

POWYS YOUTH SERVICE

Peer Researchers

Powys



sewscap



Young ambassadors working with Powys Youth Service, Jazmin, Tia, Caitlin and Jovi (pictured left to right) were approached to take part in the StreetGames Peer Research project in Wales. “The thought of being able to have our voices heard and share our opinions” and “the opportunity to help people get involved in sports” encouraged the young people to get involved as they are “all quite sporty”. Prior to this, the girls were actively involved in local primary schools as activity leaders and Jovi was already a committed dance coach with younger age groups.

StreetGames posed the following research question:

‘What does an attractive sport and physical activity offer look like for girls and young women, in a post pandemic world?’

The group opted to use an anonymous questionnaire, asking questions such as ‘age, gender, what sports they do, what barriers they face and why they don’t like to do sports’. Social media platforms were utilised to share the questionnaire to a wider audience and the group often found themselves “at lunch in school talking about it and throwing ideas around about logos or places we could go to do our research”. This further promoted the project within school and the peer researchers always made themselves available for informal conversations with young people and teachers.

“Mental health, insecurities, fear of being judged and boys being at gyms” were noted as the most common barriers to participation for young girls in Powys. Girls also wanted to learn new things such as how to play Gaelic Football. The peer researchers proposed to start term time activities inside and outside of school, as well as trips to try new activities during holiday time. “After girls attend 3 sessions, we’re going to give away free sporty tops. One of the reasons why girls don’t take part in fitness is because they don’t have the right fitness equipment or clothing. They feel like they might be judged because they don’t have the coolest new top”.

As individuals, the peer researchers shared their reasoning for wanting to make this project a success. Jovi said

“I’m not a girl so this project wasn’t specifically targeted at me but my friends have always been females since before I came out as gay so I can see the side of it from girls who don’t feel comfortable. I’ve been a part of it to bring another perspective of what girls go through because I’ve always been surrounded by them”. Whereas, Tia said “knowing I can help other girls is huge. I went through a stage where I got severely bullied. It made me feel like I didn’t want to do sports because I felt like I was being judged all the time. Just to know I’m helping to put out an opportunity for people to do sports without being judged and having issues with being stared at or not wearing the right clothes. I just want girls to have fun in sport. I’ve participated in dance for a long time and I know if I’m having a bad day I can go to dance and it distracts me from everything else, everybody should have an opportunity to have that”.

The group said

“we are all quite confident now but that’s because we know that we did the research and we’ve put the work into it. Now we’re being told its good work and we did well, it’s very encouraging”. When asked if they enjoyed taking part in the project Jazmin said “yes, it’s something we are passionate about and we’re learning things. As much as we’re helping others, we’re learning so much for our own development”.