



Executive Summary



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The Fit for Girls programme is a joint initiative between the Youth Sport Trust and sportscotland, aimed at increasing physical activity participation among girls aged 11 to 16 years.

The programme was launched in 2008 and is being delivered to all secondary schools across Scotland over 3 years. A core focus of the programme is to bring about sustainable change in schools that builds a positive future for girls' participation in physical activity.

This is achieved by providing an interactive workshop for practitioners which allows them to share and exchange necessary knowledge, tools and skills. From this they are able to successfully consult, plan and implement positive physical education (PE) experiences and sustainable physical activity (PA) programmes for girls in the school setting, and build stronger links with community provision.

This first Interim Report presents findings from a survey of all S2 girls in secondary schools across Scotland, undertaken as part of the evaluation of the Fit for Girls programme. Survey questionnaires were administered in schools during 2009.

The questionnaire gathers information about physical activity, physical education and extra-curricular activities, as well as girls' health and wellbeing.

The findings in the interim report are baseline findings against which changes over time will be monitored as implementation of the Fit for Girls programme takes place. In total, 17,853 girls completed a questionnaire. The mean age of the girls was 13.7 years.

The findings reveal predominantly positive attitudes towards PE and physical activity. Overall, levels of enjoyment were high and most girls said they would like to be more active.

In relation to PE, the majority of girls agreed that it is an important subject at their school and felt comfortable in what they wear for PE. The social context in which PE takes place is evidently a significant issue for girls: over a third felt that having a female teacher is important and said that girls and boys should do PE separately.

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Health and fitness are clearly important to girls of this age and, along with having fun, being healthy is a key motivation for being physically active.

However, actual participation in physical activity remains low. Therefore there is a need to identify and address barriers to participation. Perceived lack of skill and preferring to do other things with their time were the most common reasons why girls do not take part in physical activity.

The Fit for Girls programme provides an opportunity for PE staff to consult with girls and identify issues around low participation. Schools are then able to develop a range of activities they feel the girls will engage with, with the aim of increasing overall physical activity levels.

Follow-up questionnaires will be administered to the same cohort of girls in Year 3 (2010/2011) of the programme to enable changes in physical activity participation and attitudes to be assessed.



Specific findings from the first Interim Report are highlighted below:

Physical Education (PE)

- 73% of girls had spent 1½ hours or more in PE during the previous week.
- 68% agreed that PE is an important subject at their school.
- 28% said that PE is their favourite lesson.

**81%
said they
enjoy PE**

**73% said
PE would be
better with a
wider variety
of activities**

- 28% said they often feel embarrassed in PE.
- 13% often find an excuse not to take part.
- 37% said that PE should be done separately for boys and girls.
- 35% of girls agreed that having a female teacher for PE is important.

School-based extra-curricular sport and physical activity

- 47.5% of girls had not taken part in any extra-curricular sport or physical activity during the previous week.
- 61% agreed that the facilities for sport and physical activity at their school are really good but only 36% agreed that the changing facilities are really good.
- 77% felt that their school offers enough opportunities to take part in sport and other physical activities but 25% felt that sport is too competitive at their school.

**72% said
they do PA to
be healthy and
63% take part
for fun**

**Less than half
of the girls (43%)
had been consulted
about what physical
activities they
would like to do
at school**

Physical activity and health

- 19% of girls correctly stated the current physical activity recommendation for young people their age.
- 19% had spent less than an hour in physical activity during their free time the previous week.
- 48% of girls think that they are good at sport.
- Almost half of girls (48%) said they do physical activity to feel better about themselves or to lose weight.
- One in four girls (26%) said that taking part in competitions is a reason why they do physical activity.
- 44% said that preferring to do other things with their time is a reason why they do not do physical activity.

**84% said
they would
like to be
more active**

**44% cite
lack of skill
and 35% feeling
embarrassed
as barriers to
being active**

If you would like to view the full report, please visit www.sportscotland.org.uk/ffg-report or for further information please contact:

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