

We are a group of young women from Newton Aycliffe who are looking at the barriers that prevent young women aged 11-16 participating in sport.

Here are some of the reasons how and why we became involved.

How I Got Involved

I first heard about this young women's project from school. Rachael came into our school and told us about it.

Rebecca 13

I first heard of this project at school. We were in tutor when she read this out. I was quite interested in it. I asked all my friends if they were interested and they said no. There was only me, my friend Jessica who comes to the meetings and Natalie who wasn't allowed to come that turned up at the gym for the 'briefing.

When I got home I told my mum about this and my older sister Ellis asked if she could come. So, on Monday I took her along with me. Ever since then I have enjoyed doing this project. I find it very enjoyable and as a bonus we get paid as well!

Georgia Loveys 13

I heard about this project at school, by my tutor. I wanted to see what was involved in doing this, so I went along to the meeting at the gym. That's where I meet Rachael, she told only 3 of us who turned up what was involved.

Jessica Hutchinson 13

I heard about this project off my PE teacher, who told me Rachael was coming to the school to talk about it. I also got asked in the town, so I signed up for it.

Ashleigh Maddison 13

I heard of this through the school, when Rebecca came in and told us about it.

Sacha 16

Why I got involved

I enjoy this project because we get to find out what girls want in the community. We also get to find out what some girls do in their spare time.

Rebecca 13

I got involved in this because I thought it would be a lot of fun. I also wanted to find

out about the sport facilities around Newton Aycliffe, because I have recently moved here. I don't do a lot of sport and wanted to get into some of the clubs around Aycliffe. It is also interesting to find out what girls around Newton Aycliffe like and enjoy doing. They all have something in common, they all like the same thing.

Georgia Loveys 13

I thought it would be fun and a good laugh. It would also help other people at the same time. Also I got told I would be getting paid. I am still here because it is something to do and I enjoy it. It also gets other people involved in things and I get paid.

Jessica Hutchinson 13

I am still doing it today because it is really fun and you get paid for it. I have also found out a lot of things about girls aged 11-16 in Newton Aycliffe. You try to solve the problems that they are.

Ashleigh Maddison 13

I am still here today because it is good fun and I enjoy it.

Sacha 16

How Important is it for Young Women to take part in Sport

As sports participants, young girls have a dropout rate six times higher than boys. Fortunately, mentoring and leadership activities can help to reduce the dropout rate. A little compassion and understanding can go a long way.

Numerous research studies suggest that girls who participate in sports are less likely to get involved in drugs, less likely to get pregnant than those who do not play sports. A lesser known fact, however, is that girls drop out of sports at a rate of 6 times higher than boys.

Even more frightening is that if a girl does not participate in sports by the time she is 10, there is only a 10% chance she will participate by the time she is 25.

When they are young, girls are just as interested as boys are to participate in sport. Unfortunately, a combination of a lack of opportunity, lack of peer group support when they do play sports, and a lack of encouragement often causes them to drop out.

How We Did Our Research

We held an Agenda Day at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre. This is where we invited 108 young women from Newton Aycliffe to the Leisure Centre. 84 attended. We talked to the young women to find out what makes them happy and healthy.

We used this information to further develop our research by designing and distributing questionnaires to over 40 young women.

What we found out

Spare Time

From our agenda day we found out what some girls do in their spare time. Here is what they told us:

- Dance and Drama
- Gym
- Swimming
- Cinema
- Parties
- Smoke
- Msn
- Out on streets
- Coursework
- Babysit
- Go out for meals
- Shopping
- Watch TV

From this information we found out that most girls like to go on msn straight after school as that's when other people go on. Others go out on a night time but not so much in the winter as it's too cold and so they normally find someone's house to go to.

What do you do in your spare time?

- Msn 6pm-10pm
- Mates 3pm-7pm
- Play with friends 12pm-9pm
- Talk to friends and lads
- Nothing to do
- Hang around with mates on the streets
- Friday nights – people smoke and drink because they are bored
- Disco's
- Sometimes do homework
- Go to Tall Trees
- Go swimming to see lads bodies
- Go to bed 9pm-12pm

Weekends

- Computer
- Go to Chinese in Darlington
- Go shopping at Darlington, Bishop, Metro Centre etc.

Summer

- Redcar
- Swimming
- Beach
- Sunbathe
- Go holiday

Why they don't do sport

- Costs too much
- Not on at the right times
- It is boring

What they like to do

- Rock Climbing – Aycliffe
- Ice Skating – Around the area
- Obstacle Courses – Aycliffe
- Trampolining – Leisure Centre
- Treasure Hunting – Aycliffe
- Football for Girls – Aycliffe

What We Found Out

What makes you do sport?

The girls said that doing sport got you a good reputation. It makes you fit and healthy. If you don't do sport it will make your bum big!

What stops you doing sports?

The girls said there was nowhere to do sport, like local places. If there was anywhere local, it didn't have the sessions they wanted. Lads also stop the girls from doing sport. They make comments and laugh at them. They want sessions for just girls with no boys allowed.

Where do you go to do sport?

Most of the girls go to the leisure centre and others go to the Oak Leaf. If they don't do sport, they go to the park and mess around. They listen to music and watch TV, when there is nothing else better to do.

What are the problems?

We found out that the prices are too high, for the sessions they wanted to do. The sports centres didn't do the clubs for their age so they couldn't go. Even if there was it would be a problem for them to get there. If they go there, there are people who make remarks towards them. The cost is one of the main problems because they charge too much for a couple of sessions.

What would they like to see?

They want somewhere to go, that have a variety of things for them to do. More sessions or groups for their hobby and more clubs for girls only.

What we think could help

To use the gym, you have to be 14.