

PEER RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



PROJECT SUMMARY

Does free provision of quality gymnastics activities improve the physical health and wellbeing of young participants and families who represent Ealing's diverse Black African and Caribbean communities?

The project aimed to reduce health inequalities by providing free physical activity sessions for young people in Ealing. Over 8 weeks, 16 participants referred through Zebra Sports Ealing HAF Summer Programme 2025 and directly by local headteachers, took part in a structured gymnastics programme.

Each week, participants attended two-hour sessions (totaling 16 hours) at a local W13 venue, where they received free club uniforms, snacks, drinks, water bottles, and progress books. To measure the overall impact and experience, the project used surveys alongside ongoing observation during the delivery phase.

The programme will conclude with a Finale Show in November 2025, celebrating participants' progress and achievements.

INSIGHTS

“ ***The gymnastics club has created [a supportive environment] as you never want to be going into your club scared of the coaches*** ”

“ ***My coaches never looked like me [representation matters and allows you to feel seen and understood]*** ”

“ ***My daughters been asking to go to gymnastics for over a year but logistically we could never make it work*** ”

PROJECT LEARNINGS

- 1 Urgent Need for Physical Activity**
Fewer than 1 in 5 children are meeting recommended physical activity levels (NHS England 2024). This highlights the importance of creating accessible, structured opportunities like our programme.
- 2 Tackling Inequalities in Access**
Significant disparities remain, particularly for Black children (40%) and those from less affluent families (44%), who are less likely to be active (Active Lives Survey 2022–23). Our project shows how free, inclusive programmes can help break down these barriers.
- 3 High Demand and Strong Value for Money**
Our programme reached full capacity within 48 hours, with a waiting list—demonstrating huge local demand. With every £1 spent on sport generating a £4.20 return (Sport England 2021), initiatives like ours deliver clear social and economic value.

88% of participants have NEVER tried gymnastics before

88% of participants would continue weekly attendance if projects were funded

100% of families stated that the healthy snacks, drinks, funded uniform and gymnast progress book provided have had a real impact on their child and family