

Research briefing

At a glance

Moving Spaces: Re-framing physical activity for young people who currently feel disengaged, excluded, or unsafe.

Background

Physical activity is vital for health and wellbeing, but can also help foster a sense of belonging, support skills development, and be joyful and fun. However, some young people currently feel disengaged with, or anxious about, physical activity. In this research project, we worked alongside LGBTQIA+ young people living in deprived areas of England, to find out how physical activity could be more joyful, safe and inclusive.

Keywords: Young People, Inequalities, LGBTQIA+, Physical Activity, Health and Wellbeing, Physical Education.



Key policy implications

Encourage and support influential adults e.g., physical education (PE) teachers, youth workers, charity workers, sports coaches, providers and anyone else passionate about making positive change to young people's participation in physical activity to:

1. Consider what physical activity means to different people
2. Enquire what might need to change to make a physical activity space (indoor or outdoor) more welcoming, inclusive and safe – changes might be quick and simple!
3. Engage in training opportunities e.g., on diverse gender identities

Find out more

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We gratefully acknowledge the work of all of the young people and youth workers who co-produced findings within this project.

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Key findings

For young people's well-being, it is vital we listen to them about how physical activity spaces can be made more welcoming, safe and inclusive.

What we discovered is:

1. Physical activity can be something simple as walking into a room, dancing, or even brushing your teeth! Using the term 'movement' maybe less off-putting
2. We need to raise conversations about physical activity or movement with young people, as recognising and acknowledging some of the challenges they may experience can empower them to think differently.
3. Change need not be complex or costly e.g., using vibrant colours, welcome messages, considering instructions and clothing rules, offering a quiet space.



More information

- Project Page: [‘Physical activity insecurity’ as experienced by LGBTQ+ children and young people living with deprivation](#)
- Practical Guide: [Moving Spaces Guide](#)
- Zine: [Moving Spaces](#)
- Blogs: [Zine made by LGBTQ+ young people explores how to create joyful and safe spaces for physical activity](#) and [Our experience co-producing a zine as a research output](#)

“This project helped to reframe the idea of what physical activity spaces could look like. If people listened more to young people and allowed themselves to be educated by our lived experiences, it would have a huge impact on how we can design and use physical activity spaces.”

Ruby Chandler, Youth Worker and young person (Children and Young People's Empowerment Project).