YOUTH

RESEARCH REVIEW 1

Increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities

Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) identifies and coordinates local, regional and national evidence of 'what works', to create a single and comprehensive picture of effective practice in delivering children's services. Using this information, C4EO offers support to local authorities and their partners, working with them to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

It is focusing its work on nine themes:

• Early Years
• Disability
• Vulnerable (looked-after) Children
• Child Poverty
• Safeguarding
• Schools and Communities
• Youth
• Families, Parents and Carers
• Early Intervention, Prevention and Integrated Delivery.

C4EO works with a consortium of leading national organisations: National Children's Bureau, National Foundation for Educational Research, Research in Practice and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

The Centre is also supported by a number of strategic partners, including Local Government Improvement and Development, the Family and Parenting Institute, the National Youth Agency and the Institute of Education.

There is close and ongoing cooperation with the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the LG Association, the NHS Confederation, the Children's Services Network, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Ofsted.

C4EO is funded by the Department for Education.

Increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities

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Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this research review produced for the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) as part of its Youth theme.

It is one of three reviews which aim to help all those working with and for young people to improve their outcomes and life chances. C4EO started its work on this theme in 2009, some time before the new Coalition Government was elected in May 2010. The review process we undertake in order to distil the very best learning and evidence from national literature and data, combined with effective local practice is cumulative, resulting in our full knowledge reviews. Policy priorities are currently being determined by the Coalition Government and we have amended the review in order to ensure that it reflects changing political context as far as possible.

I am confident that the evidence of 'what works' contained in this review and in the other two reviews, with their clear and unremitting focus on improving outcomes for young people will help all those working with them in the public, voluntary and private sectors.

Christine Davies CBE

Summary

This research review tells us what works in increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities. It is based on a rapid review of the research literature involving systematic searching and analysis of key data. It summarises the best available evidence that will help service providers to improve services and, ultimately, outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The National Youth Agency carried out this review on behalf of the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO). The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) conducted the data work.

There is a long history of interest in the activity of young people outside of school and home and the impact this has on their future life chances. The value of encouraging young people's participation in structured leisure-time activities (referred to here as 'positive activities') was a key strand of previous government policy and is implicit in the current Coalition Government's Big Society policy and their flagship project for young people, National Citizen Service.

What did we find out?

Key messages

- Around three-quarters of all young people participate in some form of positive activities. There is little difference in terms of participation rates by gender but far fewer young people from lower-income families or from rural areas participate in activities.

- Barriers to participation include: poor access to information about what is available and how to access it; parental attitudes; the influence of friends and peers; internal factors (the perceptions young people hold about themselves, for example, confidence); and practical factors such as time, transport and cost.

- The weight of evidence indicated that young people's participation in positive activities helps in their development of personal, social and emotional skills, such as self-esteem, confidence, socialising and team-work. This includes improved relationships between young people and their peers and other adults (particularly teachers and parents).

- However, some studies did not find a link between participation and positive (or negative) outcomes for young people. Possible ways of avoiding such neutral outcomes include providing sustained initiatives at an earlier age and allowing a longer lead-in for young people to learn about and trust a new initiative. It must however be recognised that such approaches are likely to incur greater cost.

- A beneficial change in young people's relationships with other adults through their participation in positive activities can be transferred to academic learning and may lead to better outcomes.

- Participation in multiple positive activities brings additional benefits.
- Effective strategies for promoting opportunities for young people to participate in positive activities include:
  o appropriate levels of engagement (i.e. for initial take-up of opportunities and sustained engagement)
  o targeting all young people, not just specific groups such as young offenders or elite athletes (although again universal provision may incur increased costs)
  o using a variety of media/marketing as part of a comprehensive communications strategy
  o involving young people
  o communicating specific messages about the benefits rather than the generic benefit of participation being a 'good thing'.
- Young people should be involved in all aspects of the provision and promotion of positive activities and the influence of word-of-mouth through friends and social networks is a very powerful one.
- There is a lack of robust evidence around the cost-benefit analysis of young people's participation in positive activities and the social return on investment that participation may bring.

Who are the key stakeholders?

The following key stakeholders have been identified for this review:

- young people
- parents and carers
- local authorities
- voluntary organisations.

Their contributions are valuable in the process of improvement

Young people are the focus of this review and by participating in positive activities they can achieve better outcomes. Young people having awareness that they can exert influence over their lives through the decisions and actions they take is a crucial factor in the benefits that can be achieved. The involvement and influence of young people in promoting and delivering positive activities is important both to increase and maintain levels of participation and also to maximise the benefits. The role of **friends and peers** is also very influential.

Parents and carers have a major influence on young people's participation in positive activities. Parent and carer perceptions of the value of positive activities and awareness of what is available locally and how to access it are important. Children and young people in lower-income families are less likely to participate in positive activities and face the practical challenges of meeting the costs of equipment, entrance fees and transport.

Local authorities have responsibility for ensuring there is provision of positive activities for all young people in their area through both direct service delivery and effective commissioning arrangements. The **youth service** is an important provider of positive activities in most areas. **Schools** have an important role in promoting opportunities for positive activities and the benefits of participation. Schools are also a useful venue for providing activities through extended services. Local authorities are also required to work in partnership with other statutory services (including **health, police, fire and rescue**) that may deliver or fund positive activities. Local authorities and partner organisations are responsible for monitoring who participates and what the outcomes are, and for securing value for money.

Voluntary organisations are very well placed to engage with young people and have a long history of providing a broad range of positive activities in local communities. Voluntary organisations may be commissioned by local authorities, and others, to provide services and are responsible for monitoring who takes part and what the outcomes are. Volunteering itself is an important positive activity for young people.

What data is available to inform the way forward?

The Tellus survey (Chamberlain *et al,* 2010) reports levels of participation in positive activities at the level of single- and upper-tier local authority and national level. Part of the survey investigated participation in activities that are structured, good quality, outside school and adult-led. When considering the data from the Tellus survey, local authorities should also note that not all schools in a local authority will have participated in Tellus surveys, and this is worth considering when drawing conclusions and assessing performance. Nevertheless, data gathered by the Tellus survey represents a good estimate of the national and regional average participation for a given year and local authorities can then start their own analysis of local positive activity participation.

The new Coalition Government decided to stop the delivery of the Tellus survey as part of its commitment to reduce the burdens which data collection imposes on schools and local authorities[1]. The last year for which data is available is 2009/10 (see Appendix 4 of this report)

In February 2010 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now the Department for Education) piloted a data collection exercise designed to provide a one-week snapshot of participation in positive activities across all local authority areas. Findings from this exercise may provide a useful benchmark when published.

The evidence base

A large body of evidence exists which relates in some way to the three main review questions in this study. Many studies, particularly from the USA, look at the impact of participation in sports-based activities and this dominates the literature. However,

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[1] For further information, see www.tellussurvey.org.uk/

much less is available set within the social context of the UK and several studies comment on the lack of research around young people's participation in non-sports/physical 'positive activities'. This gap in the research base is itself, in part, a reflection of a lower provision of positive activities with an arts and/or cultural focus (compared to the provision of sports and physical activities).

The main gap in the evidence base for this review relates to 'what works' in terms of cost-effectiveness and what provides best value for money. It is also important to acknowledge the difficulty in obtaining 'hard evidence' of many of the principal perceived benefits of participation in positive activities. There is a lack of quantitative research in this area and much of the research which is available is qualitative and often based on self-reports. Further research is necessary into the longitudinal benefits of participation, for example, into outcomes relating to employment and later life.

Research review methods

Research literature was identified through systematic searches of relevant databases and websites, recommendations from our Thematic Advisory Group and considering studies cited in identified literature ('reference harvesting'). The review team used a 'best evidence' approach to systematically select literature of the greatest relevance and quality to include in the review. This approach attempts to eliminate bias in the selection of literature, to ensure that the review's findings are as objective as possible.

Data contained within the data annexe was obtained by a combination of search methods but primarily by obtaining online access to known government publications and access to data published by the Office for National Statistics.

Next steps

An updated version of this review is due to be published in spring 2011. This will include validated practice examples and views from children, young people, parents, carers and service providers. It will also reflect any changes to the policy context that have occurred in the meantime.

C4EO reviews on Targeted Youth Support and alcohol are also available on the C4EO website. Local decision-makers and commissioners working in children's services may also find it helpful to read the Youth directors' summary, which presents the key messages from all three reviews.

C4EO is using the main messages from the three Youth theme reviews to underpin its knowledge sharing and capacity building work with children's services, and through them the full range of professions and agencies working to increase the participation of young people in positive activities.

1. Introduction

This review aims to draw out the key 'what works?' messages on engaging young people in positive activities. It addresses three questions, which were set by the C4EO Theme Advisory Group (TAG), a group of experts in youth policy, research and practice. These questions are:

1. What do we know about young people who do and do not participate in positive activities and why this is the case?
2. What is the impact of participating in positive activities on young people's outcomes?
3. What works, and offers greatest value for money, in engaging young people who would otherwise not have participated in positive activities, while ensuring that all young people have access to effective positive activities?

The review is based on:

- the best research evidence from the UK – and where relevant from abroad – on what works in improving services and outcomes for children and young people
- the best quantitative data with which to establish baselines and assess progress in improving outcomes.

C4EO will use this review to underpin the support it provides to children's services to help them improve service delivery and, ultimately, outcomes for children and young people. It will be followed by a knowledge review, which will update the research evidence and also incorporate:

- the best validated local experience and practice on the strategies and interventions that have already proved to be the most powerful in helping services improve outcomes, and why this is so
- stakeholder and client views on 'what works?' in improving services.

Definitions of key terms

The following definitions were agreed by the TAG:

The term 'positive activities' covers adult-led structured leisure-time activities outside of school hours and taking place in, or being delivered by, children's centres, extended services, youth services, school-based extra-curricular activities, play and leisure services, sports and recreation services, private providers and the arts. Specific activities include youth groups, sports and physical activities, performing and creative arts, courses and learning-related activities (outside of school hours) and volunteering.

Qualitative research with young people themselves (commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)) found that 'young people

characterise organised [or positive] activities in terms of sport, other active, non-sporty clubs, community and youth club and non-organised [sometimes referred to as 'spontaneous activities'] as things like computer games, listening to music, Facebook, hanging out with friends, shopping and cinema' (Solutions Research 2009a and b).

Note: 'Young people' refers to those aged 13 to 19 years old.

Methods

The research included in this review was either identified in the scoping study *Increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities so as to achieve the ECM outcomes and contribute to the achievement of Youth PSA 14* (Adamson and Poultney 2010) or was cited within the research items identified. The scoping team ruled out obviously irrelevant research studies by screening study titles. Remaining research studies were then coded on the basis of their abstracts. Coding took account of each study's features – including research design, relevance to the scoping review questions and country of origin – to identify the key items to be included in the forthcoming main review. The review team have appraised these key items to ensure that the evidence presented is the most robust available.

Data contained within the data annexe was obtained by a combination of search methods but primarily by obtaining online access to known government publications and access to data published by the Office for National Statistics.

Strengths and limitations of the review

Strengths of the review include: identifying the best available evidence from research and national datasets to inform specific questions; comprehensive and documented searching for relevant information; an analysis of the quality and strength of evidence; and guidance from an advisory group on the issues of greatest importance in early childhood research, policy and practice.

Limitations of the review include the very tight deadlines that the review had to meet, which limited the ability of the review team to extend and develop the evidence base through reference harvesting and hand searching; and the fact that the review was limited to English-speaking countries only.

2. Context

Policy context

A central focus of the new Coalition Government has been to close the gap in results for young people, support achievement in learning and to involve young people in volunteering and other activities in their local communities, and improve social mobility.

The activities covered by the scope of this review are fundamental to achieving this vision. The assessment of the impact of such activities is also timely given the tight fiscal climate and the need to review the cost-effectiveness of what can be provided and by whom.

Looking back, there has been a long history of interest in the activity of young people outside of school and home and the impact this has on their future life chances. Such activity generally falls into one of two categories: unstructured, 'spontaneous' activities – such as socialising with friends, watching TV, reading; or structured leisure-time activities – such as playing sport for a club or participating in activities at arts groups. It is structured leisure-time activities that form the basis of this review. Often described as 'out-of-school-time activities' outside the UK, more recently, such activities have come to be known as 'positive activities' in the UK.

'Positive activities' is a relatively recent term that describes an organised activity outside of school that provides something for young people to do and which may be beneficial for them and the wider community. The broad definition of positive activities adopted for this review[2] also covers youth volunteering and other forms of learning outside the classroom. As such, the core meaning at the heart of positive activities stretches back to the development of youth work in the mid- to late nineteenth century, right through to the current Coalition Government's Big Society policy and, specifically for young people, the planned National Citizens Service.

Policy over the past five years under the previous government prioritised positive activities and aimed to create more things to do and places to go for young people in their local area; more opportunities for young people to volunteer and to make a contribution to their local community; better information, advice and guidance about issues that matter to them, delivered in the way they want to receive it; and better support for those young people needing extra help to deal with problems (HM Government 2005). Local authorities were charged with a statutory duty to ensure that young people have access to a wide range of positive activities, achieved through the children's trust and effective joint working between partners, set in the context of national standards.

Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities was published in July 2007 (HM Treasury and DCSF 2007) and set out the then

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[2] See Introduction for the full definition of positive activities adopted for this review.

government's proposals to improve leisure-time opportunities, activities and support services for young people in England, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The strategy set out a series of reforms based around three themes: empowerment, access and quality, and made 55 commitments focusing on increasing young people's participation in positive leisure-time activities. The strategy was based on evidence of the importance of participation in constructive leisure-time activities on the development of social and emotional skills, which play an important role in enabling young people to make a successful transition to adulthood – a fundamental element of the Coalition Government's aspiration for young people.

Moving towards the Big Society is a key theme for the Coalition Government. The concept sets out the government's aspirations to shift power from central government to people and communities and to empower citizens to be part of the Big Society. National Citizen Service, the Coalition's flagship project for young people, aims to provide a programme for 16-year-olds to give them opportunities to develop skills to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds, and increase involvement in their communities.[3] National Citizen Service is central to enabling young people to be part of the Big Society and to successfully navigate the transition to adulthood.

Implicit in the National Citizen Service and Big Society is the value of engaging young people in constructive leisure-time activities, both for their own development and the contribution it makes to their local community. Such activity is also seen to be fundamental in supporting participation and achievements in learning, and in meeting the aspirations for young people's involvement in sporting and cultural activities.

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[3] www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/407789/building-big-society.pdf

3. The evidence base

This study explores the participation of young people in positive activities. A large body of evidence exists that relates in some way to the three main review questions in this study. While a specific definition of positive activities has been adopted for this review (see Definitions of key terms, in Section 1), within the literature there exists a broad range of activities which are the subject of research and could fall, at least in part, within the remit of this study. This includes youth volunteering, sports and physical activity, extended schools, music and the arts.

Initial searches by the National Foundation for Educational Research led to 808 sources being identified (following the removal of 152 duplicates). The screening process led to 569 items being excluded. The remaining 259 sources were assessed as generally relevant to the review and were coded accordingly. The review team coded these items using the available abstracts and short-listed 50 key items for the research review.

The full text was obtained for each of the key items identified by the scoping study (Adamson and Poultney 2010). The key items were split between the research review team (two people) and these were read, assessed and notes made with regards to their relevance to the three review questions and the rigour and appropriateness of the research methodology. Ten of the key items (20 per cent) were read by both members of the team as part of the review's internal quality assurance. Around half of the key items identified by the scoping review (26) are referenced in this research review.

On reading the full text of the documents, identified as being potentially key at the scoping stage, 24 of these reports were excluded. Reports were included based on their direct relevance to answering the specific three questions of this review and the quality of the research evidence. Reports excluded were 19 key items described in the scoping review as research/data (for example, small qualitative studies such as a round table discussion with one group of young people), six literature reviews (largely because they were not directly relevant to the review questions) and two practice guides.

Table 1 (below) shows that the majority of the key items referenced in this report were research literature, with nine qualitative studies, six quantitative and three mixed-methods. There are four policy documents referenced in this report (see Section 2, Policy Context) and four literature reviews are also included.

Table 1. **Type of literature for the key items**

Type of literature	Number of key items
Research – qualitative	9
case studies/interviews/group discussions	5
other	3
focus groups	1
Research – quantitative	6
survey/questionnaire	4
secondary data analysis/other	2
Policy	4
Research – mixed methods	3
Literature review	4
Total	**26**

Table 2 (below) shows that the majority of the key items were from England (14), followed by the US (9), with one each from Australia and Canada.

Table 2. **Country/area involved of the key items**

Country of origin	Number of key items
UK – England	15
US	9
Australia	1
Canada	1
Total	**26**

In terms of the content of the key items, around half the key items provided evidence relating to more than one of the three review questions. Many studies look at the impact of participation in sports-based activities and this dominates the literature. However, much less is available set within the social context of the UK and several studies comment on the lack of research around young people's participation in non-sports/physical 'positive activities'. This gap in the research base is itself, in part, a reflection of a lower provision of positive activities with an arts and/or cultural focus (compared to the provision of sports and physical activities).

The main gap in the evidence base for this review relates to cost-effectiveness and value for money. There is little available evidence on this and, linked to this, little available evidence that relates to the effectiveness of commissioning strategies.

More generally, there is also limited 'hard evidence' of many of the principal perceived benefits of participation in positive activities. This is principally because the development of what are often referred to as 'soft skills' (such as self-esteem and confidence, social skills, team work) and even the achievement of more measurable outcomes (such as academic attainment) are difficult to evidence in relation to their participation (or non-participation) in positive activities – one specific aspect of a young person's life. There is a lack of quantitative research in this area and much of the research that is available is qualitative and often based on self-reports. Further research is necessary into the longitudinal benefits of participation, for example, into outcomes relating to employment and later life – although there is significant evidence of the impact of non-participation linked to poorer outcomes for young people.

Wider benefits such as community cohesion, building social capital, improved educational outcomes and, conversely, the prevention of less desirable outcomes, such as anti-social behaviour are also notoriously difficult to account and attribute to specific interventions or initiatives. Analysis of the social return on investment has attempted to address issues such as these but this type of research was not available in relation to participation in positive activities. This is particularly challenging where participation may only be short term and involve engagement in a range of different activities.

4. What do we know about young people who do and do not participate in positive activities and why this is the case?

Key messages

- Around three-quarters of young people participate in positive activities. There is little difference by gender but those from lower-income and rural backgrounds are less likely to participate.

- Sports and physical activities are the most common type of activity that young people participate in.

- There are many barriers to young people's participation both in terms of trying new activities and maintaining participation. Of particular importance are access to information, parental attitude, the influence of friends and peers, internal factors (such as confidence and self-esteem) and practical factors (such as time, cost and transport).

Proportions and characteristics of young people who do and do not participate and the variation of participation rates by type and range of activities available

Young people spend a large proportion of their time outside of the home and school environment and what a young person does in this time, and of their own volition, will inevitably have a significant effect on their personal development and future outcomes. Participation in positive activities is one aspect of how young people may chose to spend this time and is the focus of this review.

Around three-quarters of young people attend organised out-of-school activities and around a quarter do not (DfES 2006). Participation varies greatly and a much higher proportion of young people from low-income families – possibly around half (Wikeley *et al* 2007) – do **not** participate. Those from lower-income families who do participate in positive activities do so in a much narrower range of activities than their more affluent peers.

Wikeley *et al* (2007) carried out a qualitative study of the role of educational relationships in out-of-school activities and its impact on young people's learning (for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation). The study used mapping and interview techniques with a sample of 55 young people comprising 25 young people in receipt of free school meals, matched by 30 of their peers (same schools but more affluent circumstances). Approximately half the sample (26) were in Year 6 (aged 11) and half (29) in Year 9 (aged 14).

Wikeley *et al* (2007) draw a distinction between organised activities and 'spontaneous activities'. While the 'spontaneous activities' that young people undertake through informal time spent with friends is also important, this review is

principally concerned with those organised 'positive activities'. The distinction between these two types of activities is an important one and it is useful to consider here what types of activity might be included in these two groups. Tables 3 and 4 below reproduce a summary table of Wikeley's findings. The activities are further broken down by age (Year 6 and Year 8) and by circumstances with 'free school meals' as a proxy measure of poverty compared with those from more affluent backgrounds.

In addition to providing some real-life examples of what positive activities actually are (or might be), Tables 3 and 4 (below) also illustrate the earlier point that those from lower-income backgrounds participate in a much narrower variety of (organised) positive activities than their peers from more affluent backgrounds. This pattern was true for both 11- to 12-year-olds and 13- to 14-year-olds (although it should be noted that this was not evident for 'spontaneous activities' where the range of activities was broadly similar). The study found no discernable gender difference in terms of whether or not young people participated in positive activities. However, living in a rural location did have an impact and those young people in poverty and living in rural locations were 'doubly disadvantaged'.

Table 3.   Examples of 'positive activities' by age and (proxy) income/affluence

	YEAR 6 (AGE 10 TO 11 YEARS)		YEAR 9 (AGE 13 TO 14 YEARS)	
	Free school meals	More affluent	Free school meals	More affluent
Organised (positive) activities	Cricket club Dance club Drama club Football club Karate club Monday club St John's Ambulance Youth club	Church club Cricket club Drama club Football club Guitar lessons Language lessons Netball club School art club School council Scouts Swimming club School tag rugby club Youth club Horse riding	Air training corps Athletics club Cricket club Football club Foster club Skittles	Activity club Cricket club Drama club Football training Guides Karate Kick boxing Martial arts Modern dancing Rugby Swimming club Trampolining Volley ball Youth centre Church group

Source: Wikeley *et al* 2007 p 20

Table 4.   Examples of spontaneous activities by age and (proxy) income/affluence

	YEAR 6 (AGE 10 TO 11 YEARS)		YEAR 9 (AGE 13 TO 14 YEARS)	
	Free school meals	**More affluent**	**Free school meals**	**More affluent**
Spontaneous activities	Computer – at local library Cooking Den making Family Family responsibilities Football with friends Meet friends See girlfriend Hang around town Mountain biking on own Play outside Read Shopping Sleepovers Watch TV	Computer Cooking Dog training Family Mosque MSN messaging to friends Pet care Reading Shopping with friends or family Swimming with friends or family Tag rugby Watch TV Work – paper round	Archery – with dad at home Bingo See boyfriend Use computer at home Go down town Drag racing with father Drumming Family responsibilities Sibling care Fishing Football with friends Play golf with friends Hang out with friends Homework Ice skating with family Go to night-club See non-resident father Shopping Swimming TV Work – babysitting Skittles	Caring for pets Clubbing Computer Cooking family – mum working Family Football Homework Ice skating Manhunt Play station Playing pool with friends Reading See non-resident father Shopping with mates Sleepovers Go to sports centre Swimming with friends or family Trampolining at home Watch TV Work – paper round

Source: Wikeley *et al* 2007 p 20

The *Young People's Social Attitudes Survey* (Economic and Social Data Service, 2003) is based on face-to-face interviews with 663 respondents aged 12 to 18 years. This survey found that the activity which young people most commonly participate in was sport as part of a sports club (42 per cent) followed by dance, drama or music group (35 per cent), being a member of a youth or religious club (20 per cent), taking part in voluntary of charity work (16 per cent) and a small minority participating at a political or protest group event (3 per cent).

More recently, the predominance of sports/physical activity as the most common positive activity in which young people participate was evident in the 2008 Empowering Young People Pilots. The Empowering Young People Pilots (EYPP) were a specific initiative of the then Department for Children Schools and Families which enabled young people to register with the local authority to gain control over

how money allocated to them for participation in positive activities was spent. Bielby *et al* (2010) carried out an evaluation of the EYPP through a mixed-methods approach including a quantitative study to assess the relative impact of EYPP on take-up of activities and a qualitative study of nine pilot areas. Participation rates are highest for sports. The EYPP found that 85 per cent of young people had taken part in sports activities in the previous four weeks – far higher levels of participation than for any other type of activity (next highest was 66 per cent who had been to the theatre/cinema). This was reflected in the literature with a predominance focused on sports. Wikeley *et al* (2007) specifically relay their surprise at the lack of involvement in arts activities and the 'dearth of non-sporting clubs'.

Barriers to young people participating in positive activities

Much of the information in this section of the review is informed by qualitative research carried out separately with parents (2009a) and with young people (2009b) by Solutions Research (commissioned by DCSF). Research with parents consisted of eight group discussions and thirty-two paired interviews. For the companion study 144 young people were interviewed using a friendship-paired-depth methodology. All young people were aged between 13 and 19 years and were a broad sample but all were still living with their parents.

Barriers to young people participating in positive activities are numerous and in some cases overlapping and compounding. How these barriers are manifest differs for individuals according to other factors in their lives but it is possible to identify what the main barriers are and how they are most commonly exposed.

Wikeley *et al* (2007 p 32) acknowledged that 'the reasons for non-participation were complex but the key factors were:

- cost, relating to both the activities themselves and, for young people living in rural areas, transport

- limited knowledge about how to realise access or confidence in doing so

- perceptions of self as an attendee of such activities.'

More recently, Solutions Research (2009b p 5) reiterated the importance of these three factors and expanded the list of key barriers to current participation to include the following (in approximate order of importance):

- low awareness of available activities locally

- personal inertia

- real and imagined peer pressure

- peer inertia (the way a group defaults to the familiar even when new ideas come along)

- a general lack of self-confidence

- specific anxiety about their abilities at the activity

- perceived lack of time due to school work and peer group activities (this is more common among older teens, i.e. over 16 years)

- for a minority, actual resistance to the notion of taking part.

These key barriers will now be explored in more depth, drawing on additional existing research in the relevant area.

- **Access to information** – The lack of awareness about out-of-school programmes has been identified as a barrier in research in the US, while in the UK, the perception of the availability of positive activities in their schools and neighbourhoods was a key factor linked to participation rates (Wikeley *et al* 2007). Solutions Research (2009b) found that there were often low levels of awareness about the positive activities available to young people in their local area and that this contributed to the belief that there was nothing to do. As part of the evaluation of EYPP, Bielby *et al* (2008) found that only one-in-ten young people found it very easy to find out about activities in their local area and around a fifth found it 'very difficult'.

- **Parental attitude** can be a major barrier. Unfamiliarity with clubs and groups or apathy on the part of parents discouraged children from participating. Solutions Research (2009a) identified two types of groupings of parents who presented a barrier to young people's participation in positive activities. These were parents who were 'passive disinterested' and did not particularly value participation in positive activities and those who focused on the negative impact on the parent/family and were 'resistors'.

- The **influence of friends and peers** was also identified in several studies as an important factor. Socialising with friends was an important motivating factor, more so with older young people, and some parents thought that the negative influence of an activity being viewed as 'uncool' was a definite barrier (Solutions Research 2009a). The more common and 'mainstream' an activity is the more comfortable young people are in participating. This is a strong factor in the dominance of sporting positive activities which are viewed positively and 'cool' even by those who do not participate in them (Solutions Research 2009b). Peer pressure was strongest at age 12 to 15 years when friendship groups are still forming. A qualitative study in the US by Borden *et al* (2005) with young people aged between 9 and 19 and from black/African-American and Latino backgrounds found that for some older young people the presence of younger children at youth centres was itself a major deterrent.

- **Internal factors** relating to the beliefs, confidence and perceptions young people hold of themselves are hugely important in determining whether they participate or not. EdComms' (2009) literature and communications review of attitudinal barriers to engaging young people in positive activities highlights the importance of low self-esteem, fear of rejection, limited aspirations and lowered expectations as important attitudinal barriers. Solutions Research (2009b) found that low self-confidence and a lack of belief in their own ability was a major barrier to participation for some groups of young people. It further noted that, for those

young people with lower levels of confidence, the fear of not being accepted at a particular activity was also a significant barrier. In a separate qualitative study, parents reported similar perceptions and cited lack of child motivation as the key barrier to participation (Solutions Research 2009a).

As Wikeley *et al* (2007 p xii) succinctly put it *'…the reason that most young people were involved in all these activities was because they chose to be.'* This may seem self-evident but young people's power to choose whether or not to participate and their awareness of that power and influence can be an important barrier or enabler for participation. However, as Borden *et al* (2005) point out, young people knowing and understanding the benefits of participating in positive activities is just one barrier and the other **contextual barriers** listed here are key factors in whether or not young people participate.

- Qualitative research with parents (Solutions Research 2009a) identified the **cost** of activities and associated costs for transport/equipment presented a barrier as did the payment structure (requiring all money up-front, for example). However, in research with young people, the cost of activities was cited more as a reason for participation lapsing than for not taking up new activities (Solutions Research 2009b).

- **Transport** – Living in a rural location appeared to have a strong (negative) effect on uptake of out-of-school-time activities. (Wikeley *et al* 2007 p 22) Solutions Research (2009a) found that as well as for those young people living in rural areas, transport was also a barrier for children of single parents and for those whose parents could not transport them due to work commitments.

- **Perceived risk** – Some evidence points to parents/guardians being risk averse, for example, travel safety (parents unwilling to let their child travel alone out of school if aged under 16 and/or after dark) or concerns about the activities themselves (dangerous sports, for example) (Solutions Research 2009a). A small study of mainly African-American teenagers in the US found that youth relationships and a fear of gang violence also impinged on the willingness to participate.

- **Time** – Positive activities, volunteering in particular, are perceived as time-consuming, particularly for those from poorer backgrounds and with many siblings (EdComms 2009) and where there was a greater responsibility in family life (Wikeley *et al* 2007). In the evaluation of EYPPs, 30 per cent of young carers did not sign up (for 'free money' for positive activities) because they did not have time, compared to 8 per cent of those without a caring responsibility (Bielby *et al* 2008). Using focus group sessions with 26 adolescent males based in Toronto, Allison *et al* (2005) found that other commitments such as homework, part-time jobs, relationships and responsibilities all acted as barriers to participation.

5. What is the impact of participating in positive activities on young people's outcomes?

Key messages

- Fun and enjoyment are the primary personal benefits of participation in positive activities, particularly those elements of novelty that may not be experienced elsewhere, i.e. trying something new with different people.

- Participation in positive activities can help young people to develop personal, social and emotional skills including: their self-esteem; confidence and aspiration; team-working; and social skills. Participation also improves relationships between young people, their peers and parents, teachers and other adults.

- A beneficial change in young people's relationships with other adults and in particular through their participation in positive activities can be transferred to academic learning, which may lead to better outcomes.

- More beneficial outcomes are achieved through participation in multiple positive activities.

- School-based provision of positive activities has the advantages of familiarity, convenience and availability of facilities and can be particularly useful for younger people and those from low-income families. However, it can also be a barrier for older young people for whom neutral venues may be more appropriate.

- Young people's participation in positive activities can directly benefit local communities through building social capital and community cohesion.

- Negative outcomes may be associated with the potential networking effect of bringing together the riskiest young people. Such negative outcomes may be avoided by offering long-term programs at an early age.

- For young people facing difficulties, contact with a supportive adult who views them positively (which participation in positive activities offers) is a crucial factor in improving their personal outcomes. Long-term, consistent involvement of a supportive adult is important for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

This section explores the impact of participation in positive activities through the perceptions of young people, parents, carers and providers and how this relates to outcomes (participation and achievement in learning; prevention of anti-social behaviour, youth crime and other high-risk behaviours such as substance misuse; and development of social and emotional skills).

The impact of participation in positive activities is described through three different perspectives. First, what hard evidence there is to show what young people have gained through participation in positive activities. Beyond this it is important to look at what participants themselves perceive they have gained through participation and, finally, how this relates to what the providers intended and to what participants (and their parents) expected. As described in more detail earlier (Section 3) there is relatively little 'hard evidence' of outcomes and the literature is dominated by qualitative research and self-reported impacts.

Personal, social and emotional development through participation in positive activities

The most obvious, primary benefit for young people participating in positive activities is the fun and enjoyment they experience. However, it is important to acknowledge that this is not, of course, unique to positive activities and could be achieved through the 'spontaneous activities' listed in the previous section (Tables 3 and 4) as well as elsewhere. The enjoyment experienced is most commonly described in terms of socialising and seeing friends and this was identified by both children and parents alike as the most appealing aspect of participation in extended services in schools (over half cited this). The idea of novelty was also important here; meeting new people, making new friends and 'trying something new' were key aspects of participation. These elements of fun and enjoyment may be more likely through positive activities than through other, spontaneous activities. In addition, in Wallace *et al*'s (2009) quantitative study of perceptions and usage of extended services in schools, around a third of pupils say they like activities because they get to learn new things.

Trying and experiencing new things with 'new' people through participation in positive activities has other benefits for young people. A literature review of school-based extra-curricular activities by Feldman and Matjasko (2005) found that participation in positive activities increased young people's aspirations to go to college. It also increased the amount that students talked to their parents about issues and helped those young people who had suffered depression as a result of previously being emotionally detached from their parents. They also found that adolescent participation was a significant predictor of life-long participation. Continuity of participation was a contributor to long-term educational success, voting behaviour and volunteering. This evidence demonstrates the value of young people participating in positive activities with regards to achieving the Coalition Government's aspirations for increased civic involvement and the potential longer-term benefits of initiatives such as National Citizen Service.

Hansen *et al* (2003) carried out a study into young people's self-reported perceptions of developmental experiences in organised youth activities compared to two other areas of their lives – education and socialising with friends. The strongest differences reported by those who participated in organised youth activities related to personal development and, in particular, their development of initiative. Young people reported higher rates of experiences involving setting goals, problem solving and time management through their experiences in organised youth activities than in education or through socialising with friends. They also reported more experiences of learning basic skills, such as how to control their emotions, and higher rates of experiences around relationships with other people, particularly around teamwork, social skills, group process skills and leadership. Such skills are consistently highlighted by employers as being significant in young people's successful transition to work. This finding carries particular weight as it reinforces the value of participation in positive activities in developing skills that can be transferred to learning and work-based settings to facilitate young people achieving better results.

Studies focusing on non-sporting positive activities are less common but Gardner *et al* (2008) looked at young people's experiences in dance classes through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 10 young people aged between 14 and 26. In this study, Gardner *et al* (2008) found that participation improved confidence with respect to both physical activity and social relationships. They also identified that participation in community dance classes increased respect between age groups and led to a greater sense of community solidarity (though it should be noted that these were perceived benefits and not the basis of any hard evidence.)

The process of learning

Wikeley *et al* (2007 p 35) stressed that it was not just the 'personal, social and emotional skills' (referred to in Youth Matters) that are the impact of participation in positive activities but that the process of learning itself is fundamental: 'it is the key skills of learning gained that are so important for their [young people's] full engagement and attainment in school'.

The positive activities considered in this review are defined as adult-led and the dynamic between those adults leading activities and the young people who participate is a crucial one. The learning environment of positive activities is a very different one to that of schools, even when the activity takes place in the same (school) building and involves the same adult (for example, a teacher from the school taking karate lessons).

The key difference for positive activities as opposed to in-school activities is the educational relationship. The perception of those young people participating is that the adult's contribution to the activity is based on their **expertise** rather than their '**adultness**'. For example, an adult may lead a session in karate because they are proficient at it (a black-belt) rather than simply because they are an adult. Like the young people, the adult's involvement is voluntary and based on their own enthusiasm for the activity, rather than because they were part of a system, imposing a separate agenda on the young people (Wikeley *et al* 2007). The power is more equally shared and the young people held perceptions of the adults as co-learners and felt that they had a significant role in their own learning experience.

Wikeley *et al* (2007) surmise that:

> *'…the learning that takes place in out-of-school activities is crucial and can have real implications for school engagement in terms of the educational relationships young people form with teachers. If successful those relationships have an impact on self-efficacy: agency and motivation at school and on into lifelong learning. Therefore out-of-school activities are a 'good thing' for all learners'.* (p 36)

Participation in multiple positive activities

Some studies have focused on whether participation in a combination of different positive activities has a bearing on the impact. One such study looked at whether participation in sports activities produced better outcomes for young people when

combined with participation in other activities. Linver *et al* (2009) conducted cluster analysis of a large, nationally representative sample in the US comparing activity patterns of adolescents aged 10 to 18 years. They focused on evidence of competence, confidence, connections, character and caring. Findings showed that participation in one activity (of any type) was generally better for young people than not participating but that participating in many activities, including sport, was generally better than participating in just one activity. The authors concluded that:

> *'The research demonstrates the benefits of sports participation over no activity participation for positive youth development. However, if participation in sports occurs in conjunction with other organised activities, so much the better'.* (p16)

A study by Blomfield and Barber (2009) based on a self-completed questionnaire (sample of 1,489 adolescents, 56 per cent female and aged 12 to 16 years) also found similar general benefits of participation in sporting and other activities. In this study of Australian young people it was found that those young people who reported participating in a mixture of sporting and other activities had a higher academic self-concept and higher general self-worth. The authors suggested that this may be a result of exposure to a greater variety of developmental experiences. Although, as mentioned earlier, care must be taken not to assume a causal relationship exists within this correlation (i.e. participating in a mixture of sporting and other activities may lead to higher academic self-concept and higher self-worth **or** those with a higher academic self-concept and higher self-worth may be more likely to participate in a mixture of sporting and other activities).

Perspectives of parents/carers on participation in positive activities

Qualitative research with parents found universal agreement that 'organised activities' were a 'good thing' and parents liked the fact that they kept children occupied doing something fun and enjoyable, kept children safe and off the streets and could have a very positive impact on personal growth and development, particularly with confidence and self-esteem (Solutions Research 2009a section 4.1). The most important benefit was that the children enjoyed the activity and that the parents could share this enjoyment.

Other related skills which parents/carers perceived as being the impact of participation in positive activities included learning to be part of a team, discipline/organisational skills (being somewhere on time, taking part in something, working together as a team) and self-reliance/independence – learning to be away from parents and operate as a growing adult. All of these benefits were felt to be very important and valued by parents (Solutions Research 2009a section 5.5.4). The development of new skills that children may not get in school or at home was seen as important for some parents, particularly the more engaged. Findings from the interviews indicated that very low-income parents living in deprived settings were particularly strong believers in the beneficial impacts which could be achieved by young people through participating in positive activities. These parents felt that not being able to participate in positive activities (for whatever reasons) actually had a

negative impact on a child's self-esteem and attitude (Solutions Research 2009a section 5.5.4).

The location of activities

The location of activities plays an important part in the participation of young people in positive activities. Clearly the school is one of the main potential venues for the provision of positive activities and many benefits to providing positive activities in school-based locations have been identified. Based on 99 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with tenth graders in Chicago schools, Chaskin and Baker (2006) found that, on a basic level, schools have facilities, are convenient, familiar and feel relatively safe for young people.

The school has been identified as particularly important for young children unable to access shared peer group activities elsewhere (Wikeley *et al* 2007). More generally, the school was an important source of positive activities for young people from low-income families, although this study found that this rarely extends beyond sporting activities. The use of schools as a location for provision of activities may, however, create a barrier for young people attending special schools who are unable to participate because they have transport arranged home.

For older young people Wikeley *et al* (2007 p 37) found that they often do not join school clubs and prefer other alternatives that are unconnected to schools. This relates to their perceptions of the level of 'authenticity in the adult world' of the activity. Having places for which young people feel a sense of ownership enables them to engage with others on equal terms and is an important aspect of the shared learning experience gained through positive activities.

Young people feeling some kind of ownership over the venue in which activity takes place was highlighted as an important factor in overcoming attitudinal barriers for young people (EdComms 2009).

This is also relevant to perceptions of parents and concerns about the safety of their children in relation to particular places/neighbourhoods. Research about gang culture in the US (Chaskin and Baker 2006) suggests that neutral venues should be chosen to avoid associating a certain activity with a certain subculture. In the same study young people expressed interest in activities which took place outside of their own neighbourhood in other parts of the city, relating to their own concerns about safety and risk.

Young people also thought that this would help to broaden their horizons, 'to try new things, meet new people …in new places'. However, interestingly, young people also expressed a desire to contribute towards changing those 'deficits' in their local area that made it problematic for locating activities there. This suggests that young people in such areas would benefit from access to positive activities which focused on civic engagement and involved them in social action in their neighbourhoods. This demonstrates the direct link between participation in positive activities and young people's involvement in the Big Society,

Impact on the community

Parents did see a benefit to the wider community if young people participated in certain positive activities, however, this was not a strong driver to encourage participation, nor was it seen as the primary benefit. This benefit tended to be linked to youth volunteering which was seen as giving a sense of community awareness to young people in addition to helping the wider community. This is relevant in the context of a literature review by Hill *et al* (2009) which found that young people (aged 16 to 24 years old) were more likely than any other age group to volunteer 'informally' but were among the least likely to volunteer formally. Thus participation in positive activities presents an opportunity to increase formal volunteering, increase the take-up of opportunities through the forthcoming National Citizen Service and, through that, increase recognition of the contribution that young people make.

Although not an immediate response, on reflection, most respondents felt that participation in positive activities also gave young people in an area the opportunity to mix and get to know other young people outside of their immediate friends/peers, which would be good for community relationships and community cohesion. (Solutions Research 2009a section 5.5.9) In this way young people's participation in positive activities can be seen as a way of developing social capital. It is worth noting the distinction here between what Putnam (2000) described as 'bonding' social capital (essentially developing strong bonds and social capital between similar/like people or within a group) and 'bridging' social capital (as the term suggests, developing bonds and social capital across different people/groups). Muschamp *et al* (2009) found that new friendships were more likely to be forged through clubs based on single/specific activities rather than less focused, more general activities, such as youth clubs. This may also suggest that 'bridging' social capital is also more likely to be developed through activity-specific clubs.

Potential negative outcomes and how to avoid them

The challenge of trying to evidence and measure a direct causal relationship between participation in positive activities and better general outcomes for young people from existing literature was highlighted in a systematic review for the Campbell Collaboration. Zief *et al* (2006) found that there was insufficient evidence to make specific policy recommendations and noted that despite identifying some promising findings, the pooled impact of participation in positive activities requires further research.

A quantitative US study, based on data from the Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey (sample size 891) into participation in sport and physical activity and substance misuse among adolescents (Moore and Werch 2005), found a correlation between certain specific sports/physical activities – school-sponsored football, swimming, wrestling; out-of-school dance/cheerleading/gymnastics, skateboarding, surfing and tennis – and a higher likelihood of substance misuse. The same study also identified a correlation between other activities – school-sponsored dance/cheerleading/ gymnastics, out-of-school basketball, rollerblading and swimming – and a **decrease** in substance misuse. However, overall the study found that there was no specific link between positive activities and an increase in substance misuse. The correlations

identified above may reflect that some young substance users are more likely to choose certain sports/physical activities, rather than those activities playing any causal role.

There are two studies which, while they do not show a negative outcome linked to participation in positive activities, did not find any positive outcomes either. The evidence that participation may not produce positive outcomes for young people has obvious ramifications in terms of the effective use of resources and ensuring value for money, so it is important to consider possible ways of avoiding this in future provision.

The first of these two studies focused on the Young People's Development Programme (YPDP). This study looked at participation in positive activities but as part of a broader specific initiative. The differentiation between this and the provision of positive activities more generally is an important one to make in considering its effectiveness. The YPDP was evaluated by Wiggins *et al* (2008) using a mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) and found that participation in YPDP was not associated with higher rates of positive outcomes than the comparison group. Specifically,

> *'YPDP young people were statistically no more or less likely than those from comparison sites to report on their questionnaires positive outcomes related to: self-esteem and mental well-being, substance misuse, or contact with police. For young women attending YPDP, the statistical comparisons suggested that they had significantly less positive outcomes than the comparison group relating to truanting, temporary exclusions, expectations of being a teenage parent, sexual activity and teenage pregnancy'.* (p 70)

The evaluation outlined a number of considerations as important in understanding these findings. Practical considerations included the difficulty in providing interventions in a consistent manner and the potential networking effect of bringing together the riskiest young people.

The evaluation challenges:

> *'the assumption that a relatively short-term programme can alone substantially influence long-term, entrenched problems in the often chaotic lives of vulnerable young people'.* (p v)

The evaluation did find that there were improved outcomes with time, and staff involved in delivering the programmes felt that a longer programme offered at an earlier age could increase the likelihood of achieving positive outcomes.

A similar cautionary note emerges from the EYPP study, which found no significant impact on self-esteem or emotional wellbeing or on young people's educational engagement or attitudes to school within this specific one-year pilot (Bielby *et al* 2010). The study notes the initial mistrust of young people in relation to this initiative and the corresponding slow take-up of funding for positive activities. This greatly reduced the time over which the initiative could have an impact on young people. This again highlights the importance of long-term initiatives and allowing time for

young people to learn about and trust a new initiative as well as allowing time for any outcomes to be evident.

Linked to the issue of the length and timing of programmes, there is some evidence that parents (and possibly others) do not make the direct link between involvement in positive activities and better outcomes for young people. Qualitative research with parents found that many did not see a link between positive activities and success in school, some even felt that out-of-school activities could be distracting to school work. (Solutions Research 2009a, 1).

Cross-cutting issues: child poverty

Research in the US by Reisner *et al* (2007) used data from the Study of Promising After-School Programs (2,914 youth in 35 after-school programs) to examine the impact of after-school activities over a two-year period for economically disadvantaged, minority youth, many of whose family were recent migrants. For this group it was found that those who participate in varied, high-quality after-school programmes alongside other after-school activities gain better outcomes than those who only attend one after-school programme or not at all. These benefits included improved behaviour and work habits, better academic performance and better social skills in relating to their peers. This presents hard evidence from a two-year study of the beneficial impact of participation in positive activities. However, it is not possible to state from this study whether the same scenario would occur among youth in different cultural groups.

The YPDP reported that it was possible to involve the most vulnerable, 'at-risk' young people in an intensive programme of broad provision, over relatively long periods if they find it engaging. Of those people who did engage on this programme a greater number than in the comparison achieved accreditation. There were also improvements in self-confidence and the ability to get on with other people. It is interesting to note that even in a study that did not find an association between participation and more positive outcomes on the whole, there were some beneficial outcomes. (This perhaps links to the point above about the provision of positive activities in a more general sense as opposed to provision as part of a specific initiative.)

Cross-cutting issues: integrated services delivery and extended schools

Using a multi-strand approach over three years Cummings *et al* (2007) carried out an evaluation of the national Full Service Extended Schools (FSES) initiative to determine what FSES can and might achieve. With this purpose, the evaluation focused on FSES operating under the most favourable conditions, rather than on 'typical' FSES (or those with the most problems) so their findings need to be considered within that context.

The FSES approach was impacting positively on pupils' attainments in those 'best scenario' case study schools included in the review. These impacts were most

apparent in the case of those pupils facing difficulties. In this evaluation, FSES were found to be having a range of other impacts on outcomes for pupils, including engagement with learning, family stability and enhanced life chances. Further, it was evident that in the case of children facing difficulties, these outcomes were often closely related (Cummings *et al* 2007).

For young people facing difficulties the immediate cause of change in terms of personal and social outcomes is contact with supportive adults who view them positively (Cummings *et al* 2007). This is cited by Wikeley *et al* (2007 p 36) who state that 'what enthuses and transforms those young people who participate in out-of-school activities are the skills, efforts and motivation of committed adults'. This emerges as a recurring key factor in research looking into those enablers that help young people move forward and is a fundamental benefit of youth work (McKee *et al* 2010). Perseverance on the part of the FSES is also an important factor for positive outcomes with young people facing difficulties, as their problems are often long-standing (Cummings *et al* 2007). Again, the importance of long-term consistent involvement in young people's lives is a recurring feature in analysing what is important in young people achieving positive outcomes from participation in positive activities, i.e. there are no quick fixes to long-standing personal, social and cultural problems.

Another beneficial impact of FSES was in terms of young people's behavioural and health-related outcomes. It was common for FSES to set up open-access forms of health provision such as drop-in health clinics or curriculum sessions to enable young people to get advice on health matters as they needed it. The evidence suggests that these facilities were extensively used and resulted in changes in young people's behaviour and health-related outcomes (Cummings *et al* 2007 p 55).

However, as Wikeley *et al* (2007 p 36) point out, it is important that extended schools are not merely seen as a means of providing affordable childcare and more efficient provision of children's services as positive activities have 'a more fundamental and valuable part to play in improving learning for all young people'.

6. What works, and offers greatest value for money, in engaging young people who would otherwise not have participated in positive activities, while ensuring that all young people have access to effective positive activities?

Key messages

- Different approaches are required for different levels of engagement. The fun and enjoyment of positive activities should be the focus of encouraging initial take-up of opportunities; otherwise unobtainable benefits – such as competitions and travel to other venues – may help to keep young people engaged; and more long-term benefits in relation to education, training and employment may help sustain participation over a longer period in multiple activities.

- The most effective mechanism for getting young people involved in positive activities is through valued personal relationships: peers, adults or siblings.

- Word of mouth and local face-to-face communication to young people and their parents remain pivotal.

- Value for money may be improved by using existing positive activities as the conduit to promote the multitude of other opportunities available to young people in their local area.

- Provision that is flexible, takes account of older young people's possible family responsibilities, has no fixed start or end date and with a rolling admission system has been successful in recruiting and maintaining young people's participation in positive activities.

- A comprehensive communications strategy based on research with the young people being targeted will help engage young people in positive activities. Different methods need to be used as appropriate for the desired outcome, for example, articles in magazines may be a useful way of reaching teenagers, especially girls; text messages can be used to remind young people to attend a specific activity.

Promoting positive activities/raising young people's awareness of what's on offer

This section of the review draws heavily on a summary of the findings of the 2009 DCSF *Review of Literature and Communications* (EdComms 2009) in relation to attitudinal barriers to engaging young people in positive activities. The review proposes a communications campaign that addresses a number of key areas, which are described below, with reference to other research as relevant:

- **Levels of engagement** – A different approach is required to get young people to take up positive activities and to get them to continue to participate. The DCSF review recommended a three-pronged approach to this. First, as highlighted earlier, the immediate benefit for young people who participate is having fun and enjoyment so this fact should be promoted to encourage take-up. Second, once engaged, continuity could be promoted through highlighting otherwise unobtainable benefits such as entry to competitions, travel to different venues or trying something new in addition to the current activity. Third, more long-term outcomes beneficial to further education/training or job opportunities should be promoted through positive activities. This may be achieved through highlighting new skills/experience gained or more practical things such as UCAS points gained through volunteering (EdComms 2009).

- **Audience and minority groups** – Wikeley *et al* (2007) and EdComms (2009) both argue that the promotion and access to positive activities should be for all young people and not just targeted towards specific groups (accepting that there will be specific initiatives that by design do target specific groups). Participation of all young people is discouraged by the promotion of activities either for an elite group (for example, those who excel at sports) or a disadvantaged group (for example, those not in education, employment or training). Similarly, positive activities should not be promoted solely as an intervention, for example, to reduce anti-social behaviour. For some minority groups, EdComms (2009) identifies that additional targeting may be beneficial and gives the example of promoting volunteering among Muslims as part of a duty to help your community.

- **Media, marketing and promotion** – EdComms (2009) emphasised the importance of background research to understand the core interests for the young people being targeted (a particular group or in a particular locality, for example). There is a wide variety of media that could be used to convey messages to young people – magazines, social networking sites, blogs, radio, text messages, viral marketing, websites and face-to-face. There are advantages and disadvantages to each medium and it is important to identify the right message for the right medium (or combination of mediums) and to review this regularly. Looking at the different mediums in turn with regards to promoting participation in positive activities, the following was summarised in the EdComms (2009) communication and literature review:

    o **Magazines** – can be an effective means of communicating the general benefits of positive activities or of an individual project, particularly for teenagers – girls especially – and where the message is about personal/intimate issues not easily addressed face-to-face.

    o **Social networking websites** – combine multiple forms of media and engage young people's active involvement in contributing their own messages, rather than as passive recipients. Has been used by the National Youth Volunteers Servicein relation to youth volunteering.

    o **Blogs** – Oxfam is a good example of use of blogs as 'Young people tend to like their simple, non-condescending language and style and often

participate in lively discussions on issues they are passionate about.' (EdComms 2009 p 48).

- o **Radio** – still important; needs to be targeted when young people are not in school and more likely to be in the house.

- o **Text messages** – can be cheaper than a letter or flier but must adhere to specific regulations. Commonly used as part of a mixed-methods approach, either providing a link or signposting young people elsewhere for more information or as a reminder for specific activities. Has also been used for consultation where a quick turnaround on single issues was desired.

- o **Viral marketing** – can be very cost-effective particularly for petitions, launch events, last-minute changes, etc but little control over the message and difficult to target specific groups.

- o **Websites** – often the primary communication tool and tend to be the repository of all information about a specific campaign: essential but not enough on their own.

- o **Face-to-face** – youth workers, young volunteers or other young people can be particularly effective in recruiting young people for positive activities. Face-to-face contacts with faith groups, community groups and other local organisations is important in recruiting the 'hard-to-engage'.

- o Research in the UK said parents would welcome clear, concise and up-to-date information about what was available in the local area, when and where and at what cost (Solutions Research 2009a). As discussed earlier in this report, the role of parents in securing young people's participation in positive activities is a crucial one and publicity material targeted specifically at parents/carers would be welcomed.

- **Involving young people** – key to the benefits of taking part in positive activities is the sense of agency which young people have and their ability to exercise influence (Wikeley *et al* 2007). This should be replicated in the involvement of young people in all aspects of promoting positive activities, such as design of materials, targeting strategy. For example, young people were involved in developing the 'Launch Yourself' slogan later incorporated as part of the Australian National Youth Week logo.

- **Messages** – EdComms (2009) recommended that messages about positive activities should highlight specific benefits rather than a generic 'it's a good thing' and use plain language, avoiding 'youth speak'. They felt that the evidence base for a communications plan was still somewhat lacking and that further primary research was necessary to provide a more complete picture. Nonetheless, the authors did recommend key messages for two audiences (and primary stakeholders), namely young people and parents. These key messages present a useful starting point for promoting positive activities and are reproduced here in Table 5 (below):

Table 5.   Key messages for promoting positive activities

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1. Messages to young people

1.1 'Try something new'

Impact: Trying a new sport or an outdoor activity is fun and a good way to meet people and learn new things.

Why: There are many possible activities you could join. You can also add to your CV by taking on new activities and responsibilities. Employers appreciate when you are engaged in something outside school.

How: Go to a youth centre or contact your local council to get informed about what is available in your area. Most leisure places offer a free taster session. Try it and if you do not enjoy it, tell the organisers why you do not like it and how it could be improved.

1.2 'You decide'

Impact: You really have a choice in what to do and how to do it. You can be as involved as you want and dedicate as much time as you wish.

Why: Young people who participate in activities can feel much more confident and are less likely to be bullied.[4] Making important decisions and participating in group work is fun: nobody tells you what to do; it's up to you and your friends to decide.

How: Join an activity and ask the youth workers to be as involved as possible in the planning, managing and evaluation of the activity. They will be happy to see you wanting to be involved.

1.3 'It's learning but it's not school'

Impact: You can learn a lot of new skills by volunteering, playing new sports, learning arts, music and drama techniques. This is so different from school, though. It's up to you to decide what to learn and how to develop your skills and, most importantly, it's fun.

Why: Teachers have to be tough to make sure everybody learns to master some core skills. Positive activities are just the opposite: everyone can develop the skills they love the most and youth workers are there to help you reach your potential, not to tell you what to do.

How: Schools may provide information on positive activities, or offer some of their buildings as a site for activities. But don't be suspicious! Even if the activity is held in a school facility, it is not really school.

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[4] NfpSynergy (2007) *Typical young people: a study of what young people are really like today*, London: NfpSynergy.

2. Messages to parents

2.1 'Good for them, good for others'

Impact: Positive activities are as important for your child's development as school itself. While bringing benefits to your child's behaviour and overall wellbeing, most of the time your child also gets the chance to help others and make a difference – by volunteering, or coaching younger children or helping disabled peers.

Why: Young people participating in positive activities get along better with their parents.[5] At the same time, they have much more fun than in school. All religions see helping your own community as a duty.

How: Contact your local council and ask what's on offer in your area. Help your child decide what activity they would enjoy the most.

2.2 'Good for the present, good for the future'

Impact: Employers are more likely to hire someone who has been involved in other activities apart from school. At the same time, out-of-school activities relieve boredom and make your child more social, integrated and active.

Why: Activities sustained for a longer period of time bring about the most positive results.[6] This is recognised by experts, youth workers and employers. Make sure your child develops a passion and builds it up for a long time.

How: Help your child decide which activity would be the best for them. Consider their present and their future.

2.3 'Your encouragement counts'

Impact: The cost of positive activities is a problem for young people.[7] If you encourage them to start an activity and help them cover the cost of it, they will be more inclined to participate.

Why: The role of parents is pivotal in determining and encouraging young people's participation in positive activities. Research has proved your encouragement leads to greater and sustained involvement.[8]

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[5] NfpSynergy (2007) *Typical young people: a study of what young people are really like today,* London: NfpSynergy.

[6] Feinstein, L. *et al* (2005) *Leisure context in adolescence and their effects on adult outcomes*, London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, p 23.

[7] Wikeley, F. *et al* (2007) *Educational relationships outside school: why access is important,* York: JRF

[8] Smith, D. (1999) 'Poor marketing or the decline of altruism? Young people and volunteering in the UK, *International journal of non-profit and voluntary sector marketing,* vol 4, no 4, p 375.

> **How**: Suggest possible activities and be supportive. If the young person is not put off by it, offer to help by driving him or her to attend these activities or offering some small but important help, like washing the sports kit.

Source: EdComms 2009 pp 7–8

As neatly summed up by Chaskin and Baker (2006 p 13) the most effective mechanism for getting young people involved in positive activities is through valued personal relationships: peers, adults or siblings. Information coming to them through these relationships is much more powerful than anonymous or socially unmediated information. This is echoed by the DCSF *Literature and Communications Review* (EdComms 2009) which states that:

> *'there is widespread agreement that word of mouth and local face-to-face communication to young people and their parents remain pivotal …The evidence suggests that there is nothing more efficient than harnessing friendship, one of the most important values for young people, to recruit others to positive activities'* (p 6).

The Empowering Young People Pilots (EYPP) was a specific initiative which gave young people direct influence over money spent on them in the provision of positive activities. The evaluation of this particular initiative found that young people were most likely to be aware of this and to have registered where a card-based approach was used rather than a web-based or key worker approach (Bielby *et al* 2010).

Young people who participated in EYPP activities increased their knowledge and awareness of the positive activities on offer because they received information from the local authorities and because they gained access to further information about the (other) activities in their local area when they participated in activities. So the role of local authorities in promoting what's on offer locally for young people is important. Further, those who participate in activities already are then more likely to participate in other activities.

There may be relatively greater gains – and therefore better value for money – in promoting a multitude of positive activities with those who have previously or are currently already participating in a positive activity, i.e. using that existing activity as the conduit to promote other activities. This may present better value for money than trying to promote directly – 'cold calling' – to those who are not participating, particularly when considering:

- many activities may be short term
- there may be additional benefits in young people participating in a wider variety of activities over a longer period of time
- 'word of mouth' is a key channel through which young people and parents find out about what's on offer with regards to positive activities.

Enablers

Over and above the promotion of positive activities, a number of other key enablers emerge. The main enablers for promoting and sustaining young people's participation in positive activities are strongly linked to the removal or negation of the barriers outlined earlier (Section 4).

- **Fun and enjoyment** are key motivations for young people participating in positive activities and for the ongoing support of parents. Young people's ability to choose which activities to participate in and when to participate is a key part of their attractiveness and increases the likelihood of participation being sustained (Wikeley *et al* 2007). One of the key principals of marketing is the importance of the first contact with a customer (Novo 2004) and this principal is also key to engaging young people in positive activities.

- **Friends and peers** – qualitative research in the UK (Solutions Research 2009b p 21) found that friends and peers were one of the most powerful influences on participating in positive activities. The immediate peer group was 'a strong and trusted source of information about 'what was going on' locally and what was worth trying' and as a result 'was therefore seen as key in spreading the word and encouraging interest'. In the EYPP study (Bielby *et al* 2008), around two-fifths of young people said that if their friends or family were involved it would make it easier for them to do activities. A study among rural adolescent girls in Australia also found that family members who were active participants in sports were important factors that encouraged participation, as were friends. Wikeley *et al* (2007) identified *'the importance of secure friendships for initiating and sustaining young people in organised activities'*. (p 27)

- **Parents** – parental support and encouragement was seen as vital by young people. Those young people who were participating in positive activities believed that they had full parental support, both emotional (encouragement, etc) and practical (financial, transport, etc) (Solutions Research 2009b).

- **Schools** are often very good at introducing young people to activities through taster sessions, widening horizons and providing links with broader community groups (Wikeley *et al* 2007) although 'endorsing such activities as part of the establishment often results in them becoming less attractive to young people' (2007 p 37).

- **Reduce cost** – around two-fifths of young people said that getting the cost of activities paid would help (Bielby *et al* 2008). Meeting both direct (for example, payment for coaching sessions, entrance fees) and indirect costs (for example, transport to matches/events, equipment) would enable more young people to participate.

- Creating more **opportunities** for young people early in their lives will have a positive impact on aspiration and participation during adolescence (EdComms 2009).

- Based on previous studies, **time** was a crucial factor for young people to 'become aware of, understand and trust' any new initiatives aimed at increasing their participation in positive activities (Bielby *et al* 2008 p 28). It was identified that young people needed sustained exposure before accepting a new activity and that young people initially mistrusted the money offered to them (Bielby *et al* 2008). Reisner *et al* (2007) found that young people who had high-quality after-school experiences over two years, rather than one year, produced better outcomes academically and in terms of improved behaviour, work habits and social skills. Time pressure is also a key factor in young people's participation lapsing, particularly as they progress through teenage years. Lauver and Little (2005) suggested that a programme schedule that is flexible and takes account of older young people's possible family responsibilities, has no fixed start or end date, with a rolling admission system has been successful in recruiting and maintaining young people's participation in positive activities.

Cross-sector partnership working, effective commissioning strategies and value for money

Relatively little research exists around the role of partnership working with specific regards to the provision of positive activities for young people.

Clemens *et al* (2005) conducted 3,806 telephone interviews to provide a baseline of extended services in maintained schools. A high level of partnership working was evident with some other agencies. Almost all schools worked with a health professional (99 per cent) and around four-fifths (81 per cent) worked with youth workers.

More recently, with regards to Full Service Extended Schools (FSES), there was a positive picture of partnership working. This largely stemmed from the proactive work of heads and FSES coordinators in engaging other agencies to work with schools and to use it as a base for delivering services (Cummings *et al* 2007). It was acknowledged that effective partnership working takes time and effort to develop and that the role of individuals is key to whether this is effective or not.

Research by Reisner *et al* (2007 pp 15–16) into after-school programmes in the US concluded that high-quality after-school programmes should collaborate with other after-school providers to extend provision to all young people in an area. Further, it is important to identify and, as much as possible, eliminate perverse, unintended incentives in commissioning providers, such as ensuring a process that promotes collaboration rather than competition between providers .

There is currently no research literature focusing specifically on the social return on investment or value for money assessment of the provision of positive activities.

In the EYPP initiative, young people (through a range of different methods) were given direct influence over how money was spent on positive activities. This was shown to significantly increase young people's participation in sporting activities and cinema visits, but not for other activities. Self-reports from young people suggested that the EYPP had enabled them to participate in at least one activity that they

otherwise would not have done (Bielby *et al* 2010). However, there were limitations to the beneficial outcomes that could be linked to this (see previous section on negative impacts).

In an earlier interim report on EYPP, it was found that most providers used were organisations that had previously worked with the local authorities although all areas had plans to develop their provision and recruit new providers in response to demand identified through requests and feedback from young people (Bielby *et al* 2008).

7. Conclusions and main messages

This research review looks at available evidence pertaining to young people's participation in 'positive activities'. For the purposes of this review positive activities are defined as adult-led constructive leisure-time activities for young people between the ages of 13 and 19 years.

This review essentially focuses on:

- who participates and who does not
- what evidence exists about the impact their participation has
- what works in engaging all young people in effective positive activities?

Who participates and who does not?

Around three-quarters of all young people participate in some form of positive activities. There is little difference in terms of participation rates by gender but far fewer young people from lower-income families participate in activities – less than half – and those in rural areas also participate in lower numbers.

A formal measure of rates of participation in positive activities exists in data gathered in the Tellus survey (previously commissioned by DCSF). This is a voluntary online survey which young people complete in those schools that chose to participate in each local authority. While there are limitations as to how accurate and representative the data is at local authority level it nonetheless provides a useful benchmark for levels of participation from over 250,000 respondents.

The most recent data from the Tellus survey for participation in positive activities suggests that rates of participation have fallen over the last year by 2.4 percentage points from 68.2 per cent in 2008/09 to 65.8 per cent in 2009/10. The percentage of young people participating in positive activities in individual local authorities, ranges from around half (49 per cent) of all young people to all young people (100 per cent), with an average (median) value at around two-thirds (66 per cent) of all young people.

Sports and physical activity are the type of positive activity with the highest participation rates, followed by dance/drama or music groups, volunteering and religious faith or community groups. However, participation rates may be a reflection of the type of provision available to young people and the funding available for this, rather than the preferences of young people.

There are many barriers to young people's participation in positive activities both in terms of trying new activities and maintaining participation. Of particular importance are the following:

- **access to information** – knowing what is available locally and how to access it

- **parental attitude** – both in terms of perception of the value of positive activities and the perceptions of risk in accessing and taking part in activities

- **the influence of friends and peers** – peer pressure is strongest at age 12 to 15 years when friendship groups are still forming

- **internal factors** – the perceptions young people hold about themselves, such as confidence and self-esteem

- **practical factors** – mainly around time (particularly for those from larger families and with caring responsibilities), transport (particularly for those in rural areas) and cost (direct cost of activities, equipment, competition fees, and costing structure, for example, money in advance for a ten-week course).

What evidence exists about the impact of young people participating in positive activities?

The immediate impact for young people participating in positive activities – and one not to be underplayed – is fun and enjoyment! In particular, those elements of fun and enjoyment to be found in the novelty of experience not gained elsewhere, i.e. trying new things with new people. (This is also the strongest driving factor in recruiting young people to positive activities.)

Participation in positive activities helps young people to develop personal, social and emotional skills including improving: their self-esteem; confidence and aspiration; team-working; and social skills. Wikeley *et al* (2007) found that participation in positive activities improves relationships between young people and other adults (parents and teachers) and also with their peers. There is evidence that more beneficial outcomes are achieved through participation in multiple positive activities. This beneficial impact relates directly to the 'be healthy' outcome of Every Child Matters (ECM) and in particular the aim around mental and emotional health. It also indirectly relates to many other ECM outcomes (see below).

The second broad area of impact relating to participation in positive activities centres on the process of learning. The dynamic between young people participating in activities and the adult 'leading' those activities is fundamentally different in positive activities to that in formal education settings. Unlike in schools, the adult 'expert' is viewed as participating in positive activities due to a shared passion and acknowledged level of expertise in that particular area (for example, being a black belt in karate), rather than it being part of a job. As such, the dynamic is different between adults and young people and all participants are commonly viewed as co-learners. A beneficial change in young people's relationships with other adults through their participation in positive activities can be transferred to academic learning and may lead to better outcomes. This impact relates most directly to the 'enjoy and achieve' and 'achieve economic wellbeing' outcomes of Every Child Matters.

In addition to the beneficial transfer of a different process of learning to support academic achievement, there are also benefits in terms of skill development that can be transferred to the workplace. Experiences of developing relationships with other people, particularly around teamwork, social skills, group process skills and

leadership through participation in positive activities are key to skills consistently highlighted by employers as important.

The location in which positive activities are provided is also important. School-based provision of positive activities has the advantages of familiarity, convenience and availability of facilities and can be particularly useful for younger people and those from low-income families. However, school-based provision can also be a barrier for older young people and for those harder to engage, for whom neutral venues may be more appropriate. Indeed an activity that is promoted by schools and local authorities may, as a direct result, be less desirable for older young people. Similarly, the participation of young children may also make activities less appealing for older young people. Thus, different activities in different settings are required for different age groups and those activities need to be promoted differently.

A third key impact of positive activities – and particular those relating to involvement in religious, faith or community groups and youth volunteering – is the beneficial impact on the local community. Young people's participation in positive activities can directly benefit local communities through building social capital and developing community cohesion. Through this young people participating in positive activities can 'make a positive contribution' to their local area (another main outcome of Every Child Matters). There is evidence of a direct link between participation in positive activities and life-long civic engagement that will be key to young people's role in the Big Society and, more specifically, to the potential learning for a successful National Citizen Service.

Although the weight of evidence supports the development of personal, social and emotional skills through participation in positive activities, some studies (Wiggins *et al* 2008; Bielby *et al* 2010) did not find a causal relationship (or a correlation) between participation in positive activities and positive outcomes for young people. In these studies participation was neither linked to more positive outcomes for young people, nor to more negative outcomes. Possible ways of avoiding such neutral outcomes include providing sustained initiatives at an earlier age and allowing a longer lead-in for young people to learn about and trust a new initiative.

Wiggins *et al* (2008 p v) succinctly describe the difficulty in isolating and evidencing the impact of participation in positive activities on long-term positive outcomes for young people, seeing it, in part, as a challenge of the '…assumption that a relatively short-term programme can alone substantially influence long-term, entrenched problems in the often chaotic lives of vulnerable young people'. This also highlights the differentiation between broad provision of positive activities and specific interventions.

However, despite the inherent difficulty, further research is required in terms of a cost-benefit or social return on investment analysis of young people's participation in positive activities. This needs to establish causal links between young people's participation in positive activities and the resultant outcomes. In particular, better evidence is required to help us understand the fundamental value for money challenges of: is more investment worth it? And, would less investment have a negative effect? This could then help inform what should be delivered by an effective commissioning strategy.

What works in engaging all young people in effective positive activities?

It is useful to reflect on the purpose of positive activities and whether they are conceived as out-of-school activities accessible and available to all young people or a specific targeted intervention for disadvantaged and disengaged young people. The way that they are conceived will necessarily impact on the way in which access and engagement is developed. Given that participation is higher among urban, affluent families, there may be an argument for widening access to provision. The main enablers for engaging young people in positive activities relate to the removal or negation of the barriers to participation. Namely, these are to harness the power of friendship and word-of-mouth in engaging young people; tackle the inherent practical barriers around access such as cost, travel, etc; to involve young people in the provision of new initiatives and give them time to work; and to develop an effective comprehensive approach to marketing opportunities to participate in positive activities.

The promotion and marketing of positive activities is a crucial part of engaging young people and narrowing the gap in participation and some key themes emerge:

- **Levels of engagement** – promoting the immediate benefits of fun and enjoyment is instrumental in engaging more young people in positive activities. In order to sustain levels of participation, additional benefits need to be promoted such as entry to competitions, travel to new places/venues. A third level is to then promote longer-term benefits such as those relating to higher education or employment prospects (for example, UCAS points gained through volunteering).

- **Type of provision** – perhaps particularly relevant related to the use of extended schools, and that is the importance of ensuring that positive activities are not primarily seen as a substitute for childcare, nor a diversionary activity targeted at specific groups. To increase the participation of **all** young people in positive activities, the provision and promotion of positive activities would ideally be for **all** young people, not just targeted at specific groups such as young offenders or elite sports-people. However, in the current financial environment this may not be possible and some targeted promotion such as this may be both necessary and desirable. This underlines the significance of the way in which positive activities are conceived by commissioners and providers: i.e. Are positive activities a universal offer in their own right or part of a specific initiative?

- **Media, marketing and promotion** – all forms of media should be exploited to promote positive activities to young people as appropriate to specific objectives as part of a comprehensive communications strategy. For example, magazines can be a useful way of reaching teenagers; text messages can signpost young people to other sources of information or act as a reminder to attend a specific activity; and websites are a useful repository for all information but even the best-designed need to be combined with other methods (EdComms 2009).

- **Involving young people** – research points to the benefits of involving young people in developing appropriate ways of designing, promoting and delivering positive activities in their local area.

- **Messages** – there is a need to communicate messages relating to specific benefits rather than just a generic message about participation being 'a good thing'.

In addition to these key themes it is important to highlight that the most effective means of promoting positive activities and increasing levels of participation is through valued personal relationships and, in particular, the friendships and social networks that young people form.

There is a clear lack of evidence regarding the cost-effectiveness of the provision of positive activities and, linked to this, the effectiveness of commissioning strategies. Further research is required around the long-term impact of participation in positive activities and how this relates to the five broad outcomes for young people as articulated in the Every Child Matters agenda: be healthy, stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic wellbeing.

Data annexe

Key messages

- Survey data on volunteering and positive activities is available from the Tellus and Taking Part surveys, although more comprehensive data has been collected in regard to sporting activities.

- According to data collected by the Tellus survey, in 2009, young people reported participating in positive activities to a slightly less extent than young people in 2008: down 2.4 percentage points.

- Most children aged between 11 and 15 participate in sporting activity, although only about 30 per cent spend five or more hours a week.

- Levels of sport participation varied considerably according to eligibility for free school meals and school area deprivation.

Introduction and availability of data

The main focus of this priority is increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities. Positive activities should therefore help children to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic wellbeing, as well as increasing the prospects of all young people.

The main surveys reviewed are Tellus, the PE and Sport Survey (Quick *et al* 2009), and The Taking Part Survey (DCMS 2009), although longitudinal surveys such as the Youth Cohort Study are also useful for identifying the most widespread positive activities. Data from Tellus measures participation in positive activities.

This data annexe presents further discussion about the data currently available on positive activities. It provides:

- a summary of the search strategy for identifying data

- an overview of the nature and scope of the data that was found, with a brief commentary on the quality of this data, and any gaps that have been identified

- Data charts on positive activities, with an emphasis on sporting activities in and out of school and the variations of participation rates.

Data search strategy

There are a number of archival databases in the UK, such as the National Digital Archive of Datasets (NDAD) and the UK data archive, some of which have services that facilitate searching or access to macro- and micro-datasets (including ESDS International). Even so, searching for current and recently published data cannot yet be conducted in the same way as searching for published research findings. Access

to newly published data is not supported by comprehensive searchable databases in the same way that literature searches are supported.

Data for this annexe was obtained by a combination of search methods including obtaining online access to known government publications (such as the Statistical First Releases from the then Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCSF)) and online searches following leads emerging from these publications, research funding council summaries and other literature searches. It should be noted that links to statistical sources that were live at the time of searching may not remain live after publication.

Tellus and Taking Part surveys were designed to collect information on young people's participation in positive activities. Tellus data was the official standardised measurement of participation in positive activities for all local authorities. The new Coalition Government decided to stop the delivery of the Tellus survey as part of its commitment to reduce the burdens that data collection imposes on schools and local authorities. The last year for which data is available was therefore 2009/10 (see Appendix 4 of this report). Tellus asked young people about their participation in various activities over the past four weeks and about any perceived barriers to their participation. The data did not, however, offer an insight into the impact of taking part in positive activities, such as how it might affect anti-social behaviour, nor does it indicate which activities offer greatest value for money. Moreover, although the Taking Part survey collects data on sport participation it does not differentiate between in and out-of-school activity. This also implies that data on positive activities for children who are not in fulltime education is unavailable. The result is that at the national and regional level, the dynamics of positive activities and their relation to broader youth issues are unclear.

Charts showing trends and demographics of positive activities

According to the Tellus4 survey (Chamberlain *et al* 2010), in 2009, two-thirds (66 per cent) of young people reported that they had taken part in a positive activity over the past four weeks (Figure 1). This is a similar proportion to 2008 and there were no major regional differences. As Figure 2 shows, there was a slight decrease in the proportion of young people attending youth groups between 2008 and 2009, while there was a slight increase in the proportion of young people attending religious, faith or community groups (Figure 2). The proportion of young people engaging in arts activities, such as taking a music lesson, had remained the same across the years. Overall, going to a playground and playing sports were the most popular activities. Around half (52 per cent) played sport as part of a sports club. In 2009, around 17 per cent of young people reported taking part in voluntary or charity work over the previous two weeks.

Figure 1. **Young people's participation in positive activities in 2008 and 2009 (NI 110).**

England and Government Office Region
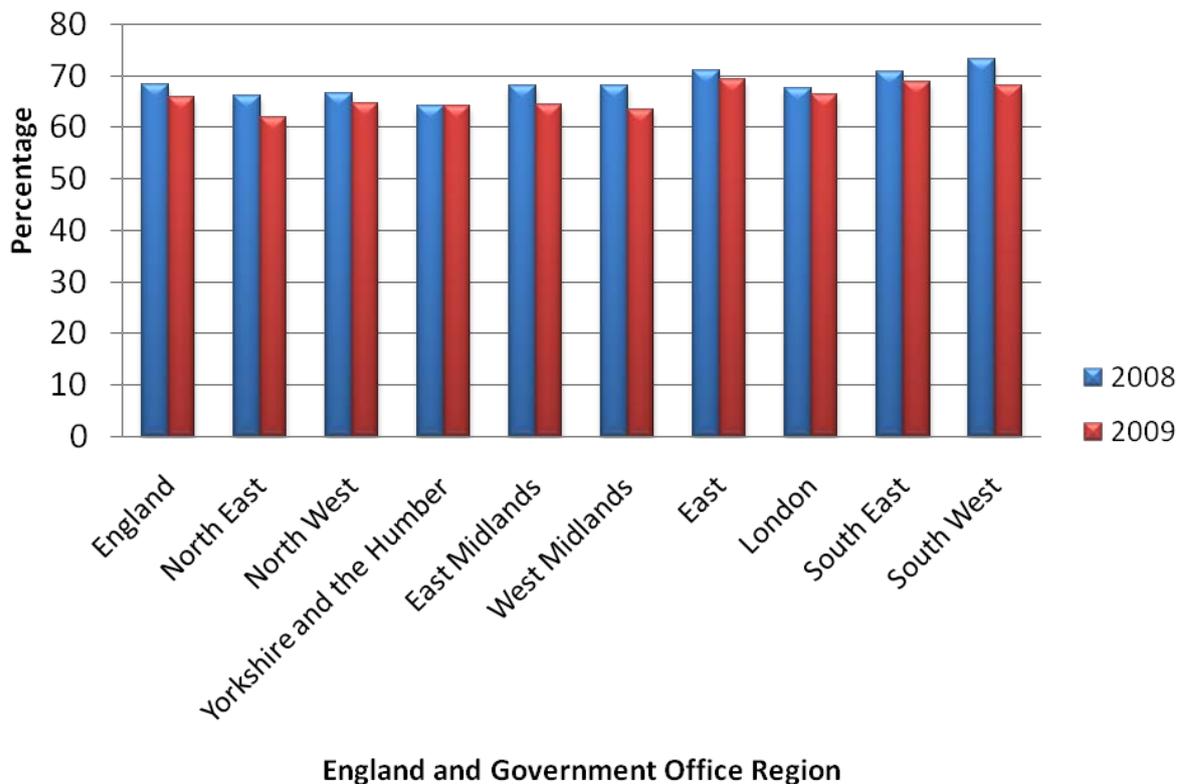
Source: Chamberlain *et al* 2010

Figure 2. **Children and young people's involvement in activities within the previous four weeks in 2009**
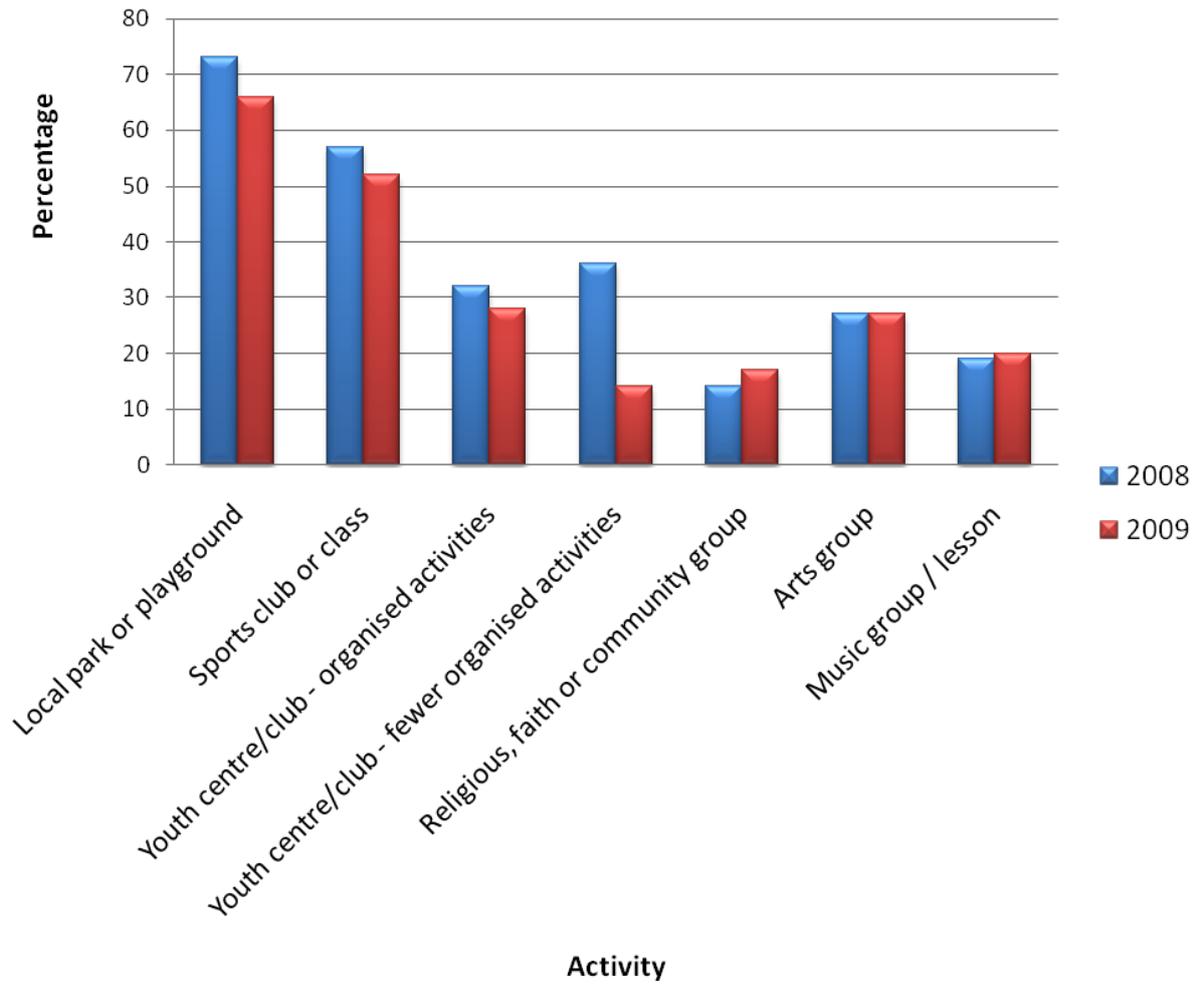
Source: Chamberlain *et al* 2010

Exploring positive activities: participation in sports

The data available for sports participation allows a closer look into the characteristics and trends of children participating in positive activities. Figure 3 shows how participation in sports has steadily increased since 2003 and that in 2008/09 around one in five (22 per cent) young people was involved.

Figure 3. **Percentage of pupils in Years 10–13 who have actively involved in sports volunteering and leadership – 2003/04 to 2008/09**
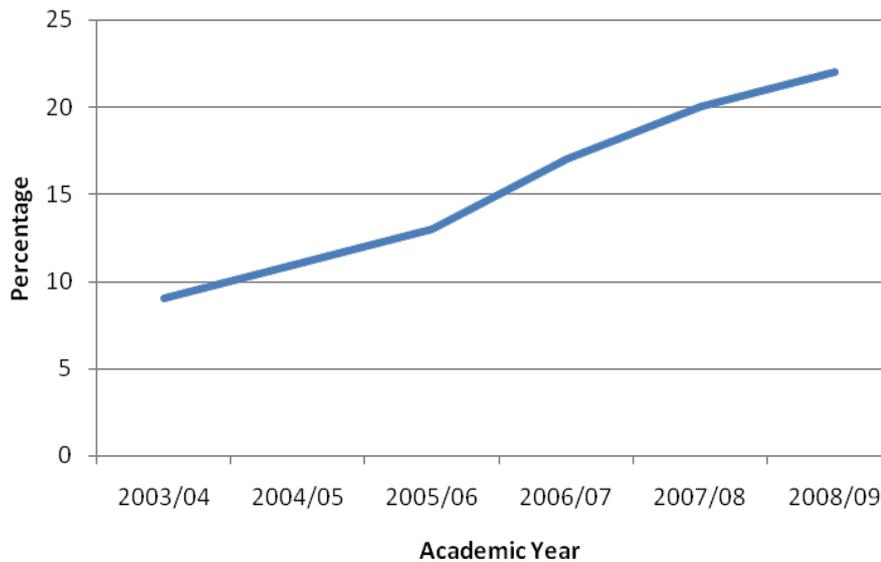
Source: Quick *et al* 2009

As shown in Figure 4, young people between the ages of 11 and 15 and aged 16 participated in sport to a similar extent. On average, less than 35 per cent of children spend five hours or more a week doing sport in and out of school.

Figure 4.   Hours spent participating in sport (in and out of school) in the previous week by age, 2008/09
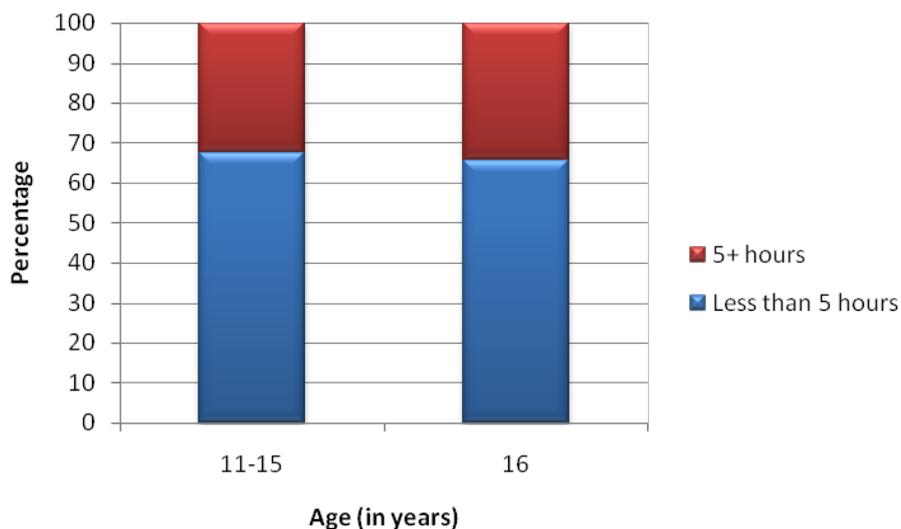
Source: DCMS 2009

Nevertheless, most children between 11 and 15 participated in some form of sport to some extent (see Figure 5). This includes the majority of those with a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits their activities, although these young people are less likely to participate than their peers. It is arguable that differences between groups are levelled by compulsory sport participation in school.

Figure 5.   Eleven- to 15 year-olds' participation in sport in and out of school by subgroups: gender, disability/illness, ethnicity and geography, 2008/09
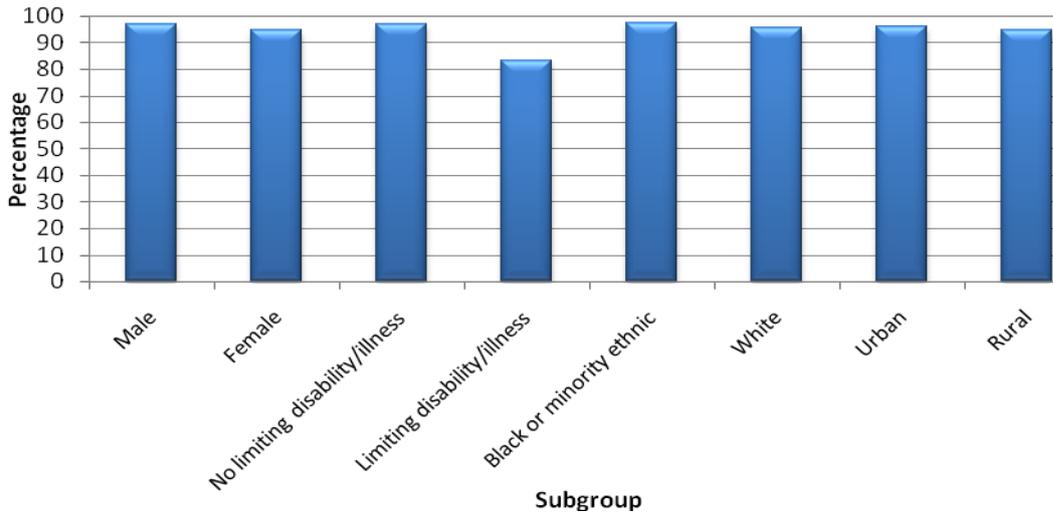
Source: DCMS 2009

Football is by far the most popular sport among 11- to 15-year-olds, followed by basketball and swimming. As with the data above, it is unclear whether this is representative of sport participation outside school.

Free school meals eligibility and sporting activity

Schools with a lower proportion of children eligible for free school meals also tend to have higher sport participation rates (Figure 6).Hence, schools where 40 per cent or fewer children participate in sports for three or more hours per week also tend to have a higher proportion of children eligible for free school meals than schools with a 70 per cent or higher participation rate.

Figure 6. **Relationship between free school meals[9] and percentage of pupils in schools participating in three or more hours of sporting activity per week, 2008/09**
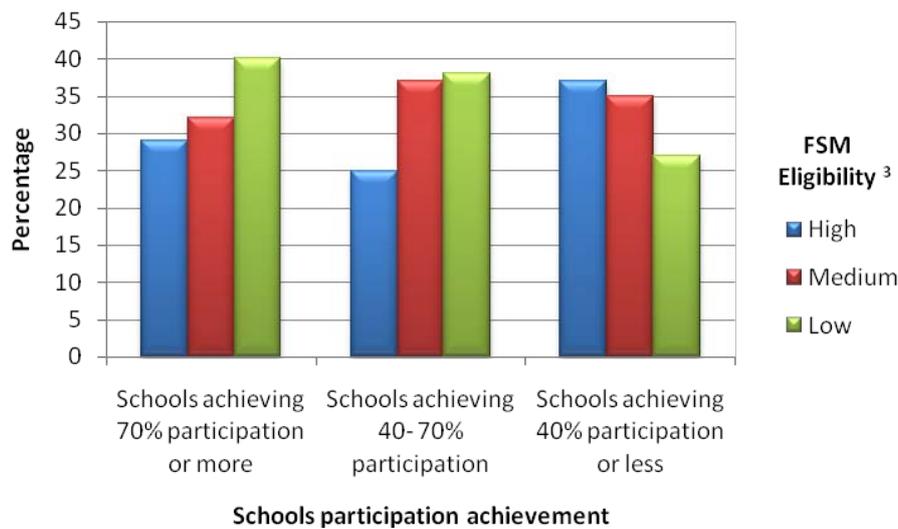
Source: Quick *et al* 2009

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[9] High FSM = more than 20 per cent of children eligible for free school meals; Medium FSM = 7 to 19 per cent eligible; Low FSM = fewer than 7 per cent of children eligible.

Although participation may not be highly correlated with free school meals eligibility, substituting free school meals with the school Index of Multiple Deprivation (which looks at employment, health, education, housing and services and the living environment in the school area) reveals a very similar picture (Figure 7).

Figure 7.   Relationship between Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and percentage of pupils in schools participating in three or more hours of sporting activity per week, 2008/09
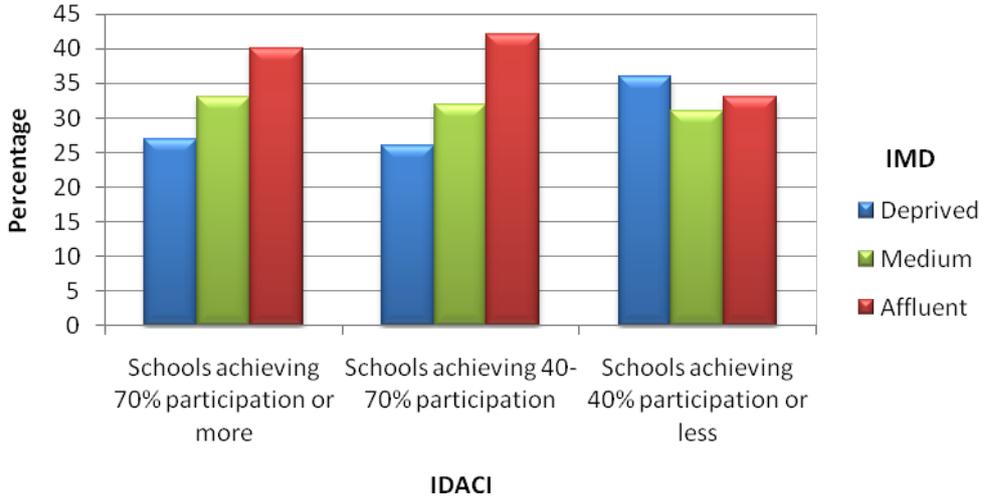
Source: Quick *et al* 2009

However, the PE and Sport Survey (Quick *et al* 2009) also seems to point out that schools where 40 per cent or fewer children participate in sport are not necessarily concentrated in more deprived areas when looking at the school rather than the family degree of deprivation (free school meals). Keeping in mind that the two indices are not directly comparable, Figure 8 reminds the reader that extremely low levels of participation may be the result of children's specific family circumstances rather than just the overall level of area deprivation. More research is needed to understand the difference between individual and area level degrees of deprivation and their influence on positive activities.

Figure 8.   Relationship between schools achieving only 40 per cent participation and individual (FSM) and broader area level (IMD) deprivation, 2008/09[10]
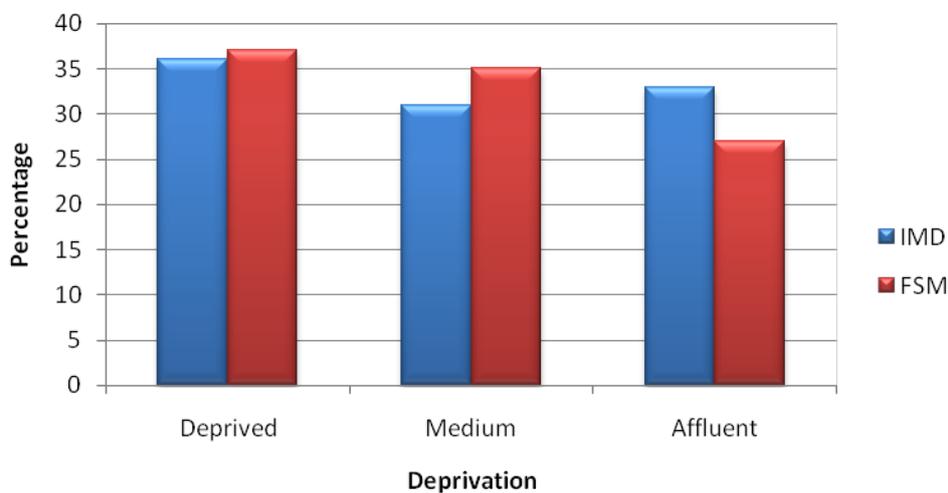
Source: Quick *et al* 2009

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[10] In this chart Low, Medium and High FSM are compared with affluent, medium and deprived (IMD).

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Appendix 1: Research review methods

The review includes literature identified by a C4EO scoping study (Adamson and Poultney 2010) as being relevant to the review questions. The scoping study used systematic searching of key databases and other sources to identify literature that was then screened and coded (see Appendix 2). Apart from reference harvesting, no further searching for material other than that located by the scoping review was undertaken for this review.

The review team used a 'best evidence' approach to select literature of the greatest relevance and quality for the review. This entailed identifying:

- the items of greatest relevance to the review questions

- the items that came closest to providing an ideal design to answer the review questions

- the quality of the research methods, execution and reporting.

The full text was obtained for each of the key items identified by the scoping study (Adamson and Poultney 2010). The key items were split between the research review team (two people) and these were read, assessed and notes made with regard to their relevance to the three review questions and the rigour and appropriateness of the research methodology. Ten of the key items (20 per cent) were read by both members of the team as part of the review's internal quality assurance. Around half of the key items identified by the scoping review (26) are referenced in this research review.

On reading the full text of the documents, identified as being potentially key at the scoping stage, 24 of these reports were excluded. Reports were included based on their direct relevance to answering the specific three questions of this review and the quality of the research evidence. Reports excluded were 19 key items described in the scoping review as research/data, (for example, small qualitative studies such as a round table discussion with one group of young people), six literature reviews (largely because they were not directly relevant to the review questions) and two practice guides.

Table 1 (below) shows that the majority of the key items referenced in this report were research literature, with nine qualitative studies, six quantitative and three mixed methods. There are four policy documents referenced in this report (see Section 2, Policy Context) and four literature reviews are also included.

Table 1. Type of literature for the key items

Type of literature	Number of key items
Research – qualitative	9
case studies/interviews/group discussions	5
other	3
focus groups	1
Research – quantitative	6
survey/questionnaire	4
secondary data analysis/other	2
Policy	4
Research – mixed-methods	3
Literature review	4
Total	**26**

Table 2 (below) shows that the majority of the key items were from England (14), followed by the US (9), with one each from Australia and Canada.

Table 2. Country/area involved of the key items

Country of origin	Number of key items
UK – England	15
US	9
Australia	1
Canada	1
Total	**26**

In terms of the content of the key items, around half the key items provided evidence relating to more than one of the three review questions. Many studies look at the impact of participation in sports-based activities and this dominates the literature. However, much less is available set within the social context of the UK and several studies comment on the lack of research around young people's participation in non-sports/physical 'positive activities'. This gap in the research base is itself, in part, a reflection of a lower provision of positive activities with an arts and/or cultural focus (compared to the provision of sports and physical activities).

The main gap in the evidence base for this review relates to 'what works' in terms of cost-effectiveness and what provides best value for money. There is little available evidence on this and, linked to this, little available evidence that relates to the effectiveness of commissioning strategies. More generally, there is also limited 'hard evidence' of many of the principal perceived benefits of participation in positive

activities. The development of what are often referred to as 'soft skills' (such as self-esteem and confidence, social skills, team work) and even the achievement of more measurable outcomes (such as academic attainment) are difficult to evidence in relation to their participation (or non-participation) in positive activities – one specific aspect of a young person's life. There is a lack of quantitative research in this area and much of the research that is available is qualitative and often based on self-reports.

Wider benefits such as community cohesion, building social capital, improved educational outcomes and, conversely, the prevention of less desirable outcomes, such as anti-social behaviour are also notoriously difficult to account and attribute to specific interventions or initiatives. Analysis of the social return on investment has attempted to address issues such as these but this type of research was not available in relation to participation in positive activities. This is particularly challenging where participation may only be short term and involve engagement in a range of different activities. Further research is necessary into the longitudinal benefits of participation, for example, into outcomes relating to employment and later life.

Appendix 2: Scoping study process

This appendix contains details of the search results and search strategy. The first stage in the process was for the Theme Lead to set the key review questions and search parameters and agree them with the Theme Advisory Group (TAG) and the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The National Youth Agency (NYA) commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to carry out the searching on their behalf. The list of databases, sources and keywords to be searched was then agreed with the NYA.

The keywords comprised sets covering positive activities, broken down into extended services, youth work, play, leisure and short breaks and the arts. Further sets covered participation in activities and the age group.

Members of the TAG were invited to suggest relevant keywords, documents and websites. Websites were searched on main keywords and/or the publications/research/policy sections of each website were browsed as appropriate.

The next stage in the process was to carry out searching across the specified databases and web resources. The database and web searches were conducted by information specialists at the NFER and, in the case of ChildData, by an information specialist at the National Children's Bureau.

The records selected from the searches were then loaded into the EPPI-Reviewer database[11] and duplicates were removed. The review team members used information from the abstract and/or the full document to assess the relevance of each piece of literature in addressing the key questions for the review. They also noted the characteristics of the text, such as the type of literature, country of origin and relevance to the review question. A 10 per cent sample was selected at random and checked for accuracy by another member of staff.

The numbers of items found by the initial search, and subsequently selected, can be found in the following table. The three columns represent:

- items found in the initial searches

- items selected for further consideration (that is those complying with the search parameters after the removal of duplicates)

- items considered relevant to the study by a researcher who had read the abstract and/or accessed the full document.

[11] The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) is part of the Social Science Research Unit at the Institute of Education, University of London.

Table A2.1. Overview of searches

Source	Items found	Items selected for consideration	Items identified as relevant to this study
Databases			
Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)	157	35	13
Australian Education Index (AEI)	460	50	9
British Education Index (BEI)	395	74	13
ChildData	5842	557	111
Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)	1566	110	53
PsycINFO	156	47	27
Social Policy and Practice	265	39	19
Internet databases/portals			
British Education Index Free Collections (BEIFC)	65	18	n/k*
CERUKplus	22	4	n/k*
Educational Evidence Portal (eep)	86	15	n/k*
Research Register for Social Care	59	0	n/k*
Social Care Online	64	8	5
TAG recommendations			1

* 14 source items were grouped under 'web searches' and it was not possible to break these down into the individual internet databases/portals listed here

Search strategy

This section provides information on the keywords and search strategy for each database and web source searched as part of the review.

All searches were limited to publication years 2003/09, in English language only. A brief description of each of the databases searched, together with the keywords used, is outlined below. The search strategy for each database reflects the differences in database structure and vocabulary. Smaller sets of keywords were used in the more specialist web-based databases. Throughout, the abbreviation 'ft' denotes that a free-text search term was used and the symbol * denotes truncation of terms.

Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)
(searched via CSA 20/10/09)

ASSIA is an index of articles from over 500 international English language social science journals.

Extended services

#1	Extended school day (ft)
#2	Out of school care (ft)
#3	Extracurricular activity
#4	Children's cent* (ft)
#5	#1 or #2 or #3 or #4

Youth work

#6	Youth club
#7	Youth club
#8	Youth work
#9	Youth group
#10	#6 or #7 or #8 or #9

Play, leisure, sport, recreation and short breaks

#11	Cultural activity
#12	Cultural activities
#13	Exercise
#14	Leisure (ft)
#15	Play (ft)
#16	Sport (ft)
#17	#11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16

Arts

#18	Art (ft)
#19	Dancing (ft)
#20	Literature (ft)
#21	Music (ft)
#22	Performing arts (ft)
#23	#18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22
#24	#5 or #10 or #17 or #23

Participation

#25	Participation
#26	Pupil participation (ft)
#27	Student participation
#28	Youth participation (ft)
#29	Engagement (ft)
#30	Involvement (ft)

#31   Improving performance (ft)
#32   Improving outcomes (ft)
#33   Improving achievement (ft)
#34   Community action (ft)
#35   Community involvement (ft)
#36   Extended school* (ft)
#37   #25 or #26 or #27 or #28 or #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36

Age range

#38   Young person (ft)
#39   Young people (ft)
#40   Student (ft)
#41   Pupil (ft)
#42   Adolescent (ft)
#43   Youth (ft)
#44   Minor (ft)
#45   Secondary education (ft)
#46   Further education (ft)
#47   #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46
#48   #24 and #37 and #47

Australian Education Index (AEI)
(searched via Dialog 20/10/09)

AEI is Australia's largest source of education information covering reports, books, journal articles, online resources, conference papers and book chapters.

Extended services

#1   Extended schools (ft)
#2   Extended services (ft)
#3   Extended school day
#4   After school education
#5   Services provision
#6   Before school care (ft)
#7   Breakfast club (ft)
#8   After school care (ft)
#9   After school club* (ft)
#10   Extracurricular activities
#11   Children's cent* (ft)
#12   Childcare (ft)
#13   Child care (ft)
#14   Informal education(ft)
#15   Non formal education
#16   Informal learning (ft)
#17   Partnership (ft)
#18   Interagency relations (ft)

#19   Lifelong education
#20   Continuing education
#21   Commissioning (ft)
#22   #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21

Youth work

#23   Youth work (ft)
#24   Youth clubs
#25   Youth groups (ft)
#26   Youth programme
#27   Youth service (ft)
#28   Youth opportunities
#29   #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28

Play, leisure, sport, recreation and short breaks

#30   Play
#31   Play cent*
#32   Play groups
#33   Play therapy
#34   Playgrounds
#35   Playground activit*
#36   Play schemes (ft)
#37   Recreation
#38   Recreational activities
#39   Leisure (ft)
#40   Leisure activit* (ft)
#41   Leisure cent* (ft)
#42   Leisure needs (ft)
#43   Leisure time (ft)
#44   Libraries
#45   Sports
#46   Sport facilities (ft)
#47   Youth action (ft)
#48   Short breaks (ft)
#49   Physical activities
#50   Field trips
#51   School visits (ft)
#52   School trips (ft)
#53   Vacations
#54   Holidays
#55   Outdoor pursuits (ft)
#56   Outdoor activities
#57   Adventure education
#58   Volunteering (ft)
#59   Young volunteers (ft)

#60   Student volunteers (ft)

#61   Physical recreation programmes (ft)

#62   #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61

Arts

#63   Arts

#64   Art

#65   Dance

#66   Drama

#67   Music

#68   Art activities (ft)

#69   Creative writing

#70   Cultural activities (ft)

#71   #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70

#72   #22 or #29 or #62 or #71

Participation

#73   Participation

#74   Student participation

#75   Pupil participation (ft)

#76   Youth participation (ft)

#77   Engagement

#78   Involvement

#79   Outcomes

#80   Improving performance (ft)

#81   Improving achievement (ft)

#82   Educational performance (ft)

#83   Community action

#84   Community service

#85   Community involvement

#86   Community programmes

#87   Learning outcomes

#88   Learning methods (ft)

#89   Community education

#90   #73 or #74 or #75 or #76 or #77 or #78 or #79 or #80 or #81 or #82 or #83 or #84 or #85 or #86 or #87 or #88 or #89

Age range

#91   Young person (ft)

#92   Young people (ft)

#93   Adolescents

#94   Students

#95   Pupils

#96   Teenager (ft)

#97 School age
#98 Juvenile (ft)
#99 Minor (ft)
#100 Youth
#101 Early adulthood (ft)
#102 Older children (ft)
#103 Sixth form (ft)
#104 Apprentice
#105 Young man (ft)
#106 Young men (ft)
#107 Young woman (ft)
#108 Young women (ft)
#109 Young male (ft)
#110 Young female (ft)
#111 Young adult (ft)
#112 Secondary school
#113 High school
#114 Further education
#115 #91 or #92 or #93 or #94 or #95 or #96 or #97 or #98 or #99 or #100 or #101 or #102 or #103 or #104 or #105 or #106 or #107 or #108 or #109 or #110 or #111 or #112 or #113 or #114
#116 #72 and #90 and #115

British Education Index (BEI)
(searched via Dialog 12/10/09)

BEI provides information on research, policy and practice in education and training in the UK. Sources include over 300 journals, mostly published in the UK, plus other material including reports, series and conference papers.

Extended services

#1 Extended services (ft)
#2 Extended schools (ft)
#3 Extended school day
#4 Services provision
#5 Breakfast club (ft)
#6 After school care (ft)
#7 After school club* (ft)
#8 Extracurricular activities
#9 Children's cent* (ft)
#10 Childcare pilot (ft)
#11 Childcare (ft)
#12 Child care (ft)
#13 School based community service (ft)
#14 Informal education (ft)
#15 Non formal education
#16 Informal learning (ft)
#17 Partnership (ft)

#18   Lifelong education
#19   Continuing education
#20   Commissioning (ft)
#21   #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or
       #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20

Youth work

#22   Youth work (ft)
#23   Youth clubs
#24   Youth groups (ft)
#25   Youth programmes
#26   Youth service
#27   Youth services (ft)
#28   Youth opportunities
#29   School based youth work (ft)
#30   Voluntary youth organisations (ft)
#31   #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28 or #29 or #30

Play, leisure, sport, recreation and short breaks

#32   Play
#33   Play centres
#34   Play groups
#35   Play therapy
#36   Playgrounds
#37   Playground activities
#38   Play schemes (ft)
#39   Recreation
#40   Recreational activities
#41   Leisure (ft)
#42   Leisure activities (ft)
#43   Leisure time (ft)
#44   Libraries
#45   Sports
#46   Sport (ft)
#47   Sports centre
#48   Sports centres
#49   Sports facilities (ft)
#50   Youth action (ft)
#51   Physical education
#52   Field trips
#53   School visits
#54   School trips (ft)
#55   Vacations
#56   Holidays
#57   Outdoor pursuits
#58   Adventure education (ft)
#59   Volunteering (ft)

#60   #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42
       or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52 or
       #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59

Arts

#61   Arts
#62   Art
#63   Dance
#64   Drama
#65   Music
#66   Art activities
#67   Cultural activities
#68   Creative writing (ft)
#69   #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68
#70   #21 or #31 or #60 or #69

Participation

#71   Hear by right (ft)
#72   Participation
#73   Student participation (ft)
#74   Pupil participation (ft)
#75   Youth participation (ft)
#76   Engagement (ft)
#77   Involvement (ft)
#78   Outcomes (ft)
#79   Improving performance (ft)
#80   Improving achievement (ft)
#81   Educational performance (ft)
#82   Community action
#83   Community service
#84   Community involvement (ft)
#85   Learning outcomes (ft)
#86   Learning methods (ft)
#87   #71 or #72 or #73 or #74 or #75 or #76 or #77 or #78 or #79 or #80 or #81
       or #82 or #83 or #84 or #85 or #86

Age range

#88   Young persons (ft)
#89   Young person (ft)
#90   Young people (ft)
#91   Adolescent
#92   Student (ft)
#93   Pupil (ft)
#94   Teenager
#95   School age
#96   Juvenile

#97   Minor
#98   Youth
#99   Early adulthood (ft)
#100   Older children (ft)
#101   Sixth form (ft)
#102   Apprentice
#103   Young man (ft)
#104   Young men (ft)
#105   Young woman (ft)
#106   Young women (ft)
#107   Young male (ft)
#108   Young female (ft)
#109   Young adult (ft)
#110   Secondary education
#111   Further education
#112   #88 or #89 or #90 or #91 or #92 or #93 or #94 or #95 or #96 or #97 or #98 or #99 or #100 or #101 or #102 or #103 or #104 or #105 or #106 or #107 or #108 or #109 or #110 or #111
#113   #70 and #87 and #112

British Education Index Free Collections (BEIFC)
(searched 26/10/09)

The British Education Internet Resource catalogue is a freely accessible database of information about professionally evaluated and described internet sites which support educational research, policy and practice.

#1   Positive activities
#2   Extended services
#3   Youth work
#4   Play
#5   Arts
#6   Extracurricular activities
#7   #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6
#8   Young person
#9   Adolescent
#10   Secondary education
#11   Youth
#12   #8 or #9 or #10 or #11
#13   #7 and #12

CERUKplus
(searched 23/10/09)

The CERUKplus database provides access to information about current and recently completed research, PhD level work and practitioner research in the field of education and children's services.

#1   Extracurricular activities

#2   Informal learning
#3   Young people
#4   Extracurricular activity (ft)
#5   Youth work (ft)
#6   Positive activities (ft)

ChildData
(search completed 30/10/09)

ChildData is the National Children's Bureau database, containing details of around 35,000 books, reports and journal articles about children and young people

Extended services

#1   Arts
#2   Art
#3   Dance
#4   Drama
#5   Music
#6   Art activities
#7   Cultural activities
#8   Creative writing
#9   #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8

Youth work

#10   Youth work
#11   Youth clubs
#12   Youth groups
#13   Youth programmes
#14   Youth service
#15   Youth services
#16   Youth opportunities
#17   School based youth work
#18   Voluntary youth organisations
#19   PAYP
#20   Positive activities for young people
#21   #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20

Play, leisure, sport, recreation and short breaks

#22   Play
#23   Play centres
#24   Play groups
#25   Play therapy
#26   Playgrounds
#27   Playground activities
#28   Play schemes
#29   Playschemes

#30	Holiday playschemes
#31	Recreation
#32	Recreational activities
#33	Leisure
#34	Leisure activities
#35	Leisure centres
#36	Leisure needs
#37	Leisure time
#38	Libraries
#39	Sports
#40	Sport
#41	Sports centres
#42	Sports facilities
#43	Youth action
#44	Short breaks
#45	Physical education
#46	Field trips
#47	School visits
#48	School trips
#49	Vacations
#50	Holidays
#51	Outdoor pursuits
#52	Adventure education
#53	Volunteering
#54	Young volunteers
#55	#22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28 or #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52 or #53 or #54

Arts

#56	Arts
#57	Art
#58	Dance
#59	Drama
#60	Music
#61	Art activities
#62	Cultural activities
#63	Creative writing
#64	#56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63

Participation

#65	Hear by right
#66	Participation
#67	Student participation
#68	Pupil participation
#69	Youth participation

#70   Engagement
#71   Involvement
#72   Outcomes
#73   Improving performance
#74   Improving achievement
#75   Educational performance
#76   Community action
#77   Community service
#78   Community involvement
#79   Learning outcomes
#80   Learning methods
#81   Budget devolution
#82   #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70 or #71 or #72 or #73 or #74 or #75 or #76 or #77 or #78 or #79 or #80 or #81

Age range

#83   Young person
#84   Young people
#85   Adolescent
#86   Student
#87   Pupil
#88   Teenager
#89   School age
#90   Juvenile
#91   Minor
#92   Youth
#93   Early adulthood
#94   Older child
#95   Sixth form
#96   Apprentice
#97   Young man
#98   Young men
#99   Young woman
#100 Young women
#101 Young male
#102 Young female
#103 Young adult
#104 Secondary
#105 Further education
#106 Sixteen to nineteen
#107 #83 or #84 or #85 or #86 or #87 or #88 or #89 or #90 or #91 or #92 or #93 or #94 or #95 or #96 or #97 or #98 or #99 or #100 or #101 or #102 or #103 or #104 or #105 or #106
#108   #9 and #107
#109 #21 and #107
#110 #55 and #107
#111 #64 and #107
#112 #82 and #107

Educational Evidence Portal (EEP)
(searched 26/10/09)

EEP enables users to search for educational evidence from a range of reputable sources via a single search.

- #1 Positive activities
- #2 Extended school day
- #3 Extracurricular activity
- #4 Youth or youth services or youth programmes
- #5 Play or playground activities or playgrounds
- #6 Sports
- #7 Arts or art activity
- #8 Dramatics
- #9 Music or music activities
- #10 Cultural activities
- #11 Creative writing

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)
(searched via Dialog 26/10/09)

ERIC is sponsored by the United States Department of Education and is the largest education database in the world. It indexes over 725 periodicals and currently contains more than 7,000,000 records. Coverage includes research documents, journal articles, technical reports, program descriptions and evaluations and curricula material.

Extended services set

- #1 Extended services (ft)
- #2 Extended schools (ft)
- #3 Extended school day
- #4 Services provision (ft)
- #5 Before school care (ft)
- #6 Breakfast club (ft)
- #7 After school care (ft)
- #8 After school club (ft)
- #9 Out of school education (ft)
- #10 After school education
- #11 School recreational programs
- #12 Extracurricular activities
- #13 Children's cent* (ft)
- #14 Child care
- #15 Child care centers
- #16 Informal education
- #17 Non formal education
- #18 Informal learning (ft)
- #19 Partnership (ft)

#20　Interagency relations (ft)
#21　Lifelong learning
#22　Continuing education (ft)
#23　Commissioning (ft)
#24　School community programs
#25　Integrated services
#26　#1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25

Youth work

#27　Youth work (ft)
#28　Youth clubs
#29　Youth groups (ft)
#30　Youth programs
#31　Youth service (ft)
#32　Youth opportunities
#33　School based youth work (ft)
#34　Voluntary youth organizations (ft)
#35　Youth agencies
#36　#27 or #28 or #29 or #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35

Play, leisure, sport, recreation and short breaks

#37　Play
#38　Playground activities
#39　Playgrounds
#40　Play cent* (ft)
#41　Play groups (ft)
#42　Play therapy (ft)
#43　Play schemes (ft)
#44　Holiday playschemes (ft)
#45　Recreation
#46　Recreational activities
#47　Leisure (ft)
#48　Leisure activities (ft)
#49　Leisure needs (ft)
#50　Leisure time (ft)
#51　Leisure education
#52　Leisure time
#53　Libraries (ft)
#54　Recreation
#55　Athletics
#56　Physical activities
#57　Sport (ft)
#58　Sports cent* (ft)
#59　Sports facilities (ft)
#60　Youth action (ft)

#61   Short breaks (ft)
#62   Physical activities (ft)
#63   Physical education (ft)
#64   Field trips (ft)
#65   School visits (ft)
#66   School trips (ft)
#67   Vacations
#68   Outdoor pursuits (ft)
#69   Adventure education (ft)
#70   Volunteering (ft)
#71   Young volunteers (ft)
#72   Student volunteers (ft)
#73   #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45 or #46 or #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70 or #71 or #72

Arts

#74   Art
#75   Art activities
#76   Dance
#77   Drama (ft)
#78   Music
#79   Music activities
#80   Cultural activities
#81   Creative writing (ft)
#82   Creative activities
#83   Creative writing
#84   #74 or #75 or #76 or #77 or #78 or #79 or #80 or #81 or #82 or #83
#85   #26 or #36 or #73 or #84

Participation
#86   Participation
#87   Student participation
#88   Pupil participation (ft)
#89   Youth participation (ft)
#90   Engagement (ft)
#91   Involvement (ft)
#92   Outcomes of education
#93   Improving performance (ft)
#94   Improving achievement (ft)
#95   Educational performance (ft)
#96   Community action
#97   Community development
#98   Community services
#99   Community involvement (ft)
#100   Learning outcomes (ft)
#101   Learning methods (ft)

#102 Budget devolution (ft)
#103 #86 or #87 or #88 or #89 or #90 or #91 or #92 or #93 or #94 or #95 or #96 or #97 or #98 or #99 or #100 or #101 or #102

Age range

#104 Young person (ft)
#105 Young people (ft)
#106 Adolescent (ft)
#107 Student
#108 Adolescents
#109 Pupil (ft)
#110 Teenager (ft)
#111 School age (ft)
#112 Juvenile (ft)
#113 Minor (ft)
#114 Youth
#115 Early adolescents
#116 Late adolescents
#117 Early adulthood (ft)
#118 Older children (ft)
#119 Apprentice (ft)
#120 Young man (ft)
#121 Young men (ft)
#122 Young woman (ft)
#123 Young women (ft)
#124 Young male (ft)
#125 Young female (ft)
#126 Young adult (ft)
#127 High school students
#128 High schools
 #129 Junior high schools
#130 Secondary education
#131 Secondary schools
#132 #104 or #105 or #106 or #107 or #108 or #109 or #110 or #111 or #112 or #113 or #114 or #115 or #116 or #117 or #118 or #119 or #120 or #121 or #122 or #123 or #124 or #125 or #126 or #127 or #128 or #129 or #130 or #131
#133   #85 and #103 and #132

PsycInfo
(searched via OvidSP 21/10/09)

This is an international database containing citations and summaries of journal articles, book chapters, book and technical reports, as well as citations to dissertations in the field of psychology and psychological aspects of related disciplines, such as medicine, sociology and education.

#1   Extended school (ft)

#2   Extended school day (ft)
#3   Before school care (ft)
#4   After school care (ft)
#5   Breakfast club* (ft)
#6   After school club (ft)
#7   Extracurricular activities (ft)
#8   Childrens cent* (ft)
#9   Youth work (ft)
#10   Youth club (ft)
#11   Youth group (ft)
#12   Youth programme (ft)
#13   Youth service (ft)
#14   Cultural activities (ft)
#15   Exercise (+NT)
#16   Leisure time (ft)
#17   Outdoor pursuits (ft)
#18   Art
#19   Drama
#20   Music
#21   #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20
#22   Participation (ft)
#23   Engagement (ft)
#24   Educational performance (ft)
#25   Academic achievement
#26   Improving achievement (ft)
#27   Community services
#28   Community involvement
#29   #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28
#30   Young adult (ft)
#31   Young person (ft)
#32   Young people (ft)
#33   Youth (ft)
#34   Adolescent (ft)
#35   Secondary education
#36   High school education
#37   Further education
#38   #30 or #31 or #32 or #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37
#39   #21 and #29 and #38

Research Register for Social Care (RRSC)
(searched 26/10/09)

The RRSC provides access to information about ongoing and completed social care research that has been subject to independent ethical and scientific review.

#1   Extended services (ft) or extended school (ft) or extended school day (ft)
#2   Youth work (ft) or youth services (ft) or youth (ft)
#3   Play (ft) or leisure (ft) or sport (ft)

#4   Art (ft) or drama (ft) or music (ft)

Social Care Online
(searched 27/10/09)

Social Care Online is the Social Care Institute for Excellence's (SCIE's) database covering an extensive range of information and research on all aspects of social care. Content is drawn from a range of sources including journal articles, websites, research reviews, legislation and government documents and service user knowledge.

#1   Extended services (ft)
#2   Extracurricular (ft)
#3   Youth work (ft)
#4   Play (ft)
#5   Leisure (ft)
#6   Arts (ft)
#7   Positive activities (ft)
#8   #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7

Social Policy and Practice
(searched via OvidSP 23/10/09)

Social Policy and Practice is a bibliographic database with abstracts covering evidence-based social policy, public health, social services, and mental and community health. Content is from the UK with some material from the USA and Europe.

Extended schools
 #1   Extended schools
 #2   Extended schools initiative
 #3   Extended services
 #4   Extended school day (ft)
 #5   After school care (ft)
 #6   Services provision
 #7   After school clubs
 #8   After school service
 #9   After school club
#10   After school provision
#11   Out of school clubs
#12   Out of school care
#13   Out of school childcare
#14   Out of school club
#15   Out of school education (ft)
#16   Extracurricular activity
#17   Children's cent*
#18   Childcare
#19   School based community service (ft)
#20   Informal learning

#21   Informal education
#22   Non formal education (ft)
#23   Partnership
#24   Interagency relations (ft)
#25   Lifelong learning
#26   Lifelong education
#27   Lifelong learning (ft)
#28   Continuing education
#29   Youth capital fund
#30   Youth opportunity fund
#31   Youth opportunities programme
#32   #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15 or #16 or #17 or #18 or #19 or #20 or #21 or #22 or #23 or #24 or #25 or #26 or #27 or #28 or #29 or #30 or #31

Youth work
#33   Youth centres
#34   Youth clubs
#35   Youth (ft)
#36   Youth club provision
#37   Youth club
#38   Youth centre
#39   Youth opportunity
#40   Youth services
#41   Youth service
#42   Youth work
#43   School based youth work (ft)
#44   Positive activities for young people (ft)
#45   PAYP (ft)
#46   #33 or #34 or #35 or #36 or #37 or #38 or #39 or #40 or #41 or #42 or #43 or #44 or #45

Play, leisure, sport, recreation and short breaks
#47   Play schemes (ft)
#48   Play areas (ft)
#49   Play centre (ft)
#50   Play (ft)
#51   Play scheme (ft)
#52   Play centres (ft)
#53   Play area
#54   Play ground
#55   Leisure need
#56   Leisure time (ft)
#57   Leisure (ft)
#58   Leisure centre (ft)
#59   Leisure activity
#60   Leisure activities
#61   Libraries
#62   Sport centres (ft)

#63   Sport centre (ft)

#64   Sport club (ft)

#65   Sport

#66   Field trip (ft)

#67   School trips (ft)

#68   School visits (ft)

#69   Outdoor pursuit

#70   Volunteering

#71   #47 or #48 or #49 or #50 or #51 or #52 or #53 or #54 or #55 or #56 or #57 or #58 or #59 or #60 or #61 or #62 or #63 or #64 or #65 or #66 or #67 or #68 or #69 or #70

Arts

#72   Art

#73   Drama

#74   Music

#75   Cultural activity

#76   #72 or #73 or #74 or #75

#77   #32 or #46 or #71 or #76

Participation

#78   Participation

#79   Engagement

#80   Academic achievement (ft)

#81   Academic performance

#82   Educational performance

#83   Community action

#84   Community activity

#85   Community activities

#86   Community involvement

#87   Community play scheme

#88   Community service

#89   #78 or #79 or #80 or #81 or #82 or #83 or #84 or #85 or #86 or #87 or #88

Age range

#90   Young male (ft)

#91   Young persons (ft)

#92   Young people (ft)

#93   Young men (ft)

#94   Young women (ft)

#95   Young woman (ft)

#96   Adolescent

#97   Apprentice

#98   Secondary education

#99   Further education

#100 #90 or #91 or #92 or #93 or #94 or #95 or #96 or #97 or #98 or #99

#101 #77 and #89 and #100

Organisations

A list of key organisations was recommended by the TAG and then supplemented with others considered relevant by the NFER team. The following websites were browsed for additional sources not already found in the database searches. This entailed browsing through the publications and/or research and policy sections.

Organisation	URL	Records initially selected by NFER library
Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO)	www.c4eo.org.uk	0
Children's Play Information Service (National Children's Bureau)	www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx6812in_1832991054480z44q6370913124	12
Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)	www.cwdcouncil.org.uk	1
Clubs for Young People	www.clubsforyoungpeople.org.uk	3
DCSF (now Department for Education)	www.education.gov.uk	15
National Youth Agency	www.nya.org.uk/	7
National Foundation for Educational Research	www.nfer.ac.uk	9
Research in Practice (Website and Evidence Bank)	www.rip.org.uk	1
Social Exclusion Task Force (Cabinet Office)	www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force.aspx	1
Sport England	www.sportengland.org/	3
Youth Sport Trust	www.youthsporttrust.org/page/home-welcome/index.html	3

Appendix 3: Parameters document

1. C4EO Theme: Youth

2.Priority:

Increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities so as to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes and contribute to the achievement of Youth Public Service Agreement 14.

3.Context for this priority

The policy framework for the development and delivery of positive activities is in place. Local authorities are developing their local youth and IAG offers and starting to fulfil their obligations under the statutory guidance. However, we know that around a quarter of young people aged 13 to 19 still do not participate in structured positive activities.

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4. Main review questions[12] to be addressed in this scoping study (no more than five; preferably fewer)

1) What do we know about young people who do and do not participate in positive activities and why this is the case?

- proportions and characteristics of young people who do and do not participate

- variation of participation rates by type and range of activities available

- barriers to young people participating in positive activities.

2) What is the impact of participating in positive activities on young people's outcomes?

- perspectives on impact of young people, parents, carers and providers

- impact of the built environment

- outcomes to include participation and achievement in learning; prevention of anti-social behaviour, youth crime and other high-risk behaviours such as substance misuse; and development of social and emotional skills

- any negative outcomes and how to avoid them

- cross-cutting issues: child poverty, integrated services delivery, workforce development.

---

[12] See guidance note on setting review questions at the end of this form

3) What works, and offers greatest value for money, in engaging young people who would otherwise not have participated in positive activities, while ensuring that all young people have access to effective positive activities?

- promoting positive activities/raising young people's awareness of what's on offer

- enablers

- cross-sector partnership working

- effectiveness commissioning strategies

- importance of value for money

- cross-cutting issues: child poverty, integrated services delivery, workforce development.

5. Which cross-cutting issues should be included? (Child poverty: equality and diversity; disability; integrated service delivery; workforce development; change management; leadership; learning organisations)? Please specify the review questions for cross-cutting issues in this scope:
- child poverty
- integrated service delivery
- workforce development.

6. Definitions for any terms used in the review questions
The term 'positive activities' covers adult-led structured leisure-time activities outside of school hours and taking place in, or being delivered by, children's centres, extended services, youth services, school-based extra-curricular activities, play and leisure services, sports and recreation services, private providers and the arts. Specific activities include youth groups, sports and physical activities, performing and creative arts, courses and learning-related activities (outside of school hours) and volunteering.

'Young people' refers to those aged 11 to 19 years

7. What will be the likely geographical scope of the searches?
(Work conducted in/including the following countries)

Europe and other countries (English language)

8. Age range for children and young people: 11 to 19 years

9. Literature search dates
Start year   2003

10. Suggestions for key words to be used for searching the literature.

11. Suggestions for websites, databases, networks and experts to be searched or included as key sources.

12. Any key texts/books/seminal works that you wish to see included?

13. Anything else that should be included or taken into account?
Note: the need to avoid overlap with the Disabled Children Review 2, which focuses on the improving disabled young people's access to positive activities.

Appendix 4: National indicators and key data sources

National indicator (NI) number	NI detail	Source (published information)	Scale	Frequency of data collection	Latest data collection	First data collection	Link
Make a positive contribution							
NI 110	Young People Participation in positive activities	Tellus survey 2009	National	Annual	2009	2007 (Not comparable across years)	www.c4eo.org.uk/IAS/ dataviews/report?repo rtId=6&viewId=24&ge oId=2&geoSubsetId= &indicator=i684&date =2009
NI 110	Young People Participation in positive activities	Young People's Social Attitudes survey	National	Annual	2003	1994	http://nesstar.esds.ac.uk /webview/index.jsp?v=2 &mode=documentation& submode=abstract&stud y=http%3A%2F%2Fnes star.esds.ac.uk%3A80% 2Fobj%2FfStudy%2F52 50&top=yes
NI 110	Young People Participation in positive activities	Tellus survey 2009	National	Annual	2009	2007 (Not comparable across years)	www.dcsf.gov.uk/resear ch/programmeofresearc h/index.cfm?type=5&key wordlist1=0&keywordlist 2=0&keywordlist3=0&an dor=or&keyword=Tellus 4&x=40&y=12

National indicator (NI) number	NI detail	Source (published information)	Scale	Frequency of data collection	Latest data collection	First data collection	Link
NI 110	Young People Participation in positive activities	Taking Part survey 2008/09	National	Unknown	2008/09	2008/09	http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/08-09_Child_Baseline_report.pdf
Be healthy							
NI 57	Five to 16-year-olds participating in at least two hours per week of high-quality PE and sport at school	PE and Sport Survey 2008/09	National	Annual	2008/09	2003/04	www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR168.pdf

NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities			
Is the data provided by the local authority or a local partner?	**Y**	**Is this an existing indicator?**	**N**

Rationale	To measure and drive improved performance around the participation of young people in positive activities.
	What young people do, or don't do, out of school matters. Research demonstrates that the activities young people participate in out of school have a significant bearing on their later life outcomes. Positive activities are a good use of young people's time because they provide opportunities to:
	• acquire and practise specific social, physical, emotional and intellectual skills • contribute to the community • belong to a socially recognised group • establish supportive social networks of peers and adults • experience and deal with challenges • enjoy themselves
	UK and international evaluations of out-of-school activities find programme participation to be linked to improvements in **academic**, **preventative** and **development** outcomes. This includes outcomes such as: school performance; avoidance of drug and alcohol use; and increased self-confidence and self-esteem. In this way, positive activities can also help support other indicators for young people.
	Current research suggests participation tends to be higher among those from: higher social groups; living in less deprived areas; and with access to a car. Participation tends to be lower among: Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people; those living in council and housing association rented accommodation; and where household finances are described as 'getting into difficulties'.
	The indicator provides a local measure directly related to the national indicator on positive activities in the then DCSF-led Public Service Agreement 14 to 'increase the number of children and young people on the path to success'.
Definition	The proportion of young people in school year 10 reporting participating in any group activity led by an adult outside school lessons (such as sports, arts, music or youth group) in the last four weeks based on the analysis of the weighted Tellus survey data.
	The Tellus survey is voluntary and the data is weighted and grossed up to match local area profiles based on School Census data.
	Positive activities include a wide range of sporting, cultural and recreational activities and opportunities for volunteering. The key is that activities are structured, good quality, adult-led and support development towards the Every Child Matters outcomes. Activities can take place in a wide variety of settings including youth clubs, sports clubs, outdoor recreation centres, museums and libraries. The 2006 *Education and Inspections Act* sets out a local authority's duties in respect of securing access to activities.

NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities	
	The indicator will be calculated for all local authorities and at a national level. The indicator will be made available to all local authorities.

NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities			
Formula	Using Tellus survey data which has been weighted and grossed up to match local area profiles based on School Census data. $$\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) \times 100$$ Where: x = the number of young people (according to the weighted Tellus data) in school year 10 answering 'yes' to the question *'In the last 4 weeks, have you participated in any group activity led by an adult outside school lessons (such as sports, arts or a youth group)?'* **and/or** claiming they participated (In the last 4 weeks) at one or more of the following structured activities: • sports club or class (where I've done sport not just watched it) • a youth club or youth group with organised activities run by adults • art, craft, dance, drama, film/video-making group or class (not in school lessons) • music group or lesson (not in school lessons). These responses are captured under the Tellus question: 'Which of these have you been to in the last 4 weeks? (Don't count things that were part of school lessons.)' and y = the number of young people in school year 10 responding to one or more of the relevant questions, based on the weighted Tellus data. The above figures must be found from the pupil level Tellus dataset.		
Worked example	In a given local authority, using the weighted and grossed up Tellus survey data, we estimate there are 4,000 young people in school year 10 responding to one or more of the relevant questions and 2,000 of these young people answered yes to the question 'In the last 4 weeks, have you participated in any group activity led by an adult outside school lessons (such as sports, arts or a youth group)?' and a additional 950 claim that they have participated in one or more of	**Good performance**	Good performance is typified by a high and increasing percentage of young people participating in activities – statistically significant improvements will be considered.

NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities

	the following activities, in the last 4 weeks: • sports club or class (where I've done sport not just watched it) • a youth club or youth group with organised activities run by adults • art, craft, dance, drama, film/video-making group or class (not in school lessons)		
	• Music group or lesson (not in school lessons) So: X = 2,000+950 This would equate to: $$\left(\frac{2,900}{4,000}\right) \times 100 = 74\%$$ This gives an indicator value of 74 per cent.		

NI 110: Young people's participation in positive activities			
Collection interval	Financial yearly	**Data source**	The Tellus survey
Return format	Percentage	**Decimal places**	One
Reporting organisation	DCSF		
Spatial level	Single tier and county council		
Further guidance	The Tellus survey is voluntary and the data is grossed up and weighted to match local area profiles based on School Census data.		

Comparison of Tellus3 and Tellus4 NI figures				
		NI 110 - Positive activities		
		2008/09	2009/10	
Local authority		Tellus3 (new weighting)	Tellus4	Change (ppts)
841	Darlington	67.6%	65.6%	-2.0
840	Durham	65.5%	63.1%	-2.4
390	Gateshead	68.3%	57.0%	-11.3
805	Hartlepool	69.6%	56.2%	-13.4
806	Middlesbrough	54.8%	57.9%	3.1
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	69.4%	63.5%	-5.9
392	North Tyneside	62.5%	66.9%	4.4
929	Northumberland	70.0%	69.1%	-0.9

807	Redcar and Cleveland	66.2%	52.8%	-13.4
393	South Tyneside	63.3%	55.0%	-8.3
808	Stockton-on-Tees	62.5%	65.9%	3.4
394	Sunderland	69.0%	54.7%	-14.3
NE	**North East**	**66.1%**	**61.9%**	**-4.2**
889	Blackburn with Darwen	57.8%	48.6%	-9.2
890	Blackpool	63.7%	61.7%	-2.0
350	Bolton	58.0%	69.5%	11.5
351	Bury	63.1%	60.7%	-2.4
875	Cheshire	73.4%	-	-
895	Cheshire East	-	61.6%	-
896	Cheshire West and Chester	-	67.0%	-
909	Cumbria	72.7%	70.8%	-1.9
876	Halton	66.6%	62.5%	-4.1
340	Knowsley	63.5%	61.1%	-2.4
888	Lancashire	63.6%	65.9%	2.3
341	Liverpool	69.7%	66.2%	-3.5
352	Manchester	65.8%	62.7%	-3.1
353	Oldham	64.5%	78.7%	14.2
354	Rochdale	66.3%	59.9%	-6.4
355	Salford	61.1%	59.6%	-1.5
343	Sefton	67.2%	66.0%	-1.2
342	St Helens	74.2%	64.7%	-9.5
356	Stockport	62.5%	73.2%	10.7
357	Tameside	64.8%	65.1%	0.3
358	Trafford	68.6%	67.5%	-1.0
877	Warrington	72.6%	68.6%	-4.0
359	Wigan	62.6%	64.5%	1.9
344	Wirral	80.5%	67.3%	-13.2
NW	**North West**	**66.5%**	**64.7%**	**-1.8**
370	Barnsley	63.4%	52.7%	-10.7
380	Bradford	74.7%	58.3%	-16.4
381	Calderdale	60.8%	65.7%	4.9
371	Doncaster	69.8%	71.3%	1.5
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	63.3%	67.1%	3.8
810	Kingston upon Hull, City of	51.1%	54.6%	3.5
382	Kirklees	72.0%	67.8%	-4.2
383	Leeds	67.3%	64.2%	-3.1
812	North East Lincolnshire	65.2%	57.1%	-8.1
813	North Lincolnshire	66.7%	62.7%	-4.0
815	North Yorkshire	76.1%	73.7%	-2.4
372	Rotherham	60.4%	60.0%	-0.4
373	Sheffield	64.6%	63.2%	-1.4
384	Wakefield	62.4%	58.2%	-4.2
816	York	68.6%	66.0%	-2.6

YH	Yorkshire and the Humber	**64.0%**	**64.1%**	**0.1**
831	Derby	69.7%	61.7%	-8.0
830	Derbyshire	68.9%	64.6%	-4.3
856	Leicester	64.8%	56.6%	-8.2
855	Leicestershire	69.7%	68.3%	-1.4
925	Lincolnshire	65.0%	71.0%	6.0
928	Northamptonshire	63.2%	62.6%	-0.6
892	Nottingham	72.8%	61.2%	-11.6
891	Nottinghamshire	71.5%	70.2%	-1.3
857	Rutland	70.1%	69.6%	-0.5
EM	**East Midlands**	**68.1%**	**64.3%**	**-3.8**
330	Birmingham	66.4%	54.8%	-11.6
331	Coventry	65.3%	62.0%	-3.3
332	Dudley	64.4%	64.9%	0.5
884	Herefordshire	85.8%	79.6%	-6.2
333	Sandwell	62.9%	62.7%	-0.2
893	Shropshire	73.6%	65.7%	-7.9
334	Solihull	64.7%	64.0%	-0.7
860	Staffordshire	70.5%	64.8%	-5.7
861	Stoke-on-Trent	65.1%	55.3%	-9.8
894	Telford and Wrekin	67.2%	61.2%	-6.0
335	Walsall	67.0%	57.6%	-9.4
937	Warwickshire	69.9%	68.5%	-1.4
336	Wolverhampton	68.8%	61.5%	-7.3
885	Worcestershire	71.6%	65.2%	-6.4
WM	**West Midlands**	**68.0%**	**63.4%**	**-4.6**
820	Bedfordshire	70.6%	-	-
823	Central Bedfordshire	-	69.0%	-
822	Bedford	-	68.7%	-
873	Cambridgeshire	74.2%	80.4%	6.2
881	Essex	73.9%	69.8%	-4.1
919	Hertfordshire	71.4%	75.0%	3.6
821	Luton	65.6%	61.1%	-4.5
926	Norfolk	75.0%	67.7%	-7.3
874	Peterborough	67.0%	69.7%	2.7
882	Southend-on-Sea	65.5%	78.6%	13.1
935	Suffolk	72.9%	70.3%	-2.6
883	Thurrock	68.0%	58.9%	-9.1
EE	**East of England**	**70.9%**	**69.3%**	**-1.6**
201	City of London	66.0%	65.9%	-0.1
202	Camden	52.9%	73.0%	20.1
204	Hackney	65.8%	62.2%	-3.6
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	60.3%	64.8%	4.5

309	Haringey	53.6%	69.4%	15.8
206	Islington	62.9%	67.1%	4.2
207	Kensington and Chelsea	65.7%	63.3%	-2.4
208	Lambeth	65.7%	69.8%	4.1
209	Lewisham	72.5%	63.4%	-9.1
316	Newham	68.6%	60.9%	-7.7
210	Southwark	63.7%	59.2%	-4.5
211	Tower Hamlets	70.0%	64.1%	-5.9
212	Wandsworth	63.1%	63.3%	0.2
213	Westminster	59.8%	72.6%	12.8
301	Barking and Dagenham	73.3%	64.1%	-9.2
302	Barnet	66.6%	64.5%	-2.1
303	Bexley	69.2%	73.0%	3.8
304	Brent	72.3%	57.3%	-15.0
305	Bromley	68.9%	66.4%	-2.5
306	Croydon	63.7%	67.9%	4.2
307	Ealing	64.9%	67.2%	2.3
308	Enfield	60.0%	72.8%	12.8
203	Greenwich	66.3%	62.4%	-3.9
310	Harrow	75.3%	66.1%	-9.2
311	Havering	71.8%	66.3%	-5.5
312	Hillingdon	61.7%	74.9%	13.2
313	Hounslow	69.3%	68.0%	-1.3
314	Kingston upon Thames	70.0%	73.5%	3.5
315	Merton	70.2%	57.8%	-12.4
317	Redbridge	67.7%	72.4%	4.7
318	Richmond upon Thames	83.9%	60.4%	-23.5
319	Sutton	70.1%	76.3%	6.2
320	Waltham Forest	65.8%	57.8%	-8.0
L	**London**	**67.5%**	**66.3%**	**-1.2**
867	Bracknell Forest	88.4%	76.2%	-12.2
846	Brighton and Hove	64.2%	65.6%	1.4
825	Buckinghamshire	76.5%	73.1%	-3.4
845	East Sussex	70.3%	68.7%	-1.6
850	Hampshire	74.7%	70.1%	-4.6
921	Isle of Wight	70.2%	64.6%	-5.6
886	Kent	65.5%	67.3%	1.8
887	Medway	65.8%	66.5%	0.7
826	Milton Keynes	72.4%	67.1%	-5.3
931	Oxfordshire	71.2%	61.7%	-9.5
851	Portsmouth	50.3%	58.5%	8.2
870	Reading	69.5%	59.8%	-9.7
871	Slough	71.0%	77.7%	6.7
852	Southampton	65.5%	59.3%	-6.2
936	Surrey	75.1%	74.8%	-0.3
869	West Berkshire	72.6%	72.3%	-0.3

938	West Sussex	69.0%	68.7%	-0.3
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	73.2%	72.6%	-0.6
872	Wokingham	75.3%	77.1%	1.8
SE	**South East**	**70.7%**	**68.8%**	**-1.9**
800	Bath and North East Somerset	79.1%	79.2%	0.1
837	Bournemouth	65.6%	61.0%	-4.6
801	Bristol, City of	73.5%	59.3%	-14.2
908	Cornwall	68.6%	69.7%	1.1
878	Devon	73.9%	68.3%	-5.7
835	Dorset	70.5%	68.3%	-2.1
916	Gloucestershire	70.6%	73.6%	3.0
420	Isles of Scilly	100.0%	100.0%	0.0
802	North Somerset	68.3%	75.2%	6.9
879	Plymouth	78.0%	66.0%	-12.0
836	Poole	60.7%	66.6%	5.9
933	Somerset	74.7%	70.6%	-4.1
803	South Gloucestershire	71.7%	66.9%	-4.8
866	Swindon	71.8%	67.6%	-4.2
880	Torbay	60.8%	63.4%	2.6
865	Wiltshire	76.5%	72.6%	-3.9
SW	**South West**	**73.2%**	**68.1%**	**-5.1**
Eng	**England**	**68.2%**	**65.8%**	**-2.4**
	min	50.3%	48.6%	-24
	quartile limit	64.7%	61.7%	-6
	median	68.1%	65.9%	-2
	quartile limit	71.6%	69.4%	1
	max	100%	100%	20

Source: DCSF 2010

SEPTEMBER 2010

Increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities

This research review tells us what works in increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities. It is based on a rapid review of the research literature involving systematic searching and analysis of key data. It summarises the best available evidence that will help service providers to improve services and, ultimately, outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The National Youth Agency carried out this review on behalf of the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO). The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) conducted the data work.