



**ACTIVE LIVES
CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE SURVEY**

**ACADEMIC YEAR
2017/18**

Published December 2018

WELCOME

Welcome to the first Active Lives Children and Young People Survey report summarising the activity levels of children and young people (aged 5-16) in England from September 2017 to July 2018.

Given that attitudes towards sport and physical activity are often shaped by experiences in childhood, we have sought to explore and better understand not only the behaviours of children and young people, but also their attitudes towards sport and physical activity, and the extent to which being active links to levels of mental wellbeing, individual development and social and community development.

To maximise the value and usefulness of the findings, we have presented the overall levels of activity both at and outside school, and summarised the picture of engagement by key demographics, as well as the types of activity being undertaken. With a sample of over 130,000, we have been able to present data down to local authority level. This data can be accessed using the links embedded in each page to take you to the data tables which sit behind the headlines within this report.

For the first release of Active Lives Children and Young People, we have taken the decision to release the data in two parts. This first report focuses specifically on behaviours. The second report (to be published in March 2019) will focus on the attitudes of children and young people towards sport and physical activity, seeking to better understand the impact of confidence, motivation and perceived physical competence upon behaviours and activity levels.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank colleagues within the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education who have been key partners in the development of this survey, the network of County Sports Partnerships who have recruited the schools to take part and finally the schools, children, parents and teachers who took the time to complete the survey.

Lisa O'Keefe
Insight Director

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KEY INFORMATION

This report presents data from the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey for the academic year 2017/18. Data is presented for children and young people in school Years 1-11 (ages 5-16) in England.

RELEASE DATES

This release: 6 December 2018
Next release: 21 March 2019

FIND OUT MORE

For further information on the data presented in this report, please visit the [Active Lives section](#) of our website.

LEVELS OF ACTIVITY

This chapter presents information on four levels of activity:

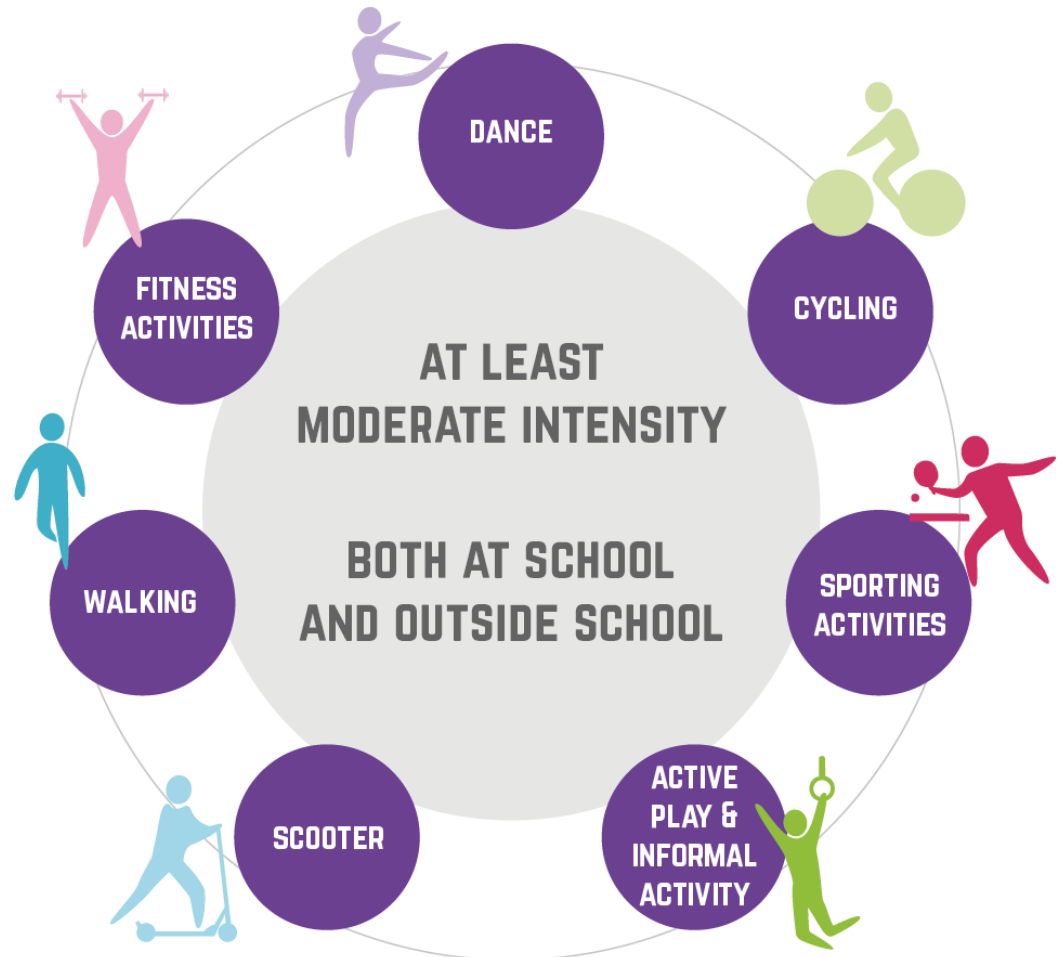
- Active every day (at least 60 minutes every day)
- Active across the week (an average of at least 60 minutes a day, but not every day)
- Fairly active (an average of 30-59 minutes a day)
- Less active (less than an average of 30 minutes a day).

[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)



DEFINITION

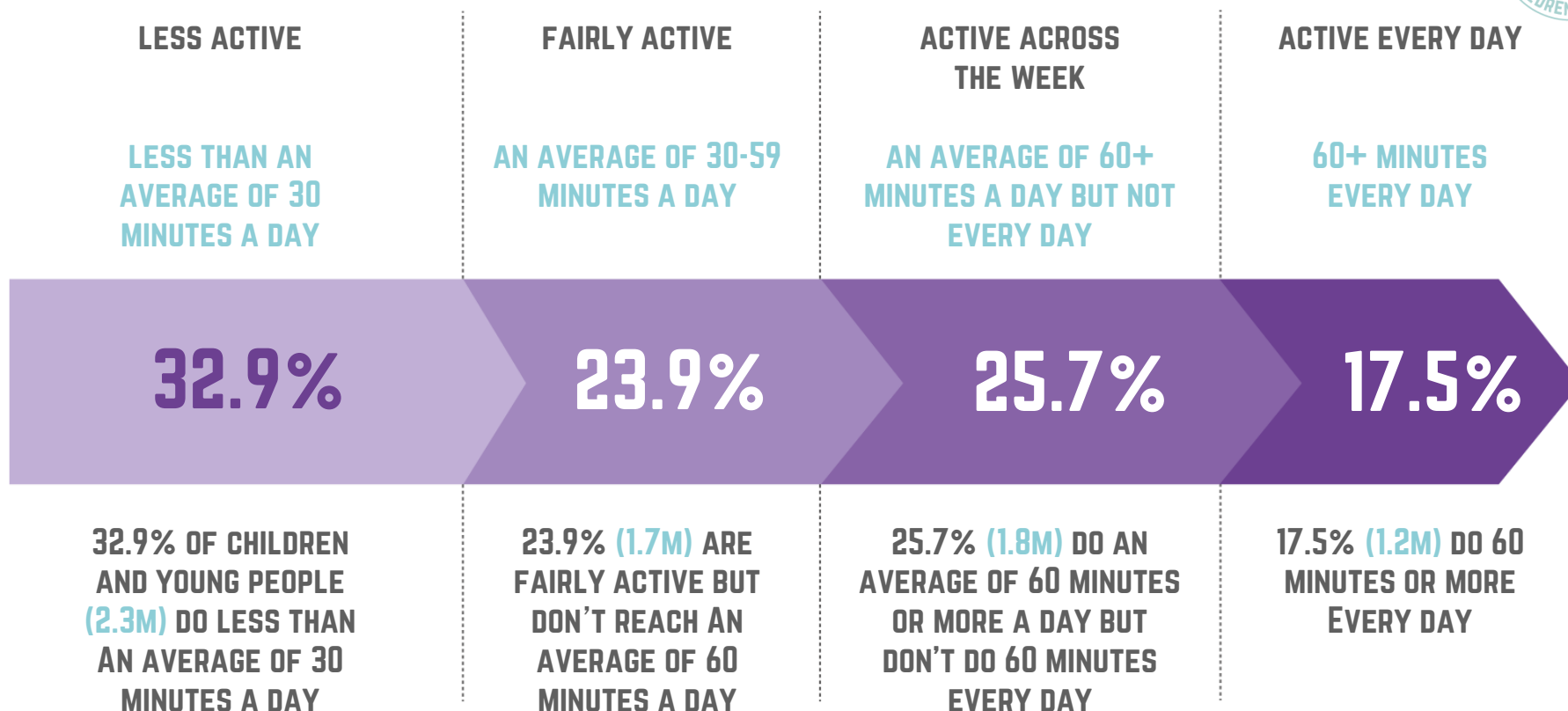
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?



LEVELS OF ACTIVITY

HEADLINES

Our data shows that 17.5% of children and young people (1.2m) are meeting the current Chief Medical Officer guidelines of taking part in sport and physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day. A further 25.7% (1.8m) sit just below this threshold, taking part **on average** for 60+ minutes a day across the week, whilst 32.9% (2.3m) do less than an average of 30 minutes a day.



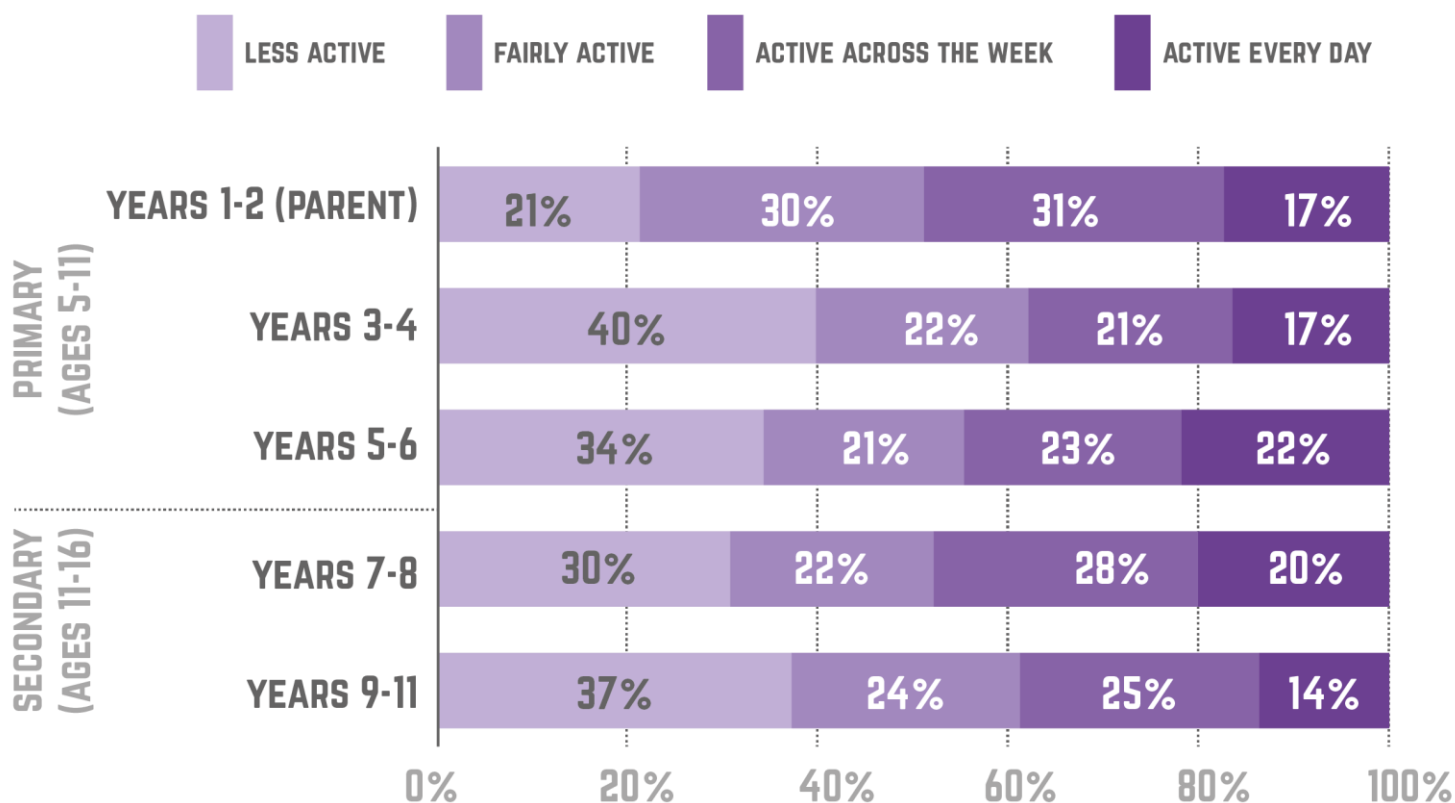
[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)



LEVELS OF ACTIVITY

SCHOOL YEAR GROUP

Children and young people in Years 5-6 and 7-8 (top end of primary, lower end of secondary, ages 9-13) are more likely to be active every day, with young people in Years 9-11 (ages 13-16) the least likely to be active every day.



Note:

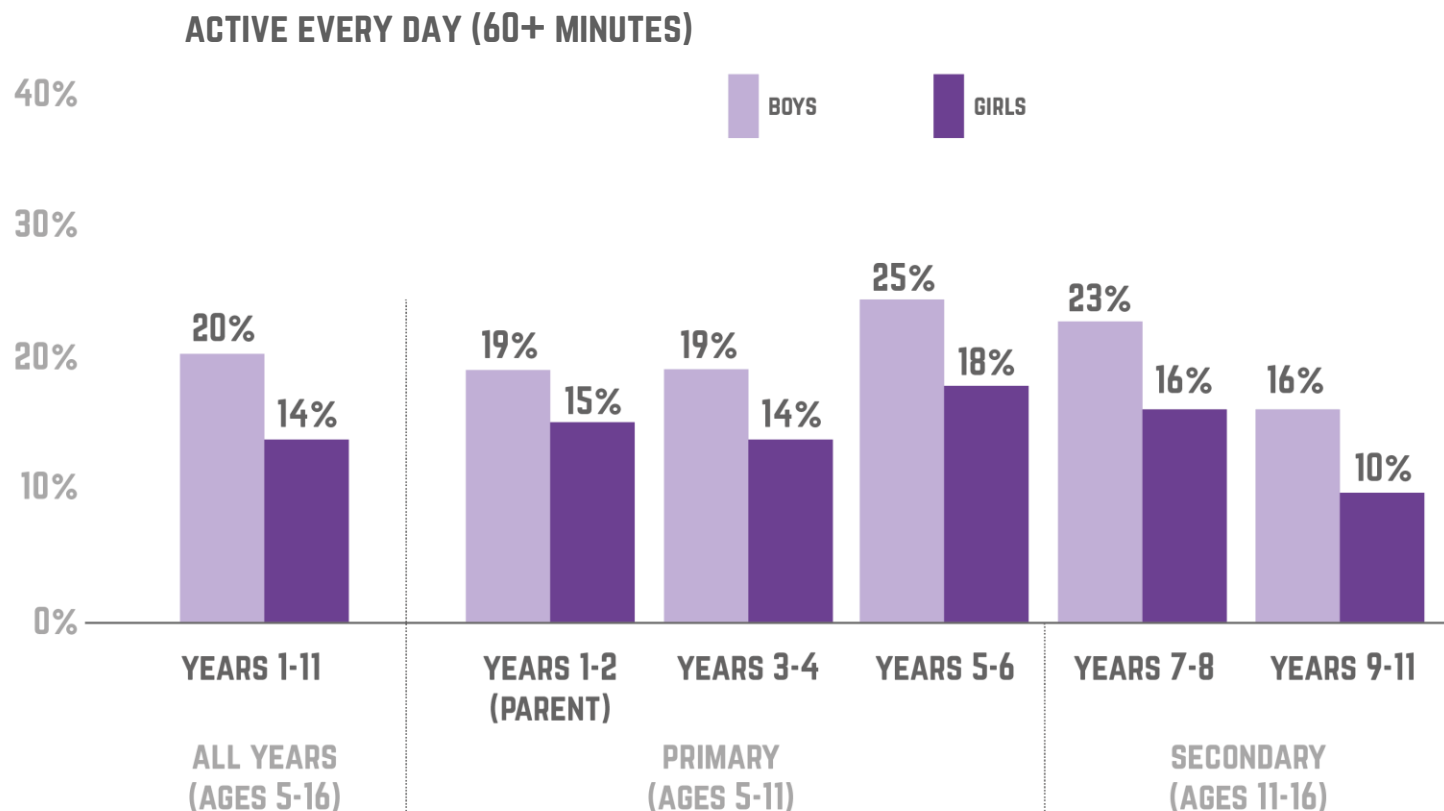
Data for Years 1-2 children for this question is collected by proxy from parents, while for Years 3-11, the pupils are asked directly. This may mean some of the differences observed between these year groups are partly methodological.

LEVELS OF ACTIVITY

GENDER

Boys (20%) are more likely to be active every day than girls (14%).

The gap between boys and girls who are active every day is wider from Years 5-6 (ages 9-11) onwards.

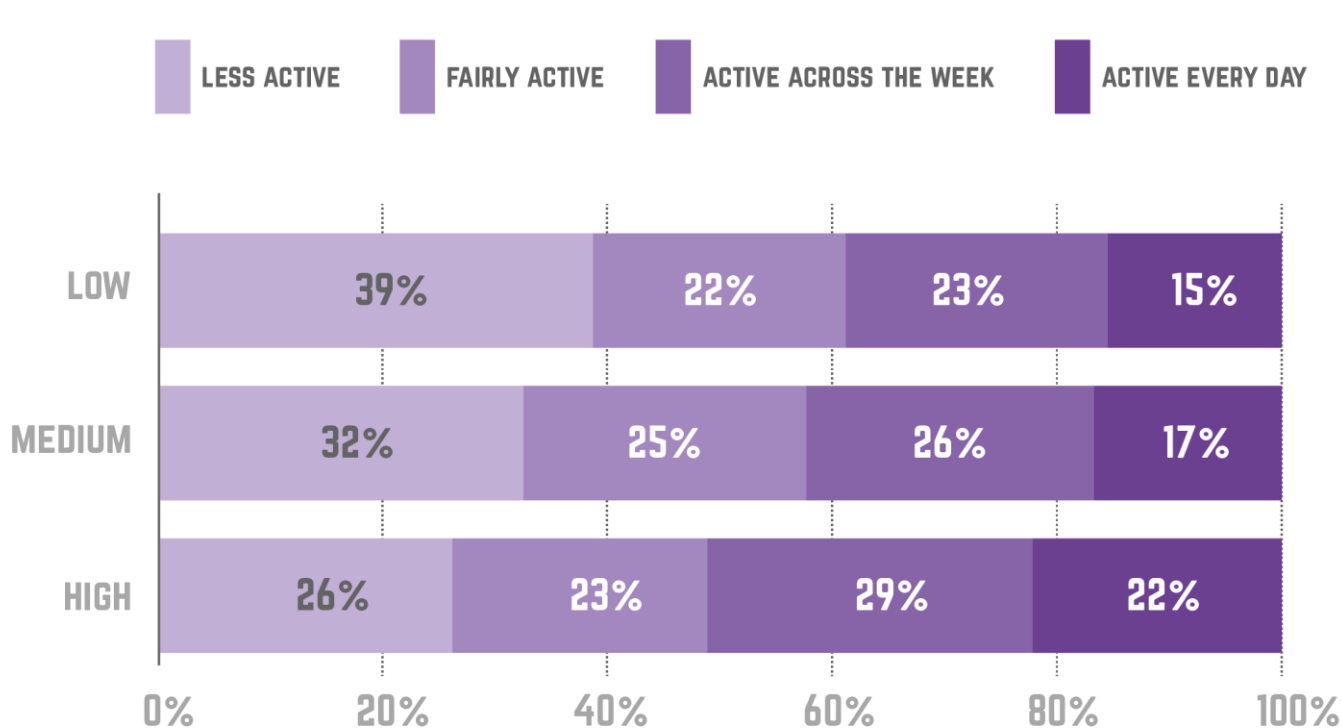


[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)



FAMILY AFFLUENCE

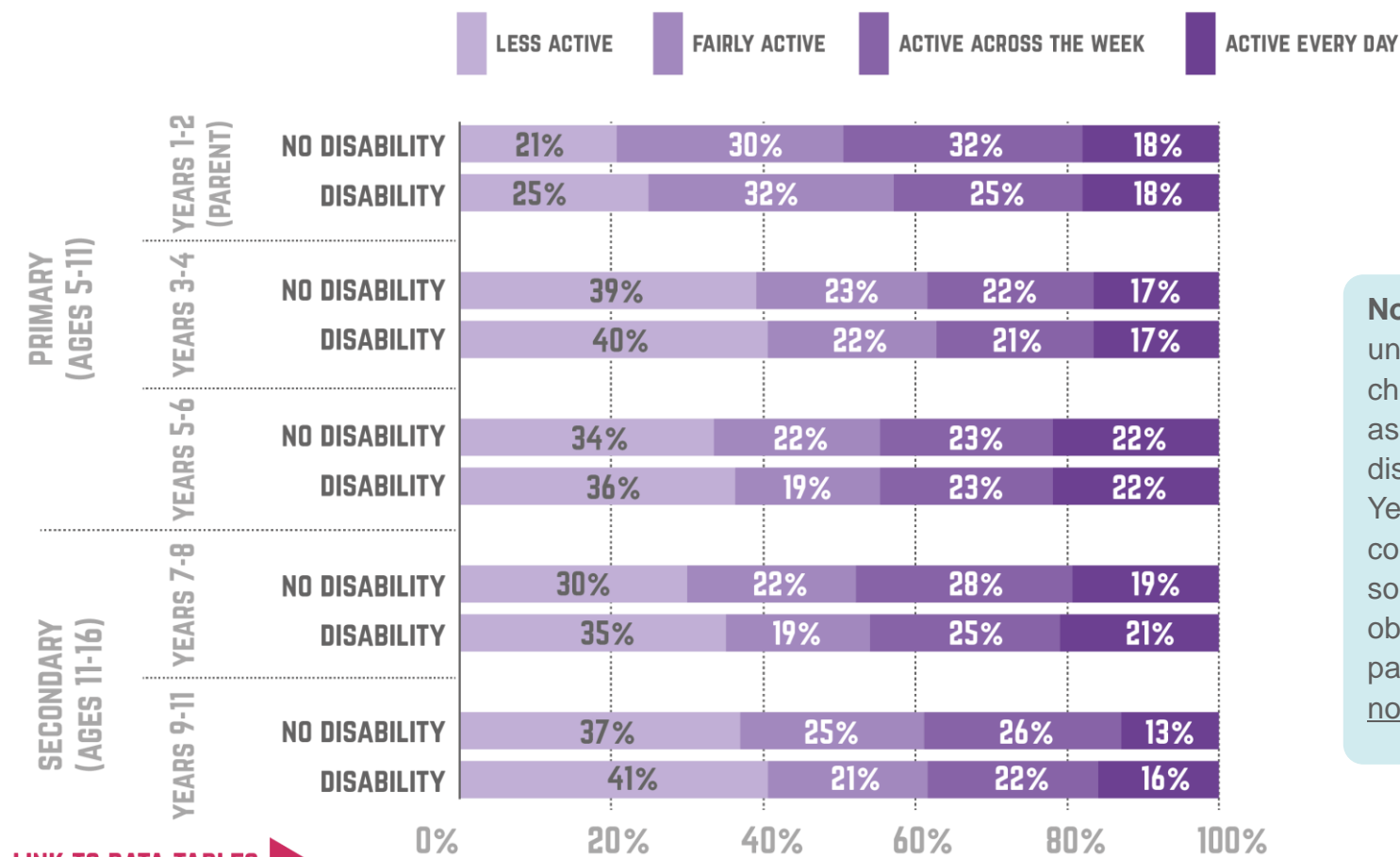
The family affluence scale provides an indication of the socio-economic profile of children and young people's families. There is a clear gradient, with children and young people from the most affluent families generally being more active than those from the mid-affluent families, who in turn are generally more active than those from the least affluent families.



LEVELS OF ACTIVITY

DISABILITY

There is no real difference in the activity profile of children and young people with and without a disability, with only a small difference in 'less active' for Years 7-8 (ages 11-13) and 9-11 (ages 13-16).



Note: In order to make it understandable to them, children in Years 3-6 are asked a simpler question for disability. This means that Year groups 1-11 cannot be combined and may mean some of the differences observed between them are partly methodological. See the [notes](#) page for more detail.

[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)

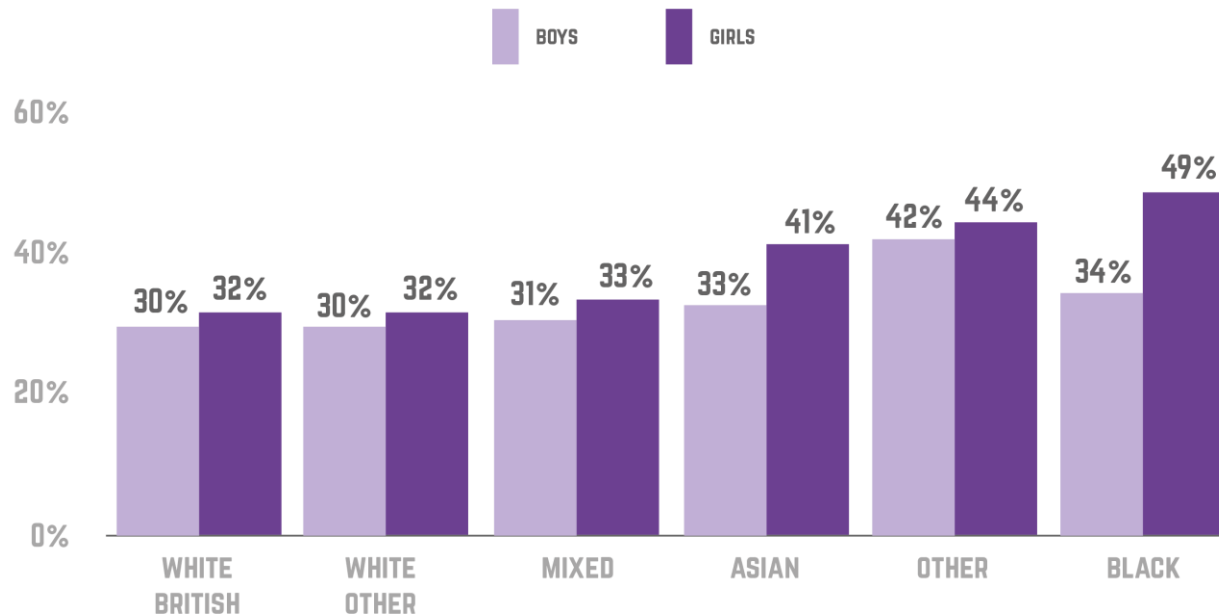
LEVELS OF ACTIVITY

ETHNICITY

Girls from Asian and black backgrounds and both boys and girls from 'other' backgrounds (such as Arab and South American), are more likely to be 'less active'.



LESS ACTIVE



The age at which these differences are seen varies for each group:

- Girls from black backgrounds are more likely to be 'less active' from Years 5-6 (ages 9-11) onwards
- Girls from Asian backgrounds are more likely to be 'less active' in Years 9-11 (ages 13-16) only (47% compared to 37% of all children and young people).



LEVELS OF ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY LEVELS, EVERY DAY, ARE HIGHER AT SCHOOL COMPARED TO OUTSIDE SCHOOL

Government guidelines set out that children and young people should get 30 minutes of their daily physical activity through the school day and 30 minutes outside of school. Our data shows that 28% of children and young people do **30 minutes** or more every day at school, while 22% do so outside school.

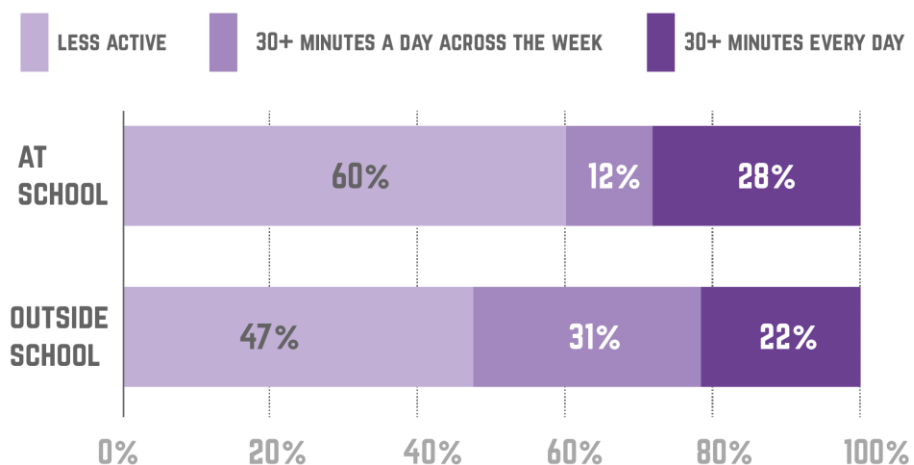
In contrast, children and young people are more likely to be doing less than an average of 30 minutes a day across the week (i.e. be less active) at school (60%) than outside school (47%).

Activity levels differs by year groups, with children in Years 3-4 (ages 7-9) reporting similar rates of taking part every day at and outside school and children in Years 5-6 (ages 9-11) more likely to do so outside school.

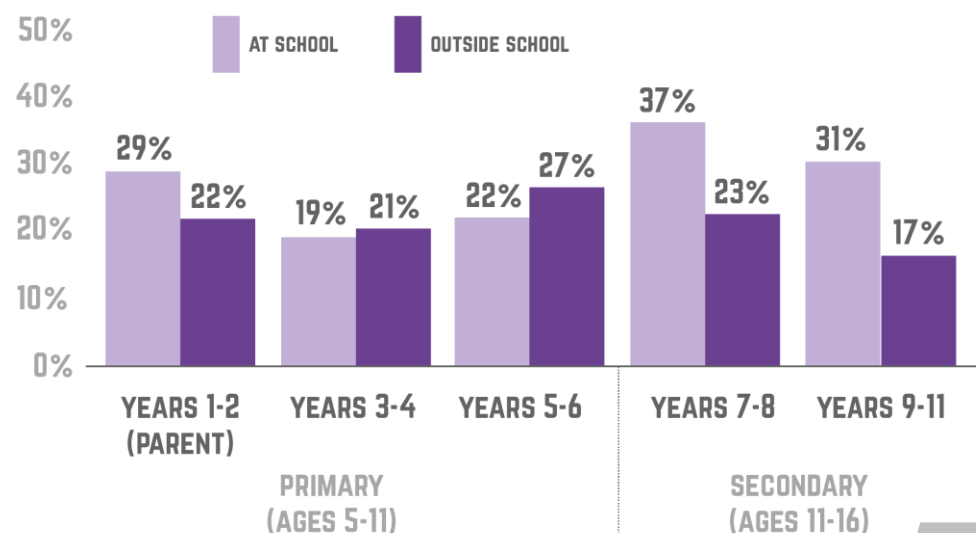
Both environments play a critical role in the overall activity levels of children and young people.



ACTIVITY LEVELS



30+ MINUTES EVERY DAY



[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)



TYPES OF ACTIVITY

This chapter presents data broken down by activity group and looks at those who have participated at least once in the last week.

Data is also provided for swimming confidence and capability within this section.

PARTICIPATION – OUR DEFINITION

Looking at participation at least once in the last week provides:

- An entry level view of participation overall
- An understanding of which activities contribute to the make-up of an active day.



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
--------	---------	-----------	----------	--------	----------	--------

**WE MEASURE SPORT
AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
IF IT'S DONE...**

- **IN THE LAST WEEK**
- **AT LEAST MODERATE INTENSITY**
- **EITHER AT SCHOOL OR OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)

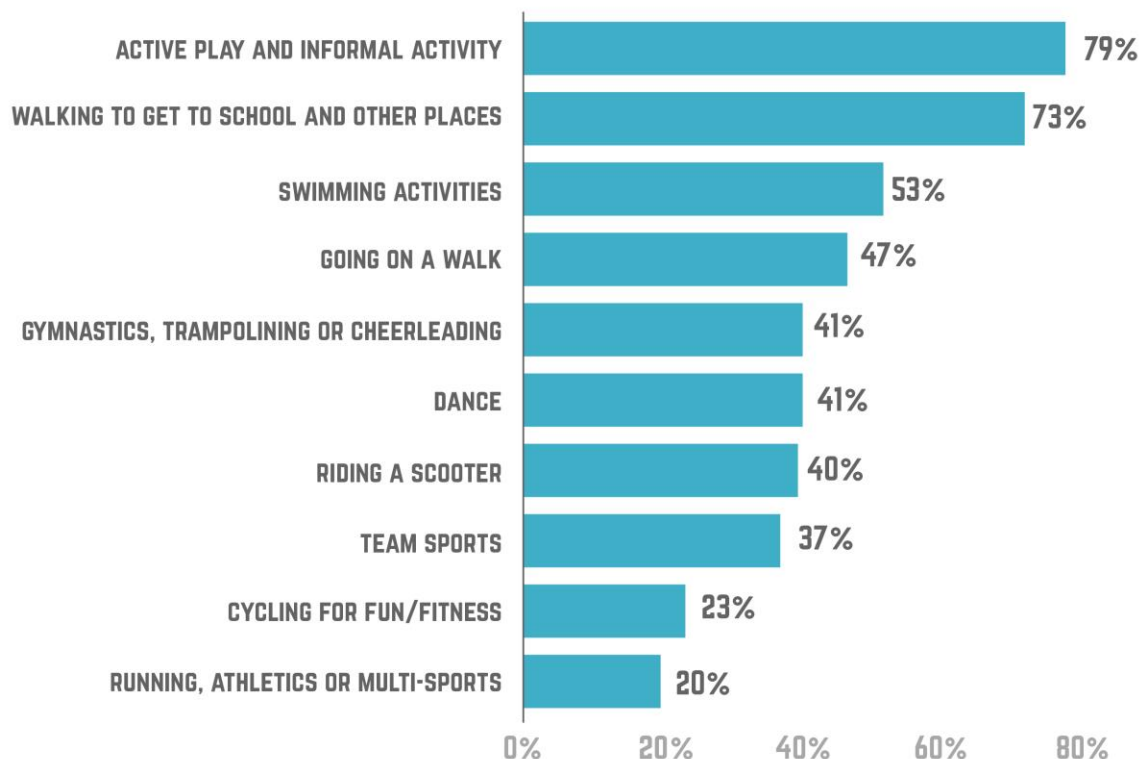


ACTIVE PLAY AND INFORMAL ACTIVITY IS THE MOST COMMON ACTIVITY AMONGST CHILDREN IN YEARS 1-2 (AGES 5-7)

A high number of children in Years 1-2 walk to get to school and other places, while over half have been swimming.



TEN MOST PREVALENT ACTIVITY GROUPS – YEARS 1-2 (AGES 5-7)



Note:

Data for Years 1-2 for this question is collected from parents, while for Years 3-11, the pupils are asked directly. This may mean some of the differences observed between these year groups are partly methodological.

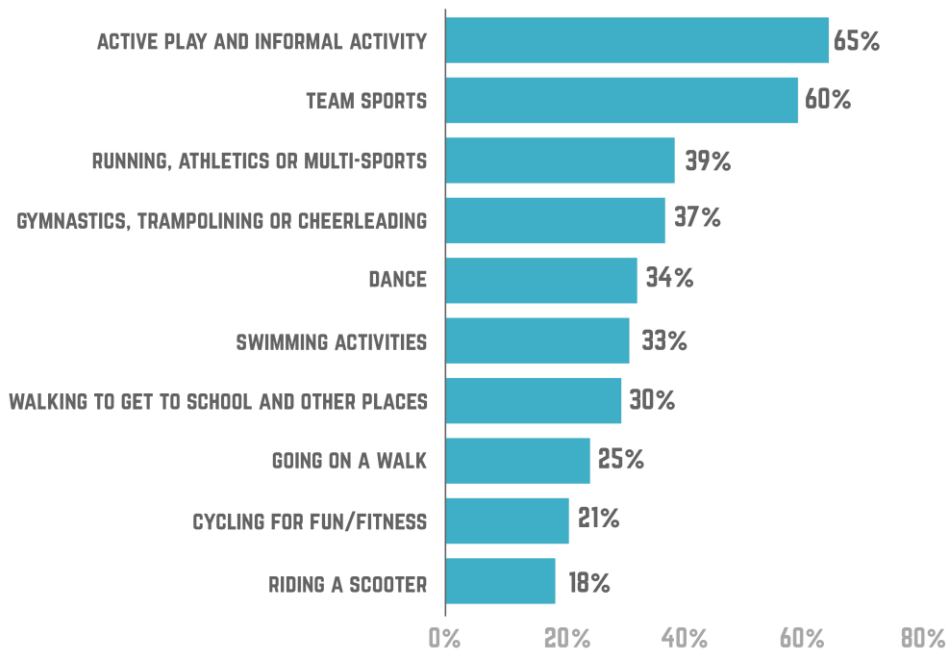
TYPES OF ACTIVITY

ACTIVE PLAY AND INFORMAL ACTIVITY REMAINS THE MOST COMMON ACTIVITY AMONGST CHILDREN IN YEARS 3-6 (AGES 7-11), CLOSELY FOLLOWED BY TEAM SPORTS

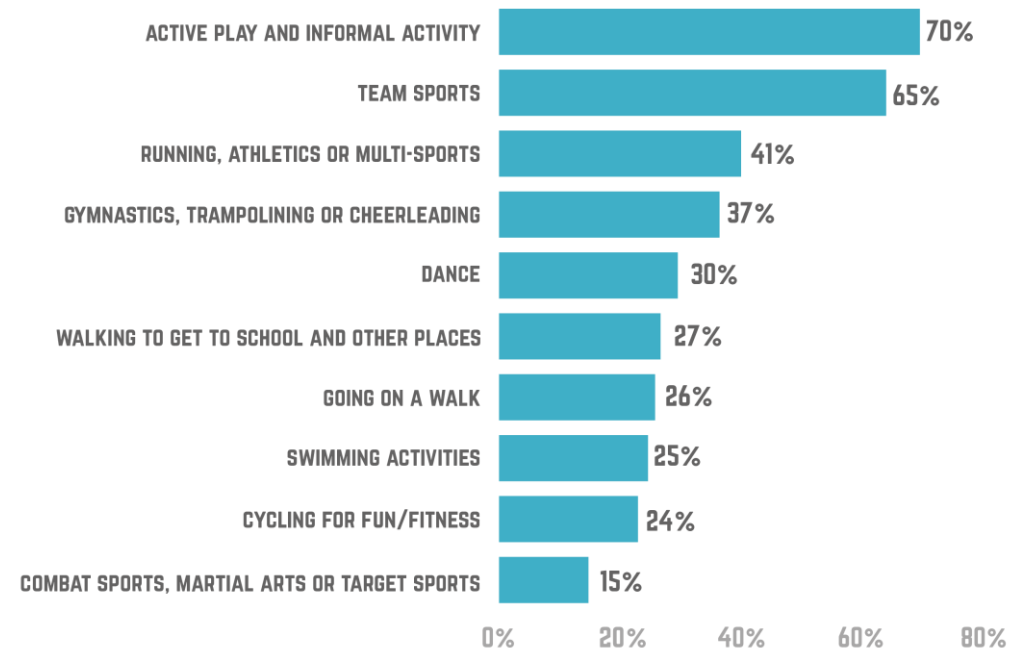
Walking to get to school and other places and swimming are both less common than for Years 1-2 (ages 5-7) children with under a third taking part, while running begins to feature.



TEN MOST PREVALENT ACTIVITY GROUPS – YEARS 3-4 (AGES 7-9)



TEN MOST PREVALENT ACTIVITY GROUPS – YEARS 5-6 (AGES 9-11)



[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)



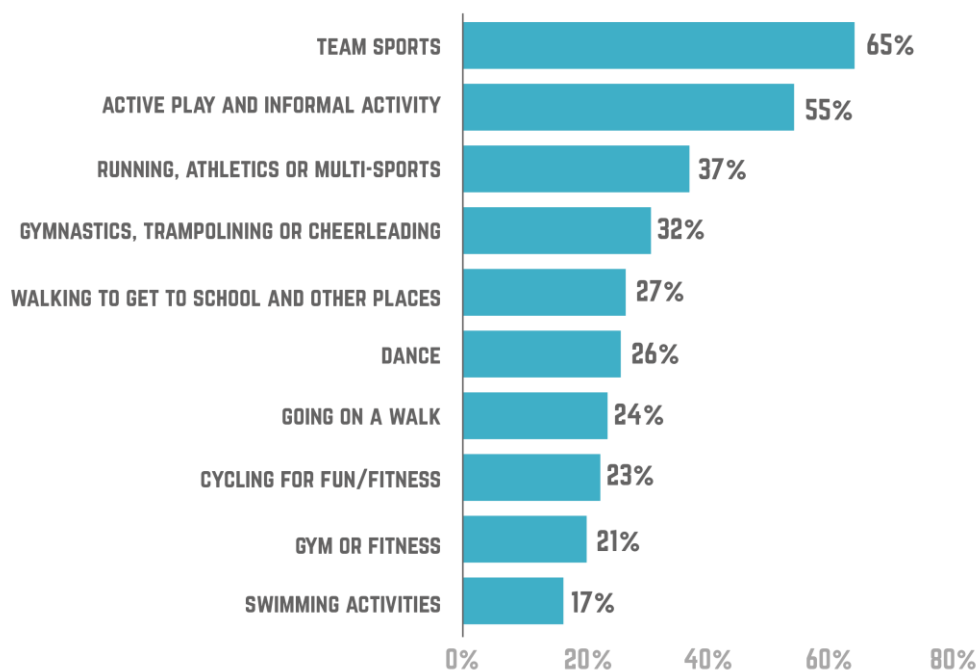
Note: Individual activities are reported in the data table.

TYPES OF ACTIVITY

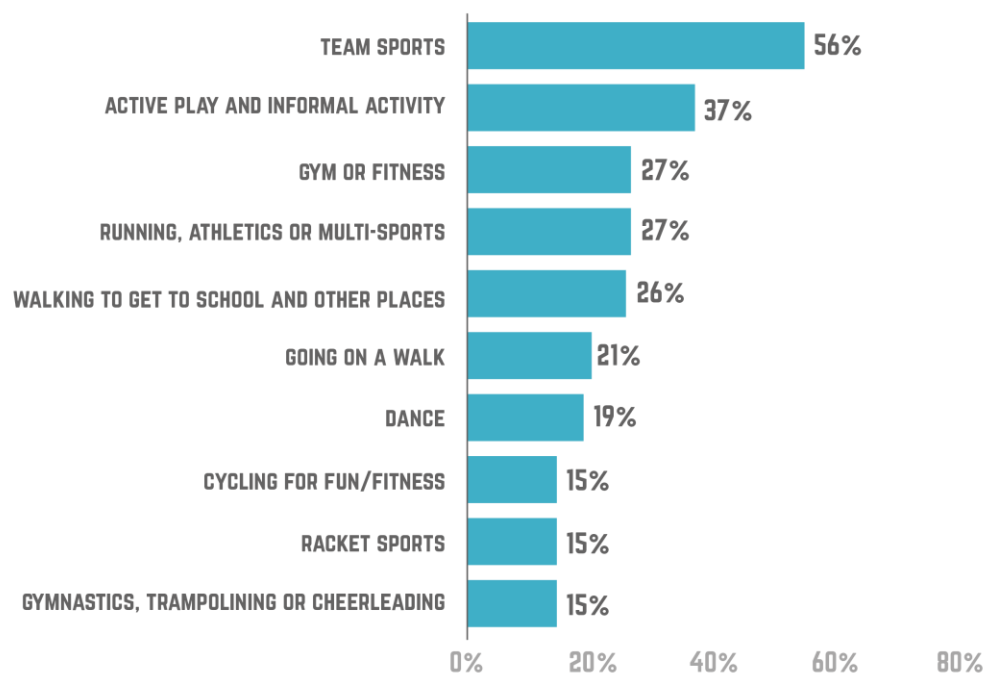
TEAM SPORTS IS THE MOST COMMON ACTIVITY AMONGST CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN YEARS 7-11 (AGES 11-16)

Active play and informal activity remain common for secondary school children and young people, while swimming has dropped away, and is outside the top 10 by Years 9-11 (ages 13-16) with just 10% taking part. In Years 9-11, just over a quarter take part in gym or fitness activities.

TEN MOST PREVALENT ACTIVITY GROUPS – YEARS 7-8 (AGES 11-13)



TEN MOST PREVALENT ACTIVITY GROUPS – YEARS 9-11 (AGES 13-16)



[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)



Note: Individual activities are reported in the data table.

SWIMMING CONFIDENCE AND CAPABILITY

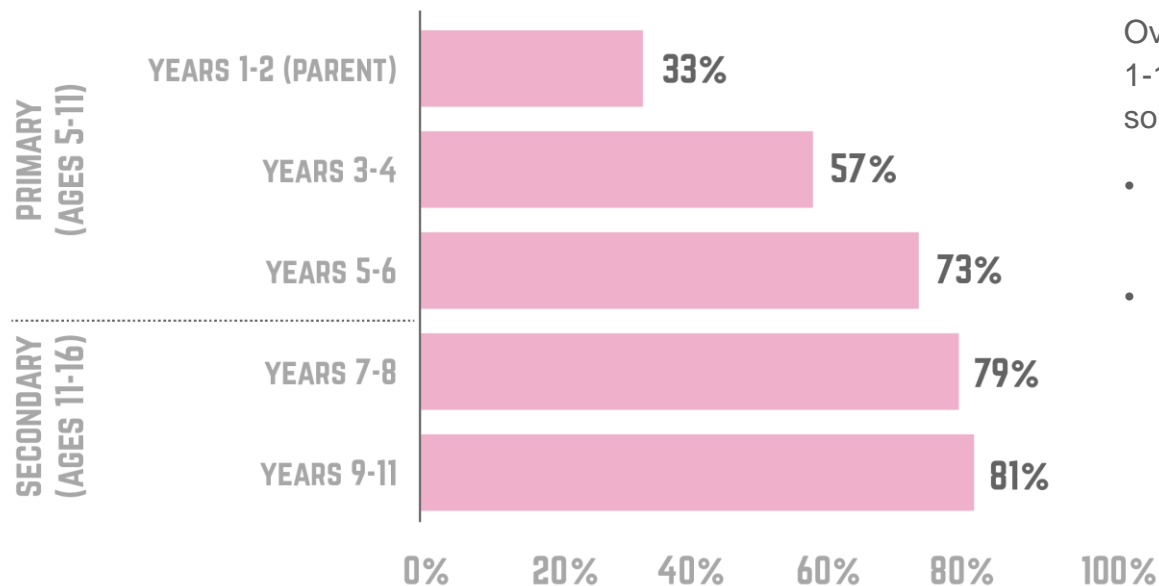
77% OF YEAR 7 CHILDREN CAN SWIM 25 METRES UNAIDED

Guidelines indicate that children should be able to swim 25m unaided by the time they leave primary school. The data shows that 77% of Year 7 (first year of secondary school, age 11-12) children can do this. This only increases slightly to 81% by Year 11 (ages 15-16).

In comparison, 86% of children of the same age (Year 7, ages 11-12) say they can tread water and 81% say they can self rescue.



CAN SWIM 25M UNAIDED



Overall, 65% of all children and young people (Years 1-11, ages 5-16) can swim 25m unaided. There are some key inequalities within this:

- Boys (66%) are more likely to be able to swim 25m unaided than girls (63%)
- 86% of children and young people from the most affluent families can swim 25m unaided, compared to 42% of those from the least affluent families.

VOLUNTEERING

AT LEAST TWICE IN THE
LAST 12 MONTHS

Giving your time helping others to be active is amazing, no matter what age you are. Not only are they benefitting, but you benefit too; gaining experience, making friends and learning new skills. And evidence suggests that those who give their time when they're young are more likely to continue to volunteer in later life.

DEFINITION

WE COUNT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON AS HAVING VOLUNTEERED IF:

**THEY HAVE TAKEN PART IN A
VOLUNTEERING ROLE TO
SUPPORT SPORT/PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**

(A full list of roles can be found in our definitions at the end of this report).



**A PERSON HAS VOLUNTEERED
AT LEAST TWICE IN THE LAST
12 MONTHS**



**1.6 MILLION CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE
VOLUNTEERED**

**...AT LEAST TWICE IN THE LAST
YEAR TO SUPPORT SPORT AND
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**



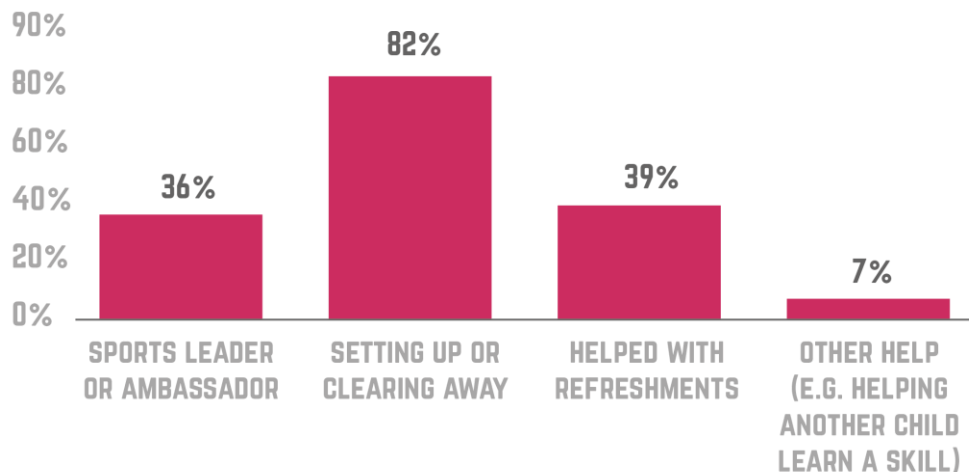
38%



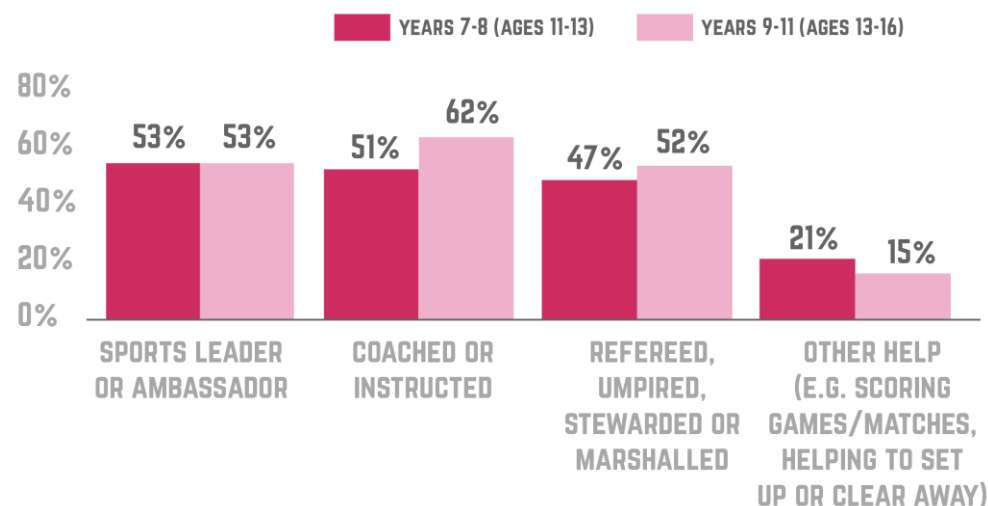
VOLUNTEER ROLES VARY BY AGE

Over half of children and young people in Years 5-6 (ages 9-11) and 30% in Years 7-11 (ages 11-16) volunteer to support sport and physical activity. Children in Years 5-6 who volunteer are most likely to undertake supporting roles, i.e. setting up and clearing away, or helping with refreshments. Over half of young people in Years 7-11 who volunteer do so by coaching or instructing, or through being a sports leader or ambassador.

YEARS 5-6 (AGES 9-11) ROLES UNDERTAKEN BY THOSE WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED AT LEAST TWICE IN THE LAST YEAR



YEARS 7-11 (AGES 11-16) ROLES UNDERTAKEN BY THOSE WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED AT LEAST TWICE IN THE LAST YEAR



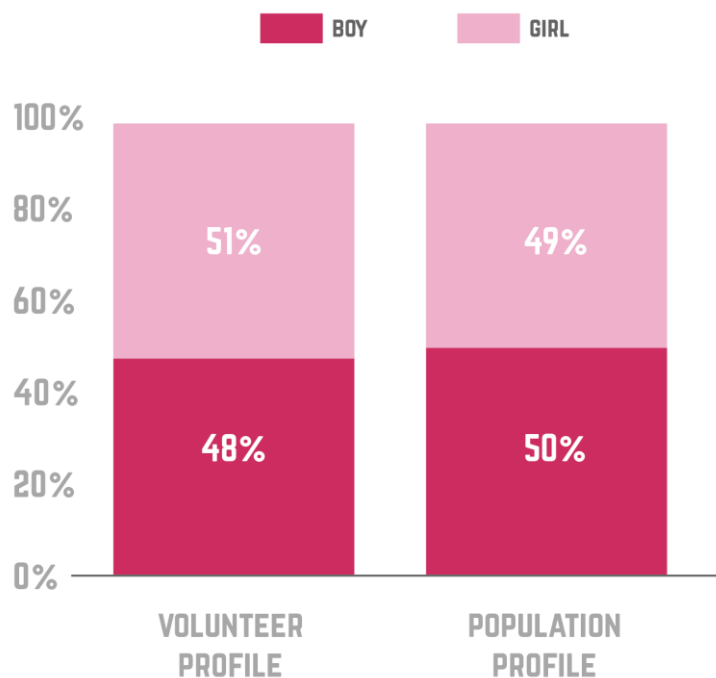
[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)

Note: Volunteering is only asked of children and young people in Years 5-11 (ages 9-16), with Years 5-6 (ages 9-11) having a slightly different question to Years 7-11 (ages 11-16), to ensure the volunteering roles asked about are relevant.

VOLUNTEERING

GENDER

While girls make up a slightly higher share of volunteers than boys, this is not far from the population profile and so is closely representative.



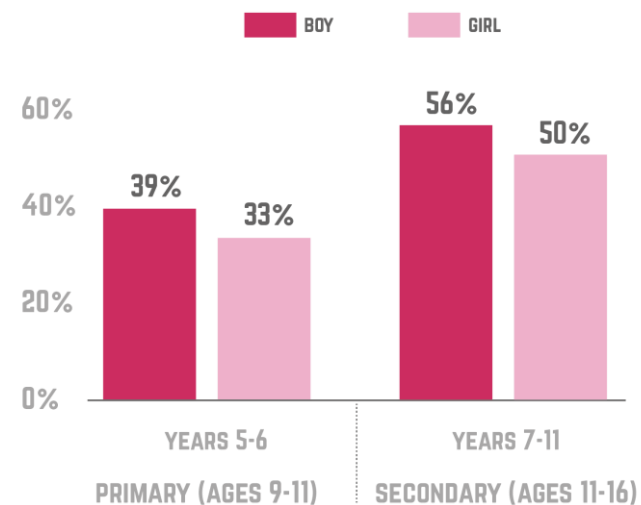
Certain roles are more skewed towards specific genders.

Boys who volunteer are more likely than girls to be a sports leader or ambassador.

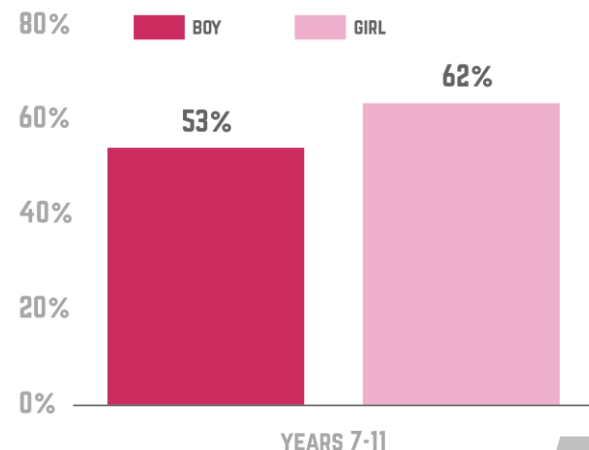
Girls who volunteer are more likely than boys to coach or instruct.



SPORTS LEADER OR AMBASSADOR



COACHED OR INSTRUCTED



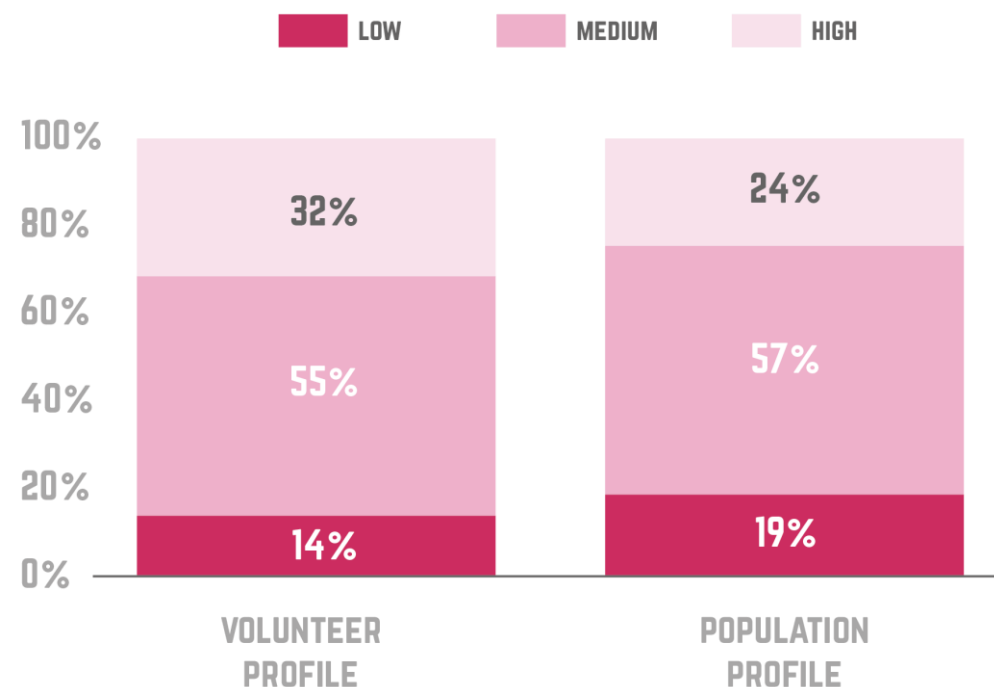
[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)

FAMILY AFFLUENCE

Children and young people who volunteer and belong to the most affluent families (32%) are over-represented when compared to the population profile (24%), while children and young people who belong to the least affluent families (14%) are under-represented compared to the population profile (19%).

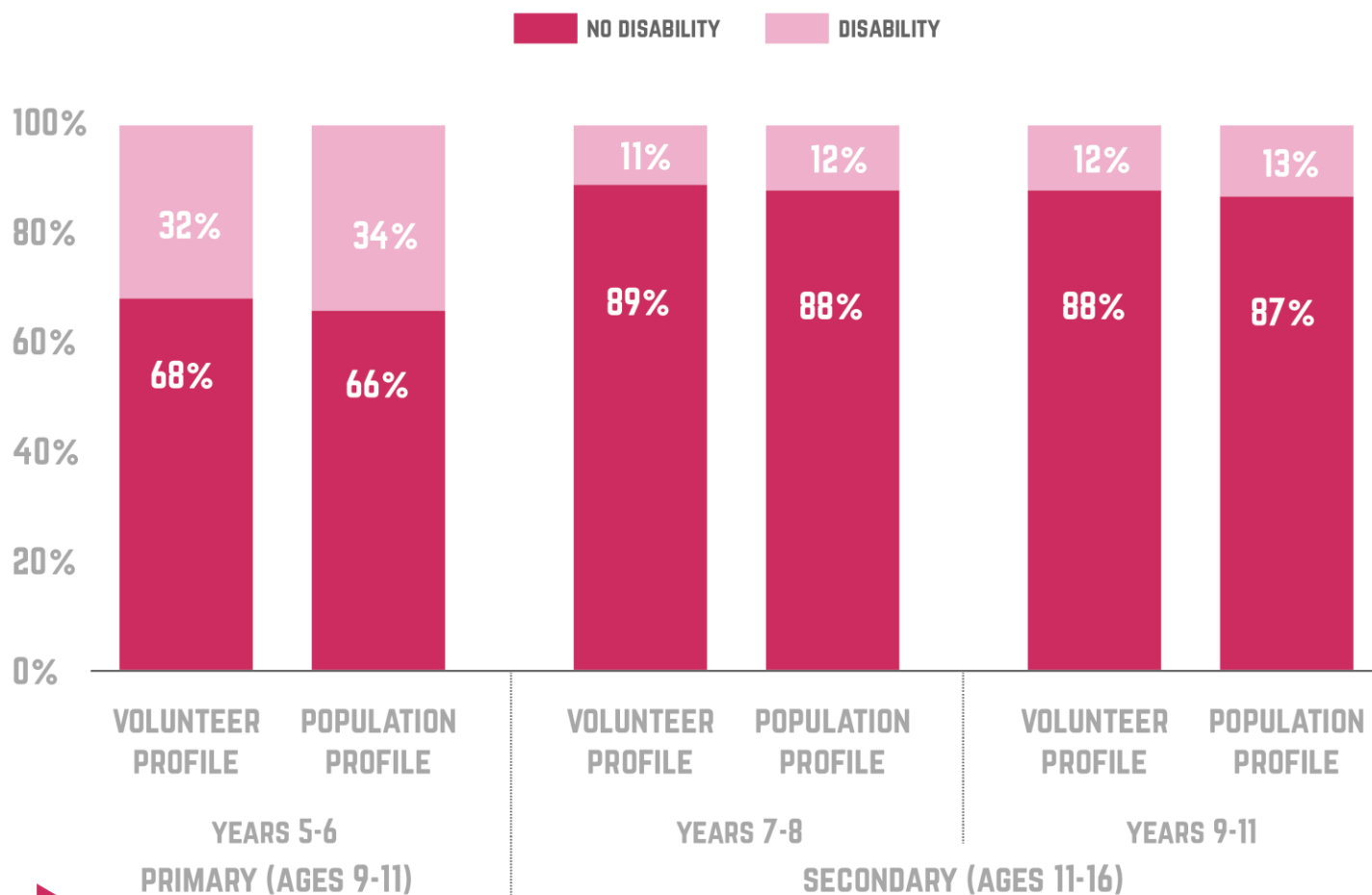
Children in Years 5-6 (ages 9-11) from the most affluent families are more likely to be sports leaders or ambassadors.

Young people in Years 7-11 (ages 11-16) from the most affluent families are more likely to volunteer as a coach or instructor, a referee, umpire, steward or marshal, compared to those from less affluent families.



DISABILITY

In all year groups, the profile of volunteers matches that of the population in relation to disability.

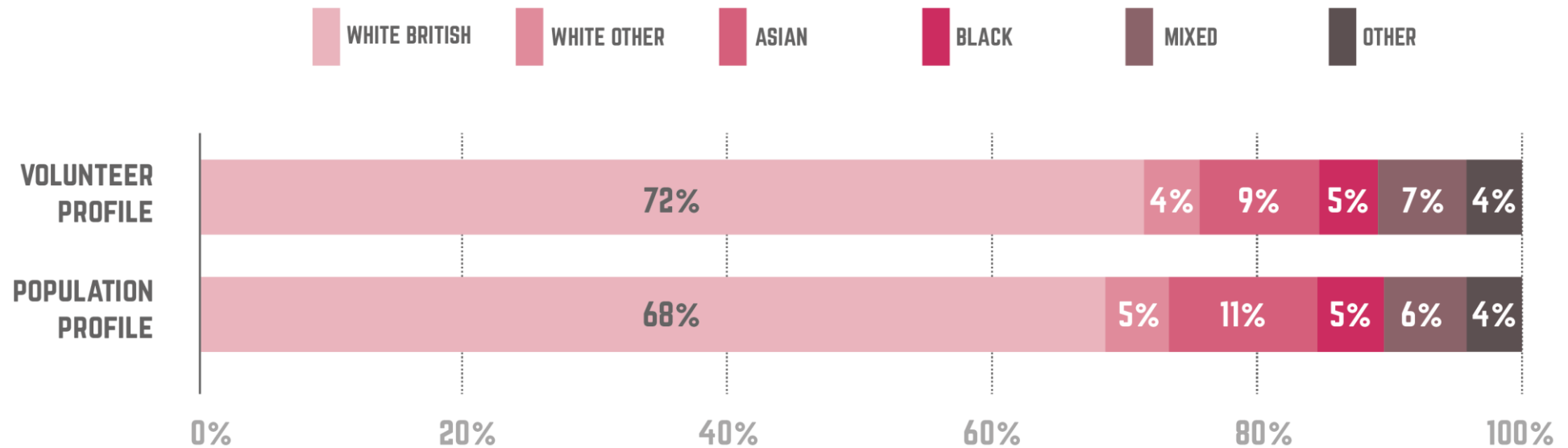


[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)



ETHNICITY

White British children and young people are slightly over-represented, whereas Asian children and young people are slightly under-represented amongst all volunteers.



WELLBEING, INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This chapter presents data looking at the wider outcomes for children and young people, both overall and linked to their levels of engagement in sport and physical activity.

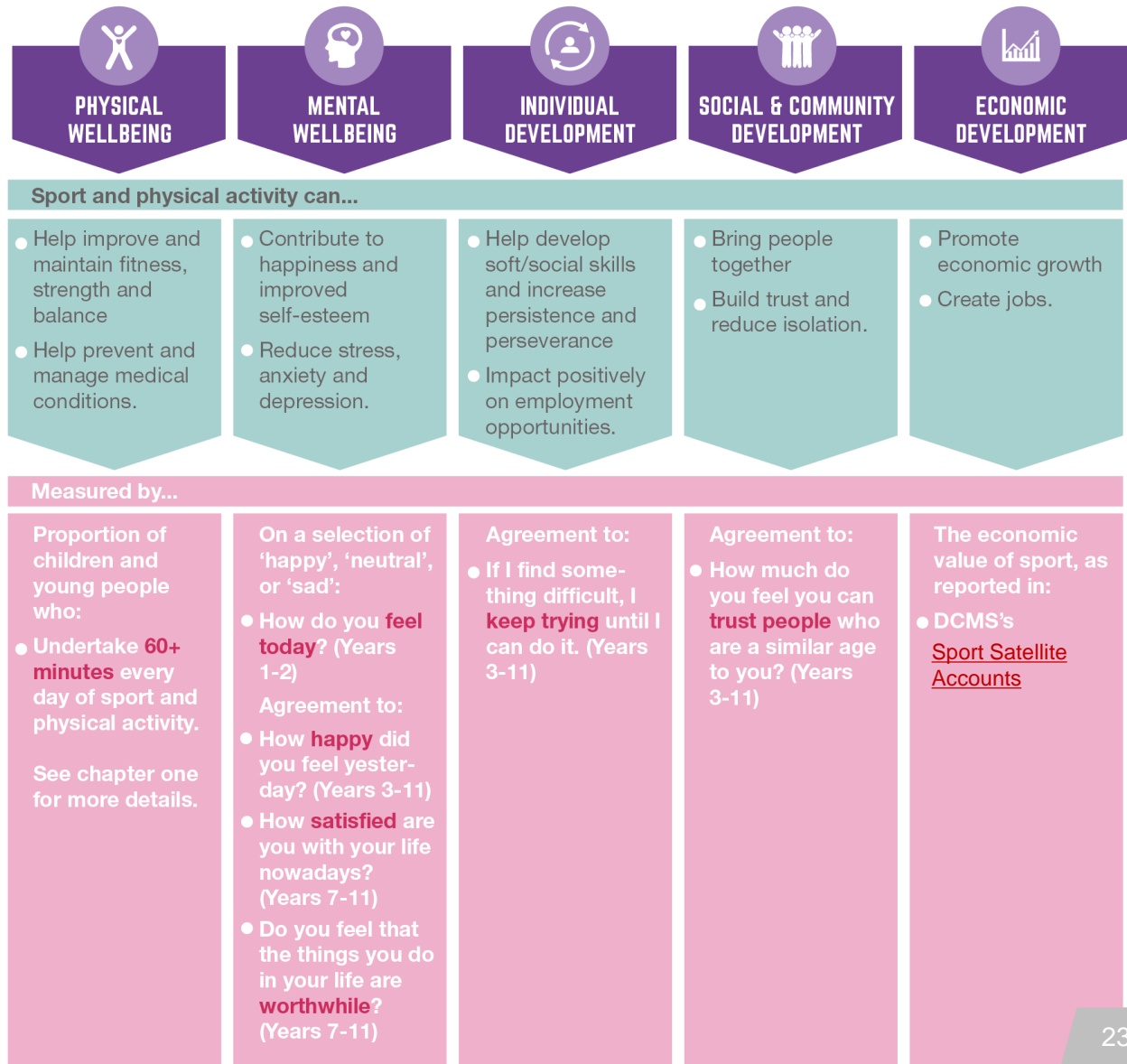
Measures covered are:

- Mental wellbeing
- Individual development
- Social and community development.

LINK TO DATA TABLES



OUTCOMES DEFINITION



MENTAL WELLBEING



MENTAL WELLBEING DECREASES WITH AGE

Levels of mental wellbeing are high:

- 83% of children in Years 1-2 (ages 5-7) agreed that they felt happy today
- Children and young people in Years 3-11 (ages 7-16) scored 7.1 out of 10 on average for how happy they felt yesterday.

Average levels of mental wellbeing decrease with age, from 7.9 for Years 3-4 (ages 7-9) to 6.2 for Years 9-11 (ages 13-16).

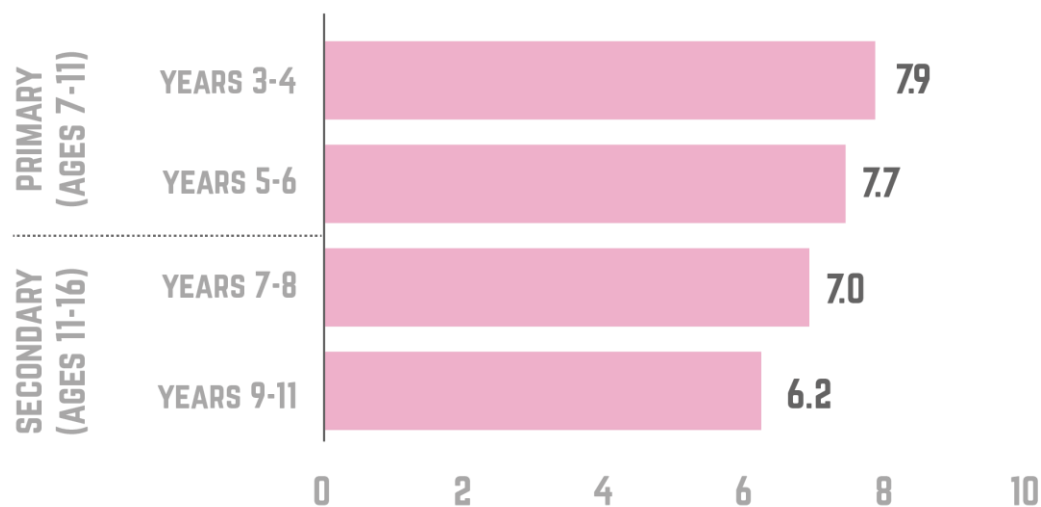
Boys (7.3) have higher average levels of mental wellbeing than girls (7.1).

Happiness is presented here, but Years 7-11 (ages 11-16) were also asked about life satisfaction and things they do in their lives being worthwhile. The same patterns as happiness have been observed.

HOW DO YOU FEEL TODAY? (YEARS 1-2 ONLY)



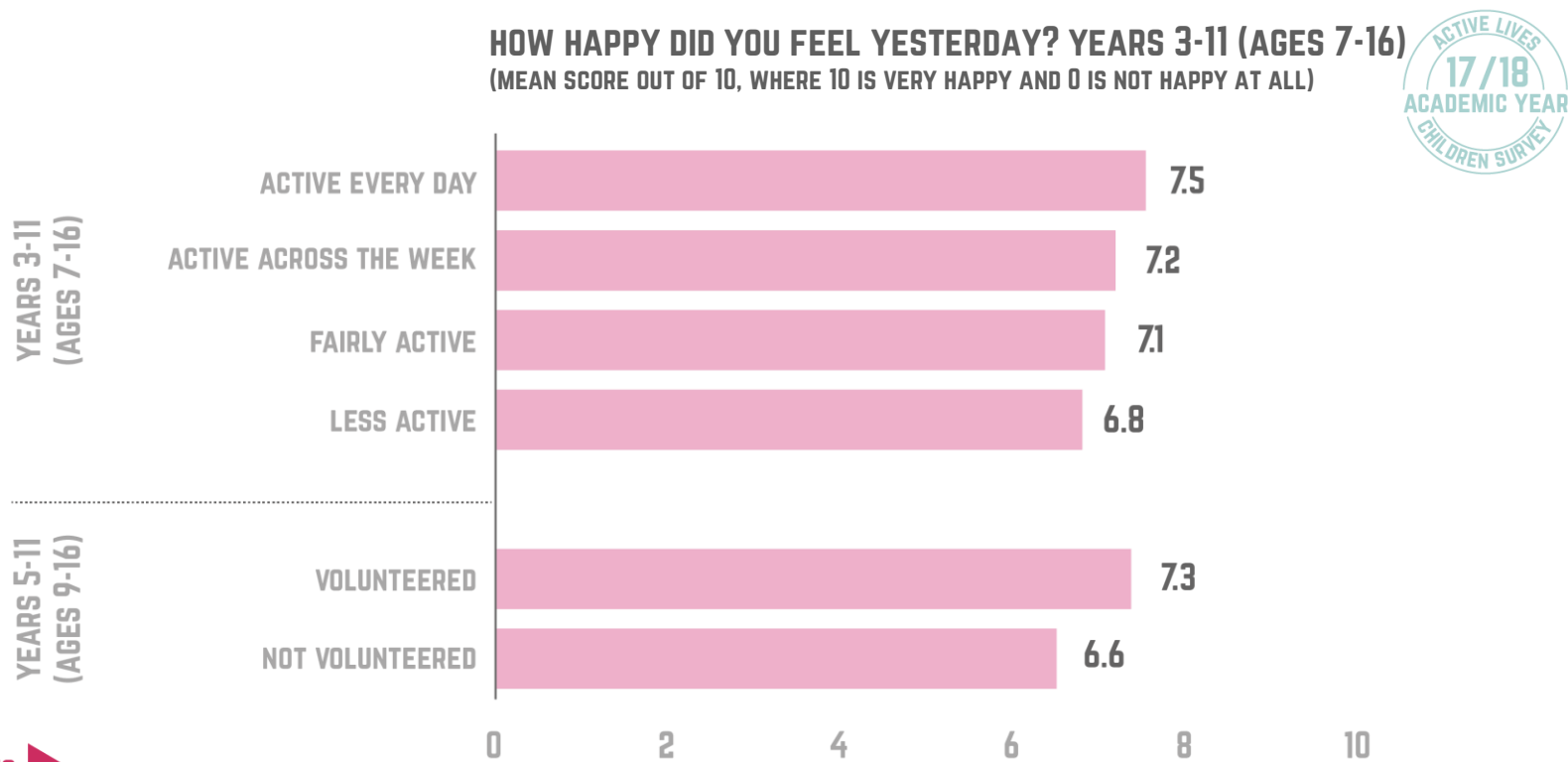
HOW HAPPY DID YOU FEEL YESTERDAY? (MEAN SCORE OUT OF 10, WHERE 10 IS VERY HAPPY AND 0 IS NOT HAPPY AT ALL)



THERE IS A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND LEVELS OF MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental wellbeing (happiness shown here) scores are higher for those active every day than those who are active across the week, which in turn are higher than for those who are fairly active, with scores being lowest for those who are less active.

There is also a positive association between all mental wellbeing measures and volunteering to support sport and physical activity.



[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#)



THE AMOUNT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAY THEY KEEP TRYING UNTIL THEY CAN DO SOMETHING DECREASES WITH AGE

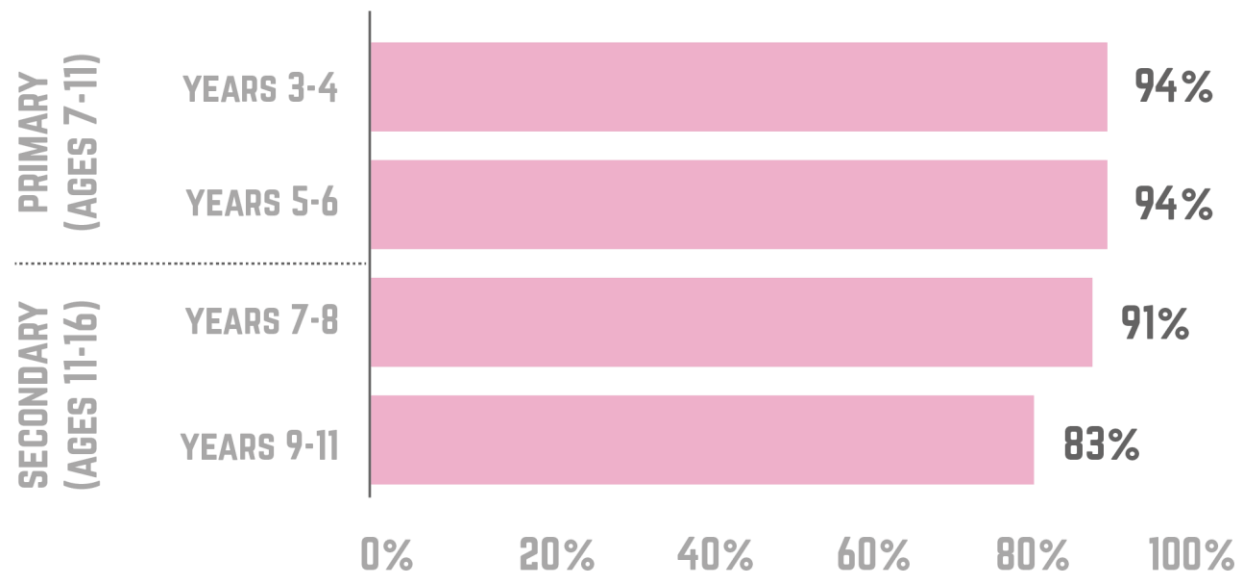
Individual development levels are high, with 90% of children and young people agreeing or strongly agreeing that they keep trying until they can do something.

Levels drop off most noticeably at Years 9-11 (ages 13-16), falling to 83%.



Boys and girls have similar levels of 'keep trying' up to Years 7-8 (ages 11-13). In Years 9-11, a gender difference is found, with boys (88%) being more likely to agree to the statement than girls (80%).

IF I FIND SOMETHING DIFFICULT, I KEEP TRYING UNTIL I CAN DO IT: YEARS 3-11 (AGES 7-16) (PROPORTION WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE)

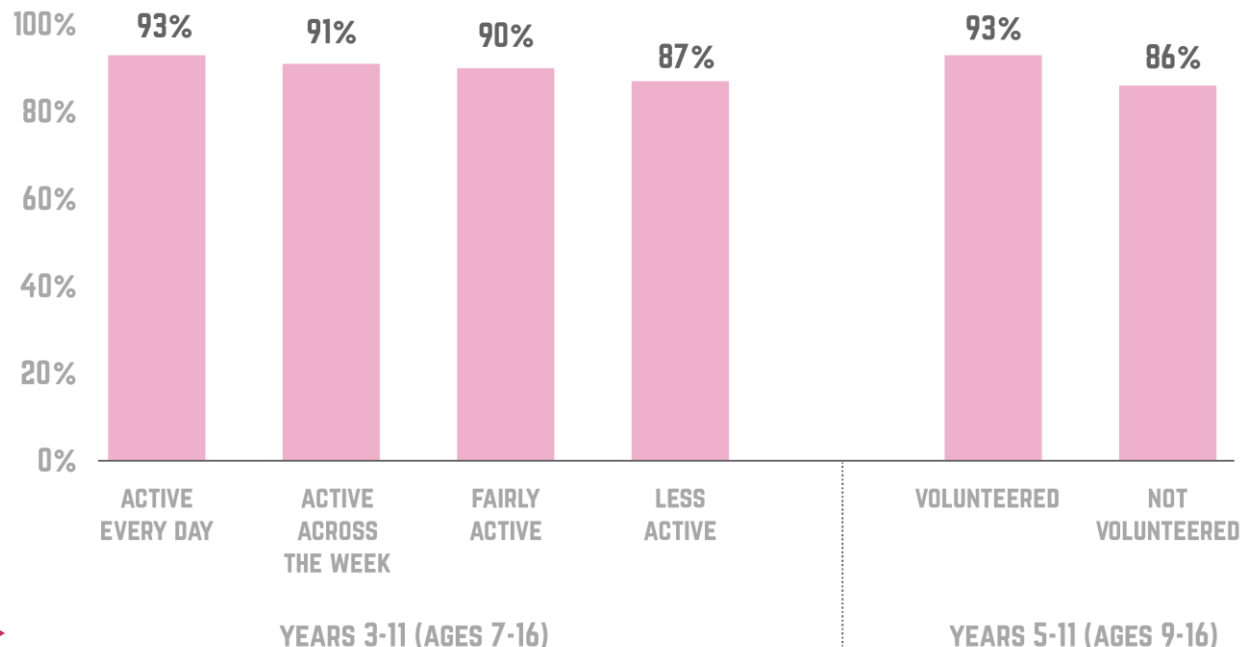


THERE IS A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND LEVELS OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Scores for agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement 'if I find something difficult I keep trying until I can do it' are higher for those active every day than those who are active across the week, which in turn are higher than for those who are fairly active, with scores being lowest for those who are less active.

There is also a positive association between individual development and volunteering to support sport and physical activity.

**IF I FIND SOMETHING DIFFICULT, I KEEP TRYING UNTIL I CAN DO IT: YEARS 3-11
(AGES 7-16) (PROPORTION WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE)**



80% OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL THEY CAN TRUST PEOPLE OF A SIMILAR AGE TO THEMSELVES

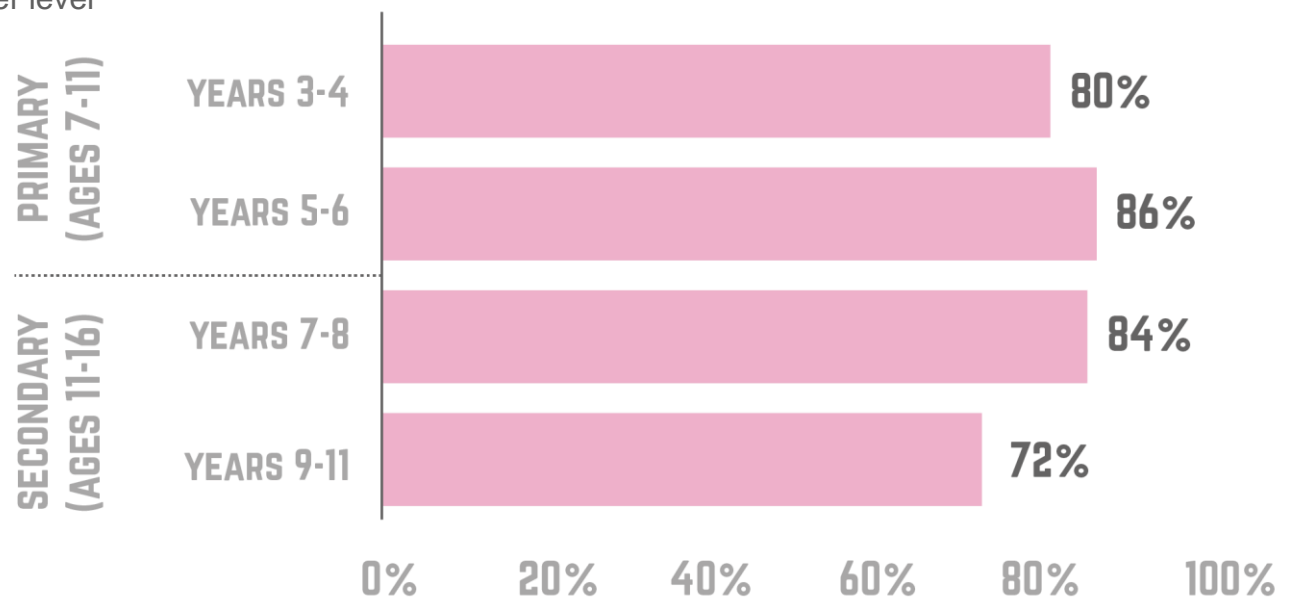
Levels of social trust are highest for children and young people in Years 5-6 (ages 9-11, 86%) and lowest for those in Years 9-11 (ages 13-16, 72%).

Overall social trust levels are similar for boys and girls, however:

- Girls in Years 3-4 (ages 7-9, 83%) have a higher level of trust than boys (80%)
- Boys in Years 9-11 (77%) have a higher level of trust than girls (71%).



HOW MUCH DO YOU FEEL YOU CAN TRUST PEOPLE OF A SIMILAR AGE TO YOU? YEARS 3-11 (AGES 7-16)
(PROPORTION WHO SAY A LOT OR A BIT)

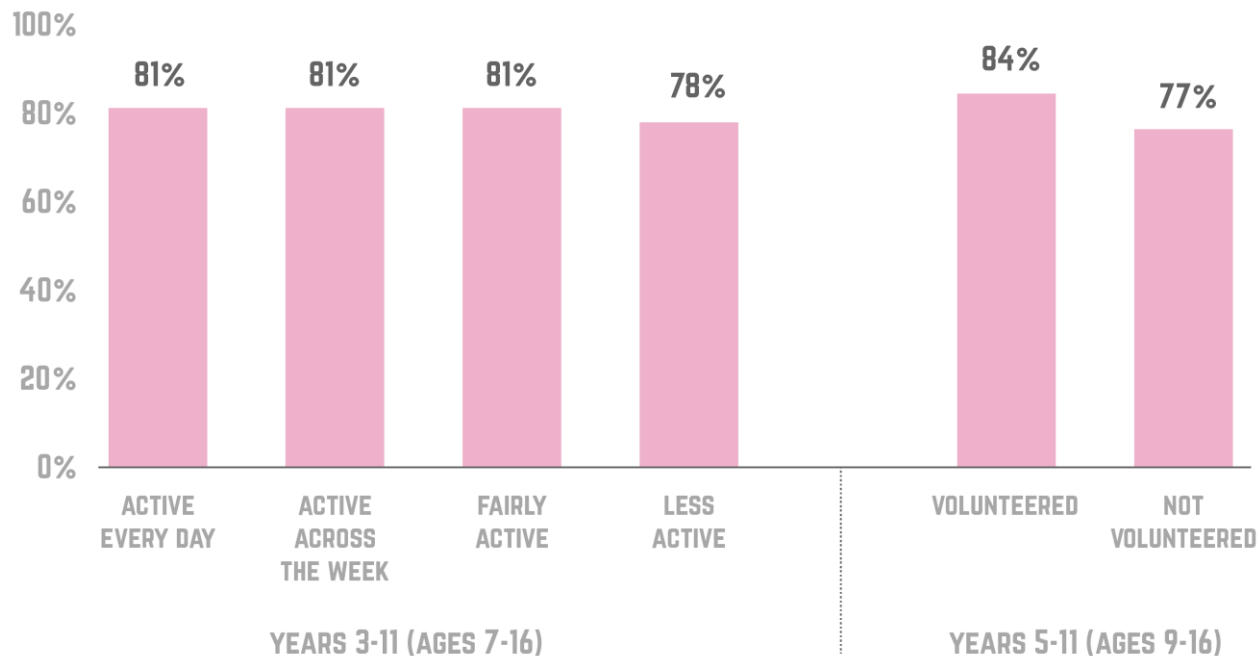


THERE IS A LIMITED POSITIVE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND LEVELS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

For agreeing or strongly agreeing that they can trust people of a similar age to themselves, less active children and young people have lower scores than all other groups. However, there is no difference in scores for those who are fairly active compared to active across the week or active every day.

There is a clear positive association between community development and volunteering to support sport and physical activity.

HOW MUCH DO YOU FEEL YOU CAN TRUST PEOPLE OF A SIMILAR AGE TO YOU? YEARS 3-11 (AGES 7-16) (PROPORTION WHO SAY A LOT OR A BIT)



LOCAL LEVEL DATA

Data for local areas, including nine regions, 44 County Sports Partnerships, and 351 local authorities are available for the following measures:

- **LEVELS OF ACTIVITY**

[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#) 

- **VOLUNTEERING AT LEAST TWICE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS**

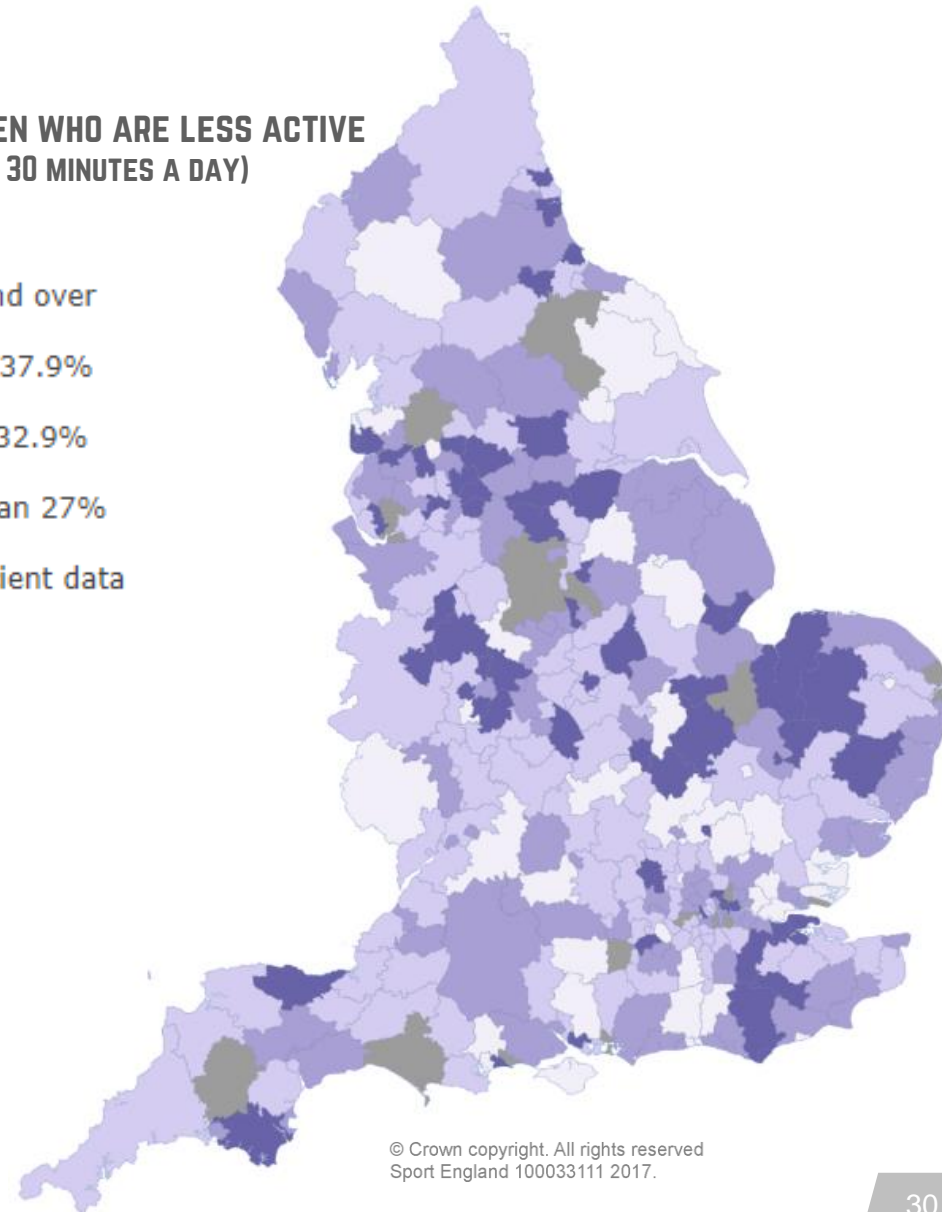
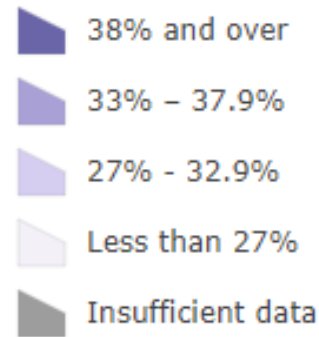
[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#) 

THE PICTURE ACROSS ENGLAND



LESS ACTIVE

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO ARE LESS ACTIVE
(LESS THAN AN AVERAGE OF 30 MINUTES A DAY)



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Sport England 100033111 2017.

ATTITUDES

Children and young people are asked about:

- Motivation
- Competence
- Confidence
- Understanding
- Knowledge

COMING SOON...

IN MARCH 2019 WE'LL BE PUBLISHING DATA ON THE ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This will cover five main domains: motivation, physical competence, confidence, understanding and knowledge. The report will set out the interactions between children and young people's perceptions of each attitude and the impact they have on both activity levels and our outcomes.



DEFINITIONS

VOLUNTEERING ROLES are defined as:

- Been a 'sports leader' or 'sports ambassador'
- Helped with setting up or clearing away (Years 5-6 only)
- Helped with refreshments: food or drink (Years 5-6 only)
- Coached or instructed an individual or team(s) in a sport, dance or fitness activity: other than solely for family members (Years 7-11 only)
- Refereed or umpired at a sports match, competition or event (Years 7-11 only)
- Acted as a steward or marshal at a sports or dance activity or event (Years 7-11 only)
- Given any other help (Years 5-6 only)
- Provided any other help for a sport, dance or fitness activity, e.g. helping with refreshments, setting up sports kit or equipment, scoring matches, first aid (Years 7-11 only).

MODERATE ACTIVITY is defined as activity where you raise your heart rate and feel a little out of breath (children were asked whether it made them breathe faster).

AT SCHOOL refers to activity done while at school, during normal school hours. It includes activities in PE lessons and break times, but excludes activities at before and after school clubs, even if these take place at school.

OUTSIDE SCHOOL refers to activity done outside of school hours. It includes anything done before getting to school and after leaving school (including travel to/from), as well as activity done at the weekend, on holiday days and at before and after school clubs, even if these took place at school.

ASSOCIATIONS

Where associations between wellbeing, individual and community development and engagement in sport and physical activity are referenced, this doesn't tell us about causality. We don't know the direction of the association or whether we are seeing a direct or indirect link.



DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS FOR CHILDREN

Standard demographic breakdowns are not applicable for children of all ages, therefore simpler questions were often used

[LINK TO MORE INFORMATION ON MEASURES AND DEMOGRAPHICS](#)



GENDER

Children and young people were given the option to select boy, girl, other or prefer not to say. Responses to 'other' are included in the data tables but not presented in this report due to low sample sizes. As a result, the volunteering profile of responses by gender does not sum to 100%.

FAMILY AFFLUENCE SCALE

The Family Affluence Scale provides an indication of the social status of children and young people's families. The scale is derived from a series of questions about their home and family such as car ownership, computers, and foreign holidays. Care should be taken when looking across year groups as the age of the child is likely to impact on certain elements of the scale (e.g. families with older children may be more likely to own digital devices and travel abroad).

DISABILITY

Limiting disability is defined as an individual reporting they have a physical or mental health condition or illness that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more, and that this has a substantial effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. Here, we just ask about disability without the reference to it being limiting or long term.

A slightly adapted version of the standard Office for National Statistics (ONS) harmonised disability question (to make the language appropriate to children) is asked to parents of Years 1-2 and pupils in Years 7-11. However, comparisons shouldn't be made as parents and pupils are likely to respond differently. A simpler question, 'do you need additional help', is asked of Years 3-6 pupils. This gets higher levels of agreement.

ETHNICITY

Children and young people in Years 3-11 were asked a simplified question about ethnicity, while parents of Years 1-2 children were asked the full ONS standard question. For the purposes of analysis, Chinese has been grouped with 'Other' from the parent responses.

NOTES

THE ACTIVE LIVES CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEY IS AN ONLINE SURVEY

Carried out by Ipsos MORI, it involves online questionnaires being completed in school during lesson time. Parents of Years 1-2 children are asked to complete a separate online questionnaire providing behavioural data for these children – the children themselves answer basic questions about their attitudes only.

More information on the survey can be found [here](#).

SPORT SPECTATING

While not covered in this report, data tables showing the number of people attending live sports events form part of this release.

[LINK TO DATA TABLES](#) 

THE ACHIEVED SAMPLE

Attitudinal responses: 130,194 (pupils Years 1-11)

Behavioural responses: 109,503 (parents of pupils Years 1-2 and pupils Years 3-11).

DATA HAVE BEEN WEIGHTED to Department for Education (DfE) pupil population estimates from Edubase (2016/17) for geography and key demographics.

CONFIDENCE INTERVALS can be found in the linked tables. These indicate that if repeated samples were taken and confidence intervals computed for each sample, 95% of the intervals would contain the true value. Only significant differences are reported within the commentary. Where results are reported as being the same for two groups, any differences fall within the margin of error.

POPULATION TOTALS are estimated values and have been calculated using 2017/18 DfE pupil population estimates. Confidence intervals also apply to these. More detail can be found [here](#).

POPULATION PROFILE

Throughout the volunteering section, to show the representativeness of volunteers, the demographic profile of volunteers has been compared to the population profile. Given the limited availability of demographic population data by school year, the weighted profile of the survey has been used to generate these proportions as the survey is weighted to be nationally representative.

[LINK TO MORE INFORMATION ON MEASURES AND DEMOGRAPHICS](#) 