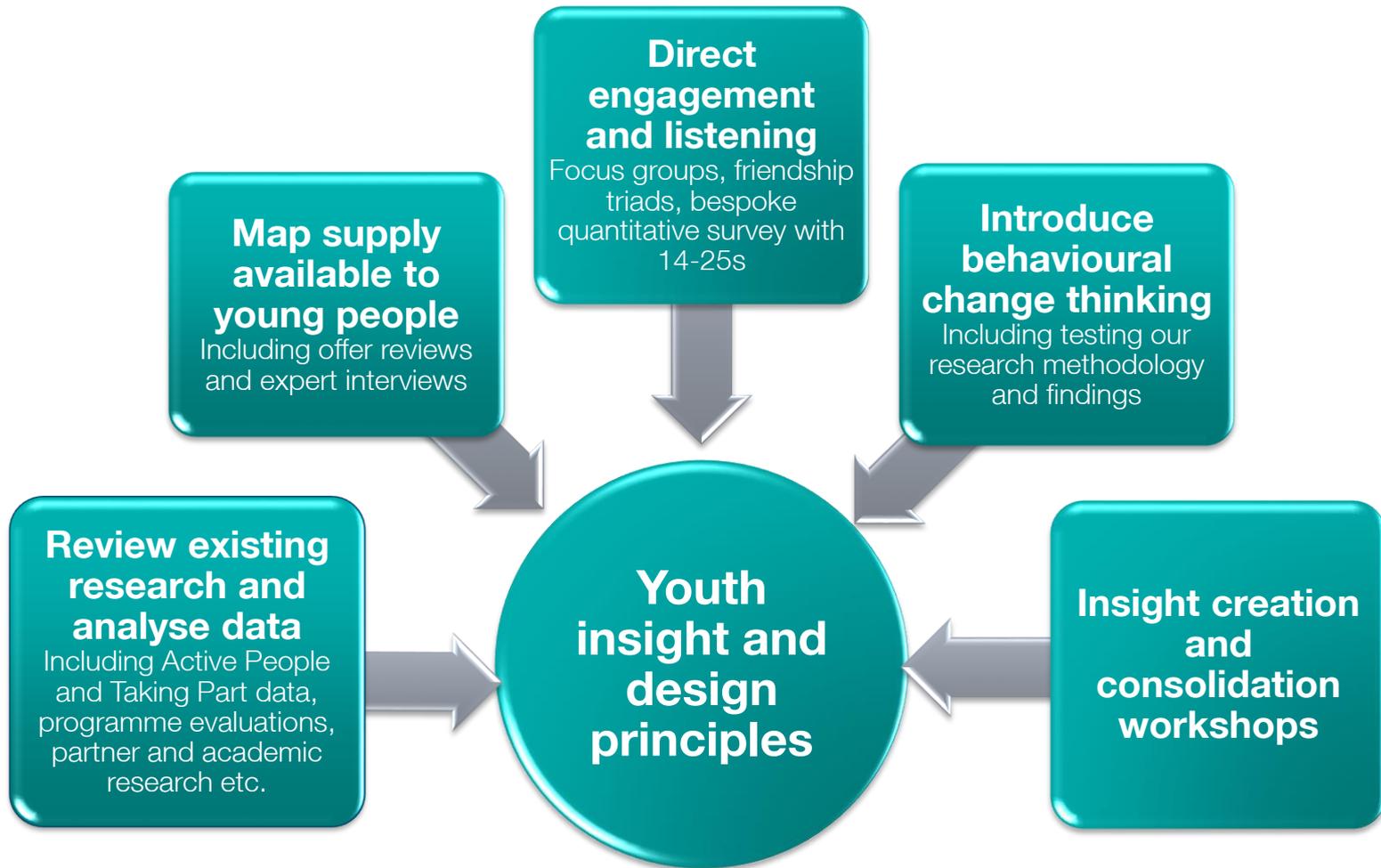
Samantha Moyo
Morning Glory

Understanding young people

Appendix: Methodology



How we've enhanced our understanding of young people and their needs



Methodology details

1. **The review of existing research and analysis of data included, but was not limited to, the following sources:**

- Sport England's Active People survey (APS) data from 2005/06 (APS 1) to 2012/13 (APS 7)
- DCMS' Taking Part survey data including the linked parent and child dataset
- Sport England's Higher Education sport participation satisfaction survey and Active Colleges survey
- Evaluations from Sport England programmes including Sportivate, Premier League for Sport, Satellite Clubs pilot impact study, Active Universities, Active Colleges and Doorstep clubs
- A large number of reports from partner organisations including the Youth Sport Trust, English Federation for Disability Sport, Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, Street Games, Sports Coach UK and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs)
- Academic research from Sheffield Hallam and Leeds Metropolitan in addition to papers collated or referenced in Sport England's Value of Sport Monitor and Sport England's 2012 review of the research evidence on young people and sport
- Research by other government and public bodies such as Sport Wales, Sport Scotland, Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED), National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Department of Health
- Wider youth and sport sources such as Youth Trends, Sports Marketing Surveys, Brand Rapport media attitudes, Childwise, SwapIT, Coca-Cola and Nike

2. **Deloitte were commissioned to map the supply available to young people:**

- Their methodology included desk based research, stakeholder consultations with 32 individuals and questionnaires distributed to Sport England NGB relationship managers

3. **Direct engagement and listening involved work with three agencies, Crowd DNA, The Pineapple Lounge and Precise.**

Crowd DNA carried out qualitative and quantitative research:

- Eight friendship triads, where three friends completed questions in advance, followed by an hour and a half interview and 'hanging out' ethnography in their area. Respondents were from London (4), Leeds (2) and Birmingham (2), there was an even gender split and the groups included NEETS (2) and disabled people (2)
- Five expert interviews with Action For Kids, Run Dem Crew, Wheelscape, Morning Glory and Shockout asking them about their experiences and successes engaging young people
- An online survey with 1,100 young people within the target age group of 14 to 25, including 100 disabled young people. The survey included Crowd DNA's Tribes segmentation questions and video blog option

The Pineapple Lounge were commissioned to provide qualitative research:

- Six, two-hour 'sports labs' each with eight young people recruited in friendship pairs. The 'labs' were held in Manchester, Bristol and London. There were two groups each of 14-16 year olds, 16-18 and 18-25 year olds recruited attitudinally and behaviourally to have one group for each age of fanatics/regular and one of occasional/disengaged. Pre-tasks included thinking about the most important things in their life (generally), positive and negative sporting memories, messages, role models and their week in sport

Precise carried out qualitative analysis of social media posts and conversations

- Analysis of data predominantly from Twitter, forums, and blogs involving young people between the ages of 14 to 25 around their participation in specific sports and activities, namely football, running, horse riding, swimming, adventurous activities, racquet sports, combat sports, cycling and health and fitness. Precise analysed data from January to December 2013, creating specific search strings using key phrases and keywords to return data relevant to the demographic and the sporting activity, (e.g. "I am 14" and "horse riding" or "gym")

4. **Professor Paul Dolan, author of the Cabinet Office MINDSPACE report, and his team introduced behavioural change thinking:**

- A series of working sessions between Sport England and Professor Paul Dolan were held to test our research methodology and to apply behavioural change thinking to the task of growing youth participation in sport

5. **Insight creation and consolidation workshops were facilitated by Crowd DNA, The Pineapple Lounge and 100% Open**

- Facilitated within Sport England, these sessions were designed to draw out the key learnings from the research, whilst combining them with the expertise provided by the various agencies, including from the wider work with young people, e.g. Crowd DNA's Tribes project with Channel 4.