



fit for
girls

Fit for Girls Evaluation

Interim Report 2

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Preface

At Newbattle High School in Midlothian, physical education and school sport play a vital role in nurturing the physical, mental and emotional health of young people – it is so much more than about improving fitness levels. One of the major benefits that we have seen with Fit For Girls, has been the dramatic way participation in school sport can drive up young people's confidence and self-esteem. Just a little bit of self-belief can act as a springboard for young people to play an active role in class, make friends more easily and generally become more engaged in school life. We have seen a jump in attendance levels, with a knock on effect on academic results. Our pupils are happier and more secure in who they are and what they can achieve and this really shows, in so many ways. Our journey for the past three years with Fit For Girls at Newbattle High has resulted in great leaps forward for our female students and by association for our entire school population and its ethos of life long Health & Well Being and skills for life and work.

The Fit for Girls programme supports our own school initiatives to get more girls into and working successfully in the PE department. Our female uptake in S3 Standard Grade climbed by 43% by upgrading all our changing rooms, and in particular installing mirrors, lockers and dryers to bring the facilities up to sport centre standards. At the same time dance and netball were introduced which have been very successful and are now incorporated into our PE timetable as core sports. The school now hosts two annual dance shows and girls have successfully taken part in the Scottish cup for netball. In four years there has been a 93% increase in the numbers of girls now attending after school clubs thanks to a creative and committed group of PE staff and Active Schools support. Our biggest increase has been in the S1-2 group.

We have used some of our funding combined with the Head Teacher and Parents Association and Friends of Newbattle, to run a bus after clubs, three nights per week to our outlying areas to ensure our youngest and most vulnerable pupils can continue to attend clubs in the winter months. In combination with Active Schools, Fit for Girls funding and Midlothian Council sports centres it is our aim to ensure our pupils successfully progress from School PE to regular and enjoyable active lifestyles in the community.

The combination of dynamic PE staff, Active Schools staff and the support of a good Head Teacher who has vision and commitment, combined with focussed and well resourced programmes such as Fit for Girls, that are crucial to getting new projects off the ground and reaping the full rewards.

Fit for Girls has made a measurable and significant difference to the success of Health & Well Being at Newbattle High School. I commend it to you.

Bob Foley
Head of Physical Education
Newbattle Community High School

Executive Summary

The Fit for Girls programme (F4G) is a joint initiative between the Youth Sport Trust and **sportscotland**, aimed at increasing physical activity participation among girls aged 11 to 16 years. The programme was launched in 2008 and is being delivered to all secondary schools across Scotland over three years. The three year roll-out will end in March 2011. A core focus of the programme is to bring about sustainable change in schools that builds a positive future for girls' participation in physical activity. This is achieved through providing an interactive workshop for practitioners in order to allow them to share and exchange necessary knowledge, tools and skills to be able to successfully consult, plan and implement positive PE experiences and sustainable physical activity programmes for girls in the school setting, and build stronger links with community provision. By the end of September 2010, 327 of the 372 mainstream secondary schools and 13 of the 27 ASN secondary schools were engaged in the Fit for Girls programme.

A national evaluation of the programme is being conducted by the Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit (CAHRU) at the University of Edinburgh. The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the Fit for Girls programme on levels of participation in PE, sport and physical activity among secondary school girls. A mixed methods approach is used, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Four individual school case studies are also included to allow more in-depth exploration of the process of implementation at school level.

The first Interim Report from the evaluation was published in early 2010 and presented findings from a baseline survey of S2 girls in all secondary schools across Scotland. This second Interim Report presents baseline findings from a survey of Physical Education staff and Active School Coordinators in all secondary schools across Scotland undertaken during the beginning of Year 2 of the programme. In addition, baseline findings from focus groups with low active girls undertaken during Year 1 of the programme are also presented.

An online questionnaire was administered to all secondary and ASN schools in Scotland during the Summer Term 2010. This aimed to gather information about physical activity provision in schools through PE and extra-curricular activities, perceptions of girls' participation at school, consultation activities with girls, experiences of the Fit for Girls programme and links with key partners at local level. In total, 223 completed questionnaires were returned by PE staff and 337 were returned by Active Schools staff. In most cases, PE staff and Active Schools staff completed questionnaires independently and therefore, for many schools, more than one questionnaire was returned. Overall, responses were received from 297 of the 372 mainstream schools and 12 of the 27 ASN schools across Scotland, giving total school response rates of 80% for mainstream schools and 44% for ASN schools.

Key findings from the PE / Active Schools questionnaire are highlighted below:

- Around a quarter of schools achieved the target for 2 hours of PE a week for S1 and S2 pupils. Older pupils typically received less PE.
- The majority of PE and Active Schools staff reported that less than 30% of girls in their school took part in extra-curricular activities on a regular basis.
- The most common perceived barrier to girls' participation was lack of interest.

- 40% of PE staff said that their School Development Plan explicitly identifies promoting physical activity among girls as a priority. 44% said that the Fit for Girls programme was included in their School Development Plan.
- The majority of PE (84%) and Active Schools (68%) staff said that they had consulted girls about the type of activities they would like to do at school. The most common method of consultation was by questionnaire.
- Half of Active Schools staff (53%) and a third of PE staff (34%) felt their school did not offer enough opportunities for girls to take part in sport and other physical activities.
- 69% of PE staff and 73% of Active Schools staff who had attended Fit for Girls training reported that involvement in the programme had helped them to increase girls' participation in PE, sport and physical activity.
- A wide range of girls-only activities were reported as being already available within the schools. Some of these may have started as a result of Fit for Girls while others may already have been in place. Dance was the most common girls-only activity within PE and football was the most common girls-only activity within extra-curricular provision.
- 65% of PE staff and 59% of Active Schools staff said that their school had started new girls-only clubs as a result of being part of the Fit for Girls programme. The majority of these were extra-curricular activities.

In addition, data from 12 focus group discussions with 41 low active girls are also presented in this report. Three focus groups were conducted in each of the four case study schools during Year 1 to investigate attitudes towards physical activity and experiences and factors underlying disengagement within the PE context and extra-curricular provision. The focus groups revealed six themes representing key influences on girls' participation in PE. These were; perceptions of competence, peer relationships, the PE teacher, the PE environment, activity choice and extra-curricular activities. Key findings are summarised below.

- Perceived competence or a perceived lack of skill was a major barrier to girls' participation and enjoyment in PE. When girls were asked how they assessed 'competence' or 'ability' in PE, girls often made comparisons to their peers.
- Peers were shown to have an important influence on engagement and experiences, with girls reporting that confidence to take part can depend largely on who else is in the PE class. Girls' only classes were preferred as boys were seen to dominate activities, increase competitiveness and many girls felt self-conscious 'performing' in front of boys.
- The PE teacher is central to girls' PE experience. Although female teachers were seen as beneficial, gender was not considered as important as personality or the quality of teacher-pupil relationship. However, many girls mentioned teachers having 'favourites' with the 'sporty' girls. This could result in disengaged girls feeling more isolated within PE classes as they felt their efforts were unrecognised.

- Aspects of the wider psychosocial environment in which PE takes place may be more important than the physical activity itself, impacting on levels of participation and enjoyment. Many girls felt that who was in the class, the activity being delivered and feeling 'on display' affected engagement and enjoyment of the subject.
- Having a choice of activity in PE appeared to make a difference to girls participation and enjoyment of the subject in one of the case study schools. Offering choice broke down barriers relating to competence, peer groups and single sex PE. However, it may be more about the consultation process and the way in which activities are delivered, rather than the choice of activity per se.
- Many of the extra curricular activities on offer were seen to be inappropriate to these girls, as they felt they were too competitive and were regarded as 'boys' sports'. Other reasons given for not participating in extra curricular activities were not being 'bothered' and having other things to do. It was also clear that the teacher running the club, along with the pupils that attended, were significant influences on participation.

1. Background

A physically active lifestyle is now recognised as an essential component of healthy living. As well as longer term health gains, physical activity during childhood promotes optimal growth and development, helps prevent overweight and obesity, protects against risk factors for cardiovascular disease and enhances psychological wellbeing. However, evidence suggests that many young people are not sufficiently active to benefit their health. Sharp declines in physical activity are observed during adolescence, particularly among girls. Current guidelines recommend that all young people should participate in physical activity of at least moderate intensity for one hour per day. The national physical activity strategy, *Let's Make Scotland More Active* (Scottish Executive, 2003), set a target for 80% of all children aged 16 or under to meet this recommendation by 2022. However, data from the 2009 Scottish Health Survey show that, among 13-15 year olds, over two-thirds of boys (70%) but only around two-fifths of girls (42%) meet the guideline and almost a third (30%) of girls engage in less than 30 minutes of moderate activity daily (Ormston, 2010).

The Fit for Girls programme was jointly developed between the Youth Sport Trust and **sportscotland** specifically to increase physical activity levels among girls aged 11-16 years. Following a pilot, the programme was launched in February 2008 and will be delivered to all secondary schools in Scotland over a three year period (2008-2011). A core focus is to bring about sustainable change in schools that builds a positive future for girls' participation in lifelong physical activity. It aims to give low active girls and young women opportunities and choices to achieve the social, psychological and physical benefits associated with physical activity. This is achieved through providing an interactive workshop for practitioners in order to allow them to share and exchange necessary knowledge, tools and skills to be able to successfully consult, plan and implement positive PE experiences and sustainable physical activity programmes for girls in the school setting and build stronger links with community provision.

The programme is flexible in its approach, responding to the needs of each school but is typically delivered via a 4-hour workshop to secondary PE staff, Active Schools Coordinators and other relevant professionals as the school community deems appropriate. Since the first workshop delivery in September 2008, training has continued to evolve and develop with a number of creative ways to engage and meet the local needs of schools. Workshops have been delivered as part of departmental meetings, cluster schools have gathered as part of an in-service day and where necessary a series of one to one meetings between the trainer, active schools coordinator and key members of school staff have taken place. Each training session is evaluated by the participants and points are taken onboard and discussed with the trainers. On reflection of the evaluation training has been most successful when 3 or 4 schools have come together to share ideas and practices and involved senior girls in the whole process of decision making and action planning to increase participation. The need for a whole school approach is necessary to maximise effect and work towards a common goal.

The real strength in the training programme has been the experience and understanding that practising PE teachers recruited as Fit for Girls trainers have brought to the workshops. Five Fit for Girls trainers were recruited for the programme to deliver workshops to schools. The trainers are all full time PE teachers and have been instrumental in the roll out of the programme. Time tabling is a challenge to the programme but crucial in delivering training that is valued and appreciated by the schools. The trainers are supported and encouraged to continually update and

improve the training and ensure that the training is targeted as much as possible to the schools needs. The trainers continue to support schools with advice and networks which enable the Fit for Girls programme to support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence and allow their work with girls to become an integral part of the School Development Plan. As well as knowledge and information sharing, the workshops provide practitioners with a planning process, feedback and support in implementing a comprehensive plan for increasing girl's participation in PE, sport and physical activity both in and out of school.

Within each school, the programme will vary according to identified needs, but all are underpinned by the following national objectives:

- To create and implement school development plans that reflect girls' needs
- To increase girls' enjoyment of PE, sport and physical activity
- To increase and improve opportunities for participation, both in and out of school
- To develop an integrated approach between PE, sport and physical activity
- To improve transition between primary and secondary schools in terms of participation in PE, sport and physical activity
- To improve the links between school and community sport

A number of programme outcomes and outputs were identified at the outset. Key performances indicators (KPIs) are as follows:

- **All secondary schools receiving training (Active Schools Secondary and Primary Coordinators, PE teacher, Head of PE, other relevant practitioners).**
Year 1: 50 training sessions held and 150 schools trained.
Year 2: 78 training sessions held and 230 schools trained.
- **340 schools producing 3-yearly action plans on addressing girls' participation, and 340 grants distributed.**
Year 1: 100 action plans received and 100 grants distributed.
Year 2: 160 action plans received and 160 grants distributed.
Year 3: 80 action plans received and 80 grants distributed.
- **240 girls-only physical activity clubs or projects running, engaging with girls previously not significantly involved in sport or other physical activity.**
Year 1: 50 new girls-only activity clubs or projects.
Year 2: 90 new girls-only activity clubs or projects.
Year 3: 100 new girls-only activity clubs or projects.
- **A more integrated approach between extra-curricular activity and curricular PE to address girls' participation.**
- **School Development Plans reflect work with girls as a priority.**
- **Improved participation of girls in extra-curricular activity and in curricular PE.**
- **Reported improved enjoyment of PE, sport and physical activity.**
- **Solid research data and good practice from participating schools.**
- **Better informed and skilled school staff.**
- **Improved health and fitness among girls and a greater focus in schools on the benefits of physical activity for girls.**
- **Improved partnership working between secondary and primary schools regarding transition.**
- **Improved opportunities for girls to take part in a wide variety of activity in and outside of school.**
- **Improved links with schools and the wider community in relation to sport and other physical activity.**

Progress toward these KPIs is being tracked and the final evaluation will report on achievements against each KPI.

2. Current status of programme

The Fit for Girls programme started in April 2008 and the first training workshop was held in September 2008. By the end of September 2010:

- 327 mainstream schools and 13 ASN schools were engaged in the programme
- 96 workshops had taken place
- 25 Local Authorities had finalised training
- 301 schools had submitted action plans
- 262 school action plans had been approved.

3. Overview of evaluation

The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the Fit for Girls programme on levels of participation in physical education, sport and physical activity among secondary school girls. A mixed methods approach is being used, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative techniques, in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact of the programme as well as the process of implementation.

The following data are being collected by **sportscotland** and will be used for the evaluation:

- National questionnaire survey to all S2 girls in Year 1 (2008/09) with follow-up to all girls in S4 in Year 3 (2010/11)
- National questionnaire survey to PE staff and Active School Coordinators in Years 1 and 3
- Ongoing Active Schools monitoring

A baseline questionnaire was issued to all S2 girls in secondary schools across Scotland during Year 1 of the programme and findings from this survey have been reported previously in Interim Report 1 (Inchley et al. 2010). A follow-up questionnaire to the same cohort of girls who are now in S4 is currently in the field and findings will be presented in the final evaluation report.

An online questionnaire was administered to PE staff and Active School Coordinators in all secondary mainstream and ASN schools in Scotland during the Summer Term 2010 (beginning of Year 2 of the programme). Questionnaires were distributed via Active Schools Managers to Active School Coordinators and to the lead link for Fit for Girls or another nominated member of PE staff. The aim of the questionnaire was to gather information about physical activity provision in schools through PE and extra-curricular activities, perceptions of girls' participation at school, consultation activities with girls, experiences of the Fit for Girls programme and links with key partners at a local level. The findings from the questionnaire provide baseline information against which future changes can be assessed. However, as many schools had already attended the Fit for Girls workshop, it also provides preliminary data on the impact of the training on physical activity provision within schools.

In total, 223 completed questionnaires were returned by PE staff and 337 were returned by Active Schools staff. In most cases, PE staff and Active Schools staff completed questionnaires independently and therefore, for many schools, more than one questionnaire was returned. In some cases, a collective response was submitted and in other cases, more than one questionnaire was submitted by different members of PE staff from the same school. In a small number of local authorities, Active Schools Coordinators have responsibility for more than one secondary school. In such cases, respondents were asked to complete a separate questionnaire for

each school they work with. Overall, responses were received from 297 of the 372 mainstream schools and 12 of the 27 ASN schools across Scotland, giving total school response rates of 80% for mainstream schools and 44% for ASN schools. However, it should be noted that the data presented in this report present individual responses from PE and Active Schools staff and not individual school responses.

In addition, four schools were selected as case study schools to take part in the evaluation, each from a different Local Authority. Based on **sportscotland's** Area Variation Report (Coalter & Dowers, 2006), two 'low active' and two 'middle active' Local Authorities were selected¹. The four individual case study schools therefore represent different geographical settings, socio-economic profiles and levels of participation. A brief profile of each school is shown in Boxes 1 to 4.

The four case studies allow for in-depth exploration of the processes of change and programme outcomes within each school. Additional questionnaires have been issued to all S2 girls (08/09) in the case study schools and in-depth qualitative work is being undertaken throughout the duration of the programme with a sub-sample of these girls who were identified as being 'disengaged' within PE. Girls were identified as being disengaged if they participated in PE 'some of the time' or 'none of the time' (rather than 'all of the time' and 'most of the time') according to their baseline questionnaire responses. This was in addition to reporting negative perceptions of the subject when asked: 'how do you feel when you take part in PE?' (e.g. bored, stupid, angry, embarrassed, worried, sad, agitated, nervous). All girls were asked to indicate on the questionnaire if they would be willing to participate in focus groups, and which friends they would like to include. Initially, girls were selected according to identified friendship groups. Disengaged individuals were then selected from the consenting girls. Therefore, while the focus groups consisted mainly of 'disengaged' girls, on occasion 'sporty' friends were included as they were chosen to be in a group with others.

A total of twelve baseline focus groups were carried out during 2008/09 (three in each case study school). The aim of the focus groups was to explore girls' opinions, perceptions and experiences of the PE environment in their school, whilst providing them with a secure atmosphere to participate with the research and researcher. The focus groups captured open 'group representation' of PE as a subject in each school, before subsequent in-depth interviews to further explore the PE environment with some of the girls individually. Topics for discussion were mostly derived from gaps in knowledge about girls' physical education experiences, which were identified from a comprehensive review of existing literature. The focus groups were exploratory and so although questions and subject areas were identified, these were not adhered to in a strict order.

¹ 'Low active' areas were those where less than 40% of adults participated in sport at least once a week. 'Middle active' areas were those where less than 60% of adults participated in sport at least once a week. Thus, both types of area fall short of the target for 60% of adults to take part in sport at least once a week by 2020 as set out in Reaching Higher, Scotland's national strategy for sport.

Box 1: Case Study School A

School A is located in a large urban area² in the West of Scotland. According to **sportscotland's** Area Variation Report (2006), the school is situated in a local authority classified as a 'low active' area. The school itself has a relatively high proportion of black and minority ethnic pupils (>=20%) and, since 1999, has housed Scotland's first School of Sport, dedicated to sporting excellence. The school is non-denominational and co-educational with 883 pupils, 82 of whom attend the School of Sport. There were 82 girls in S2 at the start of the Fit for Girls programme.

Fit for Girls action plan: key targets

- Set up a school sports council and have a sub group for girls. This group will consist of pupils from each year group and will be pupil focussed and pupil led.
- 5% of girls aged 16-18 adopt a leadership role by 2013 (from a 2010 baseline of 0%)
- Introduce Dance into the PE curriculum and also fitness through technology which can be taken into life outside school leading to a fitter and healthier lifestyle (S3-S6)
- 40% of girls aged 11-13 take part in at least one hour extra-curricular sport each week by 2013 (from an estimated 2010 baseline of 20%)
- Establish a girls football team. Establish a girls and mothers fitness class.
- Establish another girl's club – depending on the requests from the Sports Council
- Introduce Duke of Edinburgh Award with a focus on girls participating to develop confidence and team building skills with a focus on sporting activities chosen by the pupils with an input from the girls group.

Box 2: Case Study School B

School B is located in a large urban area² in Central Scotland. According to **sportscotland's** Area Variation Report (2006), the Local Authority is classified as a 'low active' area. The school is a Roman Catholic, co-educational secondary school currently participating in 'Schools of Ambition'. It has a school roll of 1100 and had 106 girls in S2 at the start of the Fit for Girls programme.

Fit for Girls action plan: key targets

- Develop a Health and Wellbeing Insert into Physical Education on Self Image and the Role of Exercise & Healthy Lifestyle, to address the 80% of girls who had no idea of recommended amount of daily physical activity for their age & who believe being healthy is important.
- Establish a forum for Active Girls to act as role models, recruit female participants and take a leadership role in providing opportunities through clubs within the school and within our Primary Schools.
- Establish a Netball Team as a first step in developing extra-curricular opportunities for girls, to provide opportunity for the sizable 38% of girls who would like to do more team games.
- Use role models from our 'Active Girls' to promote Netball in the Primary Schools through our Active Schools Programme.

² As defined by the Scottish Government Urban / Rural Classification
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0103167.pdf>

Box 3: Case Study School C

School C is located in an accessible rural area³ in the East of Scotland. According to **sportscotland's** Area Variation Report (2006), the Local Authority is classified as a 'middle active' area. It is a non-denominational, community use school which opened in 1987. It has a school roll of 729 and had 54 girls in S2 at the start of the Fit for Girls programme.

Fit for Girls action plan: key targets

- Increase participation of S3/S4 girls in core PE by 25%
- Introduce netball to the S1/2 curriculum (requested by current S3 pupils)
- Increase of 10% in the 2010 Standard Grade uptake by girls.
- Increase the number of girls participating in extra-curricular activities by 50% by 2012.
- Increase the number of school staff/volunteers delivering girls clubs.
- Develop links to local clubs in at least 1 extra-curricular activity.

Box 4: Case Study School D

School D is located in a remote small town³ in the South East of Scotland. According to **sportscotland's** Area Variation Report (2006), the Local Authority is classified as a 'middle active' area. It is a non-denominational, co-educational school with a school roll of 690. There were 76 girls in S2 at the start of the Fit for Girls programme.

Fit for Girls action plan: key targets

- Improved communication between primary and secondary PE specialists
- Staff to undertake a variety of CPD courses to improve their expertise in non-traditional activities - Aim to deliver a minimum number of 3 new non traditional activities within the curriculum based on consultation from the girls. Minimum of 4 staff to attend training.
- 95% of S2/3 girls take part in core PE from a baseline of 92%.
- 90% of S4 girls take part in core PE from a baseline of 86%

Activity sheets were used at the beginning of each focus group. Each sheet contained two boxes containing emotions (these included emotions such as: happy, sad, bored, excited, nervous). Girls were asked to circle the words in the first box that they thought described how 'other girls might feel' when they participate in PE. The girls were then asked to circle the emotions in the second box that described how 'they feel when they take part in PE'. The activity sheets were designed as a trigger to promote discussion around PE. Since the first task allowed girls to express opinions about how other girls may feel, this reduced the embarrassment of expressing their own feelings immediately in front of the group. Girls were forthcoming in discussions relating to how they think other girls may feel, which built up rapport and comfort within the group. Girls were then asked to compare the feelings they had circled in both boxes, which promoted discussion around their own feelings.

³ As defined by the Scottish Government Urban / Rural Classification
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0103167.pdf>

The findings from the girls' focus groups provide baseline data against which any changes in girls' perceptions, attitudes and engagement, as well as their awareness of the Fit for Girls programme, will be monitored. Furthermore, processes of change will be closely examined to help understand *if* and *how* girls experiences and engagement can be affected and influenced by a physical activity programme in their school. Focus groups are also being undertaken with PE staff in the case study schools and telephone interviews are being conducted with key stakeholders within each Local Authority. These findings will be reported in the final evaluation report.

This report presents findings from:

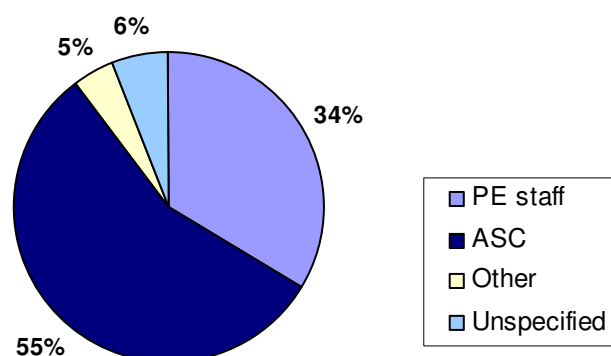
1. The online questionnaire sent to the lead link for Fit for Girls or nominated member of PE staff and Active Schools Coordinators in all secondary schools across Scotland during the Summer Term 2010. The questionnaire gathers information about physical activity, physical education and extra-curricular school-based activities, as well as girls' health and wellbeing. The findings in this report are baseline findings against which changes over time will be monitored as implementation of the Fit for Girls programme takes place.
2. Baseline focus group discussions (n=12) with girls in the four case study schools.

4. Results from baseline questionnaire to PE staff and Active School Coordinators

4.1 Sample profile

- Questionnaires were distributed via Active Schools Managers to the lead links of Fit for Girls or a nominated member of Physical Education (PE) staff and Active School Coordinators (Secondary) in all 32 local authorities across Scotland.
- A total of 598 questionnaires were returned. This represents a school response rate of 80% for mainstream schools and 44% for ASN schools.
- Figure 1 shows the breakdown of respondents. The majority of questionnaires (55%) were completed by an Active Schools Coordinator and a further 34% were completed by PE staff. A small number of questionnaires were completed by 'others'. These included joint submissions (typically by a member of PE staff and an Active School Coordinator) as well as the following: PT Curriculum, PT Health and Wellbeing, Sport and Physical Activity Coordinator, Education Officer, Education Social Worker, Faculty Head, and Girls Development Officer. Thirty four respondents (6%) did not specify their current post.
- For the purposes of this report, data are presented separately for PE staff (PE) and Active School Coordinators (ASC). The PE staff category includes joint submissions between PE teachers and ASCs as well as other teaching staff who have some degree of curricular responsibility for PE in their school. The total number of respondents in this category was 223. The Active Schools Coordinators category also includes those who may have some responsibility for delivery of extra-curricular activities either at local authority or school level. The total number of respondents in this category was 337.

Figure 1: Profile of respondents



4.2 Physical Education (PE)

Composition of PE department

Table 1 shows the number of staff within PE departments as reported by PE staff who responded to the questionnaire survey. It should be noted that there was a high degree of missing data for this question so the percentages in the Table may not be representative of the current situation across Scotland.

Three PE staff reported that there were no full-time or part-time female PE teachers within their school. Nearly one in five (17.9%) PE staff reported that there was no Active School Coordinator based at their school.

Table 1: Composition of PE department (% PE staff responses)

	0	1	2	3	4	Unknown**
Full-time NQT*	11.7	20.2	8.1	0.4	3.6	60.0
Part-time NQT*	15.2	3.6	0	0	0.4	80.7
Full-time male	1.8	23.3	28.7	21.1	9.0	16.1
Part-time male	12.6	28.3	2.2	2.7	0	54.3
Full-time female	4.0	28.3	29.1	11.2	4.9	22.4
Part-time female	9.0	30.0	11.2	5.4	0	44.4
Active School Coordinator	17.9	41.7	4.5	0.4	0	35.4

* NQT = newly qualified teacher

** Unknown responses are due to missing or inappropriate responses. It is likely that missing responses correspond to '0' but this cannot be assumed.

Weekly time allocation for PE

Table 2 shows the weekly time allocation for curricular PE by year group. The current target is for all schools to provide at least 2 hours of quality PE each week. S1 and S2 pupils were most likely to receive 2 or more hours of PE each week, but only around a quarter of schools reached this target. Fewer schools achieved this target among older year groups. In around half of schools, the weekly PE allocation for S1-S4 pupils was 1½ - 2 hours.

Table 2: Weekly PE allocation

	<30 minutes	30-59 minutes	60-89 minutes	90-119 minutes	120+ minutes	missing
S1	0	4.0	15.2	52.5	26.0	2.2
S2	0	5.4	13.9	55.2	22.9	2.7
S3	0	10.8	20.2	51.1	12.1	5.8
S4	0	13.0	21.5	50.2	9.4	5.8
S5	17.0	22.0	9.9	23.3	3.6	24.2
S6	28.7	11.7	8.5	16.6	2.2	32.3

Availability of girls-only sports and physical activities within PE

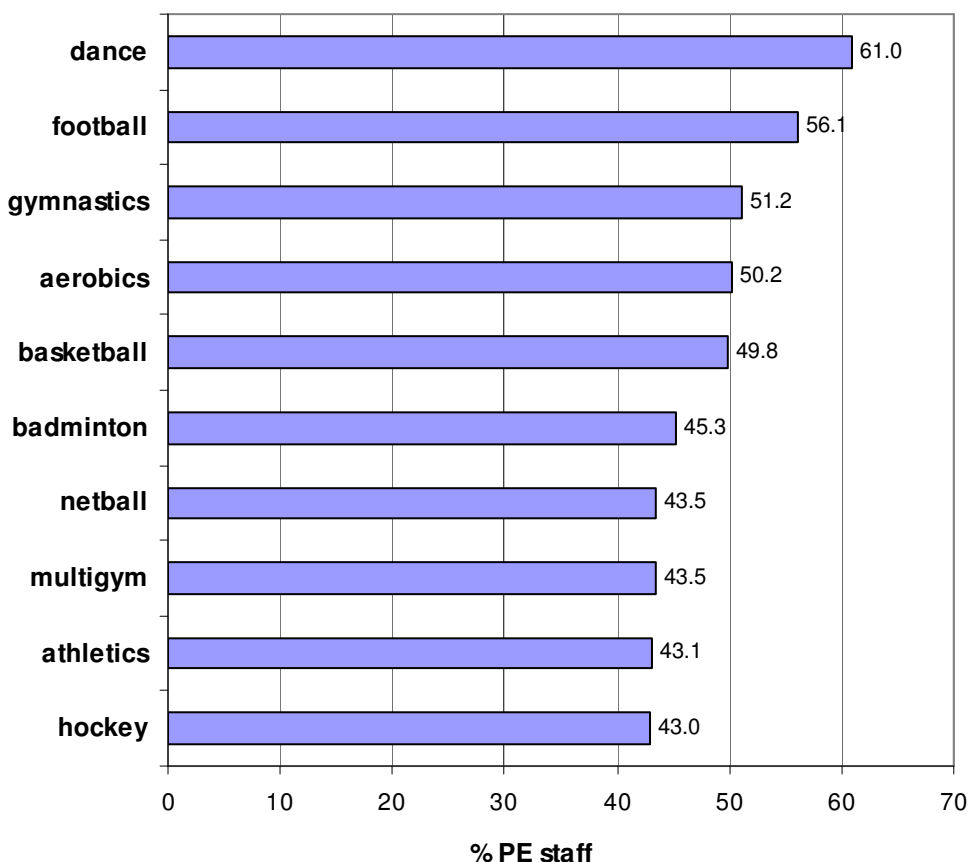
Figure 2 shows the ten most common activities provided as girls-only activities within PE. Between approximately 40-60% of PE staff said that these activities were available within their school. Dance was the most common girls-only activity but a number of other individual physical activities such as gymnastics, aerobics, multigym and athletics were also available.

- Around a third of PE staff (31.0%) said that swimming was available as a girls-only activity.
- Around a quarter of PE staff (26.0%) said that trampolining was available as a girls-only activity.
- Around a fifth of PE staff (22.4%) said that walking was available as a girls-only activity.

A full list of activities is shown in Appendix 1.

'Other' responses from PE staff included: softball, ultimate frisbee, lacrosse, rocketball, unihoc, water polo, rock climbing, kayaking, archery, climbing wall, spinning and zumba. However, it should be noted that these were rarely reported by more than one respondent and therefore are not typically offered within schools.

Figure 2: Ten most common girls-only activities within PE



4.3 Extra-curricular activities

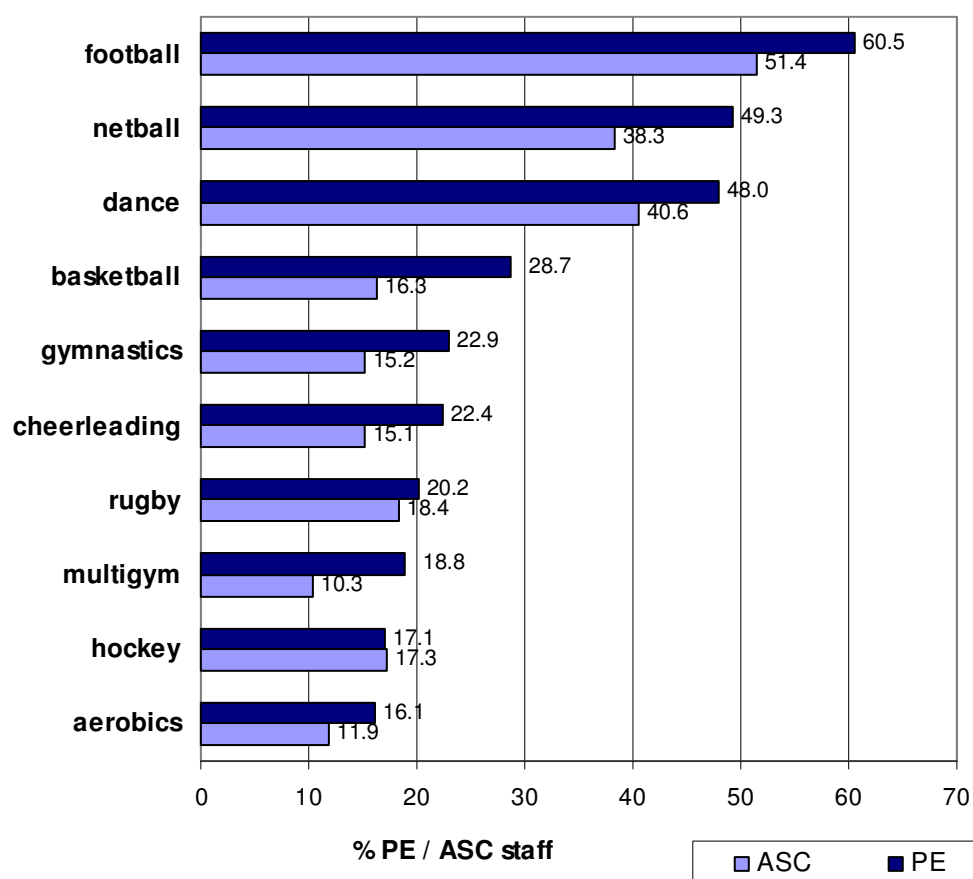
Availability of extra-curricular sports and physical activities

Figure 3 shows the ten most common activities provided as girls-only extra-curricular activities. Between approximately 10-60% of PE and Active Schools staff said that these activities were available within their school. The list of activities was the same as those most commonly provided as girls-only activities within PE with one exception: cheerleading featured instead of athletics on the list of top ten extra-curricular activities. Overall, football, netball and dance were the most common girls-only extra-curricular activities provided.

A full list of activities is shown in Appendix 2.

'Other' extra-curricular activities reported by PE and Active Schools staff included: body combat, spinning, rowing, octopush, parkour, boxercise, climbing, handball, roller skating, roller blading, skateboarding, skipping, ultimate frisbee, zumba and fencing. However, it should be noted that these were rarely reported by more than one respondent and therefore are not typically offered within schools.

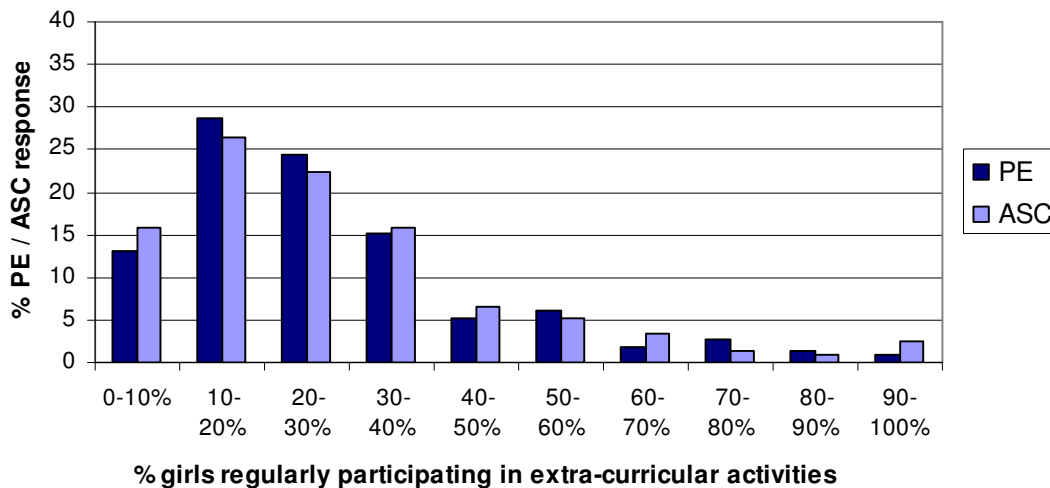
Figure 3: Ten most common girls-only extra-curricular activities



Participation in extra-curricular activities

Participants were asked approximately what percentage of girls currently participate in extra-curricular sports and physical activities on a regular basis (Figure 4). There was a high degree of correspondence between PE and Active Schools responses. Most said that between 10-30% of girls in their schools regularly participate in extra-curricular activities. Notably, more than one in ten PE teachers and Active Schools Coordinators reported that less than 10% of girls regularly take part.

Figure 4: Participation in extra-curricular physical activity



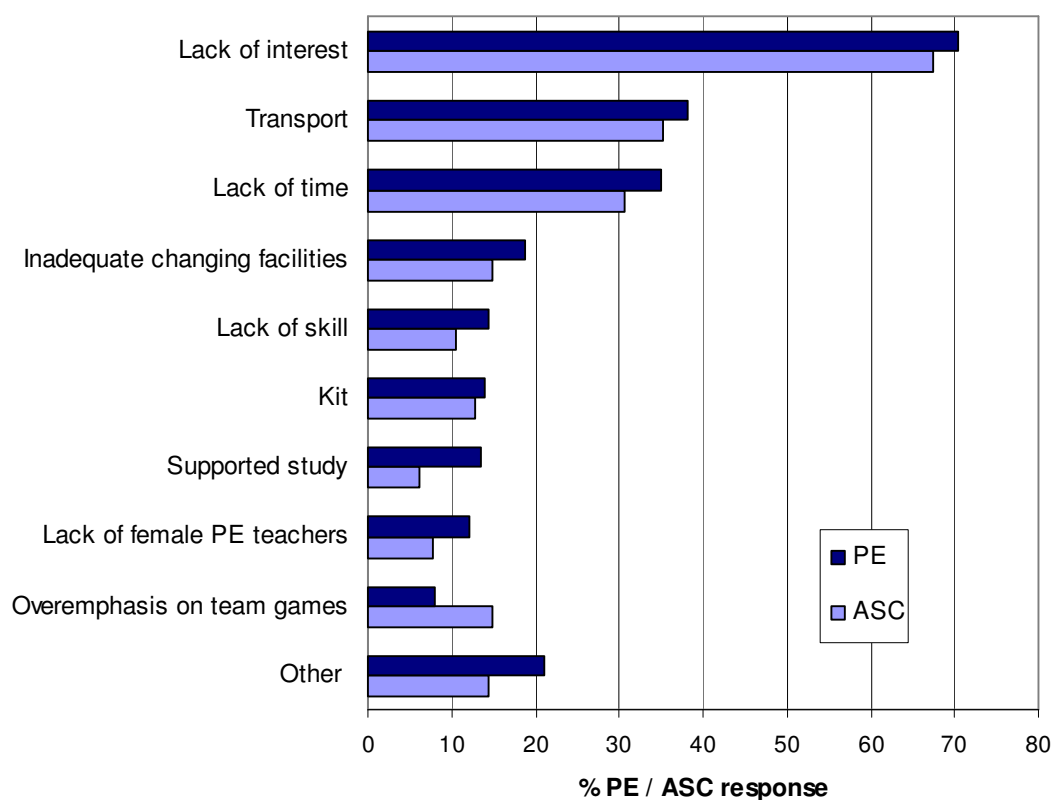
4.4 Barriers to participation

Figure 5 shows the main perceived barriers to girls' participation in PE, sport and physical activity at school. The majority of both PE and Active Schools staff felt that lack of interest was a major barrier to participation. More practical issues such as transport and lack of time were also commonly perceived barriers.

A range of 'other' perceived barriers were reported by individual respondents. These included personal, social and environmental barriers. A selection of the responses is shown below. A full list is provided in Appendix 3.

- *Body image*
- *Lack of confidence*
- *Peer pressure*
- *Lack of fitness*
- *Lazy lifestyles*
- *General apathy towards physical activity*
- *Friends not taking part*
- *Lack of positive female role models*
- *Jobs, family pressures*
- *Activity choice*
- *Inadequate facilities*
- *Timetable issues*
- *Hassle of getting access to facilities through locked doors.*
- *Commitment to other sporting / activity outwith school*

Figure 5: Perceived barriers to girls' participation



4.5 The wider school context

Two-fifths of PE staff (40.0%) said that their School Development Plan explicitly identifies promoting physical activity among girls as a priority.

Over two-fifths of PE staff (44.0%) said that the Fit for Girls programme was included in their School Development Plan.

Almost two-thirds of PE staff (64.6%) and half of Active Schools staff (47.2%) thought that their school offers enough opportunities for girls to take part in sport and other physical activities. Conversely, half of Active Schools staff and a third of PE staff felt that their school did not offer enough opportunities for girls.

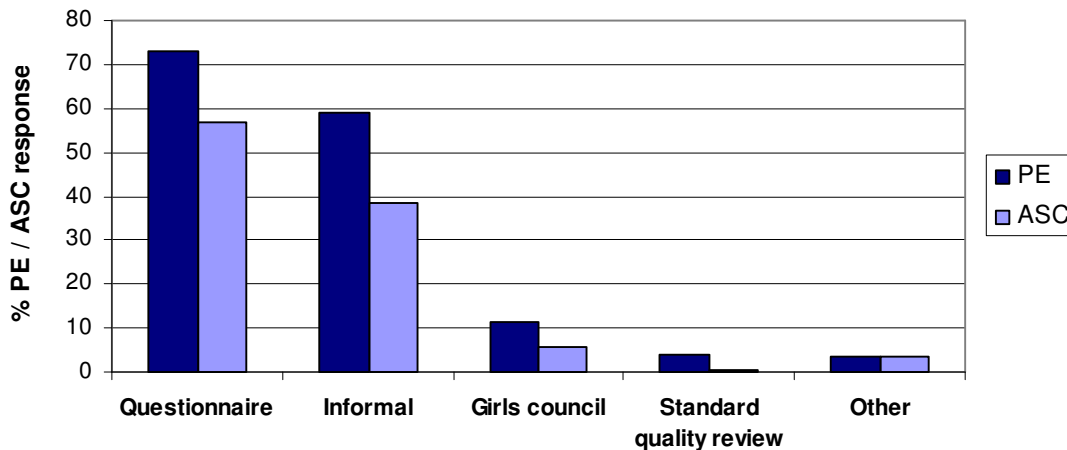
The majority of PE (84.3%) and Active Schools (68.0%) staff said that they had consulted girls about the type of activities they would like to do at school. Figure 6 shows the ways in which this consultation had taken place. The most common method was questionnaires, with the majority of PE (73.1%) and Active Schools (56.7%) respondents reporting that they had used questionnaires to consult with girls. Informal means of consultation was also common, especially among PE staff.

'Other' methods of consultation reported included the following:

- Girls focus group
- Pupil council
- Spoken to during assembly
- Sports Ambassadors

- Sports Leadership Council
- Suggestion box
- Discussion at girls night
- Sign up sheets in corridors
- Taster sessions

Figure 6: Methods of consultation with girls



4.6 The *Fit for Girls* programme

Three-quarters (76.0%) of the PE staff and over half (55.2%) of the Active Schools staff who responded to the questionnaire had attended a *Fit for Girls* training workshop. Of these, 68.5% of PE staff and 72.6% of Active Schools staff felt that involvement in the *Fit for Girls* programme had helped them to increase girls' participation in PE, sport and physical activity.

Those who had attended a *Fit for Girls* workshop were asked what the main outcomes of the workshop were for them (Figure 7). The most common response was action planning, with 76.3% of Active Schools staff and 65.1% of PE staff citing this as a key outcome. Around half of PE and Active Schools staff also reported increased knowledge and networking with other schools and professionals as outcomes of the workshop. Around a third of participants said that the workshop had led to renewed enthusiasm to revisit issues and over a quarter said that they felt better equipped to engage with low active girls. Fewer respondents reported an increase in confidence as a result of attending the workshop.

Other positive outcomes reported by PE and Active Schools staff were as follows:

"Funding" (PE)

"An opportunity to work closely with PE to implement a girls only programme of activity" (ASC)

"Good for relationship with the school" (ASC)

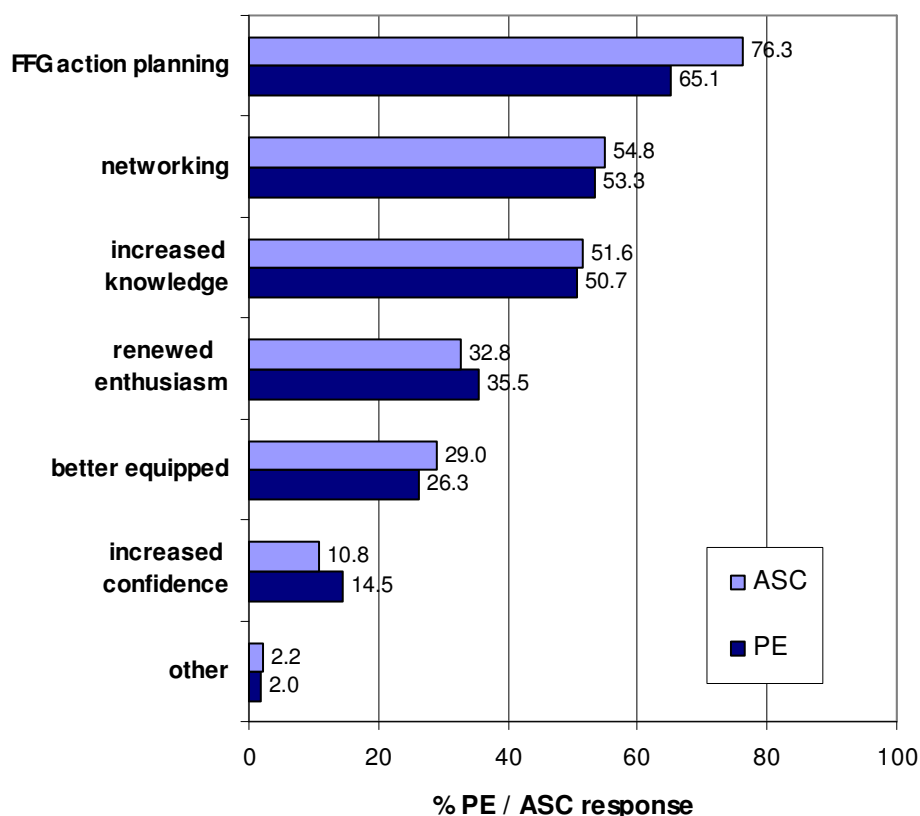
A couple of negative outcomes were also reported:

"Disillusioned by poor knowledge of what is happening in some schools and the generic responses given" (PE)

“We were disappointed by the workshop in that it didn’t appear to understand our rural perspective and we felt that there was not an adequate understanding of individual situations” (PE)

“No info prior to training. PE staff not there. Questionnaires not done beforehand. Not a useful day” (ASC)

Figure 7: Main outcomes of Fit for Girls training workshop



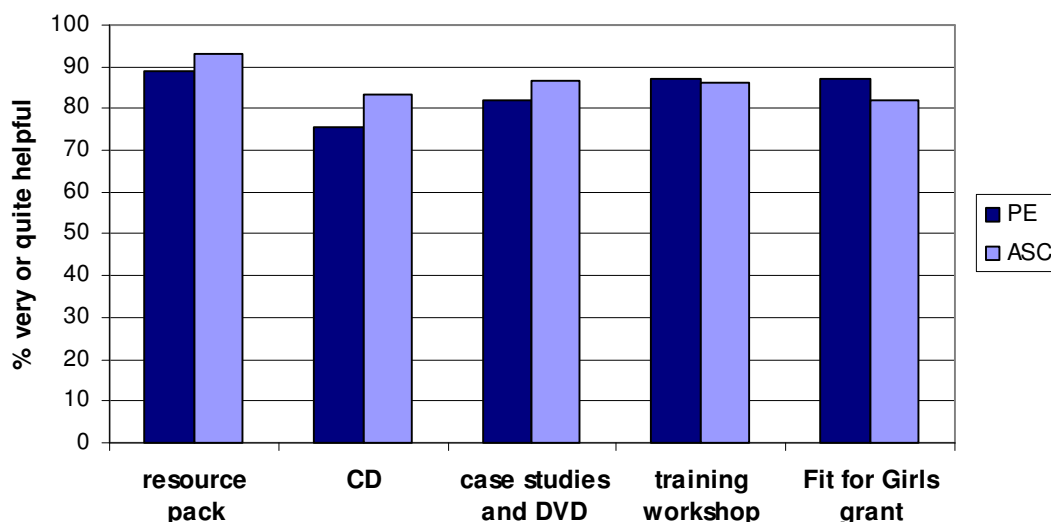
Participants who had attended a Fit for Girls training workshop were also asked how helpful they found the resources. Various resources are available to support implementation of the Fit for Girls programme, including a resource pack, CD, a case studies booklet and DVD, a small financial grant (£700), as well as the training workshop itself. Overall, most resources were very positively received with the majority of PE and Active Schools staff rating them as ‘very’ or ‘quite’ helpful (Figure 8).

Around two-thirds of PE staff (65.3%) and three-fifths of Active Schools staff (59.2%) said that their school had started new girls-only clubs as a result of being part of the Fit for Girls programme. The majority of new clubs took place as extra-curricular activities. PE respondents reported a total of 52 new curricular clubs, 97 new extra-curricular clubs and 18 new community-based clubs. Active Schools respondents reported a total of 33 new curricular clubs, 104 new extra-curricular clubs and 20 new community-based clubs. It should be noted that the PE and Active Schools respondents were not all from the same schools and therefore the differences in reported numbers are likely to reflect the different schools which these respondents work in.

Approximately two-thirds of PE staff (65.3%) and Active Schools staff (66.7%) said that at least some of these clubs were specifically targeted at low active girls.

A further 74.1% of PE staff and 86.7% of Active Schools staff said that they were planning to start new girls only clubs. Again, the majority of these were planned as extra-curricular activities.

Figure 8: Perceptions of the Fit for Girls resources



4.7 Partnership working

Survey participants were given a list of potential partners and asked who their school were currently working with to promote physical activity among girls. Figure 9 shows responses from PE staff and Active Schools Coordinators. The most common partner organisation was Sports Leaders UK. Around a fifth of respondents also said they were currently working with **sportscotland** and national governing bodies to promote physical activity among girls. Fewer respondents were involved with Youth Scotland who manage the *Girls on the Move* programme or YDance who deliver the *Free to Dance* programme. Both of these national programmes are also aimed at increasing physical activity among low active girls through community-based initiatives and dance workshops, respectively.

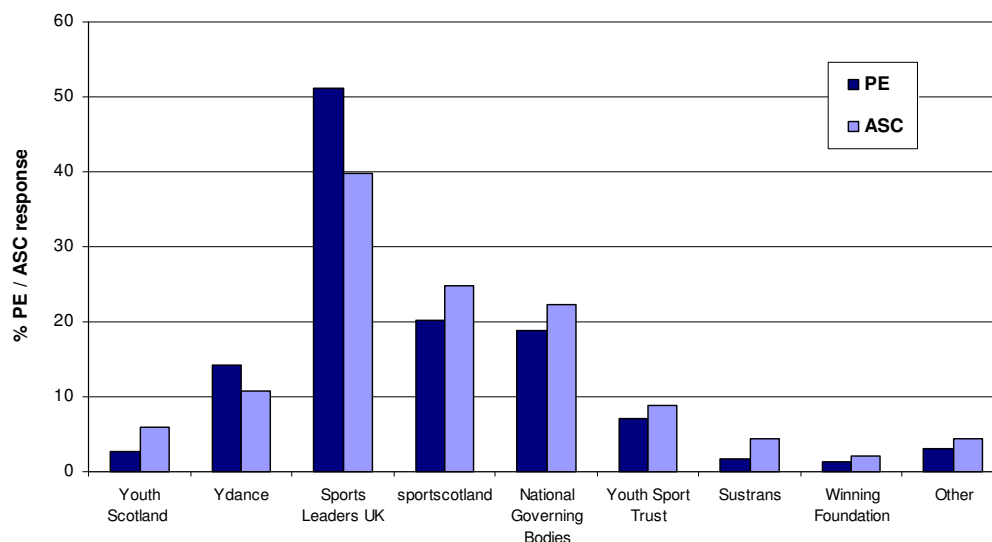
'Other' responses from PE staff included the following partners:

- NLC motivators
- Active Schools
- Big Lottery (funding for fitness equipment)
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Instructors for body pump, dance etc
- Cheerleading Association

'Other' responses from Active Schools staff included the following partners:

- Active Schools
- Sports Development Officers
- Active Stirling
- Coaching Highland
- Local police
- CLD
- Dance Development Officer
- Local dance company
- Leisure fitness instructors
- Local clubs
- Community Health Partnership
- North Lanarkshire Leisure Fitness
- Perth & Kinross Leisure
- Royal Air Force

Figure 9: Current partners



In relation to partnership working, participants were also asked to describe their existing links with key partners. Responses from PE staff are shown in Figure 10 and responses from Active Schools staff are shown in Figure 11. The most positive links reported by PE staff were with other PE staff and with Active Schools staff. Almost half of PE staff (46.8%) also described their existing links with School Management as 'very good' whereas this was the case for only 28.8% of Active Schools respondents. Not surprisingly, the most positive links reported by Active Schools Coordinators were with other Active Schools staff. Around half of Active Schools Coordinators also reported 'very good' links with PE staff and feeder primary schools. For both PE staff and Active Schools Coordinators, the least positive links were with Primary PE specialists, but it should be noted that not all local authorities have PE specialists.

Figure 10: Views of PE staff on links with key partners

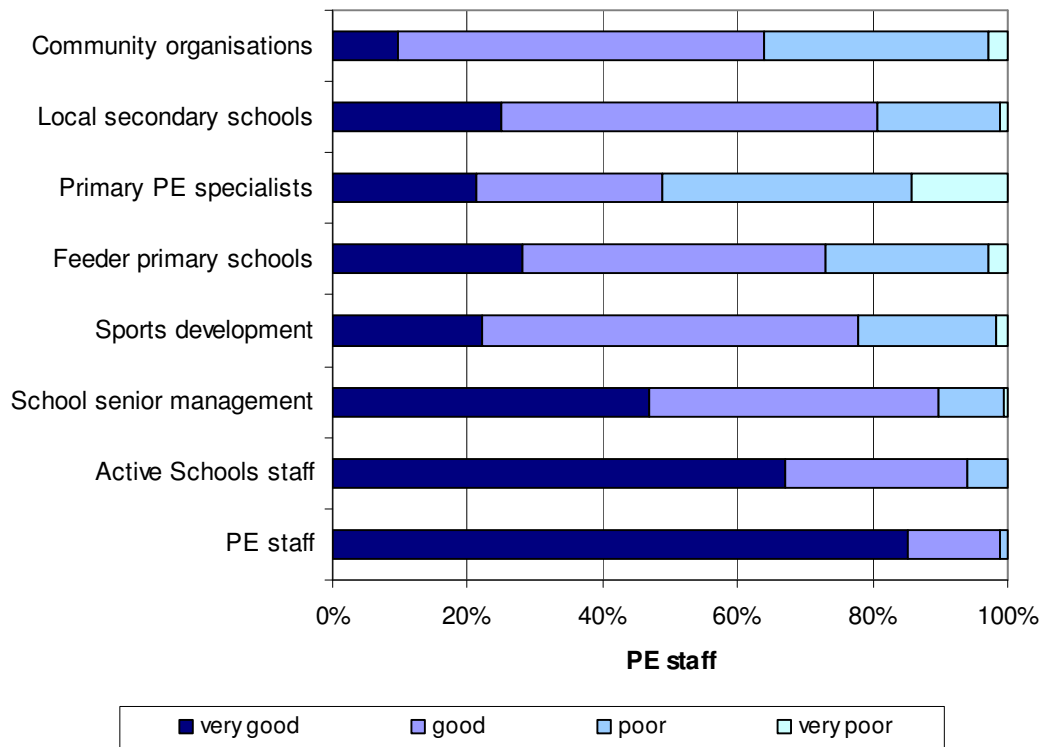
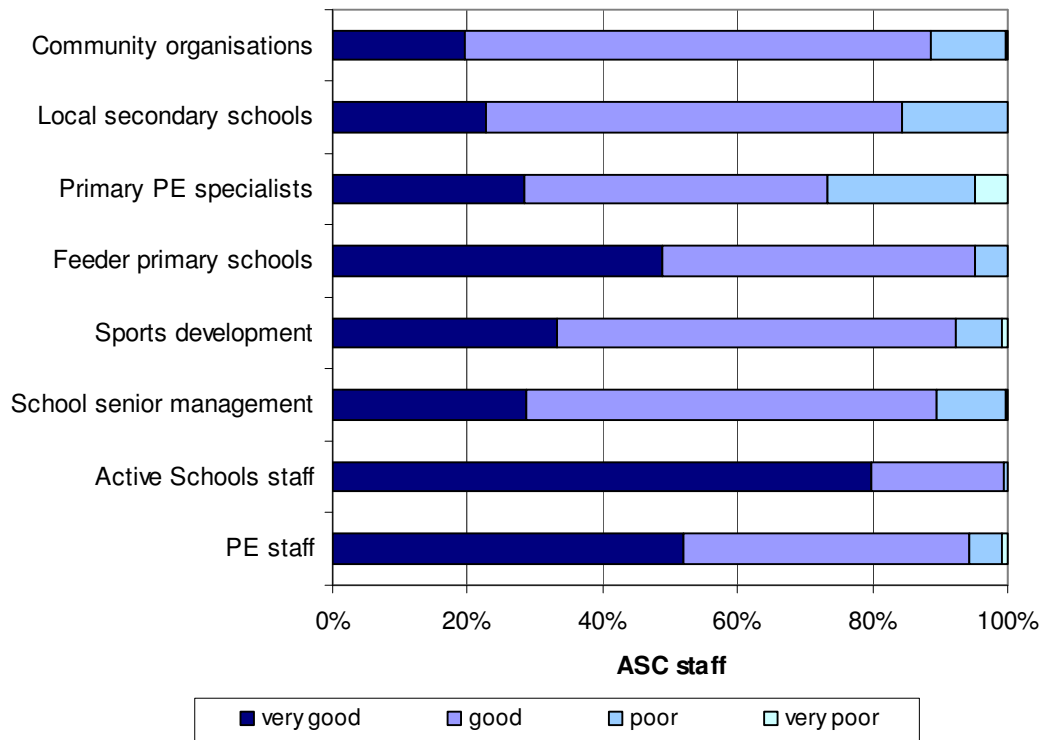


Figure 11: Views of Active Schools staff on links with key partners



5. Preliminary findings from baseline focus group discussions with girls in case study schools

The main issues to arise from the baseline focus groups are summarised below under six main themes. These six themes arose from the discussions in all four case study schools.

- Perceptions of competence
- Peer relationships
- The PE teacher
- The PE environment
- Activity choice
- Extra-curricular activities

5.1 Perceptions of competence

Results from the first Fit for Girls Interim Report (Inchley, Mitchell & Currie, 2010) indicate that perceived lack of skill was the most common barrier to participation in physical activity in girls (43.7%). The focus group discussions with girls also highlighted perceptions of competence, and specifically a perceived lack of skill, as a major barrier to girls' participation and enjoyment in PE. Almost all of the girls described themselves as 'not very good' at PE. Words such as 'embarrassment', 'nervous' and 'anxious' were used consistently across all schools when describing how they felt when taking part in PE.

When asked how they assessed 'competence' or 'ability' in PE, girls frequently made comparisons to their peers. More specifically, girls mentioned that watching others in the class perform or demonstrate skills allowed them to assess their own level of ability. However, these comparisons were only evident with other girls. Boys were seen as not 'equal' or a 'fair comparison' as they were considered 'stronger' and 'fitter' and so higher levels of ability were presumed. Girls reported feeling more confident when surrounded by girls they felt were at the same standard as themselves. Therefore, there was a general preference to being in a class with those they perceived as having a similar level of ability:

"In gymnastics it wasn't too bad cos they moved the competent ones away from the girls who aren't so competent so it's not as bad as you are separated." (School D)

"Most team sports I don't feel confident cos there is always people who are better than you in your team so you're like what's the point cos they're doing all the work." (School A)

"Its like if you're against people who were doing it outside school, like say basketball and they go to the clubs and things then you feel even more embarrassed cos you're soo bad at it compared to them and then you feel so bad trying to do it, and so that makes you feel even worse in the end." (School D)

5.2 Peer relationships

The peer context within which PE was delivered was an important issue in terms of girls' participation. In general, single sex classes were preferred as girls generally felt more embarrassed when boys were present. This was particularly true if they didn't

think they were 'good' at PE as they felt they could not 'match up' to the force and skill level the boys played with. Boys were often reported as 'being too rough' and not taking the girls seriously and girls also felt that the competitiveness of the sports increased when boys were present:

"Football scares me. They [boys] shout at you and it just makes you feel really really embarrassed and sad and angry and everything. You are just standing there and they don't pass the ball so you don't get it. So it's not our fault that you don't get the ball." (School A)

Girl 1 "no, I don't like doing dodge ball with the boys"

Girl 2 "no, me neither, cos they throw the ball really hard"

Girl 3 "...and take it really seriously"

Girl 1 it kind of depends what you're doing like ball sports mostly cos the boys are quite rough and everything".

(School D)

"If it was boys you knew, that might make it better. But I think I would still get a bit embarrassed". (School D)

Girls were conscious that boys may make fun of them, and talked about fearing nasty comments:

"It depends - sometimes it motivates you cos your friends aren't with you so you can't just talk but sometimes you're embarrassed to go ahead and do something when the boys are there cos they might make a remark." (School A)

However, for some girls, being friends with the boys in the PE class reduced the embarrassment of performing in front of them. For some, embarrassment about ability in PE appeared to be related to popularity. One group of girls felt they were 'liked' by the boys, and explained that ability level didn't matter as they were liked anyway. Other girls felt that they didn't want to be seen as able in PE in front of the boys and so intentionally acted like they couldn't catch a ball in order to be portrayed as "girly girls". For these girls being good at sport was not something that was considered desirable.

"Yeah but I don't think if we didn't talk to the boys it would be like that. I think that's why we don't mind cos we are popular with them, whereas some girls who know they aren't popular with them feel uncomfortable around them, whereas we talk to them so it's fine". (School A)

Having friends in the PE class was seen as something which was very important to the girls' in all of the case study schools. Girls reported feeling more confident and less embarrassed in PE if friends were with them and they generally felt a lot more comfortable and able to 'try' if friends were present:

"When I get to be with my friends, I take part more because I'm with my friends, but when I'm not with anyone I know I don't like it." (School D)

"Your confidence goes up when you're with your friends" (School D)

Many of the girls also felt they were influenced by their peers, both in terms of participation and attitudes towards PE. Some of the girls described how a friend's behaviour could influence their own decision to take part:

Girl 1 "My friend sometimes she says I'm not well, come and stay with me, come and sit out. So then I was saying to the teacher oh I'm not well too"

Girl 2 "Yeah, [friend] does discourage us, I think in second year I was hardly trying cos she was like don't do it. A couple of weeks ago it got so bad she made up that she broke her toe to get out of doing PE. She had a doctors note and everything though- I don't know how she managed that"

(School B)

Friends could also influence behaviour in a positive way, with some girls describing experiences when a friend had encouraged them to take part:

"Well if I forget my PE kit and stuff [friend] will be like shouting at me and stuff!"
(School D)

5.3 The PE teacher

Findings reported in Interim Report 1 revealed that around a third of girls felt that having a female PE teacher was important to them. In the focus groups, generally girls felt that it was important to have a female teacher at certain times, for instance, for explaining why sometimes they weren't able to do PE. In another focus group, girls agreed that a younger female teacher would be more understanding of what they wanted:

Girl 1 "the teachers, we need more understanding teachers"

Girl 2 "yeah, there's a lot of male teachers only two female well at the moment"

Girl 3 "yeah if we had a younger female teacher that would be good"

Girl 1 "Yeah, so they understand what the girls want"

(School B)

However, generally the most important characteristic was the PE teachers' personality and the relationship the girls had with them, rather than gender per se:

"if you didn't win or that he has a laugh or that with you. He does this laugh, and like he makes sure you're not nervous or that when your doing PE. Like when we started dodgeball all the lassies were like I don't want to do it cos I'm not good at it and don't know how to play it. But then he got us into it and said just to try and play it and you'll soon get into it more and most of the lassies that picked it have got into dodge ball now." (School C)

Girl 1 "It's more their personality I think"

Girl 2 "Yeah, personality and how they treat you"

(School A)

"Sometimes it would be good for explaining why you can't do it, but it's ok having a guy. Sometimes if teachers don't like you they pick on you, so it depends on the teacher - if you like them and they like you." (School D)

Across the four schools, girls often described certain teachers as 'having favourites'. These were typically the girls who were considered more able. As many of the girls in the focus groups considered themselves to be less able and competent at PE, they described themselves as having 'less motivation' to try as they felt their efforts were not recognised:

"I didn't like my second year teacher. It was cos he had favourites with the sporty girls and it was really noticeable. He would ask them to do everything, to demonstrate and stuff and he would only remember their names and never know our names." (School D)

However in one school, there was also mention of teachers rewarding the 'badly behaved' and focussing only on the ones 'who aren't doing it'.

"They always focus on the ones that aren't doing it and try to make them do it, then the ones that can do it get ignored. The people that do it all the time without any fuss don't get any recognition." (School B)

5.4 The PE environment

Girls were asked how they thought the school could make PE better, and many of the responses centred around the class composition and consultation about activity choice. However, sometimes the activity itself was not the key issue; rather, it was the way it was delivered to the girls. For example, one girl described how she didn't mind running itself, but it was being seen by others that was the problem:

"For cross country years ago we used to go out of school and run up past the hospital and round the fields and back, whereas now we just run round the pitch so everyone can look at you and see if you're further ahead and be like haha. But if you're running a certain route then no-one will really know. I think you should be able to go out of school". (School D)

This feeling of 'being watched' by others in the PE class was something which came up frequently across all four schools as a reason for disengagement with PE. It also appeared to be one of the main factors in girls' preference for certain activities, with girls often reporting a dislike for activities when they felt they were 'on their own' and therefore particularly visible or conspicuous. The activities that were mentioned most often in relation to feeling on display were running (cross country in particular) high jump and gymnastics. These activities were highlighted because girls felt that they were 'being judged' and their performance could not be hidden by other members of a team or group.

"I don't like it when there's loads of people watching me when it's a big class or when there are boys in the class. I don't like people watching me." (School B)

"Doing it in front of other people, like I can't even do a forward roll so it's really embarrassing. You have to do things yourself and everyone is watching you." (School D)

"I don't like the boys watching you doing running. That's why I don't like athletics and stuff." (School D)

5.5 Activity choice

In the national questionnaire administered to all S2 girls at baseline, three-quarters of the girls reported they would like a wider variety of activities in PE. This was also evident in the focus groups as many girls felt that they would like to be offered a choice of activity in PE class. In one of the case study schools, the girls were offered a choice of activity in third year. This consultation process, by which teachers asked

the girls what activities they would like to do, enabled them to participate in an activity in which they felt comfortable. This also reduced the barriers related class composition as girls could now be in a class with friends and activities such as dance and fitness became single sex. The focus groups carried out with girls from this school indicated increased participation and enjoyment of the subject.

“That’s what’s good about third year cos you get to pick and like in first and second year I hardly done PE cos I didn’t like the things that the teachers made us do. Like in rugby you used to get pure mocket (dirty) so I didn’t like doing it and started bringing in notes, but I do PE now in third year cos we get a choice”. (School C)

“In first year I didn’t do PE at all because of Miss X. In first year if my mum wouldn’t write me a note, I would hide in the toilets and write myself a note cos I didn’t like the teacher cos she was bossing me all the time. In second year sometimes I did it, but in third year that’s kind of changed, and that’s cos I’ve got my own choice now.” (School C)

5.6 Extra-curricular activities

The disengaged girls that were selected for the focus groups were generally not interested in the after-school clubs run by the schools. Along with preferring to do other things and not being ‘bothered’, one of the reasons for this was a lack of ‘suitable’ activities:

“It’s like badminton and basketball and all the boys sports” (School B)

When the girls were asked what kind of clubs they would like, dance and other fitness-based activities were favoured. However, the teacher leading the activity and the group of students attending were also significant deciding factors:

“I would rather go to my own dance club cos I have my own group of friends there and the people don’t show off there”. (School B)

“If there was a decent dance class with decent people I think I would like to join that, but the one I used to go to out of school, there was a big mix of people and the dance shows were boring”. (School D)

5. Conclusions

This report presents data on PE, sport and physical activity provision in schools across Scotland. While not all schools are represented, the findings provide an insight into the level and type of provision available to girls during the secondary school years. Data from PE and Active Schools staff were collected during Year 2 of the Fit for Girls programme and, as such, this report also provides a preliminary assessment of the impact of the programme on PE and Active Schools staff and the delivery of physical activity within schools.

In relation to PE, the results suggest that many schools have yet to achieve the two hour target for weekly PE as recommended by the PE Review Group and endorsed by the then Scottish Executive (Scottish Executive, 2004). S1 and S2 pupils were most likely to receive two hours of PE each week, but this was only the case in around a quarter of schools. Older pupils typically receive much less PE.

Research with less active girls has shown that many find doing physical activity in mixed sex groups intimidating and embarrassing, and prefer girls-only activities. Findings from the PE / Active Schools questionnaire suggests that a wide range of activities are currently available as girls-only activities in schools. The most common are dance and football. Despite the variety of activities on offer, the findings suggest that only a minority of girls regularly participate in extra-curricular physical activity. Data from the focus group discussions (see below) suggest that girls may be put off by the type of activities on offer as well as by the context in which these are delivered. Even when activities are single-sex, girls who lack confidence in their own ability are strongly influenced by others in the group as well as the person leading the activity.

Interestingly, both PE and Active Schools staff perceived lack of interest to be the most common barrier to girls' participation in physical activity. However, findings from Interim Report 1 show that less than a third of girls themselves cite lack of interest as a barrier to participation (Inchley et al. 2010). It is therefore possible that what appears as a lack of interest among girls actually reflects a range of more personal issues such as lack of confidence, self-esteem or competence. These issues were highlighted in the focus groups with girls as key reasons for non-participation within the PE context. It is important that these deeper issues are acknowledged and understood by staff working with girls if low levels of participation are to be effectively addressed.

The Fit for Girls programme has clearly had a positive impact on provision within schools. The majority of staff who had attended a training workshop said that involvement in the programme had helped them to increase girls' participation in PE, sport and physical activity and most reported that new girls-only clubs had been established as a result of the programme. Indeed, over a 150 new clubs were reported by both PE and Active Schools staff suggesting that considerable efforts have been made to engage girls in physical activity. Most of these clubs are run at school, but there is also evidence of new community-based clubs, thus potentially strengthening school-community links.

PE and Active Schools staff reported working with a range of partners to promote physical activity participation among girls. The most common of these was Sports Leaders UK who provide nationally recognised leadership awards and qualifications that help people develop essential life skills such as organisation, motivation, communication and working with others. Fewer existing links with the

other national programmes targeted at teenage girls - Girls on the Move (Youth Scotland) and Free to Dance (YDance) - were reported, but some improvement in partnership working with these organisations may be observed as implementation of the *Fit for Girls* programme continues. Similarly, further aims of the programme include improving partnership working between secondary schools and their feeder primary schools in relation to transition and between secondary schools and the wider community in relation to sport and physical activity provision. Certainly, data from the survey suggests there is scope for considerable improvements in both these areas, and particularly between PE staff and community organisations.

Overall, preliminary findings from the baseline focus groups suggest that the PE environment is central to understanding girls' disengagement in PE, with the key themes centred around choice of activity, class composition and the relationship with the teacher.

Offering a choice of activities was something which seemed to make a significant difference in one of the case study schools. Here, pupils were given a choice of activity when they moved into S3, and so many of the girls were given the chance to try non-competitive activities such as dance and fitness. This led to increased enjoyment and participation in PE with some of the 'disengaged' girls subsequently listing PE as their favourite subject. Girls' perceptions of the teachers also changed over this time. Crucially, the girls felt they were being listened to and treated fairly as they were given a chance to do the activities they enjoyed, resulting in a more positive PE environment overall. However, in another case study school which also offered a choice of activity when girls moved from S2 to S3, there was not the same shift in perceptions among the girls. Thus it appears that, while being offered a range of activities in PE is important, the environment in which the choice is offered may have greater significance in terms of girls' perceptions and experiences. The school in which positive changes did occur had consulted with the girls in such a way that they believed the teachers were trying to make PE more enjoyable and were trying to give to give them as many opportunities as the boys.

Class composition also clearly plays a role in girls' engagement with PE. Being with friends was something which was seen as very important for the disengaged girls, and offering a choice of activity is one way this may be facilitated by allowing friends to choose activities together. Being with friends was a key reason for girls' increased enjoyment and participation in the subject, however, importantly, this could also have had a negative effect on participation as peer groups may dominate an activity, therefore excluding some girls who may want to choose that pursuit. Mixed classes for PE was another main reason given by girls for not engaging in PE. Girls talked about feeling embarrassed in front of the boys, and therefore opting out or becoming disengaged in order to avoid such feelings. Girls also stated that they did not enjoy activities where they felt 'on display' and so would actively try to avoid participating in these.

It appears that a positive PE environment is central to girls' participation and enjoyment of the subject. Offering a choice of activity in PE along with a girls-only environment may reduce the focus on competence and competition that many girls feel restricts them. The importance of friends in PE class is something which is also key. However, the limitations of staff, timetabling and facilities in schools can often be a barrier to implementing such changes.

6. References

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Full list of girls-only activities currently available within PE

Numbers in the right-hand column represent the percentage of PE staff who stated that the activity is currently available within PE at their school as a girls-only activity.

	% PE staff
dance	61.0
football	56.1
gymnastics	51.2
aerobics	50.2
basketball	49.8
badminton	45.3
netball	43.5
multigym	43.5
athletics	43.1
hockey	43.0
rounders	36.8
volleyball	36.3
table tennis	35.0
dodgeball	31.8
swimming	31.0
rugby	30.5
cross country	26.4
trampolining	26.0
walking	22.4
weights	21.5
cheerleading	21.0
Scottish country dance	18.8
leadership awards	18.8
jogging	18.0
baseball	13.0
tennis	12.5
Duke of Edinburgh	8.9
orienteering	7.6
yoga	7.6
cricket	7.2
lifesaving	5.8
pilates	4.9
golf	4.0
canoeing	3.1
martial arts	3.1
cycling	2.7
hillwalking	2.6
skiing	2.6
squash	2.6
boccia	2.2
shinty	1.7
disability sport	0.9
diving	0.4

Appendix 2: Full list of extra-curricular girls-only activities currently available

Numbers in the right-hand columns represent the percentage of PE and Active Schools staff who stated that the activity is currently available at their school as a girls-only extra-curricular activity.

	% PE staff	% Active Schools staff
football	60.5	51.4
netball	49.3	38.3
dance	48.0	40.6
basketball	28.7	16.3
gymnastics	22.9	15.2
cheerleading	22.4	15.1
rugby	20.2	18.4
multigym	18.8	10.3
hockey	17.1	17.3
aerobics	16.1	11.9
badminton	14.8	5.9
athletics	12.5	6.2
trampolining	11.6	6.9
volleyball	11.2	4.5
table tennis	9.0	2.7
swimming	8.5	3.6
weights	7.6	2.7
cross country	5.8	3.0
Duke of Edinburgh	5.3	2.7
dodgeball	5.3	0.9
leadership awards	4.0	2.7
Scottish country dance	3.6	2.1
jogging	3.1	2.4
tennis	2.6	1.8
shinty	2.2	1.5
golf	2.2	3.0
skiing	2.2	0.9
rounders	2.2	0.6
yoga	2.2	3.6
lifesaving	1.8	0.6
walking	1.7	1.5
cricket	1.3	1.2
cycling	0.9	1.2
canoeing	0.9	0.6
squash	0.9	0.9
martial arts	0.8	2.1
diving	0.4	0
pilates	0.4	3.0
boccia	0.4	0
hillwalking	0	0
orienteering	0	0.3
baseball	0	0.6
disability sport	0	0.9

Appendix 3: Perceived barriers to girls' physical activity participation

(numbers in brackets represent multiple responses)

Personal barriers

Body image

Image

Self-confidence (2)

Self conscious and lack of self confidence

Low Self Confidence and Poor Fitness

Motivation and confidence

Low motivation

Getting sweaty

No desire to get sweaty!!

Lunch Time Clubs - girls don't want to get sweaty during day

Lack of fitness (2)

Appearance of doing PE when they do not feel comfortable with their bodies

Lazy lifestyles, core PE is a struggle!

Lazy

Lethargy

General apathy towards physical activity

Unwilling to put required effort in to gain success necessitate enjoyment through success.

Keeping up a good personal appearance

Lack of confidence

Lack of confidence/self esteem/body image

Physical and learning difficulties

Pupils lack of motivation

Self Image / Self confidence

Level of fitness is poor, overweight, negative attitude towards exercise in general

Socio-cultural barriers

Peer pressure (8)

Peer pressure about what is 'cool' and their appearance, therefore lack of confidence.

Image and peer pressure - even the girls who have ability and talent don't want their peers to know

Friends not taking part (2)

If their friends don't participate then they will not want to.

Physical activity not being rated within the community

Religious restrictions on Muslim girls

Social factors- demotivated, disaffected

Sport progression opportunity in borders

Social issues for a few.

Too competitive

No culture of sport exists within the school. Kids are not excited about playing sport for the school

There hasn't been many extra curricular sports clubs in the school for a number of years so I think the pupils are not used to staying after school for clubs, there are also few teachers in the school who are willing to stay behind and support clubs.

Lack of Positive Female Role Models

It's not 'COOL'

Not cool to participate

Good motivating role models

Too much pressure on exam results

Competing activities

Commitment to other sporting/activity outwith school

Wanting to do other things at lunchtime..socialising

Want to go up town at lunch time with their friends!

Outside interests - boys!

Outside clubs

They have more opportunities to take part in other non sporty activities outwith school
Too many other things to do in school, can't do everything.
Large number of clubs outside school that pupils attend
Some pupils have to work
Jobs
Family pressures
Family commitments at home (baby sitting, jobs)
After school poor due to number of club /dance schools in area
Most pupils attend clubs outwith school
Other commitments (2)
Work/homework after school, play sport elsewhere

Practical and organisational issues

Types of activities
Wider variety needs to be offered
Choice of activities (4)
No clubs of interest
Not enough extra curricular on offer
Mixed sex groups
Numbers too low for many team games
Options on offer
Lack of options and opportunity (compete with other schools)
Lack of teacher/parent volunteers
Lack of staff- male & female
Teacher ratio
Lack of clubs available due to restrictions in numbers of staff in department
Rural school (2)
Rural Area - wide spread of pupils
Transport home
Extra curricular activities not on offer, PE once per week for 2 hours
Carrying PE kit for the whole day
Unable to supply enough time / facilities/staff for all needs
Timetable issues
Staff willingness to run activities
Out of 300 pupils in the school only a handful walk to school the rest are bussed in
Not enough time at lunch time.

Physical environment

Hall Space
Hassle of getting access to facilities through locked doors
Equipment available
Facilities
Facilities at old school very poor - hope to see increase now we are in new school
Inadequate facilities
Indoor facilities
Lack of facilities
Swimming pool changing rooms