

Press release

New independent report reveals surge in number of teenage girls taking up sport.

Media campaigns and recent Olympic success by female athletes may finally be paying off. A new report from CHILDWISE shows that the proportion of girls aged 15-16 taking part in sport at school has risen dramatically since 2015.

Three in four girls this age are now doing some sort of sport at school, with more than half participating in sport both at school and in their own free time, reveals the new independent data from the CHILDWISE Monitor 2017.

In 2015, just half of girls aged 15-16 said that they took part in any sport at school, with two in three doing some sport outside of school, and only two in five doing both sport in and out of school.

“Girls aged 15-16 have always been the group least likely to take part in any sport, at school or outside school, but the news that more of them are now doing sport at school is very encouraging,” says Simon Leggett, Research Director from CHILDWISE.

“Girls this age are the most likely to say they are unhealthy, and most likely to say they are unhappy a lot of the time. So, with more of them now taking part in sport at school, we could hope to see an improvement in their general wellbeing. Early indications show that these measures already appear to be getting better.”

“The positive impact of taking part in sport could help alleviate some of the many pressures felt by girls at this age, including stress about school work, body and self-confidence issues.”

Over the last few years, major media campaigns aimed at girls and women have sought to empower and encourage them in all areas of life, but especially in the areas of sport, keeping fit, and self-esteem / self-image. Notable campaigns include Sport England’s *This Girl Can* as well as *Like a Girl* from Always and the *Be Real* campaign from Dove.

“This year we may be witnessing the impact of many years of campaigning, along with female success at both the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Olympics,” says Simon.

The 2017 CHILDWISE Monitor is a comprehensive annual report looking at five to 16-year-olds’ media consumption, purchasing and social habits as well as key behaviour. Around 2000 children in schools across the United Kingdom completed in-depth online surveys for the report.

Findings of the report also include...

- 74% of girls aged 15-16 take part in sport at school, up from 59% in 2016, and only 50% in 2015 (around two in three girls take part in sport outside of school at each year)
- While the majority of girls aged 15-16 think they are healthy and happy, significant minorities say they are unhealthy (26%), or not happy most of the time (18%)
- The vast majority of girls this age ever feel stressed about school work (92%, including 46% who say they often feel like this), anxious or worried (87%, 17% often), fear they are not good enough (78%, 30% often), or feel they need to lose weight (75%, 41% often)
- Netball is the most popular sport at school for girls age 11-16 with 57% of all girls playing, followed by athletics (45%), badminton (39%) and hockey (35%). Outside school, swimming is most popular in this age group (28%) followed by cycling (20%) and athletics (15%)

CHILDWISE is an independent market research agency specialising in children and young people. CHILDWISE has a programme of published independent research and also conducts research for government agencies, charities, broadcasters, publishers and brands www.childwise.co.uk

The Monitor Report 2017 covers... Tablets and technology; websites and applications; gaming, YouTube; mobile phones; TV viewing; video on demand; music; reading ; children's equipment; money; purchasing; sports & activities; health & wellbeing and social awareness.

Editorial notes: For more information or to interview Simon Leggett please contact Liz Hollis 07880 680302 liz@lizhollis.co.uk CHILDWISE website www.childwise.co.uk