



Briefing 09/02

January 2009

Children's Participation in Culture and Sport.

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and Email Contacts (Scotland)

CC: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)

Research findings by the Scottish Government

Key issues

Results of Ipsos MORI poll covering the implications of participation in culture and sport

Covers participation in events within and out-with school

Aim is to ensure that those in deprived areas do not miss out on opportunities and efforts made to encourage participation

1. Introduction

The Scottish Government recently commissioned a survey in order to provide an indication of children's participation in culture and sport. Fifty schools were visited between 14 February and 1 April 2008 with 2,221 pupils, aged 11-18 years old completing questionnaires, although to avoid overlap with the Scottish Household Survey (SHS), only 11-15 year olds were analysed. The key topics featured were:

- The frequency of participation in culture and the arts outside of school.
- Participation in culture and the arts during school time.
- Attendance at cultural and sporting events outside of school time as well as part of school trips.
- Participation in sport and physical activity outside of school time.
- Involvement in physical recreation, in the form of PE classes, as well as other types of physical activity organised through school.
- The involvement of young people in volunteering.

The survey was administered in a self-completion format and the findings were based upon the young person's perception of for how long, what and how they took part in cultural or sporting activities. It further found that over half of young people have visited a library at least once during the year. Non users were most likely to claim that they have no need to use the facility.

More than half of young people have visited a historical or archaeological site during the last year. The majority of those who have not claim it is due to a lack of interest or being busy with other activities. However, there was also concern with regards to perceived cost and a general feeling of being out of place in such an environment.

The results also showed that young people generally take part in a wide range of activities outside of school. Girls are most likely to read for pleasure, take dance lessons, or rehearse for a performance, whilst boys are more likely to have used a computer to create original artworks and to have done crafts.

Further information upon the original research conducted can be found at www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch.

2. Participation in cultural activities

More than half of the young people taking part in the survey had taken part in four or more of the most popular activities listed in the survey, of which, girls were shown to participate in a wider range of activities. Young people living in the least deprived areas were more likely to have participated in a wider range of activities, ranging from dance, playing a musical instrument, writing music, painting and drawing, sculpture and reading for pleasure. Those in the least deprived areas were 1.5 times more likely to take part in such activities, compared with those in the most deprived areas.

Events attended on the most regular basis, outside of school, tended to be films and live sports events, with young girls attending most. During school time, three quarters of young people had also been to at least one of the events listed in the survey. Girls are more likely to attend events as part of an organised school trip.

Outside school, one in seven young people are doing four or more activities at least once a week. Boys aged between 12 and 13 years old are the ones most likely to do so. 15 year old boys and girls meanwhile are more likely to take part in only one activity, once a week outside of school, normally football and dancing respectively. Just over a quarter of young people are members of a club. Time spent on physical activity outside of school varies between boy and girls. Approximately seven hours a week is spent doing physical activity for boys, whilst girls spend approximately four hours. Such activity appears to decline as young people get older. Of those who claim to have done no activity outside of school, boys state that it is because they prefer to do other things, whilst girls claim it is due to the fact that they do not have anyone to do it with.

On average, young people spend an average of 2.5hrs per week in PE classes, plus an average of 1hour 17minutes of sport or physical recreation organised through their school but independent of the PE classes. However, more than a third of young people do not take part in any physical activity organised through school. Also, although time spent in PE classes tends to increase with age, there is a decline in the amount of young people taking part in physical activity outside of PE as they get older.

Approximately one third of young people surveyed had given up their time to volunteer during the last year. The most common form of volunteering was through sporting activities, with volunteers taking part in such tasks as, score keeping, coaching, helping to organise events and raising cash.

3. Conclusion and APSE comment

Conclusions made by those directly involved with the survey were that the main reasons for those not taking part was a general lack of interest, preference for other activities, cost, lack of information, feelings of being out of place, the area in which they live, as well as their households socio-economic status. The survey also found that older children are arguably less likely to take part in physical activity, possibly due to factors such as cost, standard of changing facilities and not having anyone willing to participate with them.

Many of the motivations young people have for participation in cultural activities will be personal and emotional and will vary according to age. Analysis also shows that the type of area where the young person lives and the socio-economic status of their household may have some bearing. APSE believes that it is essential to ensure that young people from deprived backgrounds do not miss out on the opportunities available to them and that efforts are made to encourage these youngsters to participate wherever possible.

It is also refreshing to learn that despite previous research indicating that teenagers lose interest in PE classes as they get older, it would now appear that S3 and S4 pupils tend to spend more time in PE classes each week than their peers in S1 and S2 and it will be important to continue to encourage participation of all young people in PE classes whilst at school.

APSE believes that by increasing the amount of information available to young people about community-based physical activity it would go some way towards tackling concerns about perceived cost, standard of changing facilities and a lack of others to participate in the activities with in the first place.

APSE remains hopeful that local authorities will be at the forefront in implementing policies with regard to tackling obesity through physical activity. Whilst countryside facilities are important, it has to be equally recognised that many of the main target social and economic groups dwell within inner cities and tightly developed towns. Open space is at a premium in these areas but health has a higher value to these communities.

APSE would welcome any comments to this, which should be sent to gmooney@apse.org.uk

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