

Youth Insights Pack Summary

Sport England has undertaken significant research during 2014 into the challenge of growing youth participation in sport. The findings of this research have been collated into a Youth Insights Pack.

The bullet points that follow summarise Sport England's new research into young people and the actions the research suggests are needed if, as a sector, we are to broaden our reach with this key audience and grow participation levels:

- ***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.
- ***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.
- ***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.
- ***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.
- ***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
- ***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
- ***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
- ***From insight to action*** – Sport England 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. Details of these design principles are summarised below and the full detail can be seen in the Youth Insights Pack.

The Youth Insights Pack contains a set of design principles to be considered when delivering the right experience for all young people in sport. It is expected that Sportivate projects will reflect these design principles so they are summarised below and should be taken into consideration as you plan your project(s). It is vital to design your Sportivate project from the perspective of the young person (i.e. demand) rather than supply.

Designing and delivering the right experience for all young people:

Young people are seeking experiences which are:

- a) Interactive
- b) Social
- c) Rewarding
- d) Personalised
- e) Inspiring
- f) Creative

Messengers are influential on young people when they are:

- a) Trustworthy
- b) Expert
- c) Like me

Fitting into what's important to young people:

- a) People and dreams
- b) Interests and development
- c) Fun and enjoyment

Sportivate should reflect the combination of both attitudes to sport which are positive, functional and uninterested. It should also reflect behaviours which are consistently active, irregular and constantly inactive. Sportivate needs to aim to change young people's behaviour to consistently active.

Sportivate needs to target those who:

1. Are irregularly active
2. Are consistently inactive
3. Have a functional relationship with sport.
4. Are uninterested in sport.

Strong evidence of demand should identify what young people want and then the Sportivate project should meet their needs, not their sport needs but the needs of their wider lives.

The full Youth Insights Pack can be accessed in the downloads section of our 'Deliver Sportivate' webpage or by [clicking here](#)