

Measuring activity levels in England

**An introduction to the
Active Lives surveys
of adults and children
and young people**

June 2023

The Active Lives surveys give a unique and comprehensive view of levels of activity and sports participation in England

- The survey of **adults** was commissioned by Sport England in 2015 as the successor of the Active People survey (2006-2016)
 - Moved to push-to-web methodology
- The survey of **children and young people** (aged 5-15/16) was launched in 2017 as the first study of its kind to collect activity data from children at a large scale



Both surveys are designed to provide a robust picture of activity year-round



Annual responses	c. 180,000	c. 100,000
Data collection	Monthly	Termly
Sampling approach	Random selection from Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF), stratified by Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Random selection of schools within local authorities in England • Sample of years/ classes within schools
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push-to-web survey • Up to two responses permitted per household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey administered in-school • Age-appropriate questionnaires • Additional surveys of teachers (1 per school) and parents of children in years 1 and 2

The surveys capture data across a wide range of measures

Type and amount of physical activity (for children including at school, outside school and travel to school)	Attendance at live sporting events	Attitudes towards physical activity	Swimming proficiency and water safety	Physical literacy and school physical education
Volunteering to support sport	Mental wellbeing, loneliness and social trust	Demographics	Diet	Height, weight, and BMI
Both surveys	Child survey only	Adult survey only	Adult survey only	Adult survey only

The questionnaire captures activity data at a very granular level

Continued 

Q4 Listed below are **sport, fitness and recreation activities** which you may have done within the past 12 months.

Please ✓ *all* activities that you have done within the past 12 months; answering the follow up questions for each activity as appropriate. **Include** activities done informally, socially, casually, for health and fitness, for competition, training or receiving tuition.

	Have you done this activity in the past 12 months? <i>If you haven't please leave the box blank</i>		Have you done this activity in the past 4 weeks? <i>If you haven't please leave the box blank</i>		If you have done this activity during the past 4 weeks could you tell us...			... on how many days you did it?		... the time you usually spent on the activity per day		... if the effort you usually put into the activity was enough to ...	
	Yes ✓		Yes ✓		Days (in past 4 weeks)	Hours (per day)	Minutes (per day)	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Team sports													
Football (includes small sided football)	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cricket (includes nets practice)	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rugby union (includes touch and sevens)	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rugby league (includes touch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Netball	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basketball	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hockey (field)	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Racket sports													
Tennis	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Badminton	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Squash or racketball	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Table tennis	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="checkbox"/>	➔	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have not done any of these activities in the past 12 months

Team sports: Any team sport, including informal activities (for example playing in the garden with your family) can be captured here.

Racket sports: Any racket sport, including informal activities (for example playing in the garden with your family) can be captured here.

Continue 

- The adult survey includes around **200 different activities** and sporting disciplines
- Shown by group and discipline
- A **range of activity metrics** are created:
- Moderate-equivalent minutes
- Twice monthly participation
- Settings

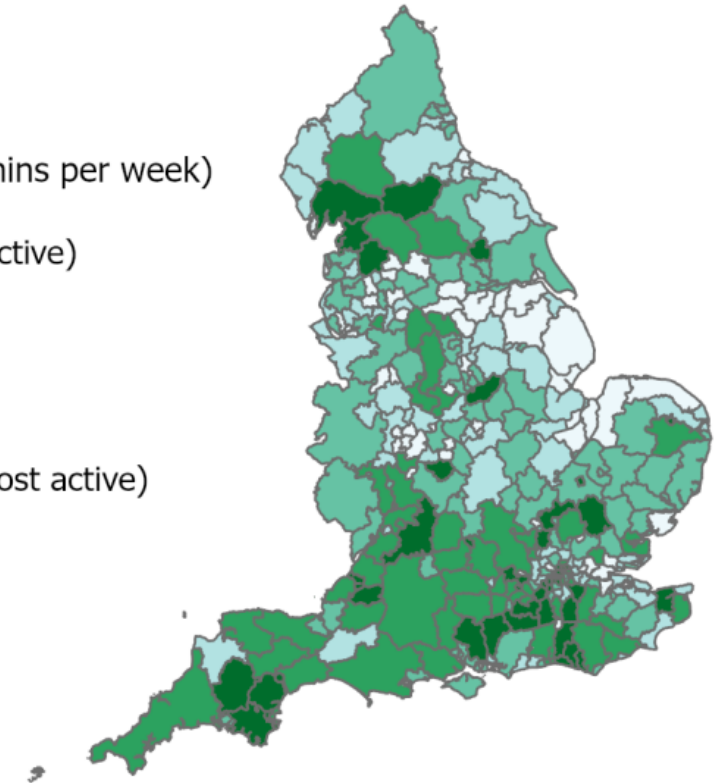
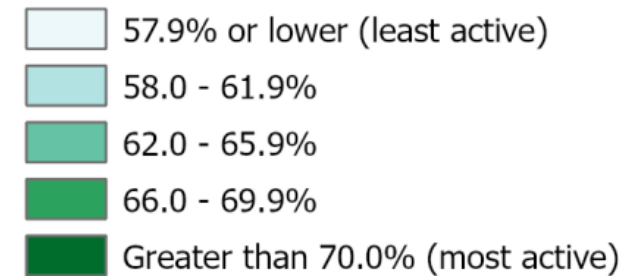
Both surveys are designed to allow analysis at local authority level

Data is published for key measures by:

- Regions
- Active partnerships
- Local authorities
- Local area statistics, e.g. rurality, deprivation (IMD)

Activity across England

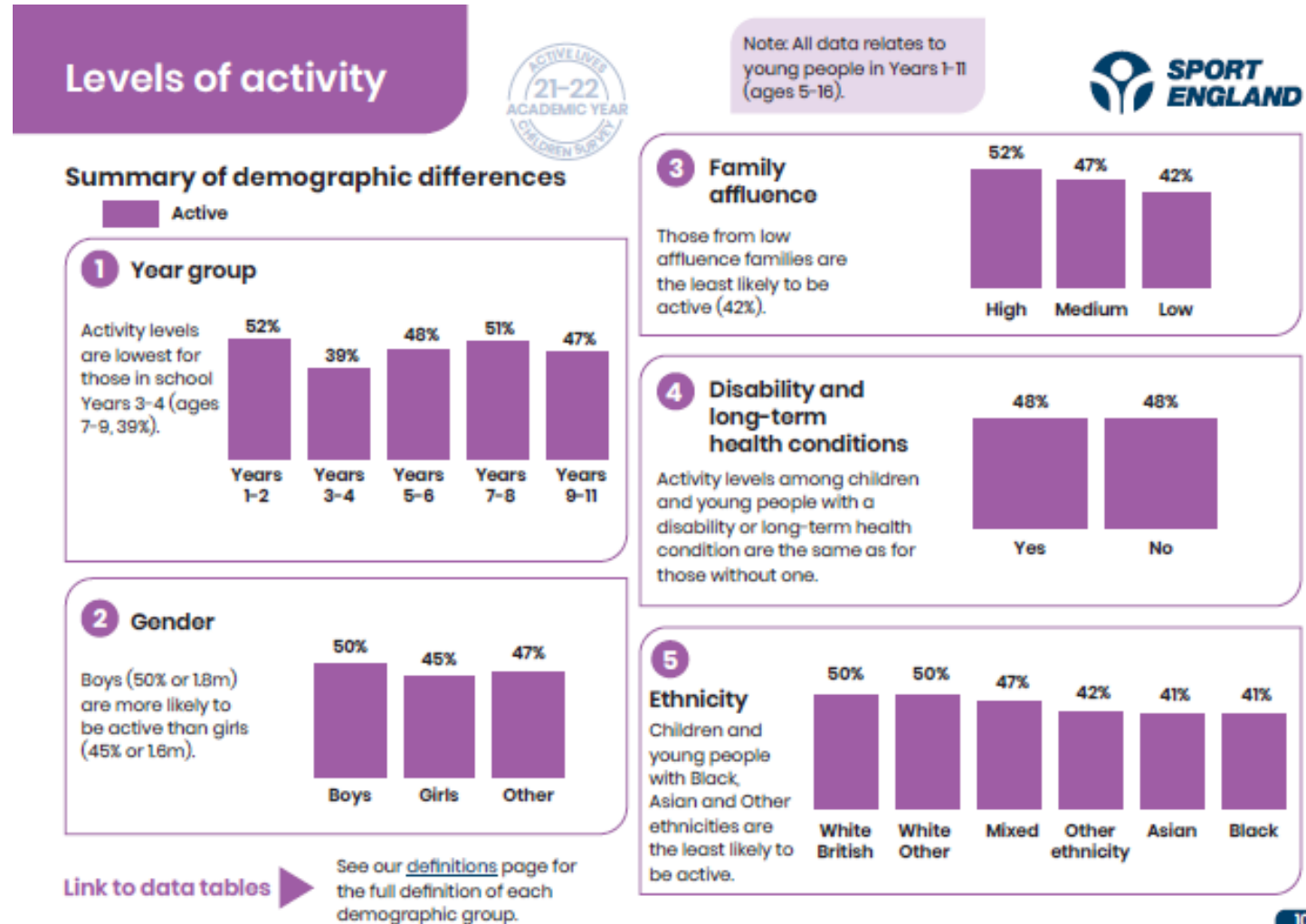
Active
(an average of at least 150 mins per week)



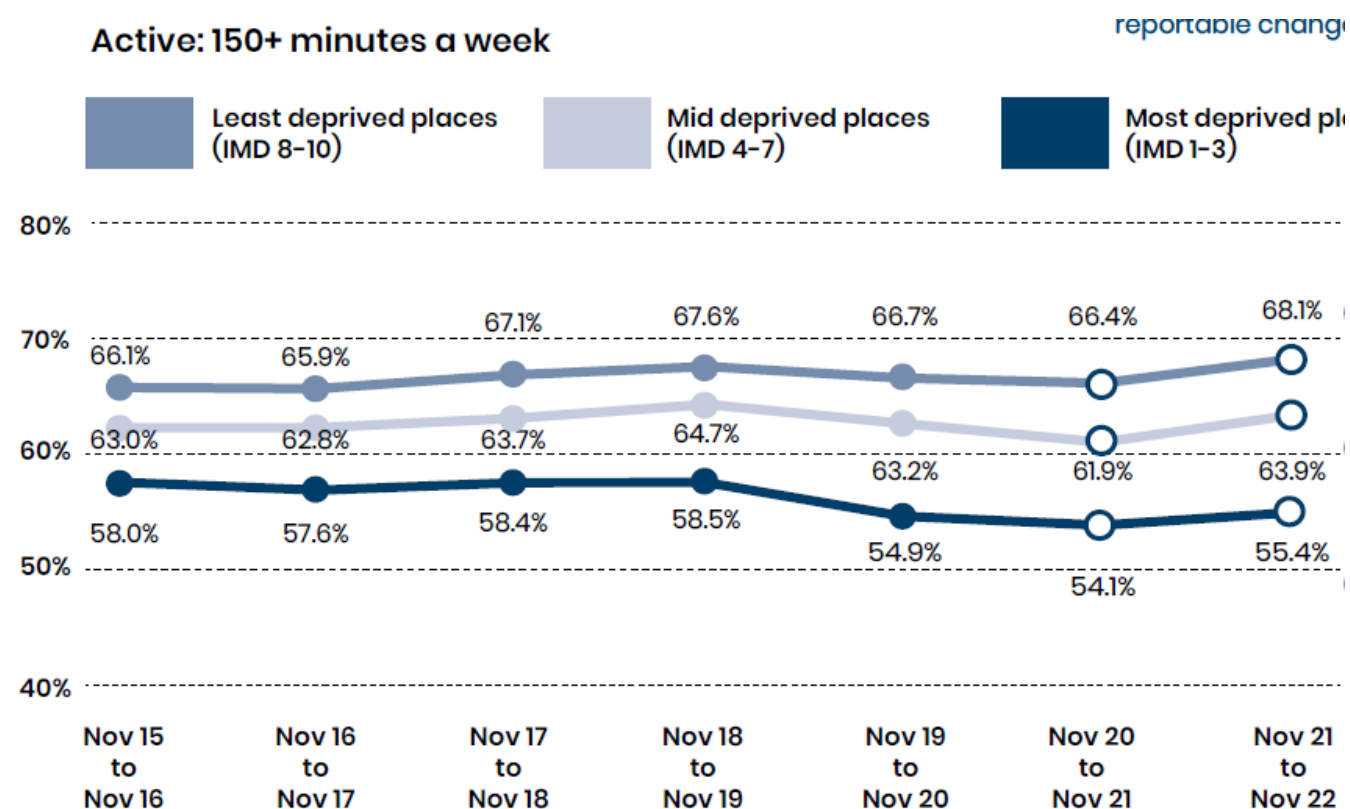
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Both surveys also contain a range of demographic questions and local area statistics

- Gender
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Disability and health
- NSSEC
- IMD
- Working status
- Educational attainment
- Pregnancy



Data is available for both surveys for multiple years, including pre-, during, and post- the COVID-19 lockdown periods



For example, data has shown that while overall adult activity levels are almost back to pre-pandemic highs, the scale of the recovery differs by deprivation level.



**Upcoming plans to
test feasibility of
collecting device-
based measurement
with a sub-sample of
respondents**

How do I find out more?



- Data files
- Technical reports
- Code books
- User guides



- Annual reports
- Data tables
- 'Spotlight' reports



- Analysis tool at <https://activelives.sportengland.org/>

THANK YOU.

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