National Insight

Executive Summary

June 2024



Overview

The Youth Sport Trust remains committed to equipping educators and empowering young people across the country, but we recognise that there is a need to have a heightened understanding in locations that serve young people who need access to play and sport the most.

To support us in doing this, we have identified 20 locations across England that will be key focus areas for Youth Sport Trust, and through a whole organisation commitment, we will be able to concentrate our capacity and resource to apply a sharpened focus in these target locations. This will enable us to take urgent action to build back healthier, happier, more resilient young people. These locations will also provide the opportunity to establish an evidence base to drive a generational shift and achieve societal change.

These locations were identified based on the following criteria:

- high levels of deprivation
- high levels of childhood obesity
- low levels of participation in sport and physical activity
- readiness to work with us
- potential and/or existing collaborations



We will be starting locally by targeting our work in a smaller geographical location, where we will focus our understanding of needs, deliver interventions, build capacity, and understand what works in these initial focus areas. Once momentum is being gained in these initial focus areas, we will seek to apply this learning to another location in the area, and then ultimately, across the broader location.

This report was produced by the Youth Sport Trust's Research and Insight Team. It synthesises the insight gathered from 20 initial focus areas in England. The insight focuses on the local context and the PE, school sport and physical activity (PESSPA) provision. The report is based on headline secondary data relating to schools and young people in the initial focus areas, plus insight from a mix of 161 primary, secondary, special and other schools across the initial focus areas.



Key challenges young people are facing - identified by schools





Poor mental health



Educational challenges



Poor physical health



Challenging home lives



Social challenges



Schools unable to fully meet young people's needs



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Groups of young people facing the greatest inequalities and challenges - identified by schools





Young people with lack of parental engagement & support



Young people with **Special Educational Needs**



Young people from non-working families



Young people with **English** as an Additional Language



Young people from low socio-economic backgrounds



Girls



Young people with poor mental health



Young people of an Asian background



Children and young people are facing challenges and inequalities at all stages of school

Key priorities for schools



To improve young people's wellbeing



To improve young people's engagement in school and wider community cohesion



To improve young people's **educational** outcomes, including their educational attainment and life skills



To develop the **curriculum**, improve provision for young people, and support staff development

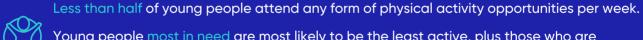


To improve the provision of PESSPA, including an understanding of its value

The role of PE, School Sport and Physical Activity (PESSPA)



On average, PE provision falls short of the 2-hour guideline for schools at all key stages.





Young people most in need are most likely to be the least active, plus those who are overweight / obese, live far from school, live in overcrowded homes, have SEND, or are at risk of exclusion.



Schools think it is important for young people to be involved in PESSPA, however, feel more can be done to ensure that staff feel competent using physical activity and sport to support young people most in need, and to help young people have a better understanding of the value of PESSPA.



Youth voice is regularly collected across schools but can be more in-depth and meaningful, and sometimes more inclusive.



The quality of partnership working between schools and other schools or organisations in their local areas appears to be mixed. Passionate and pro-active individuals are key to successful partnerships.



To help ensure that PESSPA is at the heart of schools, it needs to be sufficiently prioritised, people need to understand the value of PESSPA, the provision needs to foster enjoyment and inclusivity, and there needs to be sufficient resources allocated to PESSPA.