

## Arts and Culture

# Children's Participation in Culture and Sport

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In order to provide a picture of children's participation in culture and sport and to complement findings on adult participation (aged 16+) from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS), the Scottish Government commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct research among a sample of young people. The survey was carried out using Ipsos MORI Scotland's Schools Omnibus, an annual survey of secondary school pupils. Fieldwork took place between 14 February and 1 April 2008. Fifty schools were visited overall and fully completed questionnaires were obtained from 2,221 pupils aged 11-18 years old. In order to guarantee no overlap with the SHS findings, analysis in this report is based only on 11-15 year olds.

## Main Findings

- Outside of school, 96% of young people say they have participated in at least one cultural activity in the last 12 months, while 89% say they have attended at least one cultural event. 96% of young people say they have participated in at least one sporting activity outside school PE lessons.
- Young people take part in a broad range of cultural activities outside school. More than half (54%) stated that they have done 4 or more activities in the last 12 months. Lack of interest and wanting to do other things in their spare time is a primary factor for non-participation, irrespective of the type of activity or service.
- Reading for pleasure, playing a musical instrument and painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture are the most common activities in which young people participate.
- There are differences between participation in cultural activities according to age group, gender, and area lived in, both outside and inside school.
- Barriers to participation in certain cultural activities include poor or lack of transport; perceived cost; lack of information; not having anyone to go with; and feeling out of place.
- Outside school, around one in seven young people are doing 4 or more sport activities at least once a week; football is the most popular activity for boys whilst dancing is for girls. For those who have *not* done any sport or recreational activity outside of school in the last year (22%), most boys say it is because they prefer to do other things in their spare time, whilst for girls the main reason is that they don't have anyone to do it with.
- Young people state that they spend an average of 2.5 hours in PE classes every week, with a further 1 hour 17 minutes doing sport or physical recreation organised through their school but outside of PE classes.
- Around a third of young people have given up their time for volunteering in the last 12 months, with most having done so to help with sports activities.

## Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this study was to provide a picture of children's participation in culture and sport, to complement the forthcoming findings of the Scottish Household Survey (SHS), which will provide data on adult participation. The key topics addressed in this research were:

- Frequency of participation in culture and the arts outside of school, including library usage and visits to historical sites, museums and galleries;
- Participation in culture and the arts in school time;
- Attendance at cultural and sports events outside of school time and as part of school trips;
- Participation in sports and physical activity outside of school time, including club membership;
- Involvement in physical recreation both in PE classes and other types of physical activity organised through school;
- Young people's involvement in volunteering.

## Methodology

The research comprised a survey of secondary school children using Ipsos MORI Scotland's Schools Omnibus. Fieldwork was carried out between 14 February and 1 April 2008. Fifty schools were visited overall and fully completed questionnaires were obtained from 2,221 pupils, with an average of 23 pupils per class. The age groups included in the survey were 11-18 year olds in curriculum years S1 to S6 and each school was randomly allocated two of these curriculum years. The survey was administered using self-completion questionnaires in a mixed ability class during one classroom period.

Since one of the main aims of this survey was to complement the Scottish Household Survey of adults (defined as aged 16+) it was decided that analysis in this report should be based only on 11-15 year olds (n=1,726), to guarantee no overlap with the SHS.

It should be noted that the findings of this report are based on the self-reporting of young people, and is their perception of what, how and for how long they participate in cultural and sport activities. For example the results showing the time spent participating in PE at school is reported by the young people themselves, and is not taken from each school's curriculum.

## Findings

### Participation in cultural activities outside of school

Around half of young people have visited a library at least once in the last 12 months, with most doing so to borrow or return books or use computers or the internet. Among non-users, young people are most likely to say that they have no need to use the facility, prefer to do other things in their spare time or that they generally have no interest in using libraries.

More than half of young people say they have been to a historical or archaeological site in the last 12 months, with most going as part of a trip with their family or friends. Slightly fewer have been to a museum or gallery in the last year, though again, visiting with family and friends is the most common reason why they have done so. As with using libraries, young people say they haven't been to a historical site or museum because of a lack of interest and having other things to do. However, concerns are also raised about perceived cost and feeling out of place in such an environment.

Young people take part in a wide range of activities outside of school, with more than half stating that they have done four or more of the activities listed in the survey in the last 12 months. There are a number of differences between boys and girls, with girls significantly more likely to have read for pleasure, taken dance lessons and rehearsed for a performance in the last month than boys. Boys, however, are significantly more likely to have used a computer to create original artworks and to have done crafts such as textile, wood or pottery.

### Participation in cultural activities during school time

More than half of young people (52%) say they have done four or more of the activities listed in the survey whilst at school. Girls are more likely to have participated in a greater range and number of activities than boys, with differing levels of participation most evident in relation to involvement in dance lessons and rehearsing/practising for a performance. There are a couple of exceptions to this, however, with boys again more liable to have used computers to create artworks of animation and to have done crafts such as textile, wood or pottery whilst in school.

There are also some significant differences relating to the type of area where young people live, with those living in the *least* deprived areas of the country more likely to have

participated in a range of activities than their peers living in the *most* deprived areas, including dance lessons; playing an instrument or writing music; painting, drawing or sculpture; and reading for pleasure. Overall, those living in the *least* deprived areas are 1.5 times more likely to have done four or more of the activities listed in the survey whilst at school than those living in the *most* deprived areas of Scotland.

### **Attendance at cultural and sports events inside and outside of school**

Young people are most likely to have been to see films and live sports events outside of school on a regular basis in the last year, with girls likely to have gone to a greater number of events than boys.

During school time, around three quarters of young people have been to at least one of the events listed in the survey, with watching a film the most widespread activity. Girls are more likely than boys to have been to events as part of a school trip, particularly exhibitions and collections relating to the arts; performance street arts, theatrical performances and dance events.

### **Participation in sports and physical activity outside of school**

Outside of school, around one in seven young people are doing four or more activities at least once a week, with boys and 12 and 13 year olds most likely to be doing so. Conversely, boys and girls aged 15 are most likely to be participating in only one sporting activity at least once a week outside of school.

Football is the most popular activity for boys to participate in outside of school, with nearly half playing at least once a week. Girls, on the other hand, are most likely to do some form of dancing on a regular basis. Relating to this, just over a quarter of young people are a member of a club through which they participate in sports outside of school, with boys most likely to be a member of a club through which they play football and girls more likely to belong to a club or organisation relating to dance.

Boys tend to spend significantly more time taking part in physical activity outside of school than girls (around seven hours v. four and a half hours in a typical week), though for both boys and girls, there is a steady decline in the amount of time spent doing physical recreation outside of school as they get older.

Among those who say they have not done any sport or recreational activity outside of school in the last year, most young people say it is because they prefer to do other things

in their spare time. This is the most common explanation given by boys, but for girls, the main reason they give for their lack of participation is that they don't have anyone to do it with.

### **Participation in sports and physical activity during school time**

During school time, young people state that they spend an average of 2.5 hours in PE classes every week, with boys doing around 20 minutes more than girls. S3 and S4 pupils also tend to do 20-30 minutes more in PE classes than their peers in S1 and S2.

Young people also spend an average of 1 hour 17 minutes doing some form of sport or physical recreation organised through their school but outside of PE classes every week, with boys spending significantly more time doing activities outside of classes than girls. Notably, more than a third of young people do not do any physical activity organised through school, with 14 and 15 year olds least likely to do so. Worth highlighting is the fact that whereas time spent in PE lessons tends to increase with age, there is a steady fall in the amount of time young people spend doing physical activity outside of PE as they get older.

### **Volunteering**

Around a third of young people have given up their time to volunteer in the last 12 months, with 12 year old and 14 year old girls most likely to have done so. Among those who have volunteered, young people are most likely to have helped with sports activities such as raising money, organising events, coaching and score keeping.

## **Conclusions**

### **Improving participation in cultural activities**

Among those not taking part in cultural/artistic activities outside of school, a general lack of interest and preferring to do other things in their spare time are primary factors in non-participation. Whilst it can be accepted that not all young people will be interested in using services and taking part in activities in their own time, increasing awareness of the opportunities available to them and addressing some of the perceived barriers to participation, such as cost, lack of information and concerns about feeling out of place, may go some way to improving activity levels.

While many of the motivations young people have for participating in cultural activities will be personal and emotional, and will vary according to age, analysis also shows that the type of area where the young person lives and the socio-economic status of their household may have

some bearing. It will, therefore, be essential to ensure that young people from more deprived backgrounds do not miss out on the opportunities available to them and that efforts are made to encourage these youngsters to participate wherever possible.

### **Improving participation in sports activities**

Since it might be expected for teenagers to lose interest in PE classes as they get older, one of the more positive findings to emerge from this survey is that S3 and S4 pupils tend to spend more time in PE classes every week than their peers in S1 and S2 and it will be important to continue to encourage the participation of all young people in PE classes

for their duration at school. Our research did, however, find a drop off in participation as young people progress through their teenage years, for both extra curricular, school based activities and physical recreation outside of school time.

While it may be argued that older children are less likely to want to engage with physical activity outside of school time, there are a number of perceived barriers to participation which could be addressed. For instance, increasing the amount of information available to young people about community-based physical activity would go some way towards tackling concerns about perceived cost, standard of changing facilities and not having anyone to participate with.

This document, along with 'Children's Participation in Culture and Sport' the full research report of the project and further information about social and policy research commissioned and published on behalf of the Scottish Government, can viewed on the Social Research website at: [www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch). If you have any further queries about social research, please contact us at [socialresearch@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:socialresearch@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or telephone 0131 244 7573.



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