

## Introduction

Active Black Country are committed to producing insight that stimulates debate and drives policy across the local physical activity and sport system. From 2020, *Thematic Briefings* will be available to download on a quarterly basis for our 4 thematic areas, summarising the insight that has been collated over the preceding 3-month period and applying it to the overarching strategic objectives for the theme.

If you have any queries, or would like to submit information for future briefings, please contact [Michael\\_salmon@blackcountryconsortium.co.uk](mailto:Michael_salmon@blackcountryconsortium.co.uk).



### Health and Wellbeing – Theme Objectives

Active Black Country's four thematic areas of work have all been developed with a clear set of *Objectives* in mind, against which evolving *Strategies* and practical *Tactics* are identified to enable delivery.

**Physical activity is regarded as a realistic and viable solution to address preventative conditions**

**Increase levels of physical activity across all age groups to tackle health inequalities**



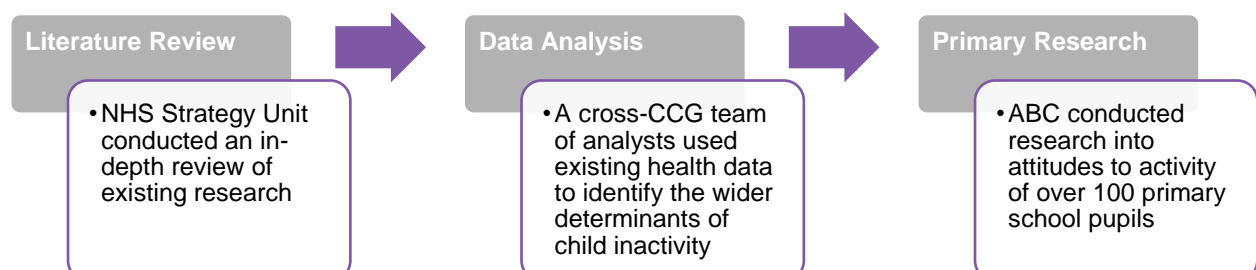
### Population Health Management - Physical Literacy

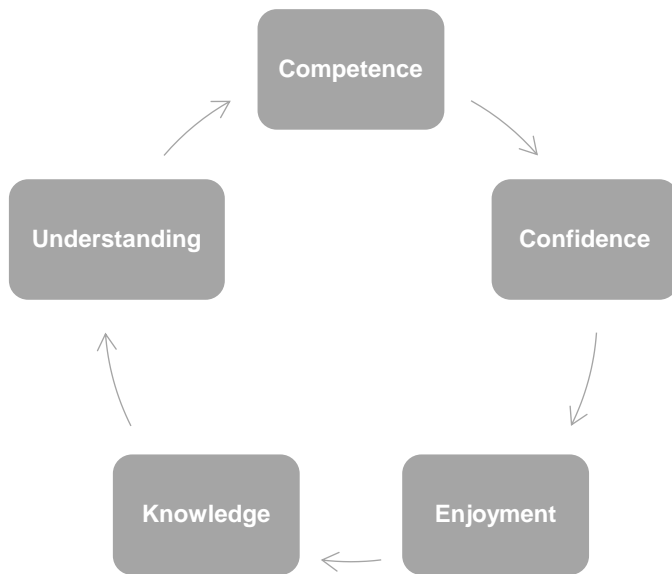
In 2018, Sport England produced their first Active Lives Survey results for children and young people, filling a key gap in sector intelligence. The survey provided information on both activity levels and attitudes to physical activity, giving insight on the key factors that influence and young person's levels of physical literacy.

#### Our Approach

In the summer of 2019, ABC were invited by the Black Country STP to sit on the core team of a new project that is looking to tackle health inequalities via the recently adopted concept of population health management, whereby health leads select a given population sub-group and work with a cross-sectoral consortium of organisations to explore ways in which the health and wellbeing of that given sub-group can be improved.

The core team selected '0-11 year olds' as the project cohort and opted to focus on increasing levels of physical literacy as a means of tackling child obesity. The system-wide approach was supported by an in-depth collation of available evidence, including;





The International Physical Literacy Association’s definition of physical literacy has five elements;

- **Competence:** how easy or difficult someone finds activity
- **Confidence:** how confident a person is when they’re being active
- **Enjoyment:** how much a person likes taking part in activity
- **Knowledge:** how much a person knows about how they can be active in their area
- **Understanding:** how much a person understands about why activity is good for them.

Of these *attitudes* towards activity, **Enjoyment** has, by some distance, the most impact on activity rates.

The data produced by Sport England also indicated that levels of physical literacy decline with age, with **Enjoyment** in being active notably declining from the age of 5. This information, combined with the potential impact on long-term physical and mental health and wellbeing, formed the basis for the project.

The core group decided to focus attention on the same priority wards in which ABC were conducting their place-based pilot work to potentially complement findings and learnings that could be scaled up in future.

**What we Learnt**

Literature Review

The NHS Midlands and Lancashire Strategy Unit produced a review of the available evidence on physical literacy in children aged 0-11 that covered;

- Causes of poor physical literacy in childhood
- Effects of physical literacy in childhood
- Interventions to support improved or increased physical literacy
- Lessons learnt from physical literacy programmes

Key findings are summarised below;

Causes of Poor Physical Literacy in Childhood	Effects of Physical Literacy in Childhood	Interventions to Improve or Increase Physical Literacy	Lessons Learnt from Programmes
Factors reported to be associated with poor physical literacy include: increasing age; being female; deprivation; parental fear (being outside); inactive parents; increased screen time, children with Mental Health Disorders.	Evidence was limited, however anticipated benefits of good physical literacy include: future healthcare savings; improved physical and psychological well-being of the population; raised levels of expertise in sport and exercise participation.	Evidence from systematic reviews has found that children instructed directly by a person who specialised in the delivery of fundamental movement skills training and resistance training interventions have a positive impact on indicators of fundamental movement skills	In terms of child engagement, sessions need to be fun. The review noted that engaging both adults and school teachers (non-PE) is challenging but crucial to develop confidence and knowledge. It suggested training non-teaching staff such as playground leaders and lunchtime assistants.

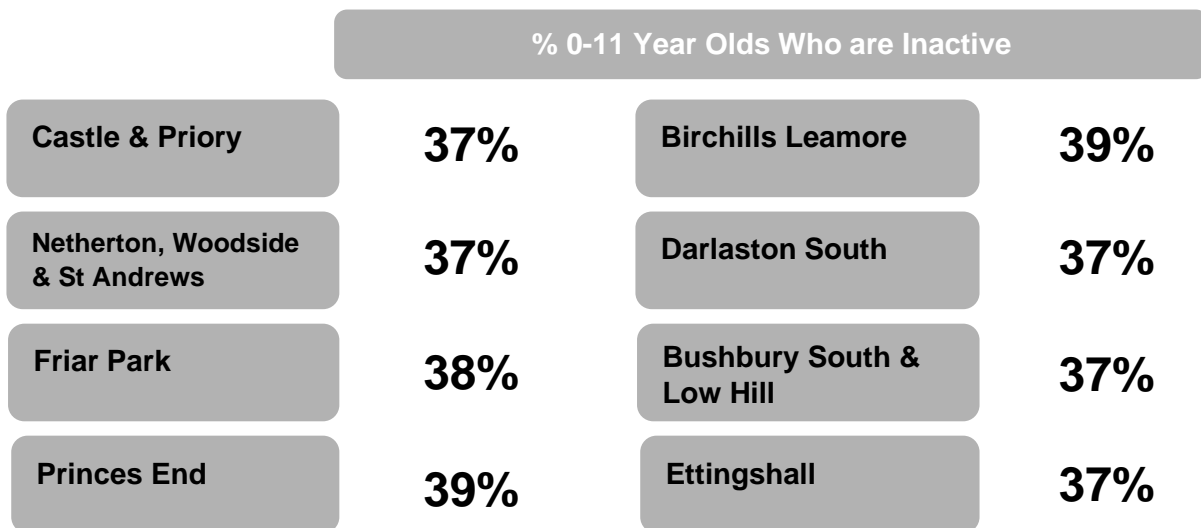
The exercise identified several systematic reviews that are currently in progress, covering;

- Interventions to improve physical literacy in children in high-income countries
- The cost-analysis of community interventions to increase physical activity and improve physical literacy and healthy eating in 3-5 year-old children
- The effectiveness of educator training in interventions to improve physical literacy, fundamental movement skills, and/or physical activity in a childcare setting.

One consistent theme through the review, however, was the lack of available evidence on which to base decision making. Much of the data we use as a sector is reliant on self-reported assessments of activity levels rather than independently observed and measured findings. To supplement existing insight, in 2020 the Active Black Country Insight Hub will incorporate a database of wider activity related research, carried out by academics and other organisations.

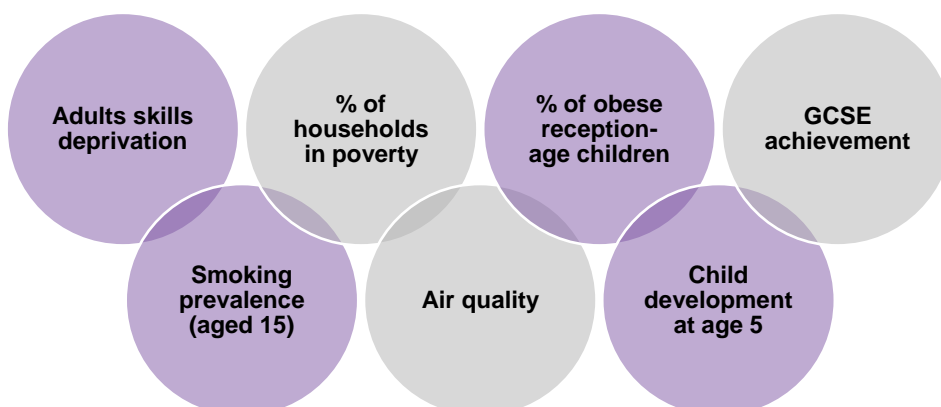
### Data Analysis

A team of analysts from the 4 Black Country CCGs worked together to develop a modelled set of small area baseline statistics in relation to child inactivity for each of the priority wards.



The baselines were modelled using existing Sport England data in relation to child inactivity and known small area variances across a range of associated indicators. The analyst team identified a series of health and demographic measures that correlated strongly with high child obesity. These factors, listed below, account for 80% of the variance in childhood inactivity levels and can be regarded as wider determinants of physical inactivity in children in the Black Country.

### Wider Determinants of Child Inactivity in the Black Country



This is not to suggest a cause and effect relationship between the indicators listed about and inactivity. However, in terms of a predictive tool, the information has the potential to enable the use of data to identify young people at risk of being inactive.

Primary Research

Dudley CCG's MeFestival is an annual event that welcomes young people from primary schools across the borough to receive advice and guidance on their health and wellbeing from a wide range of stakeholders. In 2019 Active Black Country were invited to be part of an activity tent, whereby pupils could take part in a series of inclusive activities such as boccia, Finnish skittles and table tennis.

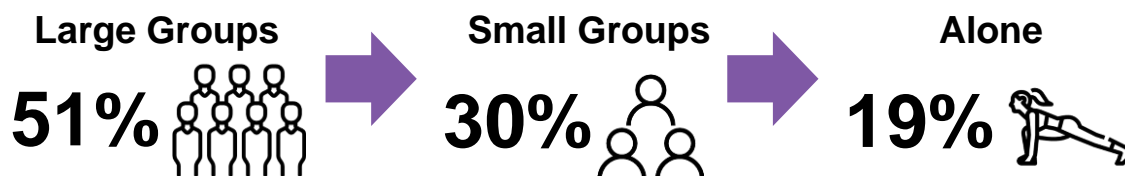
In light of the work that was being undertaken across the STP footprint, ABC also used the occasion as an opportunity to carry out some consultation with both the young people and teachers that attended to get a better understanding of their activity habits and levels of physical literacy (with specific focus on *Enjoyment, Confidence* and *Competence*). Information was captured via a paper-survey with pupils taking it in turns to complete them, facilitated by ABC officers, in-between different activities.

The findings are displayed below;

Knowledge of Recommended Activity Levels



Preferred Ways to Be Active



Levels of Physical Literacy in Young People

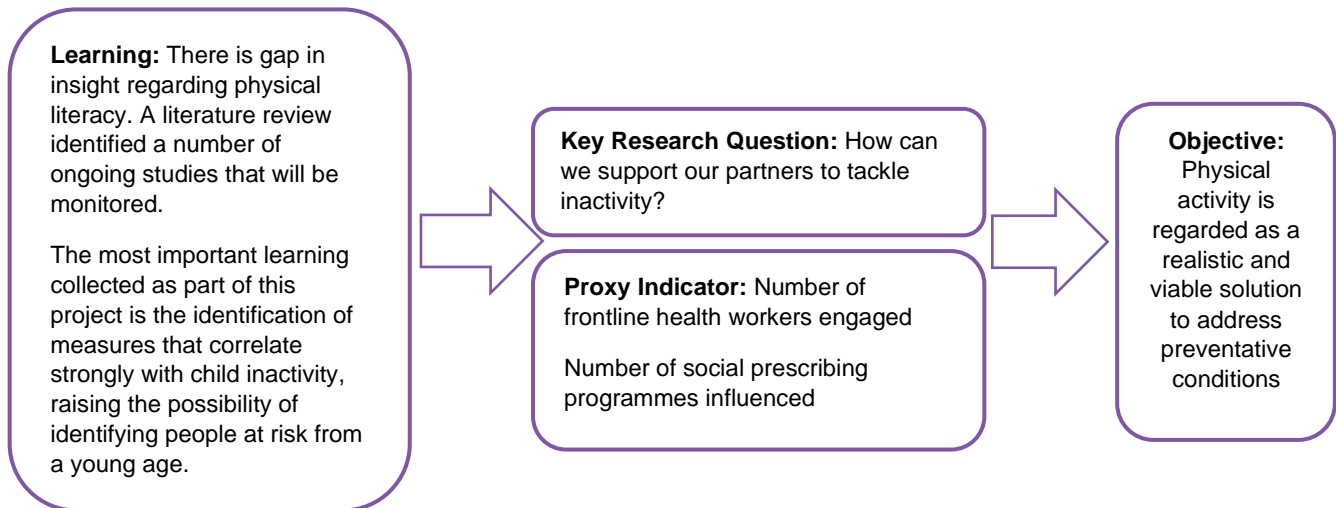
Average Self-Reported Scores out of 10 (10 being most / highest)

	BOYS	GIRLS
Confidence	7.2	7.1
Competence	7.7	7.4
Enjoyment	8.4	7.6

The results need to be treated with care as there is no comparative group and the questions were designed to purely start to develop an understanding of how pupils self-report against these measures. However, of particular interest is the gap in levels of enjoyment of activity between boys and girls, a feature that is consistent with trends picked up in the national research.

### Strategic Alignment

The diagram below explains how these learnings contribute to ABC's overarching strategic approach. ABC reporting is centred around a series of proxy indicators that contribute to the delivery of wider objectives. In parallel, to drive the development of insight across all themes, 3 key research questions have been derived and all research, consultation or exploratory engagement is carried out with the view of furthering knowledge against at least one of these.



### Further Reading



Whilst these quarterly documents will provide a summary of the latest learnings across each thematic area, there is a plethora of additional information available through Active Black Country resources and those of the wider sector.

Access the information below for additional reading.

#### Active Black Country Insight Hub

Active Black Country are one of the most insight-led Active Partnerships in the country and our new Insight Hub collates primary research, secondary data and softer thematic learnings in relation to tackling inactivity across the sub-region. The site is full of helpful information to help partners understand their area, evidence need and make decisions in relation to physical activity.

<http://blackcountryinsighthub.co.uk>



INSIGHT HUB