

JOIN OUR JOURNEY

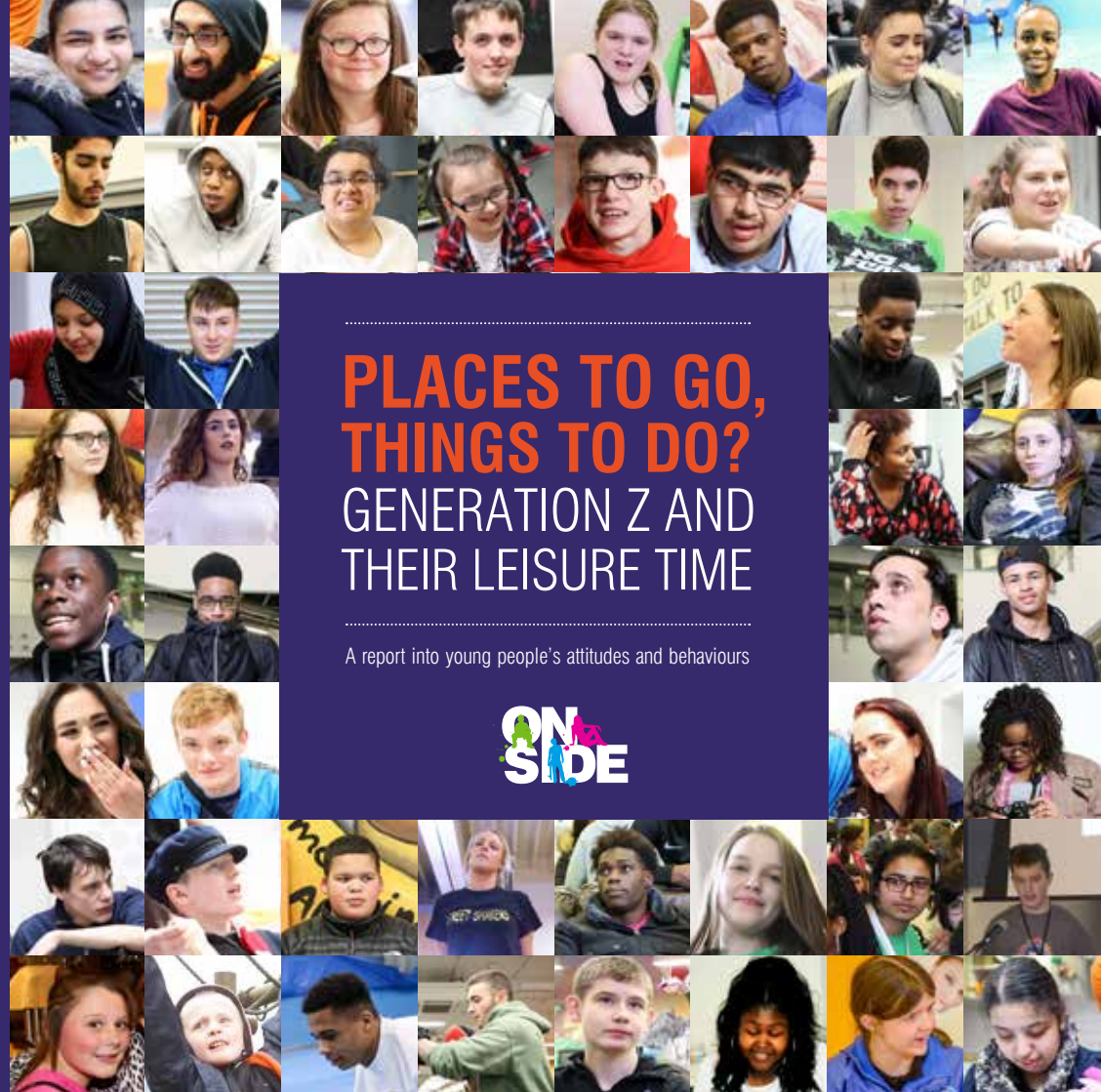
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PLACES TO GO, THINGS TO DO? GENERATION Z AND THEIR LEISURE TIME

A report into young people's attitudes and behaviours



WELCOME

The time spent outside school is a key component in young people's development and can influence all aspects of their lives from health and relationships to confidence and career prospects.

It's particularly relevant to 14-16 year olds who find themselves at a critical juncture in their lives where they are no longer children...but not yet adults.

Often referred to as 'Generation Z', these young people have grown up against a backdrop of rapid technological change and persistent economic uncertainty.

For many, this age is a tipping point. Growing independence generates new pressures and this can be a period where negative influences and behaviour outside school has a lifelong impact on wellbeing and success.

To find out what young people at this stage of their lives think about how they spend their leisure time, we surveyed a representative sample of 14-16 year olds across the UK.

The findings highlight some interesting trends in activities and attitudes which should provide useful insight for those keen to support the aspirations and life-chances of young people.

We feel that as the pace of change quickens, it's important that nobody loses sight of the role leisure time has in developing well-rounded individuals.

As a society we have to make a concerted effort to nurture future generations and support them as they transition to adulthood. This report emphasises the importance of providing safe, affordable and positive environments away from school and the family home.

I hope you find it thought-provoking and encourage you to contact us if you'd like to know more.

Kathryn Morley, CEO of OnSide Youth Zones

ABOUT THE ONSIDE YOUTH ZONES CHARITY

We are creating a UK-wide network of facilities which provide young people with access to a range of sport, arts, health and employability services.

Youth Zones have over 23,000 members making 400,000 visits per year. Our goal is to expand the network to over 100 Youth Zones where we will have the greatest impact.

We've pioneered a diversified funding model which combines public, private and third sector contributions with operating revenue generated by the facilities. Each Youth Zone is an independent charity with its own private sector-led board. This model of local ownership is a key factor in ensuring the financial sustainability of each Youth Zone.



INDOORS & ONLINE

LEISURE HABITS OF 14-16 YEAR OLDS

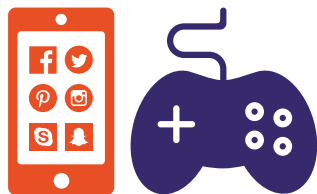
Our survey reveals a reality which many young people and their parents will probably identify with.

The inexorable rise in popularity of online entertainment such as gaming and social media is highlighted in stark terms by our findings:

- Well over half (66%) of young people in this age bracket spend the majority of their leisure time in their bedroom.
- Socialising online was cited as the activity females spend the most time doing (54%), whilst males are most likely to be taking part in gaming online (57%).
- A small proportion spend the majority of their free time playing sports either in a team (14%) or informally (8.5%).
- Only 33.6% spend the majority of their time outside.

It's worrying that so many young people are spending so much of their free time indoors and online.

There are concerns for the long-term impact this could have on physical health and the development of vital interpersonal and communication skills that only 'in-person' socialising can deliver.



NOTHING TO DO

VIEWS ON WHAT'S AVAILABLE

Over the past few decades there's been a dramatic decline in the number of quality and affordable leisure facilities available to young people.

The impact of this trend is underlined by the opinions expressed in our survey:

- A staggering 82% of young people think that their local area offers very little for them to do outside of school.
- When asked what they thought of existing facilities and activities, 38% felt that options were too limited, whilst 29% said they were dated or poor quality and 27% thought they were too expensive.
- Cost is a major factor which limits young people's options, with 71% of 14-16 year olds stating they can't afford to take part in their preferred leisure activities.

The findings suggest that many young people feel there is not much to do in their free time beyond the confines of their bedroom and online interaction.

Whilst it's impossible to cater for all individual preferences, it's clear that much more needs to be done to ensure facilities and activities available to young people in their communities are relevant, high quality, accessible and affordable.



WHAT'S NEEDED?

CAN SOCIETY MEET DEMAND?

Ask a young person what they want and you're likely to get a straight answer.

We used our survey as an opportunity to better understand the challenges facing 14-16 year olds and the expectations they have:

We found that:

- The most common issues young people said they faced were doing well at school/exams (46%), self-image (35%) and family relationships (19%).
- A significant number of those questioned spend the majority of their free time undertaking activities more associated with being an adult, such as working in a part time job (9%) or caring for a family member (8%).
- Worryingly, 20% of those questioned did not feel that they have an adult in their life who they can talk to about their challenges and who listens and believes in them.
- 40% felt that the support provided in their local area doesn't meet their needs outside of education, with 16 year olds most likely to feel this way.

These findings indicate that we could be doing more to support young people by better meeting their needs outside of education.

We've previously studied the positive impact that access to diverse leisure activities has on everything from relationships to attainment. It's clear that investment now will deliver significant long-term benefits for society across a broad range of areas.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

OnSide Youth Zones uses a robust methodology to demonstrate the direct benefits our approach to universal youth provision delivers to communities, local authorities and other public agencies across important areas such as health, crime, education and employment.

This shows that, on average, every £1 spent running a Youth Zone delivers £2 back in benefits to society. The return for the public sector contribution is much higher with £6.65 of societal benefits delivered for every £1 of public money spent.

We believe that our sustainable, community-led approach can help to address many of the issues highlighted in this report and would welcome the opportunity to discuss it further with you.

