

Just One Question Insights – April 2025

This month we asked: How important do you think sport is as a tool to engage young people in a youth offer to increase confidence, self-esteem, and sense of achievement?

We had: 268 responses

Key Messages:

Physical activity is known to be beneficial for physical, mental and social wellbeing ([NHS, 2023](#) and [Active Lives, 2023](#)). Engagement with physical activity is also associated with other positive outcomes for young people. For example, there is a positive association with education - young people who regularly participate in physical activity perform better in writing and maths than those who do not ([Youth Sports Trust, 2022](#)).

The value of physical activity is not only recognised by the health sector but also by the youth sector. The evaluation of UK Youth's programme [Adventures Away from Home](#) showed that, youth group leaders observed improvements in young people's socio-emotional skills. The most common improvements were seen in 'Initiative' (observed by 75% of leaders), 'Empathy' (75%) and 'Emotion Management' (72%).

Sport through youth work is vital as it provides safe spaces and trusted relationships, enhancing mental health and wellbeing. It fosters personal and social development, building confidence, resilience, and teamwork skills via voluntary engagement. Youth work ensures accessibility and inclusion, offering diverse sports options to all young people, including those from underserved backgrounds. Additionally, it acts as a preventative measure against crime and anti-social behaviour, supporting positive life choices and better educational outcomes ([Back Youth Alliance Evidence Review 2025](#)).

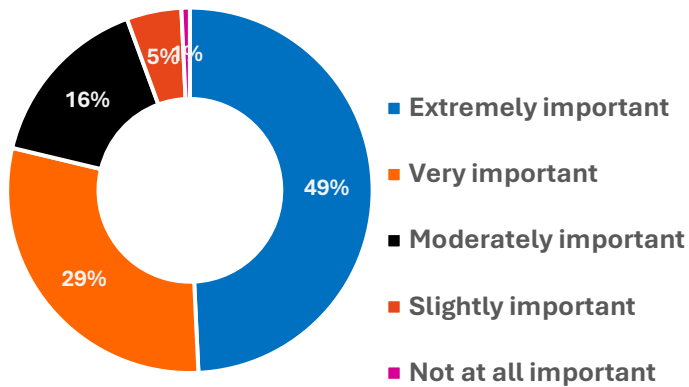
To support youth workers in using physical activity effectively, it is important to consider the availability of suitable spaces and equipment, ensure youth workers have the skills to deliver inclusive activities, and make time for intentional integration within youth programmes.

Key Findings

The April question was posed by a youth practitioner within our network to inform youth work in this area.

Almost 80% of the respondents perceive sport as an extremely or very important tool to engage young people in a youth offer to increase confidence, self-esteem, and sense of achievement, only 6% think that it is slightly or not important at all. Reinforcing the importance of sport as a tool to engage young people in a youth offer to increase confidence, self-esteem, and sense of achievement.

How important do you think sport is as a tool to engage young people in a youth offer to increase confidence, self-esteem, and sense of achievement?



UK Youth offers:

[Avon Tyrrell Outdoor Learning Centre](#)

- UK Youth are the custodians of Avon Tyrrell Outdoor Centre. The centre offers extensive range of inclusive outdoor activities and tailored programmes, for everyone to 'Experience, Learn and Develop'.

[Adventures Away from Home](#) -

funded by DCMS helps disadvantaged young people, aged 11- 18 (or up to 25 for those with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)), with bursaries to take part in outdoor learning.

UK Youth is a systems partner in Sports England - [Uniting the Movement](#). This two-tier programme will tackle the systemic challenges limiting young people's access to physical literacy and outdoor learning. By supporting youth organisations to develop, test, and scale place-based solutions.

UK Youth has run two previous physical literacy-led projects in recent years: [Outdoor Activators](#) and [Active Youth](#). Both programmes successfully engaged young people who were inactive, from lower socio-economic backgrounds and from racialised communities (through targeted funding) in physical activity. Read the latest reports on the key learning [here](#). The programmes improved activity levels, confidence and attitudes towards physical activity.