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Girls Active 2020-21 Insight and Impact Report



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Contents

Executive summary	i
1. Introduction	1
2. The Girls Active programme	1
3. Methodology	1
4. Analysis of monitoring data	2
5. The impact of the new training model	4
Overall perceptions of the training	4
Achievement of learning outcomes	5
Course content	5
The training tutors	6
Logistics	6
Resource pack	6
How a virtual training model compares to face-to-face and other online training	7
Impact on teaching staff	8
How teachers found out about the training	8
Suggested improvements for the training	10
How teachers found out about the training	10
Suggested improvements for the training	10
6. The impact of Girls Active overall and for different school characteristics	11
Six key principles	11
How girls have benefitted from Girls Active	12
Girls Active increases opportunities for girls	14
Girls Active also increases schools' ability to support girls	14
Athlete Mentor sessions – impact on the GLAMS	14
Challenges encountered this year	15
Barriers to girls participating in sport and physical activity	15
How GLAMS tried to tackle the barriers to engagement	15
Factors that can facilitate Girls Active	17
Engaging girls from different backgrounds, cultures and age groups, and those with SEND	17
Ensuring that Girls Active has a lasting impact in schools	19
How the YST can help schools ensure Girls Active has a lasting impact	20
What has gone well this year with Girls Active - teachers' perspectives	20
The value of targeted approaches	20
7. Overall recommendations from the research	22
Appendix 1: Youth Sport Trust Girls Active logic model	24

Executive summary

This report evaluates the Youth Sport Trust's (YST) Girls Active programme for 2020-21. As a result of COVID-19, a new, blended delivery model was introduced. This report provides insight into the effectiveness of the revised delivery model, and the impact of Girls Active, with a focus on girls from different demographics.

Our mixed methods approach included analysis of YST monitoring data (from 94 schools), qualitative face-to-face (4) and Zoom (12) teacher interviews, and student focus groups (11), facilitated by an experienced YST Athlete Mentor. The COVID-19 pandemic caused some minor disruptions to the data collection.

Engagement in Girls Active

Over 1,000 young leaders (Girls Leadership and Marketing Squad: GLAMS¹) took part, of whom 12% have Special Educational Need(s) or Disabilities (SEND), 31% are from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, and 33% are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).

The GLAMS worked with over 4,000 girls, of whom 14% have SEND, 43% are from BAME groups, and 32% are eligible for FSM.

Girls Active has supported 3,192 girls to be more active, of whom 20% have SEND, 38% are from BAME groups, and 27% are eligible for FSM.

Overall perceptions of the training

The teacher training was very well-received; 95% of schools rated the training experience as either good or very good, 97% stated that the training had helped them feel more competent and motivated in their role, and 95% said it had helped them feel more confident.

Teachers rated the course content highly, describing it as exciting, interactive, and easy to follow, while the tutors were 'positive' and 'enthusiastic'. The level of support and advice post-training was also highly praised.

Teachers found the workbook very useful, as it was simple, provided structure for the training and followed the course well, and 92% of teachers found the training duration appropriate for their needs. The breakout rooms, and engaging alongside similar schools, were beneficial for learning and generating discussion.

All teachers found the virtual training accessible, effective, and efficient logistically. From the sample of teachers, 59% stated they would prefer a virtual or blended approach, with 21% favouring the "personal touch" of face-to-face training. However, all teachers would be happy to attend virtual training in future.

As a result of the training, 89% of teachers said they were likely to make changes to their approach, such as being more empathetic and understanding towards girls, and including them in decision making.

All teachers felt the Athlete Mentor training sessions were extremely beneficial and inspiring for the girls.

Overall, teachers praised the format, structure, and content of the training, and suggested few improvements.

Girls Active - opportunities and impact

Within Girls Active, GLAMS are afforded the opportunity to empower girls to design and deliver PE and sport, a key principle of the programme. They develop leadership and marketing skills, and enjoy autonomy and freedom designing and delivering sessions.

All teachers reflected that being involved with Girls Active has improved their capacity and capability to support girls to become more physically active. Teachers praised the GLAMS for spreading enthusiasm and encouraging others to get involved, and highlighted the impact of involving other teachers in the programme.

Supportive senior management, adopting a whole-school approach, recruiting influential leaders, effective and tailored use of Girls Active funding, and receiving free hoodies all increased the programme's impact.

¹ Girls Leadership and Marketing Squad (GLAMS) is an integral part of the programme, designed to empower girls to influence PE, sport and physical activity in their school, develop them as role models, and promote and market physical activity to other girls.

Challenges and barriers

The GLAMS encountered four key challenges: remote working, year group bubbles, planning and logistics, and engaging girls, while the main barriers that prevent girls participating were a lack of motivation and enthusiasm, self-consciousness/body insecurities, and boys (e.g. boys taking over, being judged by boys).

To tackle these barriers, Girls Active sessions were heavily promoted via assembly presentations, social media promotions, posters, and word of mouth. GLAMS offered participants choice, a wide variety of non-competitive activities to try (different from those offered in PE), and targeted specific audiences (e.g. less confident girls), to encourage them to attend. GLAMS also tried to be inclusive and welcoming, and create a safe environment so all girls felt comfortable.

Engaging girls from different backgrounds, cultures, and age groups, and those with SEND

GLAMS had a well-rounded understanding of how girls from different demographics may perceive sport and physical activity. GLAMS had positive attitudes towards engaging all girls, regardless of background, but often, did not perceive culture or background as potential barriers to engaging girls in sport and physical activity.

Teachers understand the importance of engaging students from different demographics and consciously target them for Girls Active. Being part of Girls Active has increased schools' awareness of the value of targeted approaches to increasing physical activity levels among girls, and teachers felt the GLAMS had been instrumental in this. Parental pressure was a key barrier for many girls from BAME groups.

GLAMS adopted several methods and approaches to engage girls from different demographics, such as having smaller group sizes, partnering girls with their friend(s), including pictures of girls from diverse backgrounds in Girls Active promotions, and educating themselves about different cultures and religions.

GLAMS struggled to engage older girls, due to COVID-19 bubbles, and older year groups' low motivation levels, with aspects such as exams and peer pressure decreasing their engagement. GLAMS experienced more success engaging Year 7 and 8 girls, and particularly enjoyed working with primary schools.

GLAMS were very successful in engaging girls with SEND as participants, and several girls with SEND thrived as leaders. GLAMS catered for different needs and ensured their sessions were inclusive, adapting to different mental and physical needs, demonstrating leadership skills, and finding solutions to problems as they arose.

To engage girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, teachers advised that PE staff build relationships with disadvantaged pupils, actively encourage, and provide opportunities for them, and emphasise that it's always their own choice whether to take part. Having role models from a more socio-economically disadvantaged background as Girls Active leaders (so disadvantaged children have someone they can relate to), and involving girls from different backgrounds (to help them to understand each other) can also help.

Ensuring that Girls Active has a lasting impact

Teachers and GLAMS shared ideas and approaches around new ways of working and ensuring long-term, lasting impact, aligning with the Girls Active principle 'taking a long-term approach to engaging girls'.

Girls Active must be known across all year groups, so strong promotion and word-of-mouth are vital. The GLAMS' hoodies help to promote the programme, and give girls an increased sense of responsibility and pride.

GLAMS were eager to train and mentor younger girls (e.g. through teambuilding and confidence workshops, mentor/mentee roles, and involving them in leadership opportunities); teachers agreed that this would facilitate continuity. This aligns with the Girls Active principle 'developing role models for the future'.

Strategic use of funding, and having events for the GLAMS to look forward to (e.g. Athlete Mentor visits, training sessions, meet ups with other schools, festivals), especially ones that elicit new ideas, were seen as crucial for sustaining the programme.

Allowing children to come to school in PE kit saves time and helps engagement, as it prevents the pressure of getting changed in front of others.

Positive role models have begun to emerge on social media, so teachers have been able to guide students towards more physically active influencers.

Overall, despite COVID-19 restrictions, the GLAMS have had a fantastic impact and experienced great personal development through the Girls Active programme this academic year.

1. Introduction

This report provides an evaluation of the Youth Sport Trust's (YST's) Girls Active programme for 2020-21. The impact of COVID-19 has led to significant changes to Girls Active to maintain delivery. A new, blended delivery model incorporating pre-recorded webinars, live Zoom sessions, and face-to-face delivery (where COVID-19 allows) was introduced. This report provides insight into research conducted to better understand the impact of the programme and the revised delivery model.

2. The Girls Active programme

Girls Active supports schools to understand what motivates girls to take part in physical activity, PE and sport, enabling teachers to work with girls, through consultation and leadership, and make the necessary changes to their physical activity provision. The programme aims to address the gender disparity in participation in sport and physical activity, and help schools understand the barriers to girls' participation. Girls Active also empowers girls to develop and market opportunities that engage their peers. The logic model (see Appendix 1) sets out the key activities, and the short and long-term expected outcomes.

3. Methodology

Objectives

The objectives of the research were to:

- Evidence the impact of the new training model.
- Evidence the impact of the training and programme implementation for different school characteristics.
- Showcase the impact on individual girls through 'youth voice'.

Research approach

With institutional ethics approval, our mixed methods approach included analysis of existing YST monitoring data (from 94 schools), qualitative face-to-face (4) and Zoom (12) interviews with teachers who received the virtual training and are delivering Girls Active this academic year, and student focus groups (11), facilitated by Dr Anna Fitzpatrick, an experienced YST Athlete Mentor and SHU Researcher. Anna conducted 7 face-to-face school visits, with a further 2 planned later this year (rearranged due to COVID-19 restrictions). In addition to this report, we have created a 5-page case study, containing 3 mini case studies, to demonstrate the impact of Girls Active on different characteristics (girls from BAME groups, girls from disadvantaged backgrounds and girls with SEND), and collected video footage that allowed us to engage with the 'youth voice' by showcasing the impact of Girls Active within schools.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were some disruptions to the data collection. Two of Anna's visits were cancelled by schools, as girls had to isolate, and only two schools were able to give Anna time with wider participants of the programme. To ameliorate the impact of this disruption, we created an online GLAMS survey for the two schools that were forced to rearrange their Athlete Mentor visit, to gather data that would normally have been captured within focus groups. Despite the setbacks, we consider the research process to have been very successful.

4. Analysis of monitoring data

In total, 94 schools provided termly monitoring data to the YST. Analysis results are displayed in Table 1, with findings on the following three areas summarised below: the number of GLAMS supporting Girls Active, the number of girls the GLAMS have worked with, and the number of girls that Girls Active has supported to be more active.

- Over 1,000 young leaders (GLAMS) across 94 schools supported the implementation of Girls Active in 2020-21, an average of 11 girls per school. Just under 12% (124) of GLAMS have a disability or Special Educational Need(s), 31% (328) are from BAME groups, and 33% are eligible for Free School Meals.
- Across the 94 schools, the GLAMS worked with over 4,000 girls in 2020-21, an average of 43 girls per school. This included activities such as surveying, consulting, leading assemblies and running extra-curricular clubs. Of the girls the GLAMS worked with, 14% (576) have a disability or Special Educational Need(s), 43% (1,761) are from BAME groups, and 32% are eligible for Free School Meals.
- In the 2020-21 academic year, Girls Active has supported 3,192 girls to be more active (defined as 'being active for an extra 1 hour per week for at least 6 weeks'). Of these girls, 20% (634) have a disability or Special Educational Need(s), 38% (1,209) are from BAME groups, and 27% are eligible for Free School Meals.
- Girls Active secondary schools were successful in establishing an average of one new community link as a result of the programme.

When asked how satisfied they were with the support provided by the YST (0 = very dissatisfied, 10 = very satisfied), teachers reported a high average score of 8.5. When asked how likely they were to recommend Girls Active to other schools (0 = very unlikely, 10 = very likely), the average score was 8.9. These positive reviews are echoed in the findings detailed throughout this report.

Table 1: Termly monitoring data from 94 Girls Active schools

	Total across Secondary and SUFC ² (Primary)	Average across 94 schools (29 Secondary and 65 SUFC)	Total - Secondary	Average - Secondary (29 schools)	Total - SUFC (Primary)	Average - SUFC (Primary) (65 schools)
How many young leaders (GLAMS) are supporting the implementation of Girls Active in your school this academic year (since September 2020)?	1,045	11.1	416	14.3	629	9.7
Of these GLAMS supporting the implementation, how many have a disability or special educational needs (SEND)?	124	1.3	51	1.8	73	1.1
Of these GLAMS supporting the implementation, how many are from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups? ³	328	3.5	127	4.4	201	3.1
Of these GLAMS supporting the implementation, how many are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)?	348	3.7	147	5.1	201	3.1
Across the whole school, how many girls in total have the GLAMS worked with this academic year (since September 2020)? I.e. are engaged in the Girls Active process such as surveying, consultation, assemblies, activities	4,088	43.5	1,303	44.9	2,785	42.8
Of these girls the GLAMS have worked with, how many have a disability or special educational needs (SEND)?	576	6.1	276	9.5	300	4.6
Of these girls the GLAMS have worked with, how many are from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups?	1,761	18.7	566	19.5	1,195	18.4
Of these girls, how many are primary school aged (5-11 years old)? (SUFC only)	1,012	15.6	N/A	N/A	1,012	15.6
Of these girls the GLAMS have worked with, how many are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)?	1,325	14.1	547	18.9	778	12.0
Across the whole school, how many girls in total has Girls Active supported to be *more active? (I.e. *at least an extra 1 hour per week for 6 weeks)	3,192	34.0	881	30.4	2,311	35.6
Of these girls who are more active, how many have a disability or special educational needs (SEND)?	634	6.7	218	7.5	416	6.4
Of these girls who are more active, how many are from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups?	1,209	12.9	282	9.7	927	14.3
Of these girls who are more active, how many are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)?	855	9.1	299	10.3	556	8.6
Number of new links (Secondary only)	33	1.1	33	1.1	N/A	N/A

² Stepping Up For Change (SUFC) aims to provide resources and a support framework for schools. It uses leadership and peer marketing to empower girls to influence PE, sport and physical activity in their school and, through collaboration with other schools, consider actions that could lead to positive transition experiences and PE, sport and physical activity practices between schools.

³ The term 'Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups' was used at the point of data collection, however its use in future projects is under review by the Youth Sport Trust.

5. The impact of the new training model

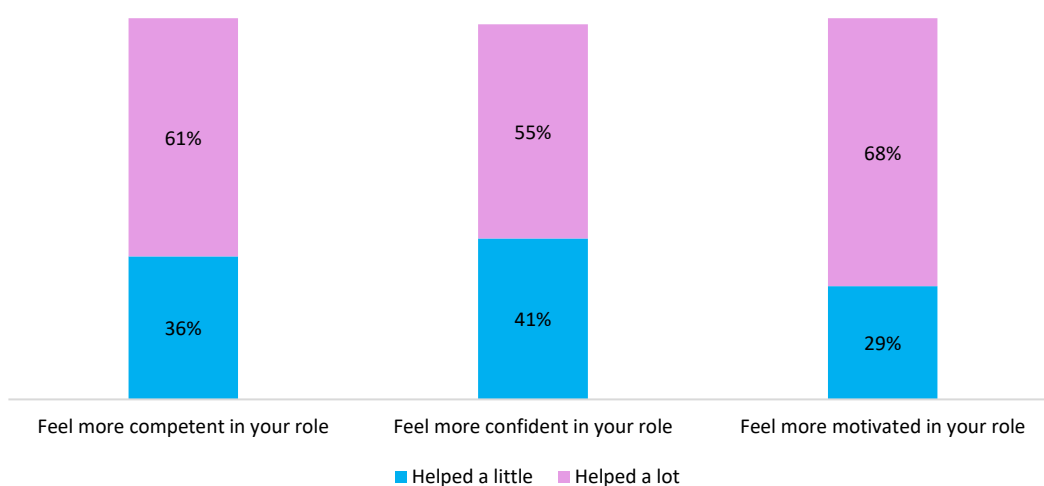
Twelve qualitative interviews were conducted via Zoom with teachers (from different schools) that have delivered Girls Active in 2020-21 and had received the virtual training. One further teacher provided written feedback to the questions. The interviews were designed to evaluate the impact of the new training model (i.e. an increase in virtual training, incorporating pre-recorded webinars and live Zoom sessions).

Surveys were also distributed to teachers that had received the virtual training. In total, 66 teachers (21 secondary, 45 primary/SUFC) completed surveys after the first training session, with some secondary teachers also providing feedback after the second training session. However, the number of responses after the second training session was low, and the feedback was largely similar to the initial responses, so the second set of responses were not included in the analysis.

Overall perceptions of the training

- Overall, the teacher training was very well-received; 95% of survey respondents across primary and secondary schools rated the training experience as either good (53%) or very good (42%).
- 97% of respondents stated that the training helped them feel “a little” or “a lot” more competent and motivated in their role, and 95% said it helped them feel “a little” or “a lot” more confident (see Figure 1).

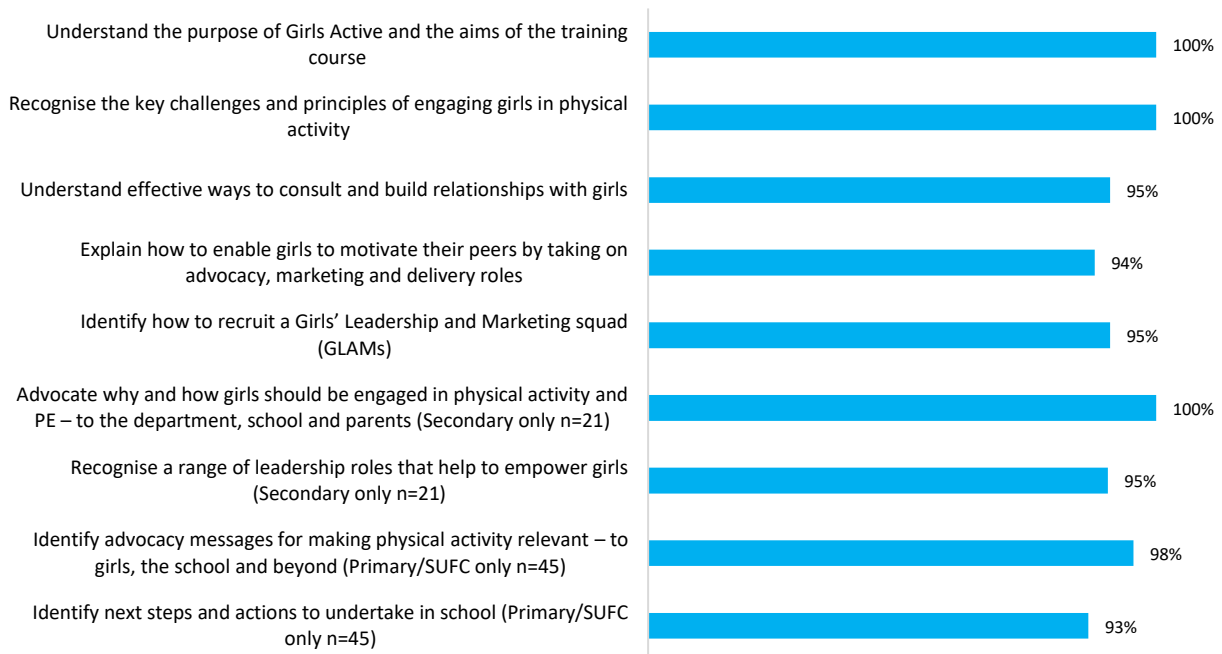
Figure 1: How much the teacher training helped primary and secondary teachers feel more competent, confident, and motivated in their role (n=66)



Achievement of learning outcomes

Teachers were overwhelmingly positive about the training. Figure 2 shows the percentage of teachers that felt the learning outcomes of the training had been met “to some extent” or “to a great extent”.

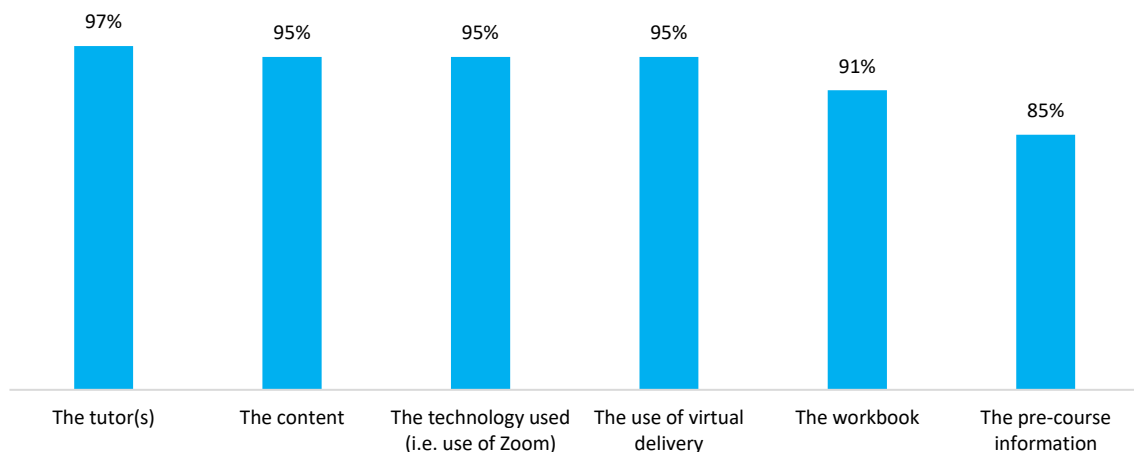
Figure 2: To what extent the intended learning outcomes of the training had been achieved (n=66)



Course content

- Teachers rated the course content very highly, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: How teachers rated different aspects of the course (n=66)



- The course content was cited as "exciting" and "interactive".
- Content was perceived as "clear" and "easy to follow".
- Good use of practical examples of implementing Girls Active demonstrated to participants.
- Sufficient mixture of talking from the YST tutors, to video clips, and discussion time.

"I thought it was very exciting, very interactive. It was clear, it was easy to follow. It didn't feel like information overload." - Teacher

"It was really informative, and I liked the way it was structured, and it was fun, clear, engaging, and interactive, with good opportunities to discuss but also learn. So, it definitely strengthened my confidence to deliver it, and I think the programme has done as well as it has because of the confidence I got from the training." - Teacher

The training tutors

- Course tutors were “really interesting”, positive and enthusiastic.
- Tutors discussed the impact of the pandemic and useful ideas for delivery – this was well received.
- Consistency of tutors worked well, as it allowed teachers to develop a relationship with them – “if there had been different tutors throughout, I probably wouldn’t have emailed them with questions. They knew what we were talking about and what had been discussed in the breakout rooms and sessions.”
- The level of support and advice from tutors post-training was also highly praised.

Logistics

- 92% of teachers said that the training duration was appropriate for their individual needs.
- The start time of the training sessions (just after the school day had finished) was generally well received, as it was accessible to a wide audience. However, some schools found the timing slightly tight, suggesting that an extra 15 minutes (e.g. starting at 3:45pm rather than 3:30pm) would ensure they had time to find a quiet space, set up their computer, grab a drink, and be ready to engage in the training.
- In breakout rooms, teachers had the chance to talk to different colleagues, which was perceived as very useful: 56% of survey respondents said that the breakout rooms and being able to discuss ideas with colleagues was the most valuable part of the training.
- Engaging in training alongside similar schools/local schools was beneficial for learning and generating useful discussion.

“The training was after school which great as it was easily accessible. Timing-wise it was great, and because it was so fun – she had us playing games and discussing things, it didn’t feel too overwhelming or too tedious.” - Teacher

“Very well organised. Led by one of the ladies at YST who was very energetic, very knowledgeable. Lots of debate about what we were doing, so we went off into breakout rooms, we’d discuss with people in our cluster group, so it we could discuss ideas that were more relevant to our area. It wasn’t laborious, it was something I quite looked forward to doing. If anything, it ratified the ideas that I had, which was great, and it made my thoughts stronger about girls being active in schools.” - Teacher

“They weren’t onerous in terms of the number of people, and as I said it was all really well organised in advance of the meeting. Everything technically worked very well, so it was very well done.” - Teacher

Resource pack

- Teachers found the workbook very useful – it gave the training structure.
- The follow-up worksheets to implement back in school with the girls were well received.
- The workbook was perceived as very clear and simple to use - it followed the course well.

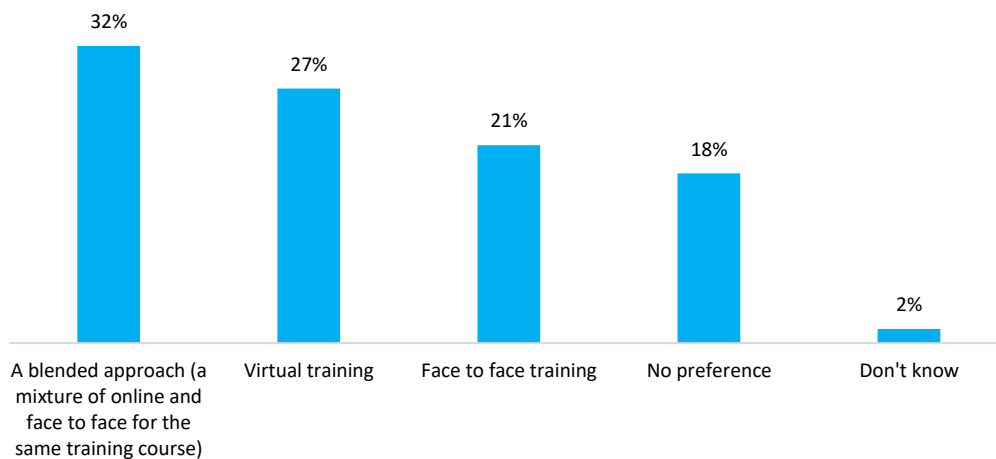
“I liked the resources, I thought they were really good for us staff, but also really useful for the girls to use, really accessible. We’ve had the workbook to look back over to see what we’ve done and think ‘where do we go from here’. At first I thought ‘oh no there’s a book to fill in’, but it was actually beneficial to have it, so we’ve kept it locked away in a drawer so nobody can steal it!” - Teacher

“The teacher work pack followed a good order – you could see what was coming up in the next session and learn from other schools. The small teacher book summarised the key things and there was space to make notes on it. The posters and resources that you could use for the girls were also really useful, it was in a nice pack you could take to the sessions, it was just easy and useful. PDF copies were also sent once we were in lockdown which was also really useful, and we appreciated.” - Teacher

How a virtual training model compares to face-to-face and other online training

- Opinion was divided in terms of which method of delivery teachers preferred (see Figure 4). A blended approach (virtual and face-to-face) was the most preferred option, followed by online/virtual only, while 20% of teachers had no preference or were unsure which option they preferred.

Figure 4: Teachers' preferred training delivery method (n=66)



- Hosting the training virtually ensured it was more accessible to teachers.
- Virtual training was perceived as a more efficient and effective form of delivery, especially in terms of logistics (e.g. cover for lessons, travel).
- It allowed teachers time to prepare for the sessions as they received the resource pack/workbook in advance, so they could think about the content, what to expect, and what questions they could ask.
- The inevitable downfall was that some individuals would prefer face-to-face for the “personal touch”.
- All teachers felt Zoom was a suitable training platform and all were comfortable with the software.
- Most teachers had experienced at least one other type of online training (e.g. Game of Our Own, Women in Sport). Girls Active training compared favourably, due to the engaging nature and content. It was not “death by PowerPoint”, and it was delivered to small groups, with regular opportunities for reflection, which ensured teachers could engage and contribute to discussions. Overall, there was an excellent balance of teaching, learning (i.e. being spoken to) and time for discussion.
- All teachers that provided feedback would be happy to attend online training in the future. Although face-to-face training offers more time for informal discussion/networking, and that slightly more personal touch, online training is more practical, efficient and time and cost effective. These are important considerations for teachers with busy workloads.

“It’s interesting because I’ve done the workshop before with my previous school in person, then when I moved schools asked if I could do it again and they said yes. I personally preferred it on Zoom. Both formats were good and you learn a lot from both, but when it’s over one day you take so much information from it that it’s hard, but when it’s broken down over a couple of sessions then you can really learn and understand, rather than trying to remember everything from a whole day.” - Teacher

“We all got sent a resource pack prior to the meeting, I had a flick through in advance of the meetings and was able to make notes. In face-to-face meetings you are normally just given these resources on the day. It has been really good that we got these earlier – we also received electronically and hard copy. Really handy to have, able to think about questions to ask.” - Teacher

“I think you get a lot more out of it. There aren’t the breaks in between sessions. Often it is out of hours 3-6pm and quite long, so how it is delivered is much sharper than it would have been if you attended a training day where you meander, network etc, In that sense, it’s a quicker, more direct form of delivery. I don’t want to say I prefer it because I like meeting people, but in terms of hassle, taking time out of your school day, not having to get cover, not having to travel, it was so much more convenient.” - Teacher

“The negative side is that you didn’t have that actual personal touch, you weren’t there, you weren’t able to talk to people and have that practical side of things.” - Teacher

“The delivery was pretty good compared to others. It wasn’t death by PowerPoint; it allowed us time to reflect too.” - Teacher

Impact on teaching staff

- As a result of the support teachers received during the training sessions, 89% of teachers said it is “likely” or “very likely” that they will make changes to the way they undertake their role.
- The training has made some teachers more empathetic and understanding towards girls, giving greater consideration to their feelings and the reasons why they may not be engaging with sport and PE.
- The training has given teachers the confidence to deliver Girls Active as effectively as possible, while reinforcing the good work that was already taking place in schools.
- The training has also taught the teachers to listen to girls’ ideas more, give girls a greater voice, and allow them to be more independent. Rather than telling the girls what to do and how, it’s more of a case of “the floor is yours”, giving the girls autonomy.
- The training led to improved networking and partnership development. One primary school PE lead said they were now in touch with the PE lead at the secondary feeder school, as a result of the training. They maintain regular contact, which has helped them understand what goes on in neighbouring schools.
- The training led to some teachers reviewing their sport offer, to ensure variety and enjoyment: “Our practice hasn’t hugely changed, but the options we give the girls have. I like that we needed to put more clubs on in different ways, and that has been our biggest change.”
- Teachers also felt that virtual engagement with primary schools has been very successful this year.

“My teaching has changed; I now take into consideration how the girls might be feeling more. I feel like I am a bit more empathetic and understanding of how those girls are feeling and how to encourage them rather than put them off.” - Teacher

“One thing I’ve learned to do is let the girls be more independent, and I’ve learned to actually step back a bit and give them the reins. It has taught me to step back a bit... they’ve got it. I can supply them with the resources, tell them what we are focussing on, then say “the floor is yours”. Rather than saying this is what you’re doing, it is asking the girls how they want to do it.” - Teacher

“The group that I pick, bottom set, typical ‘I don’t like PE cohort’. We did loads on how you can change your thought processes. Today my lesson is completely different to how it would’ve been 6 months ago. They are all now much more engaged in the lessons and more willing to take on the leadership roles which is really good, and they are actually more confident in doing it.” - Teacher

“By using the positive environment and having the Girls Active resources, it’s helped to change the mindset of the girls. We worked on reasons as to why they don’t like PE.” - Teacher

How teachers found out about the training

- All teachers interviewed found out about Girls Active either from the YST directly (usually via social media), or via their School Sports Partnership contacts.

“I saw it on Twitter, from the Youth Sport Trust account. I’m really passionate about getting girls involved in sport, so that is one of the main aims of whatever I do in sport. So, the fact they could make it easier for me to push that, I was really on board.” - Teacher

“We’ve actually got someone who’s part of the School Sport Partnership that’s part of the Academy and she sent it on to us. It came through her and we had a look at it and thought, 1. It’s an opportunity for some of our students who haven’t had the best start to their school life, and 2. We were looking at having some sort of leadership team in PE anyway, and this we thought would help us put that in place.” - Teacher

Suggested improvements for the training

- Overall, teachers were very happy with the format, structure, and content of the training sessions, therefore very few improvements were suggested.
- Some content was a little basic for more experienced teachers, but very useful for inexperienced teachers. General consensus was that the format should not be changed, as “there is no harm being taught what you already know”.
- Two respondents said that they would have preferred face-to-face training, but the online training was “adapted really well”.
- There were no suggestions for a change of format for the training. However, one teacher suggested that a 15-minute, one-to-one ‘check-in’ Zoom session, between the school and YST, could be useful to ask questions and generally assess progress.

“I wouldn’t change it at all because this role I’m in is so transient. PE leads are very transient. You’re going to get people on a yearly basis that are completely fresh to this. There’s no harm in being taught what you already know, there’s more harm in not being taught things that you should know. A lot of class teachers are given the role, because they need someone to teach PE.” - Teacher

“I really enjoyed the training, I don’t think I’d change anything to the format. One thing that I think would be helpful is a catch-up session, maybe 15 minutes at some point [one-to-one with the YST]. Checking in what I’ve done so far, what any next steps may be. So, you have the training, going off and seeing how you do, then maybe a couple of months later checking in again.” - Teacher

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- Some content was a little basic for more experienced teachers, but very useful for inexperienced teachers. General consensus was that the format should not be changed, as “there is no harm being taught what you already know”.
- Two respondents said that they would have preferred face-to-face training, but the online training was “adapted really well”.
- There were no suggestions for a change of format for the training. However, one teacher suggested that a 15-minute, one-to-one ‘check-in’ Zoom session, between the school and YST, could be useful to ask questions and generally assess progress.

“I wouldn’t change it at all because this role I’m in is so transient. PE leads are very transient. You’re going to get people on a yearly basis that are completely fresh to this. There’s no harm in being taught what you already know, there’s more harm in not being taught things that you should know. A lot of class teachers are given the role, because they need someone to teach PE.” - Teacher

“I really enjoyed the training, I don’t think I’d change anything to the format. One thing that I think would be helpful is a catch-up session, maybe 15 minutes at some point [one-to-one with the YST]. Checking in what I’ve done so far, what any next steps may be. So, you have the training, going off and seeing how you do, then maybe a couple of months later checking in again.” - Teacher

6. The impact of Girls Active overall and for different school characteristics

This section offers insight into the impact of Girls Active from teachers', GLAMS' and participants' perspectives. It also explores the student voice in relation to girls' experiences, including:

- How GLAMS and participants benefit from Girls Active.
- The best things about being a GLAM.
- What the programme offers girls.
- Challenges and barriers, and how GLAMS have tried to overcome them.
- GLAMS' perspectives on the key elements for engaging more girls in PE and sport.
- An exploration of how girls from different demographics (e.g. age groups, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, those with SEND) have engaged with the programme.
- Teachers' and GLAMS' perspectives on the aspects that help to ensure that Girls Active has a lasting impact.

Six key principles

At the heart of Girls Active, six key principles underpin effective practice in engaging girls in PE, sport, and physical activity:

1. Take a long-term approach to engaging girls.
2. Put developing self-confidence at the heart of PE.
3. Make PE and sport relevant to girls lives.
4. Recognise the power of friends to drive progress.
5. Develop role models for the future.
6. Empower girls to design and deliver PE and sport.

These principles have positive relationships at their core and should be supported by whole school policies and practice. This report highlights the impact these principles have on the way schools shape their Girls Active offer.

- While teachers were not typically aware of the 'six key principles', all agreed that they are crucial to engaging girls in PE and sport.
- Teachers discussed a wide range of examples to demonstrate how they incorporate and embed the principles into their delivery.
- One school said that they had used the YST principles to inform changes in their assessment criteria for PE.

"We definitely focus on developing role models for the future, empowering girls to design and deliver PE and sport, and recognise the power of friends to drive progress." - Teacher

"Making sport and PE relevant to girls' lives; next year, we really want to broaden the horizons of what extra-curricular clubs are. The girls can run their own club, it can be anything they want it to be." - Teacher

"We've tried to focus on wellbeing and developing confidence. Things from the YST have encouraged us to include that type of thing in our assessment criteria. We do try to hit all of those six points." - Teacher

How girls have benefitted from Girls Active

Based on feedback from the focus groups, the image below summarises the ways in which Girls Active benefits GLAMS and participants. A principle of Girls Active is to put developing self-confidence at the heart of PE. Evidenced in the image, improved confidence and self-belief were major benefits outlined by teachers (when reflecting on the experience of participants) and GLAMS alike.

GLAMS	How have girls benefitted from Girls Active?	Participants
"Knowing that you can lead activities and come up with new ideas gives you a big confidence boost."	Improved confidence and self-belief	"Their confidence has increased, sport really gives you confidence in all aspects of your life."
"It's helped me with my body image. Talking about how they [Girls Active participants] should love themselves has made me realise that I should also love myself."	Improved mental health and wellbeing	"They're happier. They used to just sit there with their heads down, and now they're smiling and talking to people, cause they've got something to look forward to."
"We do more sport now as well."	Improved opportunities to be active	"They have access to sports they wouldn't normally get to try."
"Seeing them [the participants] after sessions looking happier, it makes you feel good, because you've achieved something. You've actually made a difference to people and helped them."	Inspiration and a sense of achievement	"The girls are proud of themselves because they've changed so much."
"I've become mates with girls who I never thought I'd be mates with."	Making new friends	"Our sessions have brought lots of different people together."
"We've learnt to collaborate and communicate."	Leadership, teamwork and communication skills	GLAMS' improved leadership and teamwork skills mean participants are able to engage in a high quality activity session delivered by their peers.
GLAMS know just how important it is to create a safe and non-judgemental environment for their peers.	A safe space	"It's a place where they can come and talk."

THE BEST THINGS ABOUT GIRLS ACTIVE

THE GLAMS' PERSPECTIVE

MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND MAKING FRIENDS (ONE OF THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF GIRLS ACTIVE)

"I've enjoyed the aspect of meeting people and making friends with people who are more experienced and who've had like coaching experience, speaking to them and listening to their stories and stuff and how they've developed."

GLAMS GET THE CHANCE TO MOTIVATE, INSPIRE AND ENCOURAGE OTHER GIRLS

"The girls who come to our sessions can look at women as role models now, and say 'I want to be like them'. And it's our role to help them to try to achieve their aspirations."

GLAMS CAN DEVELOP LIFELONG EMPLOYABILITY AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS

"It improves our communication when we are working as a team. Respect, teamwork, integrity, and aspiration – they're our core values in the school. Girls Active fits into that."

NEW EXPERIENCES

"I'm starting to feel happy again, because we have a lot of new experiences."

BECOMING MORE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

"Before GLAMS, the only opportunities for girls were netball and gymnastics. The variety of sports is good now."

DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE AND SELF-BELIEF, AND HELPING OTHERS DO THE SAME

"I get to work with these amazing girls who want to see other girls step up and be confident, to know it's not just me who wants that. And we get to know one another, each other's goals, each other's abilities and watch each other learn and grow."

HAVING AN IMPACT – CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

"Spreading the message of like 'girls can be sporty too, and active, it's not just boys, and girls are equal to boys in everything."

A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT/PRIDE

"It's nice watching the people who would sit out, now doing things and having fun; you feel proud of yourself because you've got them involved."

BEING PART OF A TEAM – HAVING AN IDENTITY

"We've got our identity now and people are looking at us like 'how do I get to be a GLAM?'"

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS (DEVELOPING ROLE MODELS FOR THE FUTURE IS A KEY PRINCIPLE OF GIRLS ACTIVE)

"When you leave and get a job, you'll know how to work with people in different areas, from different backgrounds, with different beliefs and things because we've worked with different people here, so we'll just get better and better at communicating with people."

IT'S FUN!

"We have a laugh while we're doing it, it's not serious, we enjoy it."

Girls Active increases opportunities for girls

Girls Active offers far more than simply engaging girls in more sport and physical activity. GLAMS are afforded the opportunity to empower girls to design and deliver PE and sport, a key principle of the programme; they develop leadership and marketing skills, and enjoy autonomy and freedom designing and delivering sessions.

- Despite heavy disruption due to COVID-19, GLAMS have planned and led activities for other girls, designed and developed virtual content (promotional videos and online articles), delivered virtual sessions to other students/schools, educated themselves, gained knowledge, conducted market research, and even negotiated (to secure cheaper printed GLAMS t-shirts from a local print shop).
- All teachers agreed that Girls Active has given more (and different) girls the opportunity to develop leadership and marketing skills.
- Athlete Mentor workshops were very beneficial, helping the leaders learn how to influence people.
- Assigning GLAMS specific jobs and responsibilities helped develop their leadership and marketing skills.

"We created an online magazine with features on good female role models like Serena Williams. She fought against racism, she stayed confident and carried on doing what she loved, no matter what people said. And Nicola Adams, because boxing is not classed as a girl's sport, people are quite sexist about it, so we did her to inspire people to try boxing." – GLAM

"We split ourselves into teams and learnt about our roles; market researchers, media managers, designers, deliverers." – GLAM

"We bartered with print shop owners to get the GLAMS logos printed on our t-shirts for cheaper! We got a massive discount!" – GLAM

"The leaders did workshops with Jenna [YST Athlete Mentor] about how to influence their peers, and the leadership and marketing aspects of the programme. They've set challenges for girls to create their own This Girl Can posters and 'healthy selfies', and the best ones win a Girls Active beanie hat." - Teacher

"In summer, we want to lead a big event just for girls. I've started to allocate them jobs to give them the responsibility of going out there and researching different sports we can offer, what sports will best engage girls, ringing companies to see if we can get people to come into school and contribute." - Teacher

Girls Active also increases schools' ability to support girls

- All teachers reflected that being involved with Girls Active has improved their capacity and capability to support girls to become more physically active.
- Teachers praised the GLAMS for spreading enthusiasm and encouraging other girls to get involved.
- The potential impact of involving other teachers in the programme was also highlighted.

"There's only two of us in the PE department, so it's been really challenging. But we've got a whole department now, it's fantastic – our PE department branches out into the GLAMS. They're on the same wavelength as us, they've got the same values as us, and they know that the most important thing is to get more girls active." - Teacher

"We've encouraged other teachers to get involved, sharing their experiences of physical activity, to encourage the wider school. We hope that seeing the teachers going outside their comfort zones and doing things they never thought they could do might encourage the students to do the same." - Teacher

Athlete Mentor sessions – impact on the GLAMS

- Discussions within Girls Active around sport and PE, reasons why some girls don't engage, and the thought processes/barriers to taking part, have led to some girls changing their outlook on sport and PE. In turn, this has increased confidence and engagement from girls who were previously reluctant, and elicited a willingness to get involved in different aspects of delivery.
- All teachers felt the training sessions with Athlete Mentors were excellent, enjoyable, and inspiring for the girls.
- One teacher stated the reason they signed up to Girls Active was as much about the emotional and mental wellbeing aspect as it was for sporting reasons. They felt the Athlete Mentors were ideal role models to facilitate discussions about emotional literacy, barriers to taking part, and how to overcome those barriers and have the confidence to enjoy sport and PE.

“As I’ve said, not only are we doing this for sport reasons but also the emotional and mental wellbeing side that comes across very strongly in this programme. All that emotional literacy they were able to use at that time was just fantastic. I think they found her [the Athlete Mentor] quite relatable because she was so open with them. She was also really listening to the girls’ questions as well as telling her story.” - Teacher

“I thought they [the Athlete Mentor sessions] were brilliant. I’ll admit, I did think ‘how is this going to work?’ Because I knew the sessions with the mentor were going to be active, but I really enjoyed it myself and I wasn’t even taking part. There are some girls in the group that aren’t very confident, and having that experience [with the Athlete Mentor] will really help them.” - Teacher

“Kate was brilliant and the training that she delivered was totally heartfelt and because of the nature in which she became an athlete, the kids just instantaneously went ok, what has she got to say, I’ll listen to her.” - Teacher

Challenges encountered this year

- GLAMS encountered several challenges; four key themes emerged from the discussions – remote working, year group bubbles, planning and logistics, and attracting and motivating girls.
 1. Being isolated from other GLAMS, learning/delivering over the computer rather than face-to-face.
 2. Inability to mix year groups meant delivery of activities to girls of other ages was limited. There was also a perceived lack of respect from participants of the same age.
 3. Disruption to planned activities due to COVID-19.
 4. Hard to reach groups (e.g. ‘popular’ girls and disengaged students) were difficult to motivate.

“It was hard because we were doing most of it on Teams because we started it in Lockdown. So, we were going off and doing it by ourselves and messaging other people to work as a team, it was so much harder.” - GLAM

“I think people are not joining cause we’re the same age as them, cause of the Covid bubbles. We don’t get the same level of respect cause we’re not older than them.” - GLAM

“We’ve struggled to get through to the popular girls, they don’t like listening. They think ‘Oh no, it’s just more PE, I’m not doing it’, or ‘We’re not getting involved in more school than we need to’.” – GLAM

“Our leaders did a virtual session for Years 7 to 9 girls, but we don’t know if any of them were actually doing the challenges, because they wouldn’t put their cameras on.” - Teacher

Barriers to girls participating in sport and physical activity

During the focus groups, GLAMS were asked to outline the things that they think prevent more girls from participating in sport and physical activity.

- The reasons outlined are not inherently new, but they reinforce why programmes such as Girls Active are important, as the issues raised are still prevalent in schools, with further work required to tackle them.
- The main barriers that prevent girls participating centred around three factors: a lack of motivation and enthusiasm for sport/physical activity, feeling self-conscious/having body insecurities, and the negative impact of boys (e.g. boys take over, fear of being judged by boys, etc.).

“They have no passion or enthusiasm for sport.” - GLAM

“Mental wellbeing is a big issue – they might be self-conscious.” - GLAM

“Girls don’t want to do sport in front of boys for fear of being judged.” – GLAM

How GLAMS tried to tackle the barriers to engagement

- Girls Active sessions were heavily promoted across schools using methods including presentations in assemblies, social media, posters, and word of mouth.
- GLAMS offered participants a wide variety of activities in order to broaden girls’ horizons, offer different sports to those offered in PE, and offer participants a choice of what they would like to do.
- Specific audiences were targeted, with GLAMS handing out invites and chatting to the less confident girls, to encourage them to attend.

- GLAMS tried to be as inclusive and welcoming as possible; they offered different activities, ensured they were not too competitive, and created a safe environment where all girls could feel comfortable.

"We made posters and leaflets and put them around school." – GLAM

"Make it invite-only and hand out invites, so people feel special." – GLAM

"Show a different perspective of the games we play; people think football is just about kicking a ball, but it's not, it's more about learning different skills. And it doesn't have to be competitive." - GLAM

GLAMS' TOP TIPS TO MAKE GIRLS WANT TO TAKE PART

MAKE IT FUN AND EXCITING – ESPECIALLY THE FIRST SESSION

"We love bench ball, so maybe if we do, for the first session, something that they'll really like, then they'll be like 'yeah, I liked it, I'll come next week'."

GIVE GIRLS RESPONSIBILITY, CHOICE AND A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES

"Give them lots of choices of fun activities and let them add their own ideas too."

ADVERTISE THE GIRLS ACTIVE SESSIONS EFFECTIVELY

"Make sure that you tell people what the sessions will be and what they will get out of it."

CREATE A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

"Be understanding of their situations and why they might not like sports and help them to try sports. Ask what's stopping them."

"Show them that no one is getting judged, and everyone can just be themselves."

BE A ROLE MODEL (ONE OF THE SIX KEY PRINCIPLES OF GIRLS ACTIVE)

"We have to share our insecurities, then they feel like they can talk about it too, and we can help each other."

LOGISTICAL PREPARATIONS

"Timings, when it happens, where it is, what we do."

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

"Make sure everyone understands and knows where you're coming from. We're very approachable and easy to talk to."

SHARE POSITIVE MESSAGES

"Teach girls to manage their different activities and time."

FREEDOM TO CHOOSE WHAT THEY WEAR RATHER THAN SET PE KIT

"A lot of girls do not like the girls PE kit and feel judged on how they look. If we had a different outfit for the girls to wear, we would influence a lot of girls into enjoying their lessons." - GLAM

"Most girls have complained about not liking the kit and so we have taken that and have made plans to adjust it." - GLAM

Factors that can facilitate Girls Active

- Supportive senior management, and ideally, a whole-school approach.
- Influential leaders to generate interest.
- Effective and tailored use of Girls Active funding.
- The YST freebies and hoodies really help to promote the programme.

"We've got lots of other staff members involved, sharing what they'd been doing over Lockdown and stories about what sports or physical activity they do, to inspire and motivate the girls." - Teacher

"The leaders are quite influential people in their year groups. They can generate a buzz about the programme, which really helps to get people into clubs." - Teacher

"Having the funding has allowed us to give our girls more opportunities to try different activities. We try to come up with new plans all the time and think about what the most effective approach would be, for the girls we've currently got." - Teacher

"The hoodies really help boost the profile and spread the message about Girls Active. When students see the girls wearing their hoodies, it generates interest and creates a buzz." - Teacher

Engaging girls from different backgrounds, cultures and age groups, and those with SEND

Understanding and engaging girls from different backgrounds

- GLAMS demonstrated that they had a well-rounded understanding of how girls from different cultures and backgrounds may perceive sport and showed a desire to engage with sport differently.
- The GLAMS had very positive attitudes towards engaging all girls in sport and physical activity, regardless of their background, and were motivated to engage and be empathetic towards them.
- In her Athlete Mentor visits, Anna noted that many GLAMS did not perceive culture or background as a potential barrier to engaging girls in sport and physical activity.
- Teachers understand the importance of engaging students from different demographics and consciously target them for Girls Active.
- Teachers highlighted parental pressure as a key barrier for some girls from BAME groups.

"I feel like your cultural background really impacts how girls view sport, because some people make out that girls have to stay at home, cook, clean the house, everything, and we really need to get across that's not the case. I'm mixed race; my mum who is brown, is less encouraging towards me doing sport, she's more focused on my studies than my dad." - GLAM

"Girls who wear headscarves, when they do PE, they might not want to do it because they think 'I might get really hot', and when they wear hijabs, they're not really allowed to show their skin, so they'll say "no, I don't want to do that, I don't want to take my blazer off". And they also think that they look silly doing sports with a hijab, sometimes they think people don't do sports with a hijab – it's a bit new to them." – GLAM

"Everyone treats people from different backgrounds and cultures the same here, so it's not been any different trying to engage them in our sessions. It's good - there's no hate crime or racism." – GLAM

"We have a high population of Muslim students, so lots of their reasons for not coming after school were religious reasons, but they were really keen to have lunchtime clubs. It was really positive, and the profile of the girls was good, they were committed in PE lessons, but they would never give that commitment after school for different reasons, so this worked well." - Teacher

"With our mixed demographic, there is a challenge with the parents pushing education, rather than physical activity. We try to educate the students and hope it filters through to the parents that way. Girls get pressured to go home straight away after school. But our lunchtimes are staggered due to Covid, so lunchtime clubs are hard because while they're on lunch, we're teaching." - Teacher

"We have lots of disadvantaged, Pupil Premium students. We've not been able to engage as many as we'd have liked, but we do have three who are in care who come to the [Girls Active] sessions. That's really good because you wouldn't typically get those children on projects like this." - Teacher

The GLAMS had given a lot of consideration towards helping a wide range of girls, adopting different methods and approaches to engage girls from different cultures and backgrounds who are reluctant to take part. Making PE and sport relevant to girls' lives is one of the six key principles of Girls Active; the GLAMS' focus on engaging girls from different cultural backgrounds exemplifies this.

- The GLAMS' approaches included having smaller group sizes, partnering girls up with friend(s), displaying pictures of people from diverse backgrounds taking part in sport as part of their Girls Active promotion, educating themselves about different cultures, backgrounds and religions, and sharing positive messages. One group also referenced the positive messages from Sport England's This Girl Can campaign.

"Encourage people to bring a friend from the same cultural background as them." - GLAM

"Encourage them and let them know that it's ok to be different. Make sure they know they aren't going to be judged." - GLAM

"Display pictures of people from diverse backgrounds taking part in sport, so people know they're not the only one." - GLAM

"Educate ourselves [the leaders] so we understand more - get somebody to come into school to talk to us about different cultures and religions, or we could watch a video on it." - GLAM

Engaging girls in different year groups

GLAMS were asked if they had engaged girls in different year groups, and if they had noticed any differences in the way students of different ages engage with Girls Active.

- As mentioned previously, year group bubbles meant it was difficult for GLAMS to deliver sessions to girls from different year groups.
- The GLAMS suggested that a major barrier to engaging different year groups is that, as girls progress through secondary school, there is less inclination to engage in sport and physical activity. This is a well-known issue, with aspects such as exams and peer pressure leading to a drop off in engagement.
- GLAMS also highlighted a perceived lack of respect from potential participants of the same age.
- There was more optimism around engaging Year 7 and 8 girls, and opportunities to work with primaries.

"It's hard to get the older girls to come to our sessions. Year 9 and upwards are focused on getting GCSEs done and they think they've got no time for sport, but they could play during breaks to help them take their mind off it." - GLAM

"Older girls are more bothered about like 'What do I look like? Do I look stupid when I'm doing this?' or 'Are people going to judge me?' Year 7s and 8s don't really feel that pressure, they'll join in anything, but as you get older you feel more pressure to look good or not look stupid when you're doing stuff." - GLAM

"Primary school children want to learn and want to be active, and some people up here just want to stay indoors or do something else or just not participate, so you've got to prompt them." - GLAM

Engaging girls with SEND

- The GLAMS' highlighted several excellent examples of girls with SEND being engaged in Girls Active as participants. There were also examples of girls with SEND thriving as leaders.
- The GLAMS discussed how they had adapted sessions to cater for different needs and ensure that their sessions were inclusive and that everyone felt welcome.
- Examples included adaptations to cater for mental and physical needs, GLAMS adapting activities during sessions, demonstrating their leadership skills and finding solutions to problems as they arose.

"I've got a girl who's in my form, she's quite high SEN and finds it difficult to be socially aware, socially involved. When we put the application for Girls active out, she applied. So, we thought, let's give her a chance and see how she does. The session where Anna came in, she was really nervous and didn't want to do it. But she gave it a go and she loved it, and now we're seeing her in a totally different light than we have before." - Teacher

"In rounders, we got a tennis ball and tennis racket for Mayer, because of her disability she can't hit it from where other everyone else stood so we made it easier for her, instead of her missing out and just watching everyone else have fun." – GLAM

"I had Faye on my team, she's got one leg, but it was too easy for her, cause she just had to hit it and run, so I had to try and make it more challenging by asking her to hit it high or low." - GLAM

"One girl is autistic, so we learnt to adapt for her. We put more description into things, clearer instructions, like describing the movement so she understood it better." - GLAM

"We were doing Just Dance and all the sports hall was being used so we had to find a different space." - GLAM

"We've been able to find a new solution to everything so far, so it's been good." - GLAM

Ensuring that Girls Active has a lasting impact in schools

A key principle of Girls Active is to take a long-term approach to engaging girls; teachers and GLAMS demonstrated their understanding of this. This section highlights their approaches to implementing new ways of working, sustaining Girls Active, and ensuring long-term, lasting impact.

- GLAMS believed it was essential that Girls Active is known across all year groups. The GLAMS' hoodies were invaluable for showcasing Girls Active, and acted as a uniform, giving them an increased sense of responsibility and pride. Word of mouth was also important – in some instances Girls Active was regularly advertised and promoted during PE lessons, so more girls were aware of the programme.
- GLAMS felt they could help train and mentor younger girls, so they were engaged from an early age, to ensure sustainability; teachers also felt that this would facilitate continuity. Ideas included offering creative leadership opportunities to young girls such as poster design, mentor/mentee roles, and workshops on confidence and teambuilding, designed and delivered by the GLAMS. This aligns with a key principle of Girls Active - developing role models for the future.
- Strategic use of funding, and having events for the GLAMS to look forward to (e.g. Athlete Mentor visits, training sessions, meet ups with other schools, festivals), especially ones that elicit new ideas, were seen as crucial for sustaining the programme.

"We need to make people aware of what it is, what it's about, what it does, then younger years will know that they can rely on Girls Active to have fun." – GLAM

"The impact was great. Simply seeing girls wearing hoodies that they adored, and wore everyday even in hot weather, because they felt they were representing all the girls; that on its own was a significant milestone. Because all the girls in the lower ages were looking at the Year 6 girls thinking I want to be one of those, what do you have to do to be a Girls Active leader?" – Teacher

"We'd like the GLAMS to be part of Year 6 transition. It would be amazing in future if, when new students come to Litherland, they know that there is an opportunity to be part of the GLAMS and for that to become a selling point for the school would be the ultimate dream." - Teacher

"More days like this (Athlete Mentor visit), and training days for the girls would make them more confident and give them things to look forward to. And links to other schools would be brilliant – the girls could visit them and share ideas." - Teacher

"The Year 7s could come to our sessions and help out. We could do confidence and team building workshops for them." – GLAM

"Mentoring some of the Year 7s and 8s who are coming to our club, and eventually by the time we're about to leave, we'll be able to just sit and watch and they'll be able to run the session. And then later, they're in our shoes, and they can teach more people and it's just like an ongoing thing. Then it becomes a cycle." – GLAM

"Share our experiences with younger students, so they get an overview [of Girls Active] and maybe be inspired to become leaders, then they could do what we're doing and share their experiences with others too, and influence them to become leaders." - GLAM

How the YST can help schools ensure Girls Active has a lasting impact

- Teachers particularly valued the virtual support the YST provided this year.
- They felt that additional visits from YST Tutors, Athlete Mentors and/or sports coaches would help them to keep the momentum going and provide leaders with new ideas for their sessions.
- One teacher suggested that the YST could facilitate relationships between local Girls Active schools to help them share ideas and best practice.

"What the YST are doing now is great. Regular meetings, checking in virtually, networking, discussing what you're all doing, sharing best practice, it's been a really positive thing, which going forwards hopefully the YST will keep. So beneficial." - Teacher

"If the people who train us as teachers could also work with the girls, that would be really useful. The girls would like to meet leaders from other schools too – maybe the YST could facilitate emails across Girls Active schools in the local area." - Teacher

"If there's any more individuals to come in and speak to us, maybe a mentor to give us a few ideas, to keep the creativity and momentum going forward that would be a great benefit." - Teacher

What has gone well this year with Girls Active - teachers' perspectives

- Virtual engagement with primary schools has been very successful.
- Allowing children to come to school in their PE kit saves time and reduces pressure on girls.
- Positive role models have begun to emerge on social media, so teachers have been able to guide students towards more physically active influencers.
- Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the GLAMS have had a fantastic impact and experienced great personal development.

"Engagement from primaries – the staff have found it very easy to attend virtual meetings." - Teacher

"Through lockdown, lots of fitness instructors started using social media and put themselves forward to help girls and be a good influence. We've been able to encourage girls to use social media positively to help their self-confidence and guide them to the right kind of role models." - Teacher

"A positive is that children are now allowed to come in PE kit. Girls really don't enjoy getting changed in front of others, especially with puberty. And it's given us more participation time, which is great." - Teacher

"The GLAMS have thrived, their confidence has built – it's lovely to see. They're able to stand in front of a group and deliver activities now. They're not timid, scared individuals any more. And they can adapt their leadership skills to meet the needs and desired outcomes of different ability levels." - Teacher

"The GLAMS set online challenges – they've impacted lots more students than we have previously." - Teacher

The value of targeted approaches

- Teachers said that being part of Girls Active has increased their school's awareness of the value of targeted approaches to increasing physical activity levels among girls.
- Teachers felt that the GLAMS had been instrumental in encouraging girls to be more physically active.

"We are really trying to be more inclusive as a school. We are thinking a lot about self-confidence and trying to understand where girls are coming from when they are not very confident in sport." - Teacher

"The boys always seem to get more opportunities, so it's been nice for the girls to have their own identity. We've always said that we want to get girls more active, but it's just been a flippant statement, until now." - Teacher

"It's been lovely to see those girls who don't normally come to clubs finally actually attend. It's been interesting to reflect and say "Wow, how have we done that?", and the simple answer is: by getting a group of individuals who embody what a GLAM is – confident, a good leader, approachable. So, it wasn't actually rocket science, it was just putting the girls group together to lead it." - Teacher

TEACHERS' TOP TIPS ON BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL GLAM SQUAD

SELECT GIRLS WHO ARE GOOD ROLE MODELS AND HAVE INFLUENCE AMONG THEIR PEERS

"For Girls Active, we pick the girls who are really good role models, but also have that influence and power among their peers, so that when they do things, others will follow."

ASSIGN EACH GIRL A SPECIFIC ROLE THAT IS CLOSELY ALIGNED TO THEIR SKILLSET AND INTERESTS

"The success of the programme has been down to the GLAMS. Having the right team, letting their creative juices flow and go out and work their magic. They don't all want to be leaders, some want to be in the background running the GLAMS, but they've all got their own strengths, and all are equally important."

MAKE SURE EVERY GLAM KNOWS AND UNDERSTANDS THEIR ROLE

"The leaders are young, so I've had to really explain clearly their different roles, what Girls Active is, how to set it all up, and what they'll be doing."

GIVE GLAMS RESPONSIBILITY - IT EMPOWERS THEM AND BRINGS THE BEST OUT OF THEM

"I say to them: 'next year I want you to be running your own clubs and getting people to come to them'. It's about giving them the power and independence to say: 'this is my club, I'm going to get people to sign up', and encouraging self-management."

TEACHERS' TOP TIPS ON ENGAGING GIRLS FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

- As PE staff, aim to build relationships with disadvantaged pupils outside the classroom.
- Actively encourage disadvantaged pupils and provide opportunities for them.
- Emphasise that it's always the pupil's choice whether to take part or not.
- Have a role model from a more socio-economically disadvantaged background in the school (as a Girls Active leader) so disadvantaged children have someone they can relate to.
- Involve girls from different backgrounds to help them to understand each other.

"Our female PE staff have really good relationships with the disadvantaged students. It's about telling them that they can do it, and showing them that they have opportunities. Also, it's important that they know it's their choice whether they take part initially and whether they continue to take part." - Teacher

"It has really helped having girls from different backgrounds meeting together. It gets the conversation going but it also allows them to understand each other." - Teacher

"Having a role model who is from a disadvantaged background, who doesn't come into school with all the fancy things, as a Girls Active leader, really helps the disadvantaged students, because they are on the same level and they feel like they can relate to someone." - Teacher

GLAMS success stories

“Skye in Year 11 has been amazing. If you met her in Year 7, you’d never think she’d be as confident as she is now. We’ve worked on her confidence through the years and in Year 7, she would’ve never said she’d be sitting here now talking to everyone about periods and things like that, and on video too. Her self-confidence has really shone, and she’s come out of her shell a lot. She now wants to go into PE teaching, so I’m hoping it’ll lead into that. She’ll be open to saying she’s not the sportiest person in the world, but she just wants to inspire people to do and to enjoy it.” - Teacher

“There’s one girl who is extremely shy, extremely timid, and I had a parents’ evening 2 weeks ago, and her mum said to me “I’ve seen the biggest change in Caitlin that I’ve ever seen – she’s confident, she’s got a purpose now”, and that’s a huge success story for me. Her mum said she felt Caitlin had ‘lost her voice’ coming into high school and then going into lockdown. She said that now Caitlin is in the GLAMS, she’s found her voice again and she has a purpose, which is just lovely to see.” - Teacher

“How the leaders have come together to make other girls feel more confident and they’ve been able to encourage and instil enthusiasm in others, and help them live full and rich lives through physical activity – it’s brilliant to see.” - Teacher

Participant success stories

“There’s a girl who never used to bring her PE kit. She would sit in ICC for two hours during PE not doing anything, and now she comes to our club, which is unbelievable. We’ve asked her what she wants to do, we’ve adapted what we are doing for her, we’ve made her feel valued and welcome. And we’ve made her feel more comfortable with herself and confident as well.” - GLAM

“I’ve found it absolutely lovely to see individuals coming to clubs who are quite timid and shy, and all of a sudden in these clubs, they’re absolutely loving life.” - Teacher

“It’s been a joy to watch individuals who I’ve never spoken to because they are so shy and quiet, suddenly give 100% effort in the Girls Active sessions. It’s lovely to see their personalities start to shine and their motivation levels build up.” - Teacher

7. Overall recommendations from the research

Based on our evaluation, we have developed several recommendations to help schools maximise the impact of Girls Active and support its longevity. The following are also transferrable to other YST programmes:

Adopt a whole school approach

- ✓ Involve teachers from outside of the PE department in Girls Active; for example, ask staff to share their experiences of sport and physical activity with students, to show girls that they don’t need to be ‘sporty’ or enjoy PE to take part, and motivate more girls to try the Girls Active sessions.
- ✓ Seek active support from Headteachers and/or others in Senior Leadership roles.
- ✓ Promote Girls Active across the school, including within form classes during assemblies and in PE lessons, to generate interest and ensure that all students and staff are familiar with the programme.

Facilitate and maximise the impact of the GLAMS as role models

- ✓ Empower the GLAMS by giving them specific roles aligned to their individual skillsets; make sure they understand their responsibilities and how they each contribute to the overall success of Girls Active.
- ✓ Plan events throughout the year to maintain momentum and help the GLAMS to stay motivated.
- ✓ Provide termly or half-termly training and/or networking opportunities (either virtual or face-to-face) for the GLAMS, such as YST Athlete Mentor sessions, external sports coach visits and collaborations with GLAMS from other schools, to foster creativity and help them develop new activities.
- ✓ To create continuity, support the GLAMS to mentor and educate younger girls to become the new generation of leaders, as engaging them at a younger age makes them more likely to develop lifelong participation in sport and physical activity.

Tips for engaging more girls from different backgrounds and demographics

- ✓ Create a GLAM Squad who represent the whole school demographic. For example, recruit GLAMS from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure other students from similar backgrounds have role models that they can relate to and aspire to.
- ✓ Emphasise to girls that it's okay to be different, and that Girls Active provides a safe space where nobody is judged, everyone is welcomed and valued, and activities are adapted for different needs.
- ✓ Adopt methods such as having small group sizes during activities, partnering girls up with friends, displaying pictures of people from diverse backgrounds taking part in sport within Girls Active promotions, educating the GLAMS about different cultures, backgrounds and religions, and sharing positive messages (such as those from Sport England's This Girl Can campaign) to engage girls from different demographics.
- ✓ Involve girls in decision making, afford them choice in the activities on offer, and above all, make sure the Girls Active sessions are fun!
- ✓ With parental pressure being a key barrier for many girls, schools should aim to engage with parents to educate them around the benefits of participating in sport and physical activity, particularly with regards to the positive correlation between physical activity levels and academic grades.

Appendix 1: Youth Sport Trust Girls Active logic model

Context	Aims	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short term outcomes	Long term outcomes
<p>Evidence demonstrates that by age 7, girls are already less active than boys. This disparity between genders widens as young people move from childhood through adolescence.</p> <p>The transition between primary and secondary age sees the biggest drop in participation levels among girls.</p> <p>Peer support and positive role modelling approaches have been shown to be effective in raising participation levels among girls.</p> <p>During Covid-19 lockdown, many girls have been more active than usual. However, many have also experienced 'unplanned endings' or 'missed milestones' that may contribute to them feeling anxious or worried about returning to school and a different learning environment.</p>	<p>The overall aim of the programme is to raise activity levels among girls as they move from childhood to adolescence, and beyond. Specific objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the knowledge and skills of workforce in education settings (primary, secondary, special) To mobilise girls as leaders of girls; including positive role models To maximise transition to retain levels of girls' participation in sport and physical activity To extend the breadth of opportunities for girls to regularly engage in sport and physical activity 	<p>Sport England Funding</p> <p>YST Staff and expertise to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme management Project administrative support Resources Programme development, training and support Programme insight and evaluation 	<p>Stepping up for Change activities:</p> <p>Recruit, train and support 10-15 Lead LCV schools to undertake a lead role in coordination of the programme.</p> <p>Recruit, train and support a further 100 schools (25 secondary and 75 primary) to engage in the programme.</p> <p>Recruit, train and support 600 primary/transition leaders/mentors.</p> <p>Engage 3,000 girls as participants in physical activity sessions (focus on BAME, low SEG or less likely to engage in physical activity).</p> <p>Girls Active Secondary activities:</p> <p>Recruit 50 new Girls Active secondary schools from socially disadvantaged areas where participation levels are particularly low among girls.</p> <p>Recruit, train and support 180 girls as leaders.</p> <p>Engage 3,000 girls as participants in physical activity sessions (focus on girls less likely to engage in physical activity)</p> <p><i>All training will be delivered virtually through a series of live or pre-recorded webinars.</i></p>	<p>Through a flexible delivery offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10-15 Lead LCV Schools engaged in the programme 150 teachers engaged in the programme, through a flexible delivery offer. 600 primary / transition mentors trained 180 girl leaders trained 3,000 primary aged girls engaged, 1,500 of whom will be more active (*at least 1 hour for 6 weeks) 3,000 secondary aged girls engaged, 1,500 of whom will be more active (*at least 1 hour for 6 weeks) Approx. 50 virtual training sessions delivered to teachers Up to 100 virtual training sessions delivered to girls 	<p>Schools and workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of the value of targeted approaches to raising physical activity levels among girls Increased capacity and capability of workforce to support girls to be – and remain – physically active through transition <p>Girls as Leaders and participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation in, and enjoyment of, physical activity Improved wellbeing (physical, mental, social), including improved self-esteem and body confidence <p>Girls as Leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More (and different) girls who develop leadership and marketing skills Increased readiness for further education, employment and/or sporting roles 	<p>Schools and workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained commitment to delivering targeted physical activity programmes Commitment to targeted physical activity programmes embedded in all levels of school culture and governance More equitable participation in PE and sport by boys and girls <p>Girls as Leaders and participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained levels of increased physical activity Sustained improvements in all aspects of wellbeing (physical, mental, social) Sustained ability to engage with, and succeed in, education and employment Increased life chances, overall