



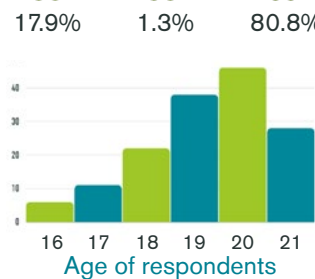
# ME & ACTIVITY

How do young people across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight feel about physical activity?

# Research snapshot

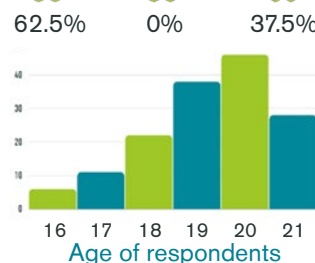
Energise Me commissioned Beatfreeks to find out how young people across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight feel about physical activity.

**151** YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16-21 YEARS COMPLETED DIGITAL SURVEYS



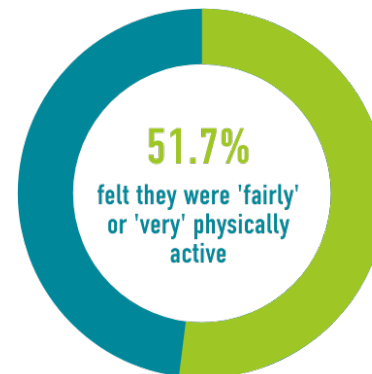
**2** FOCUS GROUPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16-21 YEARS WERE HELD TO UNPACK THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

We recruited participants through referrals from youth organisations and social media adverts as well as inviting survey respondents to take part. The focus groups lasted approximately 90 minutes each and were conducted via Zoom in January 2021. The focus groups gave young people the opportunity to discuss their ideas for increasing youth engagement with physical activity across their communities.



We wanted to hear from young people directly, rather than listening to opinions filtered through coaches, activity leaders or industry stakeholders. As such, the Beatfreeks team reached out to young people.

OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO TOOK PART:



Many young people also made positive correlations between being active and improving their mental health.

OUR 5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

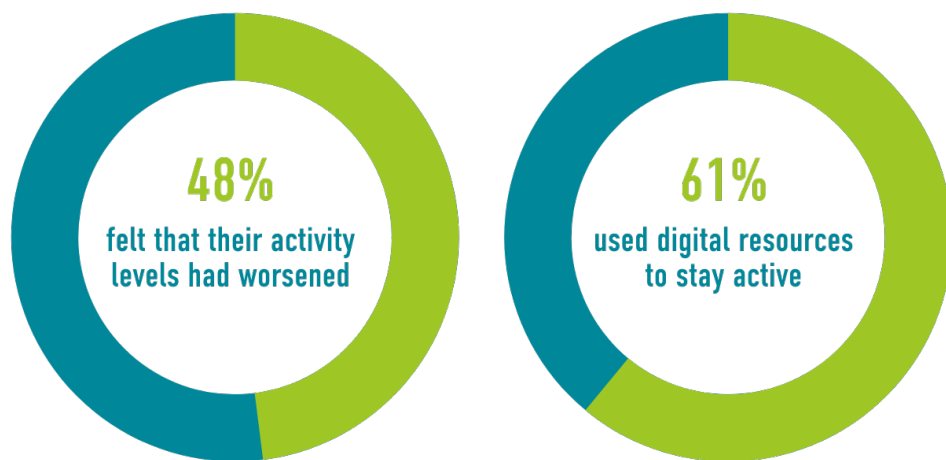
1. How do young people feel about physical activity?
2. What kind of relationship did young people have with physical activity prior to the pandemic?
3. How has the pandemic affected the way young people stay active?
4. How do young people engage with digital platforms which support physical activity?
5. How do young people envision their future regarding physical activity once restrictions are lifted?

Ultimately, this research sought to give young people a space to discuss their relationship to physical activity, their personal experiences of being active, and their vision for both their personal futures, as well as the future of their community. We hope this report will help inform discussions around the physical activity and wellbeing of young people.

# Covid-19 context

This research is particularly timely given the current COVID-19 pandemic, which has drastically re-shaped the way in which the world operates. Given the current national and global restrictions and the subsequent limitations regarding the movement of people, finding ways to stay active has been a significant challenge for young people.

We wanted to explore the impact that this pandemic has had on young people's lives and the ways in which it has shifted their behaviours and attitudes towards physical activity.



Approximately 48% of young people felt that their relationship with physical activity had worsened. The report outlines their feelings, using their own words to describe the range of emotions this has caused.

This research also discovered that 61.5% of young people used digital resources to stay active throughout the pandemic, with YouTube being by far the most popular digital platform.





# Key findings

Through the analysis of focus group discussions and survey data, the Beatfreeks team generated key insights into the experiences, practices and desires of young people in relation to physical activity.

Exploring how young people feel about physical activity

Physical activity and mental health

Engagement pre-pandemic

Motivations and barriers

Impact of the pandemic

Engagement with digital resources

What young people want for their future

# Recommendations

Based on the research, Beatfreeks made six recommendations. These are designed to provide guidance on how best to improve young people's engagement with physical activity.

Focus on accessibility

Weigh the benefits of investing in digital resources

Hold frequent consultations with young people

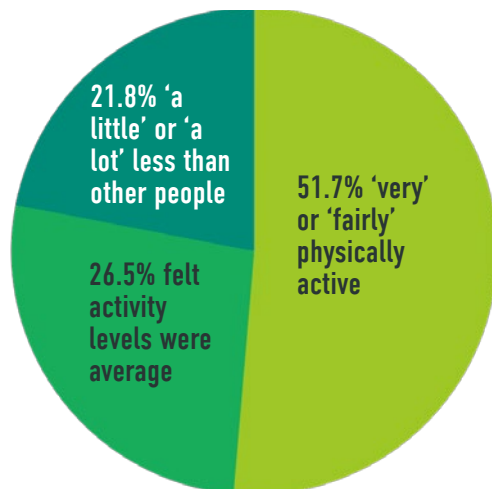
Celebrate the relationship between physical activity and mental health

Offer free or subsidised activities in conjunction with paid programmes

Invest in tackling the underlying issue of motivation

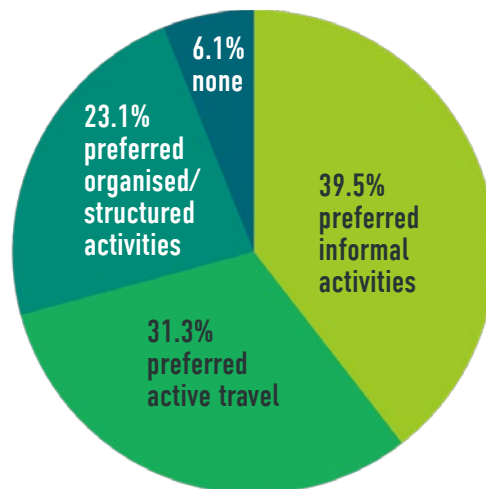
# Exploring how young people feel...

## ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITY LEVELS



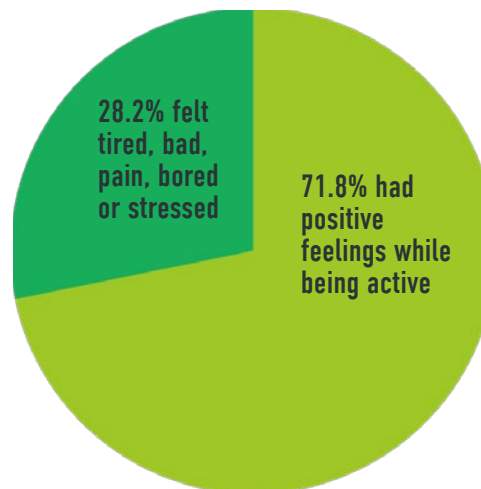
We asked young people how they would describe their level of physical activity. 51.7% felt that they were either 'very' or 'fairly physically active'. 26.5% felt that their activity levels were average and 21.8% perceived their activity levels to be either 'a little' or 'a lot' less than other people.

## ABOUT TYPES OF ACTIVITY



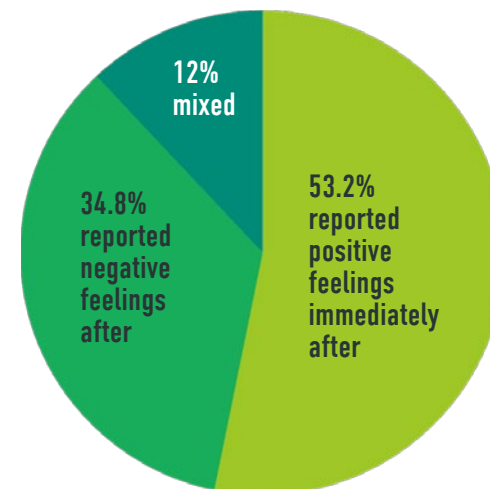
39.5% preferred informal activities e.g. going to the gym, playing in the park or dancing in a club. 31.3% preferred active travel e.g. walking or cycling to college or work. 23.1% preferred organised/structured activities e.g. sports clubs, leagues, groups or classes. 6.1% preferred not to be physically active.

## WHILE BEING ACTIVE



71.8% had positive feelings while being active, saying they felt good, happy, energised, motivated, powerful, confident and strong. For the remaining 28.2%, the feelings they identified included descriptions such as tired, bad, pain, bored, and stressed.

## AFTER BEING ACTIVE



While 71.8% felt positive during the activity, only 53.2% reported positive feeling immediately after engaging in physical activity. 34.8% expressed emotions relating to feeling tired, achy and sore post-activity. The final 12% had a mixture of both positive and negative emotions e.g. feeling tired yet proud.



# Physical activity and mental health

In the focus groups, we explored how young people felt about physical activity in more depth. In discussions around the value of staying active, one theme that kept recurring was the importance of physical activity in improving mental health. The focus group participants largely agreed that being physically active and, more specifically, engaging in outdoor activities helped improve their moods and mental states. One participant who has struggled tremendously with her mental health and had been previously admitted to a mental health facility, bravely shared how important running has become in managing her mental health. She explained:

**“I don’t have great mental health personally. So it’s a good way to regulate it without more meds. So it’s quite nice to get out, refresh yourself, take your mind off everything...I know a lot of people with the same kind of problems as me. And I think we can all agree it is so important not to just isolate yourself, not shut yourself away because it’s hard to get out when you feel like that. Sometimes you’re so down, you can’t leave your bed, you can’t do anything... Sometimes it’s good because you go out, and you’re in a new environment, and it just gives you time to block things and clear your mind. And it’s not a magic cure for your problems. But it’s certainly helpful. And I’ve become quite reliant on that over the past few weeks...”** - Female, 17 years old

Even among focus group members who did not indicate struggles with their mental health, activities such as ‘walking outside’ were almost unanimously popular. This must of course be considered within the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, where national restrictions have limited or temporarily prevented group and/or organised physical activity. Still, the young people we spoke with agreed that being active outdoors not only provided a change of scenery, but offered the opportunity to interact with friends (while socially distancing), both of which had a positive impact on their mental health.





**“I don’t have great mental health personally. So it’s a good way to regulate it without more meds.”**

**Research Participant**

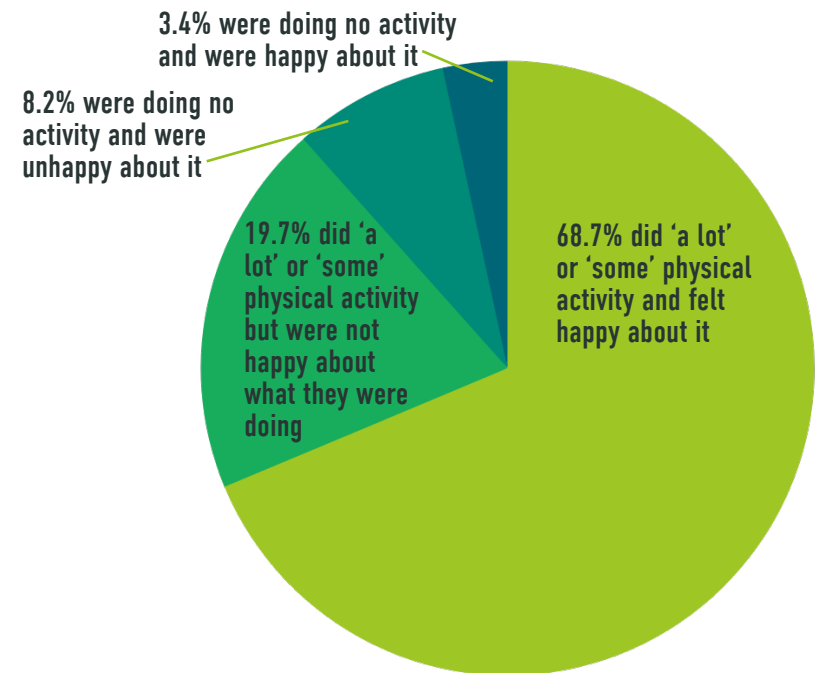


# Engagement pre-pandemic

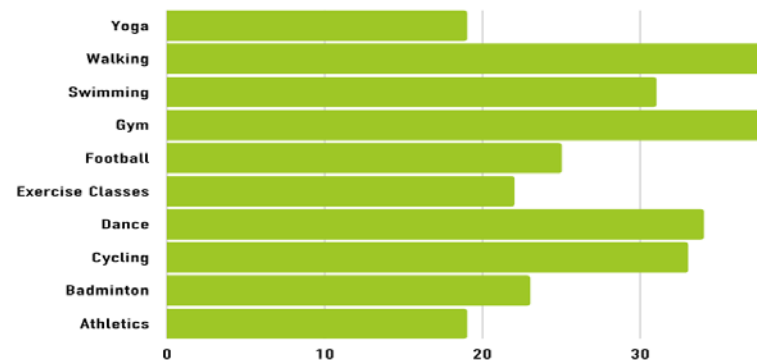
The survey asked young people to consider their levels of physical activity over 2019, prior to the pandemic and the current restrictions on physical activity and movement. Of those who responded, the vast majority (**68.7%**) said that they engaged in either **'a lot of physical activity'** or **'some physical activity'** and felt happy about it.

However, approximately **19.7%** of those who responded said that they engaged in either **'a lot of physical activity'** or **'some physical activity'**, but they were not happy about what they were doing. These figures indicate that while the majority of young people were satisfied with both their level of activity and the types of activities they were engaged with, there were many who did not enjoy their current exercise regimes.

Only a small percentage of young people said they engaged in no physical activity. **8.2%** of those who responded said they **did no physical activity** and that **they weren't happy about their lack of movement**. **3.4%** said they **did no physical activity at all but they felt happy about their lack of physical activity**.



## WHAT ACTIVITIES DID YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE PART IN?



The most popular physical activities for young people across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight included walking, going to the gym, dance, cycling and football.

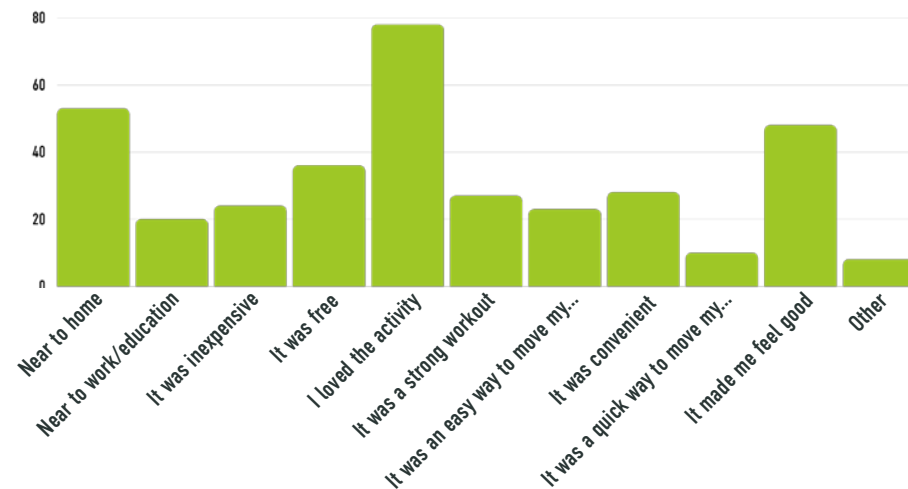
Other popular activities included horseback riding, netball, crossfit, skateboarding, gymnastics, tennis and basketball.



# Motivations and barriers

## What motivates young people when picking physical activities?

We asked young people what were their primary motivations when selecting a form of physical activity. Each person was asked to choose their top three reasons and their choices are reflected below:



As evidenced above, where young people are concerned, the most important factor in selecting an activity was a genuine love for the activity. This was closely followed by the proximity of the activity to the young person's home and whether the activity made them feel good. Less influential factors included the cost of the activity, convenience and whether the activity constituted a strong or easy workout.

**“The most important factor in selecting an activity was a genuine love for the activity.”**

Beatfreeks

## What barriers hamper young people's physical activity?

One of the most important parts of this research was determining what barriers young people face when trying to engage in physical activity. The vast majority of responses indicated that the most significant barrier for young people was a lack of motivation to be active. This sentiment was echoed in the focus groups, where young people spoke about feeling stuck and not having the impulse to exercise or move, especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

**“It's hard to find the inspiration to do things that you might normally enjoy doing.”**

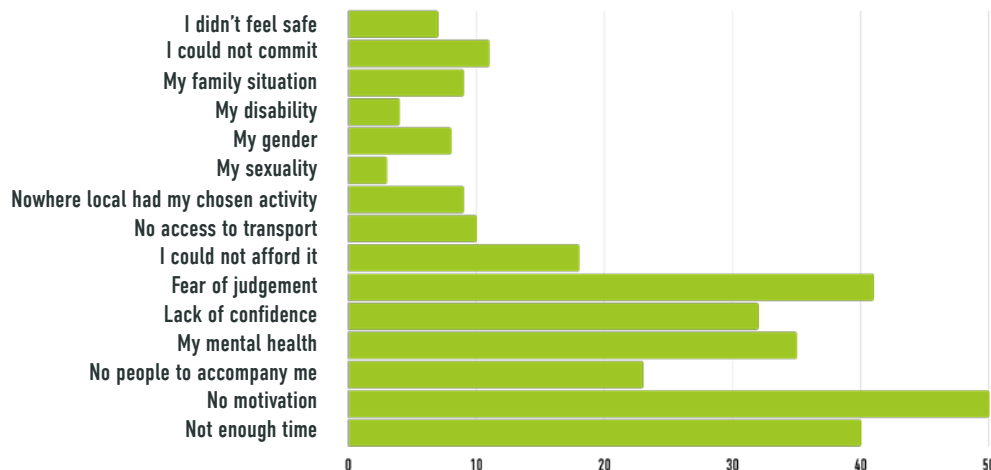
Female, 16

Apart from motivation, the second greatest barrier for young people was a fear of judgement. As such, people opted out of physical activity in an effort to spare themselves any embarrassment that they thought may be directed their way.

**“Apart from motivation, the second greatest barrier for young people was a fear of judgement.”**

Beatfreeks

Interestingly, a lack of confidence also played a significant, although lesser role in preventing young people from engaging in physical activity.



Young people also reported that they simply did not have time to be as active as they would like to be. A significant number also indicated that their mental health prevented them from being active. This is quite interesting because, as previously discussed in this report, in focus group consultations, participants reported that physical activity plays a huge role in improving their overall mental health.

**“A significant number also indicated that their mental health prevented them from being active.”**

**Beatfrees**

Another popular response when asked about barriers to being active was “I didn’t have people around me to be active with”. This indicates that for a lot of young people, physical activity is more enjoyable when it is framed as a group activity or something they can do with a friend or friends. This idea was also raised in the focus groups where participants spoke about enjoying group activities such as football or walking with their friends. This social element to physical activity and the longing for a sense of community is insight that can be used to help shape future programmes for young people.





**“It’s like you’re generally discouraged if you’re alone to do sport and activity, but when you’re with other people - they push you forward and everything.”**

**Research Participant**



# Impact of the Pandemic

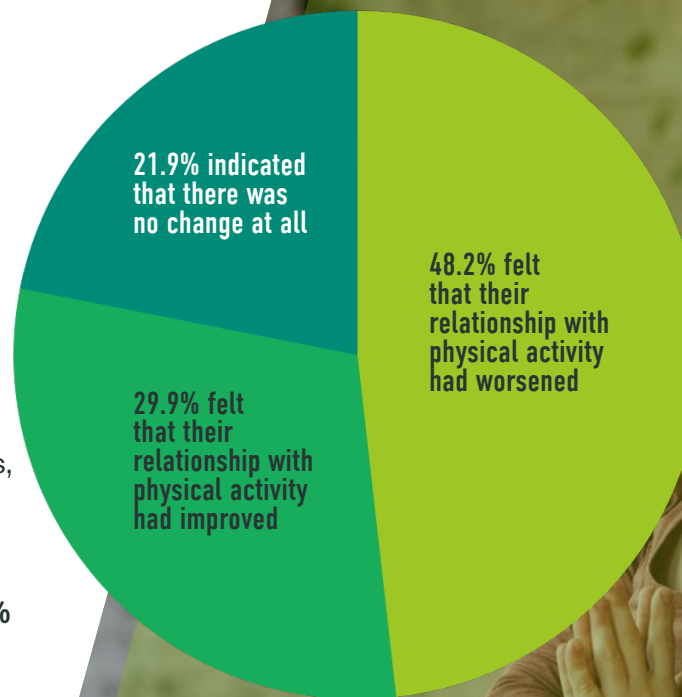
## How has young people's relationship with physical activity changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

One of the core aims of this survey was to explore how the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped physical activity. When we asked young people "Has the physical activity you take part in now changed since the restrictions?", of the young people who responded, **78.1% indicated that there were changes**, while **21.9% said there was no change at all**.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK government has encouraged the public to engage in one form of exercise a day (e.g. walking, cycling and running) either in isolation or with members of their household. In light of this, we asked young people how their overall relationship with physical activity had changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of those who responded (**48.2%**) felt that their **relationship with physical activity has worsened** since COVID-19 restrictions have been put in place. Only **29.9% felt that their relationship with physical activity had improved**, while **21.9% indicated** that there was **no change at all**.

## What new activities have young people adopted during lockdown?

We also asked young people what activities they engaged in during lockdown that they did not engage in prior to the pandemic's restrictions. While approximately 25.6% said that they had not adopted any new activities, many had in fact tried new ways to stay active, with walking being the most popular activity, followed by yoga, exercise classes and/or aerobics and the gym.





## How do young people feel about the changes to their physical activity regimes?

The majority of young people had negative emotions and vividly described the situation as sad, annoying, aggravating, disappointing and disheartening.

“It’s sad not being able to do something I love and have done most of my life.”

“I’m not happy because those activities made me feel good.”

“I would like to go back to how things were.”

“I wish I could do more exercise with friends.”

“I feel I am less sociable, which will impact how I interact with people after restrictions are lifted.”

“It has affected my mental health.”

“I feel a little defeated. I have no motivation to get moving as I don’t have to ‘keep up appearances’ as I can’t have any social interactions.”

However, there were also a few young people who had adopted a positive outlook where the ‘new normal’ was concerned. Several of those surveyed were able to recognise and articulate positive outcomes from changing the way they moved:

“I feel like they have taken away something important in my life, but I have learnt to manage this by picking up other hobbies in the meantime.”

“I am happy to be trying new types of exercise that I wouldn’t have tried before the pandemic, but I miss my exercise classes.”

“I am happy to be outside doing physical activity.”

“It’s OK, as I can still do one thing that I love doing.”

In spite of the hardships that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought and the stringent limitations that have now been placed on their lives, many young people proved to be resilient and capable of finding positive outcomes during such a difficult year.



“I feel like they have taken away something important in my life, but I have learnt to manage this by picking up other hobbies in the meantime.”

Research participant



**“It’s sad not  
being able to do  
something I love  
and have done  
most of my life.”**

**Research Participant**

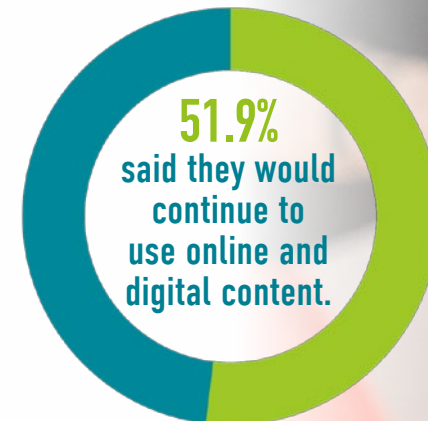




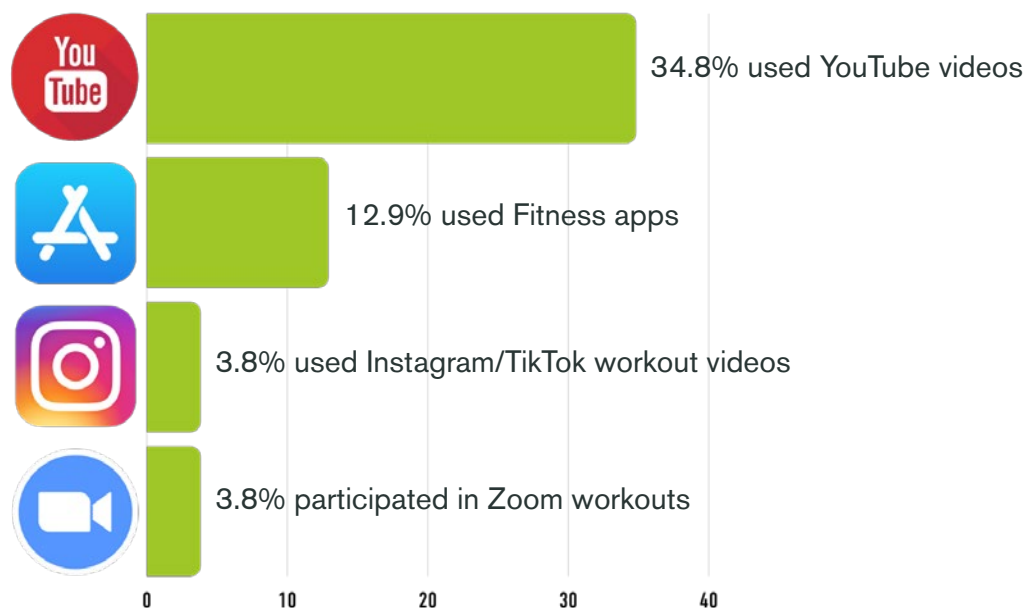
# Engagement with digital resources

## Reviewing young people's engagement with digital resources

Given the national restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were interested in whether there was a move towards engaging with online/digital content to stay active. When asked, 38.5% said they have not used any digital resources to support their physical activity. However, 61.5% of those who responded said they have used digital resources to help stay active.



## What digital resources did young people use to stay active?



YouTube videos were the most popular digital tool that young people used to stay active. Fitness apps were also fairly popular among those who completed this survey and in the focus groups, several participants also revealed that they had used fitness tracking apps as they found them to be quite beneficial. Additionally, in the focus group exercise called 'Keep and Ditch', the participants in both focus groups collectively agreed that digital resources such as **'PE with Joe Wicks'**, free online videos such as **'Yoga with Adrienne'** and the **'Couch to 5K' app should all be 'kept'**, as they are all valuable and affordable resources which have proven particularly useful during the pandemic lockdowns.

Interestingly, when asked if they intended to continue to use online and digital content after restrictions are lifted, of those who responded via survey 51.9% said yes and 48.1% said no.





# What young people want from their futures

## What do young people intend to do post-pandemic?

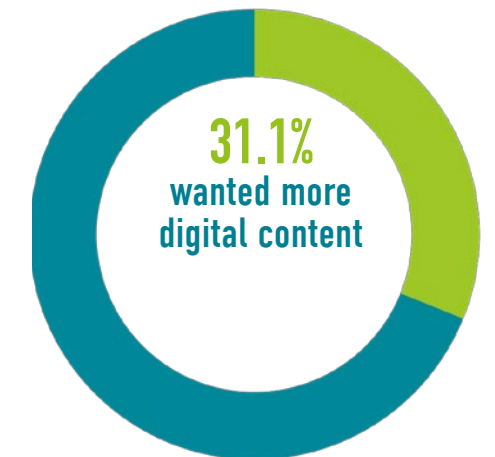
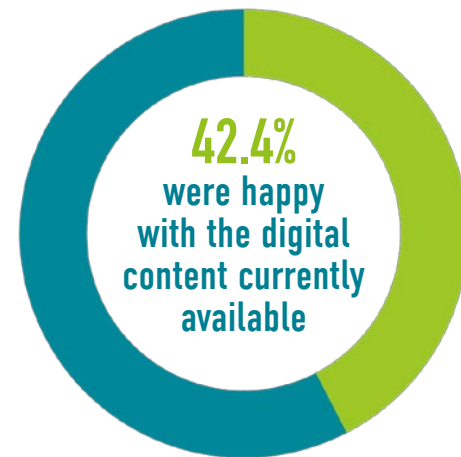
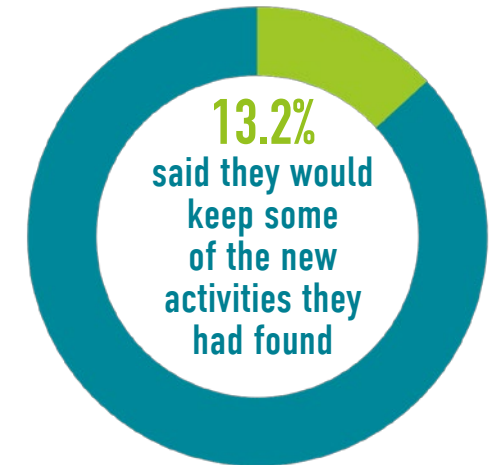
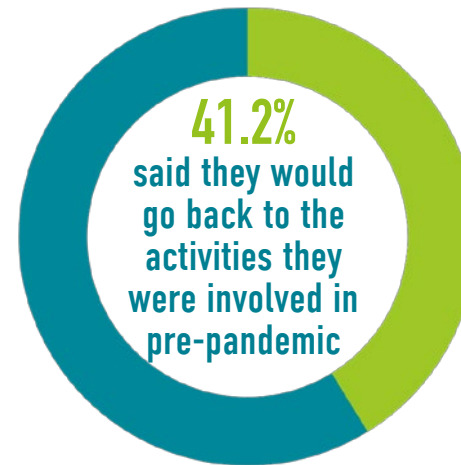
Within the survey, we asked young people what their plans were for when restrictions are eventually lifted. **41.2%** of those who responded said they **would go back to engaging in the same activities** they were involved in prior to the pandemic. Similarly, an additional **13.2%** said they **would keep some of the new activities** they had found during the pandemic, while also returning to their past forms of physical activity. Within the focus groups, participants were particularly keen to discuss their plans for post-pandemic activity, excitedly talking about heading back to the gym, going horseback riding and playing community sports like football with their friends.

“Within the focus groups, participants were keen to discuss their plans for post-pandemic activity, excitedly talking about heading back to the gym, going horseback riding and playing community sports.”

Beatfreeks

## Are young people interested in more digital content?

When asked if they had an appetite for more digital/online ways of moving in the future, 42.4% of those who responded said they were happy with what was currently available and 31.1% said they wanted more. The remaining 26.5% of those who responded said they were indifferent.



## The 'Three wishes' exercise

During the survey, the young people were asked to describe their top three wishes regarding physical activity. They were given free rein to include anything that came to mind, with absolutely no limitations. They wanted:

### Improved performance levels

A large number of young people wished for improved physical performance. They wanted to be fitter, run faster, lift heavier weights and generally be stronger individuals.

### Increased motivation

A large number of young people wanted to be more motivated to be active and to be able to push themselves to engage in more physical activities.

### Improved aesthetics

As expected, several young people wanted to improve their physical aesthetics, which they described with terms such as losing weight and increasing muscle mass.

### To enjoy the process of being active more

A number of young people wanted to enjoy the activities they partook in more, versus feeling like they have to drag themselves through an activity. They also wanted to feel better post-exercise as opposed to feeling drained and exhausted.

### To be active with others

A lot of young people wanted to resume communal activities when the pandemic restrictions have ended e.g. going to group classes or to the gym with friends.

### More affordable activities

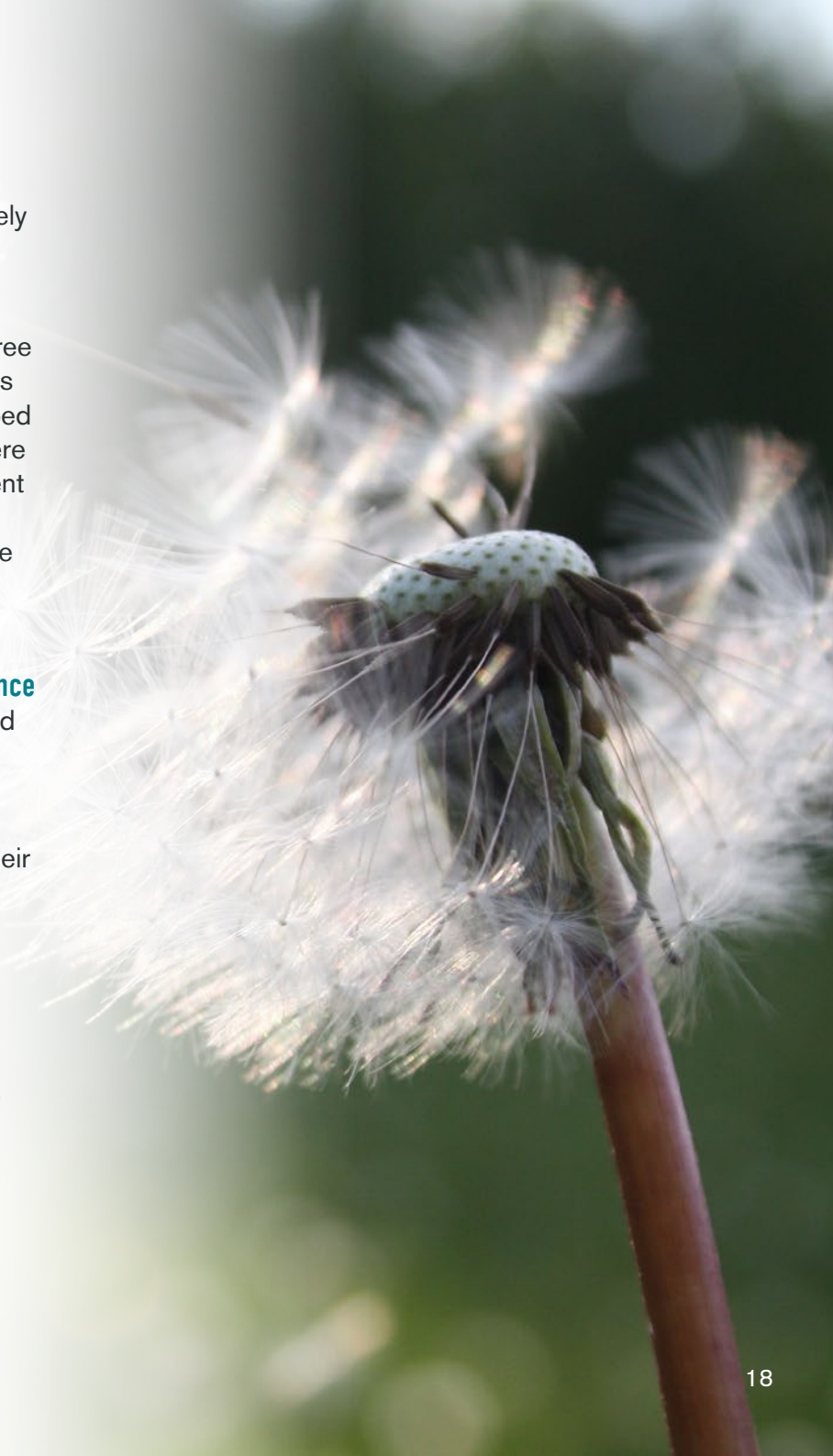
There was a consistent focus on getting free or inexpensive activities, gym memberships and equipment. This desire was also echoed in the focus groups where participants were keen to incorporate outdoor gym equipment and schemes that provided equipment for schools, so that children and young people would have access to these resources regardless of their financial situations.

### To overcome insecurities and build confidence

A lot of people mentioned that they wanted to feel better about themselves and their bodies. They also wanted to feel more confident while working out and not be anxious about people judging them and their bodies.

### Improved mental health

Several young people said they wanted to continue to use physical activity to help manage their mental health, as their experiences have proven that being active improved their mental state.





# Designing the future

One of the aims of this research was to discover what young people wanted for their future. To this end, we asked young people to describe their visions for the future of their communities, where physical activity was concerned. While of course everyone had their own unique vision, there were four common themes that appeared throughout their responses: variety, communal events, acceptance and accessibility.

**Variety**

**Communal  
events**

**Acceptance**

**Accessibility**

## Variety

In discussing what physical activities young people wanted in their community, it became evident that there was not so much a desire for specific activities, but rather a desire for a variety of activities at their disposal. When given the opportunity to discuss their hopes for their community, many of them spoke about wanting a diverse range of activities:

**“I would like my community to put more time and money into providing a larger variety of exercise options for everyone.”**

**Research participant**

“There needs to be more availability to different activities, not just basic gyms.”

“Since more and more people have started exercising due to Covid I envision more exercise opportunities for everyone after lockdown.”

“I would love an ice rink nearby to encourage a different type of exercise.”

“More free opportunities for physical activity, no expensive gym memberships.”

**“I hope my community becomes a better hub for exercise by offering more space for outdoor exercise and better indoor classes.”**

**Research participant**

Young people want the opportunity to try different things and be able to immerse themselves in various activities versus committing themselves to a singular form of exercise. Interestingly, the same desire for diversity was exhibited in the focus groups when participants were tasked with creating their own plan for their communities. The group's plans included a vast range of initiatives and activities aimed at providing the community with an abundance of choice, while making sure the activities could be accessed by the largest number of people. Their choices included building an outdoor gym, providing healthy cooking classes, offering yoga classes for parents, starting football clubs and swimming clubs and increasing street lighting for those who liked to exercise outdoors. It is evident that understanding this desire for diversity and young people's passion for versatility is an important part of designing physical activity programmes that are meant to engage the youth.





## Communal events

Another common thread that ran through several of the suggestions for the community, was the need for more communal events. This may have been sparked by the current national restrictions which limit social interaction, still many young people simply wanted to be able to engage in physical activities with other people. When asked about their hopes for the future, these were some of the responses:

**“I’d love for more people to get involved in exercise classes as it can be such a great way to socialise and move your body at the same time.”**

**Research participant.**

“To have everyone back to being active all together in a safe and acceptable way.”

“I hope that physical activity does not all end up online and rather more classes open up.”

“I hope there is more community based activities that teach people how to participate better and with others.”

“More local teams.”

“More team games.”

**“For young people, staying active is not simply about being fit, but it is also a large part of their social landscape, allowing them to connect with each other and build their social networks.”**

**Beatfreeks**

It is evident that among young people there is a strong desire for socialisation, group activity and a sense of community. For young people, staying active is not simply about being fit, but it is also a large part of their social landscape, allowing them to connect with each other and build their social networks. Understanding the importance of this social element of physical activity is paramount for stakeholders who want to create an initiative that will appeal to young people and attract engagement.





## Acceptance

In discussing their hopes for the future, the third issue that was repeatedly raised was that of acceptance. For a lot of young people engaging in physical activity created a sense of anxiety because they felt like they were being judged by others while being active. As such, some of their hopes for the community centred on the ideal of finally being accepted:

**“I want it to be more welcoming and not intimidating, there’s a lot of pressure to seem knowledgeable of fitness when you first start. I also want there to be chats about exercise you can do at home, and where they work etc.”**

**Research participant**

“More acceptance for every body type or mindset.”

“A supportive community that helps each other, that is non-toxic.”

“I want to see elderly outside exercising without being laughed at.”

“Wider access and inclusivity, not making anyone feel they are not suitable for a form of exercise.”

**“If more young people are to engage in physical activity, then they need to feel confident that they are not going to be judged based on their physical appearance, level of fitness, disabilities, gender, sexuality and any other personal traits.”**

**Beatfrees**

If more young people are to engage in physical activity, then they need to feel confident that they are not going to be judged based on their physical appearance, level of fitness, disabilities, gender, sexuality and any other personal traits. As such, industry stakeholders need to work towards ensuring a culture of acceptance is nurtured, so as to create spaces where young people feel confident to participate.





## Accessibility

Another theme that was prevalent in the discussion around the future of their communities was the idea of accessibility. For young people across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, accessibility had a broad definition encompassing diversity (so that everyone has an opportunity to find an activity that appeals to them), affordability (so that low-income residents can stay active) and inclusivity (so that all genders and bodies are welcome).

This notion of accessibility was also explored in the focus groups when developing plans for their communities, as the participants were very intentional with picking activities that would reach the largest cross section of people.

They also explored the idea of training for activity leaders in the areas of mental health, disability and LGBTQ+ discrimination awareness, so that every neighbourhood would have leaders who could help foster a climate of inclusivity.

This commitment to accessibility is a value that holds great importance for young people and stakeholders need to recognise this and respond to it if they wish to increase their youth engagement.

**“Commitment to accessibility is a value that holds great importance for young people and stakeholders need to recognise this and respond to it if they wish to increase their youth engagement.”**

**Beatfrees**





**“I hope there is more community based activities that teach people how to participate better and with others.”**

**Research Participant**





# Conclusions

This report explored the views, perceptions and practices of the young people of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, in relation to physical activity. Through the use of a wide-ranging survey and intimate focus groups, the research was able to examine how young people feel about physical activity and how they like to stay active. The research was also able to delve into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has changed the way in which young people engage with physical activity. Most importantly, the research was also able to give young people a platform to express their visions for the future not only of their physical activity, but for their entire community.

This report concluded that the respondents across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight do have a positive relationship with physical activity, with the majority considering themselves to be active individuals. The research also showed that young people expressed positive emotions while engaging in physical activity and they were aware of the impact that activity had on their mental health. The research also discussed which activities are most popular amongst young people and determined that young people choose activities which they truly enjoy or which are in close proximity to their homes. The research also showed that for young people, the biggest barriers to activity were motivation, time and not having friends to engage in activities with them.

The report also concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the way in which young people could stay active. It showed that a lot of young people were disenchanted with the restrictions on movement and their inability to participate in activities which they enjoyed. It also explored which digital resources young people employ to stay active, demonstrating that YouTube videos were the most popular medium for Hampshire and Isle of Wight youths.

The research was also able to explore the hopes that young people had for their futures and the future of their communities. It demonstrated that young people wanted to improve their physical performance, improve the way they felt about themselves and their bodies and enjoy being active more with their friends. The research also showed that young people wanted more variety, acceptance, accessibility and communal events within their respective communities.

In light of the insights presented in this report, the following pages offer a number of recommendations that may provide guidance for industry stakeholders who are interested in improving young people's engagement with physical activity. These recommendations include calls to:

- Focus on accessibility
- Weigh the benefits of investing in digital resources
- Hold frequent consultations with young people
- Celebrate the relationship between physical activity and mental health
- Offer free or subsidised activities in conjunction with paid programmes
- Invest in tackling the underlying issue of motivation.

Ultimately, it is hoped that this research has given young people the opportunity to use their voice and play a part in designing the framework for physical activity across their communities. Their vision for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, as a region where physical activity is diverse, inclusive and accessible is truly exemplary and it is now the responsibility of industry stakeholders to work in tandem with young people in order to see this vision realised.

# Recommendations

## FOCUS ON ACCESSIBILITY

As evidenced in this report, one of the most important themes young people raised repeatedly was accessibility. When the term was used, it not only referred to accessibility in a traditional sense as relates to disabilities, but as a broader term referring to whether everyone in the community could reasonably access the provisions. When asked to devise their own plans, young people focused on creating free initiatives, offering subsidies, creating gender neutral changing rooms and building infrastructure like lights to make women feel more comfortable, all in an effort to ensure that activities and resources are fully inclusive and everyone had access. This commitment to accessibility should be mirrored by all organisations whose aims include high youth engagement.

## WEIGH THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL RESOURCES

As discussed in the report, where physical activity is concerned, most young people gravitate towards in-person activities versus using digital resources. However, where digital content is concerned, video formats via platforms like YouTube were the most popular among the Hampshire and Isle of Wight youth. Given the volume of free digital content currently available on such platforms, stakeholders need to determine if it makes sense to create additional content to compete in an oversaturated market. It may prove more beneficial to invest resources elsewhere and signpost young people to existing digital content, especially as most young people have indicated that they intend to resume communal/in-person activity once restrictions are lifted.

## HOLD FREQUENT CONSULTATIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Throughout this research, it became very clear that young people have very strong opinions regarding which initiatives they would like to see developed in their communities. The data gathered from the survey questions explicitly asking what they would wish for their community, as well as the focus group discussions and activities around building a plan for their communities, prove that young people have a lot of ideas about what would work best for them. As such, it is recommended that a series of workshops and focus group consultations be held in order to give young people a platform to offer suggestions around improving current initiatives and voice their desires regarding the implementation of new activities.

It is also imperative that an ethos of co-production is embedded into regional work, thereby ensuring the youth voice is recognised, and young people are involved in design, planning and decision-making. Furthermore, industry stakeholders need to collaborate more and share their learnings, so as to avoid over-consultation or duplication of their efforts.





## CELEBRATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

While conducting this research, the role that physical activity played in relation to improving mental health was a theme that was repeatedly mentioned. A lot of young people were very aware of the relationship between physical activity and their mental health. Meanwhile, others who did not explicitly explore this relationship often alluded to it when they offered statements along the lines of “working out makes me feel good”. The relationship between being active and improving one’s mental health is obviously important to young people and as such it should be an important part of the strategic planning for industry stakeholders, particularly in relation to the ways in which stakeholders engage with and communicate with young people.

## OFFER FREE OR SUBSIDISED ACTIVITIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH PAID PROGRAMMES

This research has indicated that the cost of activities could present a barrier for young people, particularly those who do not have any income and come from lower socio-economic groups. As such, offering free or subsidised activities can increase engagement and give those with no access to funding an opportunity to remain physically active. This is particularly important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic which has had a disproportionate impact on young people with reports indicating that half of 16 to 24-year-olds were furloughed during the first three months of the UK’s lockdown.

## INVEST IN TACKLING THE UNDERLYING ISSUE OF MOTIVATION

When discussing their physical activity, a lot of young people highlighted that a lack of motivation hampered their ability to be active. Thus, in order to increase youth engagement in physical activities, the underlying issue of motivation needs to be addressed. Campaigns and outreach initiatives, much like We Are Undefeatable and This Girl Can, which are geared towards energising those who are inactive and encouraging them to start moving are great initiatives that can help address this issue.

**WHAT NEXT?** Ultimately, this research is just one part of a larger mandate to give young people the opportunity to have their voice heard. The project will form a part of the insight used by Energise Me and county-wide partners to develop the next Hampshire and Isle of Wight physical activity strategy.



**“In this report, the vision that young people have outlined for their communities is quite extensive. However, if everyone plays their part and there is an ethos of partnership and collaboration, it can certainly be achieved.”**

**Beatfrees**





The background of the image shows three young women in silhouette, celebrating against a sunset sky. The woman on the left has her arms raised with hands clasped. The woman in the middle is making a peace sign with her right hand. The woman on the right is also making a peace sign with her right hand and has her left hand raised. A large, bright green diagonal overlay covers the left and center of the image, containing the text.

**Let's work with young people to  
make their vision a reality.**

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