

# Providing positive experiences for young people: ideas for physical activity providers



## The problem

**55%** of young people in England do not meet the [CMO activity guidelines](#)

Only **51%** of children and young people strongly agree they enjoy taking part in exercise and sports.

Young people from less affluent families, girls and those from some ethnically diverse communities are **much less likely** to be active.

Only **56%** of young people in satellite clubs agreed they have a say in activities.

## Key questions

**?**  
Why is the project needed by young people?

Who are we targeting and what's stopping them taking part now?



**?**  
What local assets can we tap into?



**?**  
How are we asking young people and communities?



How will we measure success?



## The solution



Consider the resources and partners needed



Consider the people and skills needed



Tap into the motivations of the young people



Understand what a positive experience looks like for them

## Findings

There is no one size fits all approach. Project design should be based on insight

Successful projects incorporate the motivations and voices of young people at all stages

Flexible and adaptable delivery works

Enjoyment and activity levels are linked

Constant communication and feedback is required

Sustainability should be planned from the outset

## Recommendations



Start with the young people

Ensure young people feel safe, comfortable and heard



Incorporate physical activity into other interests



Understand and deliver what your young people want



Constantly reflect and re-evaluate



Connect young people outside sessions

Deploy role models that are just like them



Build trust and rapport at all levels

# What is a positive experience?

## How this is described by young people in satellite clubs:

### The environment

Face-to-face or virtual?

- Somewhere that's right for the young people you're targeting, at a convenient time and place
- A warm and friendly, safe and comforting environment
- A positive and upbeat atmosphere. Young people cite music as helping create this
- Somewhere they can socialise with others and friendships are encouraged
- A welcoming, encouraging, supportive place, free from judgement.

### The approach

Participants, leaders, volunteers, parents and others

- Make an effort to greet them on arrival
- It's ok to not join in right away - offer the option for young people to take part and pause activity whenever they like
- Keep activities easy, accessible, inclusive and simple, cater for all abilities
- Progress young people at a pace appropriate for them
- Focus on enjoyment. Show care and use humour
- Get to know young people's motivations for taking part and act on these - so becoming and staying active is easy and natural
- Keep delivery relaxed and informal. Not too serious, with no pressure
- Be persistent and patient with young people initially unwilling to engage. They may want to participate but don't yet have the confidence.

### Youth voice

Keep asking all the time, not just at the start

- Co-ownership. Listen to potential participants/parents/carers and respond to their interests and needs
- Be flexible. Respond to the young people attending and their needs and wants. Sometimes young people don't know what they want to do, so test various options out.

### Sustainability

Keeping young people involved

- As young people mature, their needs, wants and motivations change - keep listening!
- What are the next steps for each young person and who can help?
- Enjoyment and activity levels are linked.