

2. Co-curricular activity for girls chosen by girls

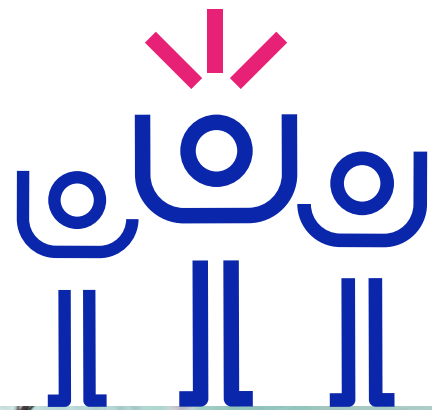
Orchard Manor School- a special school with an outstanding residential provision that caters for nearly 200 students aged 3-19. Orchard Manor provides education and care for pupils with communication and interaction difficulties, Autistic spectrum conditions and learning needs. Pupils attend as day pupils or residentially from Monday to Friday.

(South West / SLIDACI: 3 / PLIDACI: 6)

Haslingden High School – a secondary school located in Haslingden, Rossendale, England. (North / SLIDACI: 7 / PLIDACI: 6)

What?

A recognised barrier within co-curricular provision is the inequality of provision for disadvantaged young people inclusive of age, sex, disability, and socio-economic groups, (Women in Sport, 2022). With the imbalance of equality of participation between boys and girls highlighted as a pivotal requirement in the latest government strategy, choice and access remain critical elements to reducing the gap in participation. If girls are not engaged at a young age, each student will only add to the rising number of women aged 16 and over not currently active enough in the United Kingdom which is currently sat at 39%, (Sport England, 2021).



So what?

A school determined to eliminate this barrier is Orchard Manor School who added an informal inclusive girls club to their co-curricular timetable which any pupil can attend each week. By adding a flexible club to the programme, this removes the fear of formally committing to signing up for the club adopting a drop in approach. This informal, drop in club not only provides the girls with a sense of belonging through connecting with new and current friends, but also empowers them to lead physical activity to their peers. With no requirement for a specialised coach, this cost-effective club can enhance the confidence of young girls and provide them with choice within sport and physical activity. This club had sustainable attendees by allowing a variation of activities with the girls choosing their equipment and activity each week creating a positive environment where pupils have choice of participation whilst socialising with peers.

A similar approach was considered at Haslingden High School to target inactive girls through codesigned co-curricular activities. Haslingden High formed a pupil led girls group that designed each co-curricular block for their peers which had to include a focus of fun, be non-competitive, promote socialisation with peers, relax anxieties and include enjoyable music. Some of the types of activities identified were dance, Zumba, circuits, boxercise, dodgeball and benchball which were led and delivered by experts within the school

and local community (whilst all playing music!). The project also encouraged this group to visit local facilities at the leisure centre to experience climbing, a spin class, a gym induction and laser tag which has encouraged 12 girls to join this centre and regular participation in the activities as a team. As a result of the confidence gained from co-designing and participating in these activities, the girls presented their experiences back to the entire school in an assembly, highlighting the importance of being physical active and finding something you love – “you don’t need to be ‘sporty’”.

Now what?

With these ideas in mind, to increase co-curricular activities at secondary schools, a school could adopt:

1. A girls' only club onto the timetable of activities to provide choice of activity and promote inclusion within this club. If a female teacher is available, consider the use of this resource to support those restricted in participation based upon religion. There is further support on implementing female only programmes within the Girls Active network with Youth Sport Trust which can be found at <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/programmes/targeted-interventions/girls-active>
2. A 'drop in' session policy to remove the fear of commitment but promote the opportunity for students to trial a range of opportunities.

[Sport England \(2021\) 'Gender'. \[Accessed 10/08/23\]](#)

[Women in Sport \(2022\) 'Reframing sport for teenage girls: tackling teenage disengagement'. \[Accessed 16/08/23\]](#)

[Youth Sport Trust \(2023b\) 'Girls Active'. \[Accessed 16/08/23\]](#)

