

Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board – 04 March 2021

Together Active – Physical Activity participation

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a. Note the change in governance arrangements to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Active Partnership;
- b. Consider the findings of the most recent Active Lives survey and the subsequent implications to the health and wellbeing of our residents; and
- c. Endorse the recommended priority areas for action.

Background

Change in Governance

1. Together Active, is part of an England wide network of 46 Active Partnerships funded by Sport England. Active Partnerships deliver services and programmes that contribute to achieving both local and national priorities for physical activity and sport.
2. In September 2019, the organisation undertook a change in governance, moving from a hosted body to a Charitable Incorporated Body. This change will allow the organisation to be more agile and access a wider range of income streams, however whilst the name has been changed (formally known as Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent) our organisational mission of “working together to create active places and healthy lives through Sport and Physical Activity” remains.

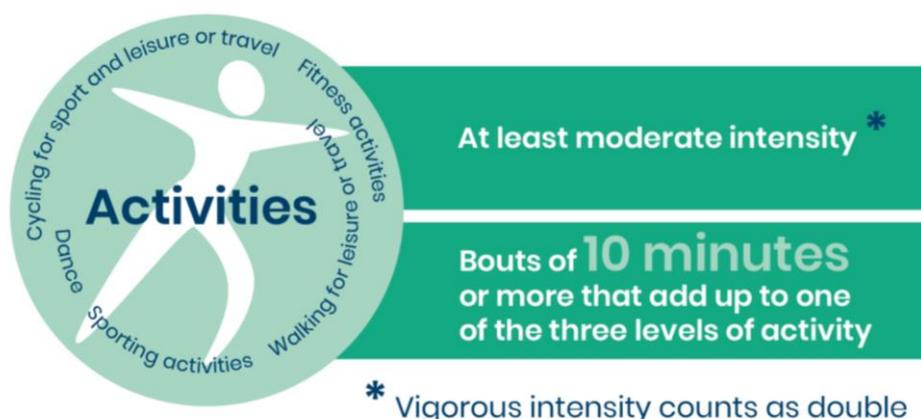
Adult participation in Sport and physical activity

3. Covering the period from mid-May 2019 to mid-May 2020, this report provides an update on the sporting and physical activity behaviours of adults in both England and Staffordshire. The period covered includes the seven-weeks from the 23 March to mid-May when England was in full lockdown in response to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. This caused unprecedented disruption to our lives and had a significant impact on our engagement in sport and physical activity.
4. In this report, we reveal that despite continued growth in the first part of the year nationally, activity levels in England were increasing until measures to counter the coronavirus pandemic were introduced in mid-March. Lockdown led to unprecedented decreases in activity levels between mid-March and mid-May. The disruption in the final two months wiped out those gains and resulted in a flat set of results for the year overall. Compared to the same two-month period 12 months earlier, we saw:

- a. 3.0m (-7.1%) fewer active adults
 - b. 3.4m (+7.4%) more inactive adults.
5. As a result, over the full 12 months, the proportion of adults who were active in England was unchanged compared to last year. There was a small increase in the proportion who were inactive. This data regarding participation trends over the year is not available at a county level.

What do we mean by physically active?

6. Sport England categories physical activity into three groups:
- a. Active (at least 150 minutes a week)
 - b. Fairly active (an average of 30-149 minutes a week)
 - c. Inactive (less than 30 minutes a week).



Staffordshire Adults Active Lives result

7. There was no significant change in adult activity levels in Staffordshire since 2019. Our most inactive districts are currently East Staffordshire (28.6%) Cannock Chase (27.8%) and Newcastle-Under-Lyme (27.6%) (See appendix 1).

	England	Staffordshire
Inactive	25.5%	25.6%
Fairly Active	11.7%	12.1%
Active	62.8%	62.3%

8. These figures put Staffordshire in the top 20% of the most inactive 'active partnerships' areas in England (9/45). Over the last five years Staffordshire has had consistently high levels of inactivity, with some of our Districts and Boroughs having the highest levels of inactivity nationally. In Staffordshire **260,200 residents aged 16+ are inactive**, potentially having a profound impact on their health and wellbeing.

Summary of demographic differences due to Covid-19 restrictions

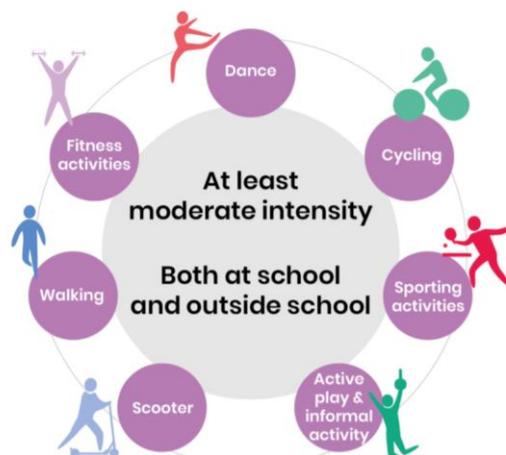
9. It has become clear that certain parts of the population are being disproportionately affected by the pandemic, significantly impacting their ability to be physically active and further widening already significant levels of health inequalities. Figures show;
- a. Whilst activity levels fell for all groups, falls were larger amongst lower social groups (NS-SEC 6-8) -6.4% than higher social groups (NS-SEC 1-2) -5.4%. As such, the gap between lower and higher social groups widened during this period.
 - b. With disabled adults and those with a long-term health condition asked to shield, their activity levels decreased. This is likely to have driven the increase in the number of those with complex needs (three or more impairments) being inactive across the period, up 11.2% compared to 12 months earlier.
 - c. The pandemic has widened the inequalities we observe between ethnic groups. Drops in activity levels were larger amongst those from Asian (excluding Chinese), Black and Other ethnic backgrounds these drops are larger for men from both Asian (excluding Chinese) (-20.8%) and Black backgrounds (-19.5%).

Active Lives Children and Young People survey (covering the academic year 2019 – 2020)

10. This is the third Active Lives Children and Young People Survey report, summarising the activity levels of 5- to 16-year-olds in England from September 2019 to July 2020. The period covered includes the disruptive storms last February, which resulted in school closures and the cancellation of many outdoor activities, and the unprecedented disruption caused by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, which primarily impacted the summer term. The disruption also impacted our collection of data. We were unable to collect any data during the last two weeks of the spring term (late March) when schools were closed, while we also had to switch from school to at home completion for the summer term. As a result, we don't have data covering the first full lockdown.

How do we define activity levels for young people?

11. Sport England defines activity levels for young people into three categories
- a. Active (an average of at least 60 minutes a day)
 - b. Fairly active (an average of 30-59 minutes a day)
 - c. Less active (less than an average of 30 minutes a day)



12. Children's lives have been disrupted by the pandemic and their usual play and activity habits continue to be inhibited. Again, inequalities were exacerbated, children with access to a garden and out of home space were more than twice as likely to participate, than those with neither.
13. Participation in active play fell in the year 3-6 and year 7-11 age groups, with the falls for boys and girls being of similar size. Participation held up for year 1-2 pupils. Children were much more likely to have taken part in Active Play if they were attending school every day (78.3%) instead of not attending (54.5%).
14. Not surprisingly, sporting activities (which include team sports, athletics/running and swimming) were collectively hardest hit, down 16% or just over a million fewer children and young people taking part, whilst the biggest gains were found in walking, cycling and fitness. Although overall reductions have been minimised, the disruption has had an unprecedented impact upon physical literacy, with changes to perceived competence, confidence and enjoyment of concern going forward.

Summary of England levels of activity for Children and Young People.

- a. 3.2 million (44.9%) children and young people are active, taking part in sport and physical activity for an average of 60+ minutes a day and therefore meeting the new Chief Medical Officer guidelines.
- b. The proportion of children and young people reporting they were active has decreased by 1.9% over the past 12 months.
- c. 1.7 million (23.8%) are fairly active taking part in average of 30-59 minutes a day.
- d. 2.3 million children and young people (31.3%) are less active (do less than an average of 30 minutes of sport and physical activity a day), an increase of 2.4% in the proportion reporting they are less active compared with 12 months ago
- e. **Doubling** of the numbers of children **doing nothing** in the last 7 days – up by over quarter of a million Children and young people.
- f. The average minutes spent doing activity per week fell by roughly an hour

Summary of Staffordshire levels of activity for Children and Young People

15. Sport England did not publish local authority data due to the lower response numbers as a result of school closures and restrictions making sample sizes less reliable. We have received a breakdown for Staffordshire, but this data should be treated with some caution.
 - a. 40.1% of children and young people are active in Staffordshire but this is lower than the England average.
 - b. 24.4% of children and young people are fairly active.
 - c. 35.5% of children and young people are less active this is higher than in England and a significant increase on last year**
16. The districts which have the highest 'less active' levels and higher than England are Staffordshire Moorlands (40.2%) and Cannock Chase (37.9%) (See Appendix 2).

Impact of Covid-19 on delivery of PE in schools

17. To build a picture of the current landscape, The Youth Sport Trust conducted an online survey, to understand the provision of both timetabled and extracurricular PE and any barriers to delivery, particularly in the light of ongoing Government guidelines and restrictions (e.g. maintaining class bubbles, cleaning and changing rules etc.) The survey reported that in secondary schools over a fifth of schools were offering less timetabled PE than before Covid. Around half of all schools will be delivering less extracurricular Sport in the Autumn term and, additional, around four in 10 will offer none.
18. PE teachers and senior leaders told the YST how life for children in schools is more sedentary, with restriction on their movement and some children not even moving between lessons. This resulted in almost three quarters of teachers reporting children returning to school with low levels of physical fitness.

Other key findings revealed:

- a. 17% of key stage 2 delivered less or no curriculum PE, 22% at key stage 3 and 26% at Key stage 4
- b. 73% of teachers reported children returning with low levels of physical fitness
- c. 49% have noticed mental wellbeing issues in pupils including anxiety and fear
- d. 50% of all teacher surveyed reported a cautiousness about interpreting the guidelines correctly.
- e. 65% of all teachers surveyed said that being able to follow delivery guidance due to logistical issues including cleaning equipment, social distancing, having to stay in class bubble or staggered break time was an issue or barrier in delivering PA.

Conclusion

19. The on-going trend of inactivity in Staffordshire continues to be a concern, particularly for our young people. The impact of the pandemic has been profound

on both our behaviours but also on public and community sport and leisure provision. Supporting communities to change sedentary behaviours must now be a priority. Together Active has identified four key priorities areas for action:

- a. Supporting schools, particularly primaries, to prioritise PE and activity play.
- b. Sustaining and enhancing community sport and physical activity provision, (specifically those organisations working with priority audiences)
- c. Delivering targeted campaigns regarding the importance of physical activity.
- d. Supporting social prescribers and medical practitioners to incorporate physical activity into routine clinical and community care.
- e. Advocating for physical activity to be a key strategy in fighting the pandemic and protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of our communities.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1-2 – Active Lives Data

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