

Engaging Young Women in Sport Ferryhill

A report written by
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Introduction

Our group is looking at the barriers for young women in the Ferryhill area that stop them doing exercise and doing sports. We are going to find out how we can help more people get involved in sports.

Why we got involved

We got involved because it seemed like a fun thing to do and we also got paid for doing it. First, we talked with Rachel and Glenys about what the project is about. We sat down in the gym and we were astonished; these people were there trying to make a difference; just wanting volunteers to help them to make our lives happier when we are doing sports. We are interested in sport and want to make a difference in our community.

The best thing is our friends were there every step of the way.

How We Did Our Research

So far we have had two agenda days. This is where we meet up with lots of young women and ask them about their views and opinions. We spoke to over 60 young women aged 11 – 16. They told us all about what makes them happy and healthy, about sports and what they do out of school etc. We have written on big sheets about what young women would like to do and what they already do and why they don't do it.

We gathered lots of information :-

What girls do in their spare time in Ferryhill:

- Dance hall at Chilton-£1.50-Thursday night.
- Hang around with friends, flirt, gossip, listen to music.
- Go on to the computer on msn, go on straight after school some can stay on all night others have limited amount of time to go on the computer.
- Some people watch T.V. nearly all the time.
- Some people walk their dogs whenever they want.
- People play on the playstation 2 anytime.
- Go to cinemas on weekends.
- Phone friends anytime.
- Shop with friends on weekends.
- Listen to music all the time.
- Go to youth club, 5.00-6.30, Tuesday, Thursday nights.

The Now Sports!!

(Sports girls take part in)

- Football-anytime-with friends
- Gym-Saturdays-pay for membership
- Skating-Saturday-free for 5 weeks
- Netball-Thursday-after school
- Cricket-friends-anytime
- Rounders-friends-anytime
- Squash-Chilton community college-70p
- Dancing-St.Aidens church hall-Thursday night £1.50
- Ice skating-anytime-£5.00
- Ice hockey-anytime-£5.00
- Horse riding-anytime-£13.00
- Rock climbing-£7.00 + shoe hire- Saturdays
- Taekwando- Wednesday, Friday- £2.00

What activities girls said they would like to do.

- *Ice Staking
- *canoeing
- *archery
- *sword fencing
- *trampolining
- *rowing
- *play in bands
- *get healthier
- *Gym-Saturdays-pay for membership

Also

- Sky diving
- Meet celebs
- Yoga
- Badminton
- Paragliding
- Horse riding
- Theme parks
- Water parks
- Tanning booths
- Shopping with loads of money
- River dancing
- Holidays(trips)
- Swim regularly
- Go out with nice lads
- Fly planes

What is stopping us from doing the sports that we want?

- It costs too much.
- You can't have any privacy
- STOP THE DISCRIMINATION always against girls you can't go anywhere without being called names.
- There is nothing there for us to do! If there was actually something there for us to do E.G in a local leisure centre.
- You have no transport to get to places. But if it was provided then they would have no trouble.
- Nobody knows what activities are on so they should use better advertisements

For example with:

- Posters
- Leaflets
- Email
- Phone
- Newspapers
- Chapter
- Letters
- No hard cases
- But you could use cctv cameras to stop the vandalism so its nicer for us to use.
- You should also use memberships or something so only members can use the certain sport.

Further Research

Using the information collected at the Agenda Days we decided to take the research further. Again over 60 young women in the area took part. From the questionnaires we designed and distributed, we found three distinct **barriers** to young women in Ferryhill and Chilton participating in sport.

These are:

Types of activities available

Transport

Discrimination

Types of activities.

From our research we found young women would love the opportunity to try lots of different activities. (see previous list) The majority of girls asked said they would like to try a new type of activity. Interestingly, not many young women in the Ferryhill and Chilton area highlighted cost as an issue. We feel every effort should be made to ensure that opportunities are made for young women to participate in lots of activities. Government statistics show that 50% of young women aged 15 are not doing the recommended level of exercise of one hour per day. If we offer more choice and a greater variety, we believe that this would encourage young women to do more.

When we asked young women what kind of games and activities they would like to see more of, our information shows some interesting results.

Girls Football was very popular. The big growth of female football particularly amongst young women is the one sport “bucking the trend”. The Football Association has ploughed big resources into developing the sport. The FA now estimates that 1.4 million girls are now participating in football on a regular basis and it is now the largest female sport in the UK. It’s not surprising then that young women from Ferryhill and Chilton want to be involved.

Transport

Everyone needs to be aware that although some facilities might be around, it is not always easy for young women to get to them. We rely on public transport or on adults driving us to different places. This can be another barrier to young women participating in sport.

Not all young women we asked were happy to travel on public transport. This is for a number of reasons. These included, “odd people”, “strangers”, “no one to talk to”, “claustrophobic”, “travel sickness”, “not on time” and “they smell.” The majority of young women do not feel comfortable changing buses and they do not feel comfortable traveling long distances on public transport. We were told, “it’s scary, “you don’t know where you are,” “the day will drag and take forever”, “you can’t find your way back”, “you get bored” and “the bus might not turn up”.

However, we found out that young women are prepared to travel and the preferred means is to travel by an organized **mini bus**.

Discrimination

Our research has shown that the young women think there is discrimination around girls participating in certain sports. Young women said they would like to play more football but it is seen as a “boys” sport. This was also highlighted when we were told about stake boarding. This negative name calling stops young women taking part in sports they enjoy. For young women body image and self esteem are very important. The single fact is that sport and physical activities can help both.

The young women we asked said the problem was with how other young people see certain sports and this can lead to name calling, but also how adults see certain sports as well. We want help to try and overcome the stigma attached to young girls taking part in “boys” sports. Young women should be free to choose their own sport without being afraid that people will laugh or name call.

Most people can name Kelly Holmes and Paula Radcliffe, but how many people know the names of England women’s football team or cricket team? Many of our female role models are world champions, Olympic medalists but nobody knows their names. When they are on TV or in newspapers, the focus is on their femininity rather than their achievement. This has an impact on how people see them. Again this leads to different activities and priorities for the provision of activities between young women and young men.

What we think can help

Providing More Choice.

Everyone needs to work together to make sure they are offering the full range of sporting opportunities to young women. More importantly, that they are offering what the young women in Ferryhill and Chilton are asking for.

We think girls football should be advertised more and in a positive way. This could be done with a regular column in the Ferryhill Chapter. A page could be given on Ferryhill Town Council Website, and we are more than willing to give out leaflets and information from our stall at Ferryhill Gala Day.

We would like to work in partnership with different organizations to provide taster sessions for young women. These would be for the sports that they have identified. E.G iceskating, fencing, rock climbing, horseriding, rowing, canoeing and archery.

Providing Transport

As we have already said, young women are willing to travel but they prefer the safety and security of an organized mini bus. The young women we spoke to are willing to contribute towards this.

Discrimination

Again we would like young women to have the opportunity to contribute to local media and relevant websites. They could use these forums to celebrate their achievements and perhaps become role models for other young women.

We would like to work with adults to remove the barrier of certain sports being seen as boy's sports.