

Engaging Young Women in Sport Spennymoor

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investing in children

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Introduction

We are a group of young women from Spennymoor Comprehensive and Tudhoe Comprehensive who are interested in why young women tend not to participate in sport. We were asked by our teachers if we would be interested in taking part in research.

We met with Glenys and Rachel who told us about the project. This report tells you all about our findings.

Research Methods

We decided that the best way to get everyone's views and opinions was to invite as many girls as possible to a local venue. We decided that The Cube in Spennymoor was a good venue for an Agenda Day because everyone knows where it is and it is big, so we could split into groups. We decided on some questions to find out why girls don't participate in sport. These included, what do you do that makes you happy, what sporting activities do you do now, what are the barriers to you doing sport and which sports would you like to try?

We talked to approximately 70 young women at our Agenda Day and they had many opinions to work on. We found out that these young women do little exercise and instead they go out with friends or spend time on chat rooms. Some young women said they didn't go to activities because they felt intimidated or they got bullied. Some girls said they didn't enjoy sport and it was bad for their image.

However, two main areas were identified by the young women of Spennymoor. The biggest problem turned out to be that they didn't know where to find the information so they didn't go. Some thought there was not enough advertising but if there were, this would probably entice them to go. While the majority said they would love to go to a gym but because of their age, they weren't allowed. Lots of young women said they would go if their friends attended and if there were more sessions for under 16's only.

Advertising

Rosie O'Reagan and Dee Davison

We compiled a set of questionnaires asking a variety of young women if they took notice of advertisements on chat rooms, and the times that would be best to organise activities. We found out from our research that girls are most active on chat rooms between 5-8pm, and they log on 1-2 times a week. They mainly go on to talk to their friends, but would rather meet them at organised activities. We also found that girls would not take notice of advertisements on chat room sites and would be too afraid to attend activities advertised over the internet.

We developed our research further by looking into the best and most effective form of advertising that teenage girls take notice of and understand.

We worked with other members of the group and investigated the possibilities and ways of advertising. We used the information to find out the best way to inform and encourage young women to take part in organised activities. We visited different leisure centres and advertisers to see what they say is the most effective form of advertising to publicise any organised activities.

Simone

We went to Spennymoor Leisure Centre to ask them about the different forms of advertising they use and to see how they advertise around the centre.

What they said:

- They supply and deliver leaflets advertising activities on tables in the centre and they also deliver leaflets into primary and secondary schools so the young people are informed about activities in their area
- They advertise contact information on the internet as well as downloadable maps and directions
- They put posters and activity timetables in a selection of the businesses around Spennymoor
- They put out some advertisements on Durham FM
- They rely on advertising on posters, booklets, leaflets in schools. In secondary schools they encourage the P.E. departments to tell people about the activities happening in their area
- They suggested that any activities that our project is trying to promote should be advertised on the internet but mainly through schools

We also observed the following:

Information in Spennymoor Leisure Centre

Are there any leaflets? If there are, where? and are they well organised?

Yes there are piles of different activities that are going on in the Leisure Centre, such as Taekwondo, Swimming and Gymnastics. There are also leaflets for shows that are going to be taking place in the Leisure Centre and Coxhoe Leisure Centre.

Any other information for sport, shown by anything other than leaflets?

Yes, there are posters all over the Leisure Centre. There are big signs outside of the Leisure Centre. There are also posters around Spennymoor of different activities happening in the Leisure Centre.

If you don't ask the staff, is information on sports and activities still easy to find?

The leaflet holders are empty, but there are leaflets thrown all over the reception desk, not very well organised but the Assistant Manager says 'we are waiting on leaflets being printed.'

What age groups are there for sports and activities in the Leisure Centre?

There is:

Swimming

50+

Schools

Parent and Child

Little Ducklings

Public Swimming

Taekwondo

4-8 year olds

9-15 year olds

16+

Ladies only

Adults

Gymnastics

2-3 year olds

3-4 year olds

4-8 year olds

8+

What activities take place in the Leisure Centre

5-a-side football
Badminton
Squash
Volleyball
Basketball
Netball
Spinning
Taekwondo
Multi Skills
Box-a-cise
Racketball
Gymnastics
Judo
Boxing
Football
Swimming
Water Polo
Water Aerobics

We then developed our research further by asking young women about their views, experiences around advertising and compared these to what the Leisure Centre told us.

We asked:

Is it easy to find information about sports and activities for girls in your area?

8 said Yes

23 said No

How do you find out about different sports in your area?

4 said in Newspapers

15 said by Posters

23 said by their friends

20 said by School

If you were better informed would you do more sport?

5 said No

26 said Yes

How would you like to be informed about sport in your area?

14 said Posters

13 said School

9 said Leaflets

5 said Newspapers

10 said Text messages

18 said by letter

The information we collected showed that in order to appeal to young women the Leisure Centre has got it right by using posters and by going into schools. It seems that very few young women use the internet or newspapers to get information. However, what is very clear, young women would prefer and be encouraged to participate in more sporting activities if they were informed directly by letter of activities and events.

Engaging Girls in Physical Activity

From our research we found out that using the gym is important to young women as they want to keep in shape and be fit and healthy. The only problem is that most gyms do not cater for young girls and do not have the facilities for women.

We found that 7 young women attended a gym and **93 didn't**. **76** of those people would like to become a member of the gym and 10 people wouldn't but those **76** people said things like they weren't allowed to go because of their age and gender. Some also felt intimidated by the men and some of the other people that attend.

Those people that answered yes would like to become a member of a gym answered the question what day or time would you like to go to the gym, here are the results:

	Morning	Lunch	Evening
Monday	1		
Tuesday			
Wednesday			16
Thursday			3
Friday			17
Saturday	14	6	4
Sunday	3	5	3

From this table you can see that Friday evening would be the best night to go to the gym for the young women. If the gym could not arrange it for this night Wednesday, night would be fine.

What Action Are We Going to Take?

Gym Sessions

We are going to approach the gyms and show them the evidence that we have collected. Young girls want to use the gyms and hopefully gyms and leisure centres will cooperate and we will be able to get a scheme going. We will try to get gym sessions for girls only aged 11 – 16. Female only sessions are one of the most certain ways of bringing women into sport. These must be held in a supportive friendly environment which will help women to feel comfortable. Hopefully, these can be on a Friday at approximately 5pm. If everything goes to plan the young girls will be happy and the gym will be making a profit so nobody loses out everyone's a winner.

We will approach different gyms in the regions and ask if they would be willing to take part. We also could ask if they could run a club for young girls for a couple of weeks and we could give them some money. It needs to be recognised that development of more activities for young women will need some form of subsidy at first. If it is working hopefully the gym will carry on doing it as they will profit from this.

Informing Young Women

We know that getting young women into sport is hard work. So when young women do want to take part it is often really difficult to find out where the opportunities exist. As previously discussed, we also found that young women would be more likely to participate if they received information about activities such as gym sessions, by letters sent directly to them.

So we have also designed a leaflet (see attached) which we will give to the P.E. teachers to issue and which we will give out at Spennymoor Gala Day for young women to complete. This will give us names and addresses of interested young women so we can send out the information. Also these leaflets will give young women the opportunity to priorities the sports and activities they would like to know about. We hope to work with other services such as Leisure Centres and set up a database which will make it easy to inform young women by their preferred means.

Spennymoor Gala Day

We have arranged to have a stall at Spennymoor Gala Day in an attempt to promote Engaging Young Women in Sport. We will do this in a positive way, and hopefully make it fun.

We will give out our data collection form, information about sporting activities that young women are interested in, and information about healthy eating etc. To help promote the image of young women in sport, we are going to contact local newspapers to get coverage for our causes.

We are sure that this will make a great news story! Perhaps just the start of many stories. Support is required, and opportunities recognised, to increase the profile of young women's sport in the regional media. We could do this through the development of a regular column or feature. For example, we have contacted the Northern Echo who are very interested in our project and who are coming out to talk to us. The interest is there.

FITNESS IS FUN



**GIRLS, DO YOU WANT TO FIND OUT ABOUT LOCAL
ACTIVITIES AND SPORT.**

ARE YOU AGED 11 - 16?

**DO YOU WANT INFORMATION DELIVERED STRAIGHT TO
YOUR DOOR**

THEN PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM

Name

Address

Post Code

**PLEASE WRITE WHICH SPORTS/ACTIVITIES YOU WOULD
PREFER TO BE TOLD ABOUT**

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ENGAGING YOUNG WOMEN IN SPORT PROJECT

DON'T FORGET TO TELL YOUR PARENTS

