

Kent and Medway Secondary School Sport and Physical Activity Survey Report

Between November 2021 and February 2022, Kent Sport and the network of School Games Organisers conducted surveys with young people from across Kent and Medway to understand their barriers and motivations to taking part in physical activity.

Kent Sport aims to reduce inactivity across the county, and encourage the least active to increase their physical activity levels. Therefore, we have focused our analysis on those not meeting the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines of 60 minutes of physical activity per day (on average), and specifically those doing less than 30 minutes of activity per day.

The responses were from students attending secondary schools with high percentages of free school meals, students from culturally diverse backgrounds, and/or those with special educational needs. We received over 2,000 responses from across the county.

In addition to developing tailored activities for the students who answered the survey, Kent Sport are committed to sharing the findings and common themes to support professionals design appropriate activities for young people who are less likely to be active.

Key findings

- More than three-quarters of respondents wanted to do more physical activity
- Activity levels were lower for young people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and recipients of free school meals
- The most active young people were happier than the least active
- The most commonly mentioned activities that young people would like to see offered were: dodgeball, swimming, self-defence, boxing and basketball



For more information on this report, please contact kentsport@kent.gov.uk

Our respondents were...

- 52% female
- 20% from culturally diverse communities
- 11% with a disability
- 25% receiving free school meals
- 68% between year 7 and 9

Physical activity participation

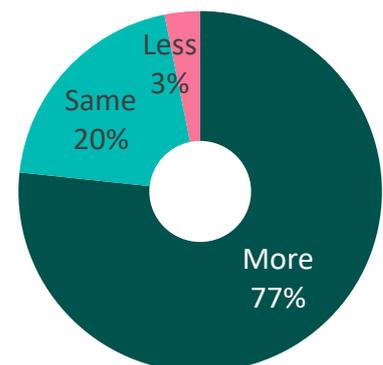
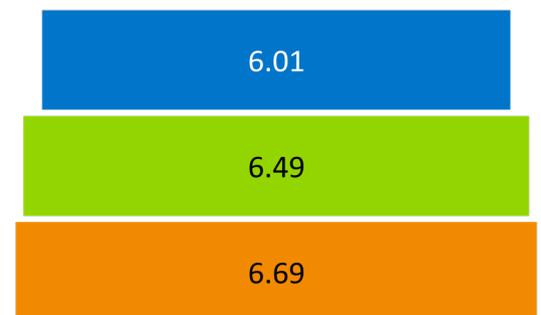
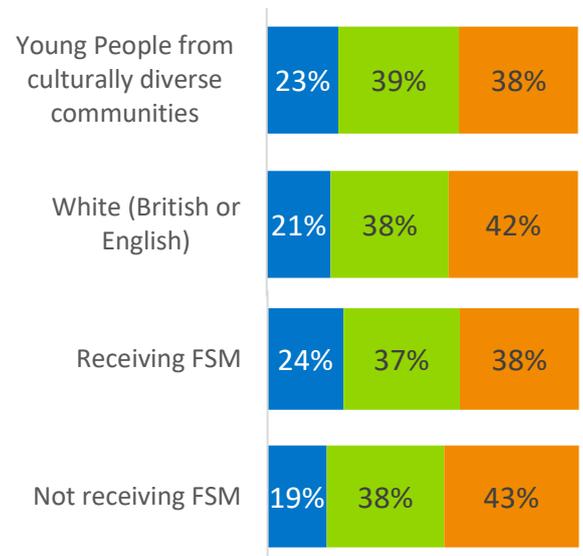
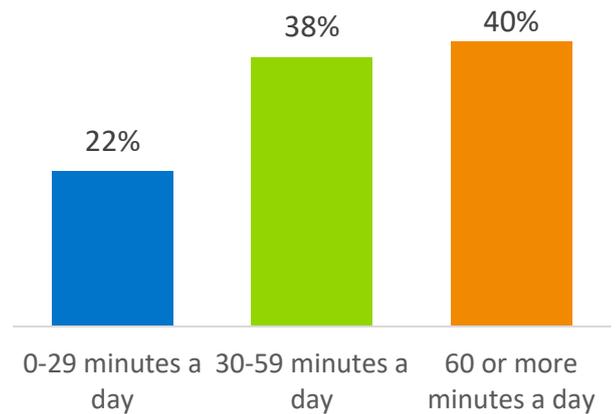
60% of young people surveyed were not meeting the Chief Medical Officer guidelines – an average of 60 minutes of physical activity per day (22% did less than 30 minutes a day, 38% did at least 30 minutes, but less than an hour).

Physical activity levels were lower for those from culturally diverse communities compared to White British students.

Young people who receive free school meals (FSM) were less likely to be active than those who did not.

Students were asked - "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?" to give an indication of mental wellbeing levels from a scale of 1 (lowest) – 10 (highest). The most active students reported the highest happiness scores, while the least active reported the lowest.

More than three-quarters of young people said they would like to be more active, showing there is demand for physical activity opportunities from the least active young people (excluding those who answered "don't know").



What the less active young people have told us...

What makes a good coach or PE teacher?

"Someone who is fun, happy and pushes us to do our best."

"Understands that not everyone works at the same speed"

"Interactive and listens to what the class enjoy."

"Someone that understands people's problems."

What do you LIKE about after-school clubs?

"Extra time with friends."

"Being active."

"I like that you can get fitter and more healthy."

"There aren't many people so you grow close."

What do you DISLIKE about after-school clubs? Why do you NOT take part in after-school clubs?

"Taking away my social time."

"Can be cancelled easily."

"I don't like how we can't choose what sport we do."

"When it's not what you fully expected or wanted to do."

Common themes

- Fun/enthusiastic
- Offers variety
- Listens to opinions
- Friendly
- Motivating
- Firm but fair
- Understanding
- Supportive/encouraging
- Patient

- Fun
- Getting fit
- Being with friends/socialising
- Meet and work with new people
- Being part of a team
- Learning new things

- Having to get changed
- They are too short and over quickly
- Time (having to get home/catch bus)
- Look after siblings/ homework
- Tired after school



What would make you or your friends attend more after-school clubs?

"More activities and they should do a vote to see what people want."

"If they were more welcoming and you were less likely to be judged by the other members."

"More posters and visual things around."

"Help with transport."

- Different clubs
- More equipment
- Help getting home (particularly for students at SEN schools)
- Clubs exclusively for year groups
- Activities aimed at girls

What did young people tell us about their likes and dislikes in relation to competition?

"Dislike the pressure."

"Challenging myself."

"It's very entertaining and I like working as a team."

"Too many people and I get nervous in front of crowds"

- Fun
- Winning
- Being Competitive
- Losing
- Nerves
- Pressure

What activities did less active people want to take part in?

The top activities mentioned were (with no. of mentions):



Dodgeball (146)



Swimming (140)



Self-defence (122)



Boxing (121)



Basketball (106)



5 Key recommendations for delivering positive experiences for the less active young people

1. Take time to understand young people's barriers to taking part and support them to overcome these.

Young people might have certain challenges which they may or may not want to disclose, however making sure potential participants have a voice from the outset will help to understand where we can address and plan for these barriers.

2. Explore the motivations of why a young person might decide to come to sessions, and ensure these expectations are met where possible.

The most frequent response was that young people liked 'fun' activities, so consider how every session you deliver incorporates enjoyable activities, but also ask young people why they have decided to attend so you can plan to meet their expectations.

3. Simply ask – "what do you want to do"?

We know that less active young people are more likely to engage in programmes if they have been involved in their development so ask potential participants what they want - be this the sport/activity or type of session.

4. Provide a welcoming and fun environment which is free from judgement.

As soon as a less active young person steps into your environment, consider the emotions they might be feeling and create a friendly atmosphere from the outset, and try to avoid activities that have the rest of group observing one person.

5. Provide social experiences both physically and virtually.

We know young people want to socialise with friends and meet new people, but we also understand there are competing interests, so consider how you can incorporate breaks in activities for participants to socialise and even check or update their social media accounts.