



Children & Young People Activity Levels

A summary of London activity data from
Sport England's Active Lives Survey



CONTENTS

LONDON
SPORT



Introduction **3**

Key Findings **4**

Executive Summary **5**

London Overview **6**

London vs England **7**

Family Affluence &
School Year **8**

Ethnicity **9**

Gender **10**

Gender vs Ethnicity **11**

Key Contacts **12**

INTRODUCTION

Every year, Sport England releases data from its Active Lives Survey for Children & Young People (CYP) which presents activity level data across England.

The Active Lives data - including an adult population version published in the spring - is the most accurate measure of activity levels available, and enables us to have a broad view of the challenges that Active Partnerships like London Sport face to tackle inactivity.

This report has been created using the latest data, covering the 2021-22 academic year, to give an overview of CYP activity levels in London and to highlight key areas of concern.

ABOUT LONDON SPORT

London Sport is a charity that exists to help all Londoners live longer, healthier and happier lives through being active.

Our focus is on children and adults in the most deprived communities who face the greatest challenges of inequality.

With physical inactivity responsible for 1 in 6 premature deaths, we want to help every Londoner find their way to move more.

We are supported by Sport England and the Mayor of London, and collaborate with London's local authorities and other organisations to provide better access to sport and physical activity across the capital.



KEY FINDINGS

Activity Levels

There was a significant improvement for England's CYP activity levels from last year, however London has not seen a significant change and the proportion of 'active' CYP remains under 50% in line with previous years.

Over 620,000 children in London (5-16 years old) are not meeting the recommended levels of daily activity.



Family Affluence

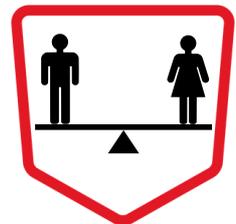
Children from the most affluent families in London are nearly 14% more likely to be active compared to children from the least affluent families (54% vs 40%).



Gender

The gap between boys and girls in London is still significant, with boys being 8% more likely to be active than girls (49% of boys are active compared to 41% of girls). There are approximately 40,000 more active boys than active girls in London.

The gap in London is also wider than the national figures (5% gender gap for England).



Ethnicity

Only 39% of Black CYP and 40% of Asian CYP are active compared to 51% of White British CYP.

While the gap between the most active and least active ethnicity groups has improved from last year (from 21% to 12%), this gap has persistently been over 10% over the last 5 years.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Less than half of children in London are doing the recommended levels of activity each day. This is not good enough because this will have a direct impact on their health and wellbeing.

While there was a slight uplift in activity across England, we are far behind where we want to be in London. We have still not bounced back to pre-pandemic activity levels, and the cost of living crisis is likely to only exacerbate the challenges already faced by millions of families across the capital. When you are faced with tough choices it's easy to see sport and physical activity as a luxury - rather than essential to a healthy, happy life.

Digging deeper into the Active Lives data, this report also shows that significant inequalities still persist. We cannot allow for activity levels - and the benefits that come with it - to be so dependent on a child's ethnicity or family income.

The widening of the activity gap between boys and girls is also disheartening. Older girls' activity levels actually increased during the pandemic but have since declined, suggesting that the pre-pandemic 'normal' was not actually helping girls be active. We need to understand why this is the case and what more we can do to help girls access and enjoy activity as much as (and indeed more than) they did during the pandemic.

We know the transformational power sport and physical activity can have for children and young people.

As well as improving physical health, an active lifestyle can improve mental health and wellbeing, reduce the risk of long term health conditions and obesity, and even help children perform better at school.

We have to be more ambitious to support the next generation and ensure that every child and young person has access to sport and physical activity.

Our current work distributing £500k of Sport England's Together Fund will play a part in tackling the child inactivity crisis, but there is far more to do. That's why in 2023 we will also be renewing our focus on children and young people, working more closely with schools in the most deprived areas of London, and leading new projects to utilise London's spaces in creative ways to help children be active in a safe and fun environment.

Together, we can help every Londoner find their way to move more.

Come and help us on our mission.

Let's Move London.



Emily Robinson
Chief Executive Officer
London Sport



ACTIVITY LEVELS: LONDON OVERVIEW

Less than half of children and young people in London (45.3%) are not meeting the recommended levels of sport and physical activity (60 minutes or more of 'moderate-to-vigorous' activity).

This suggests that over 620,000 5-16 year olds in London are not doing enough sport and physical activity.

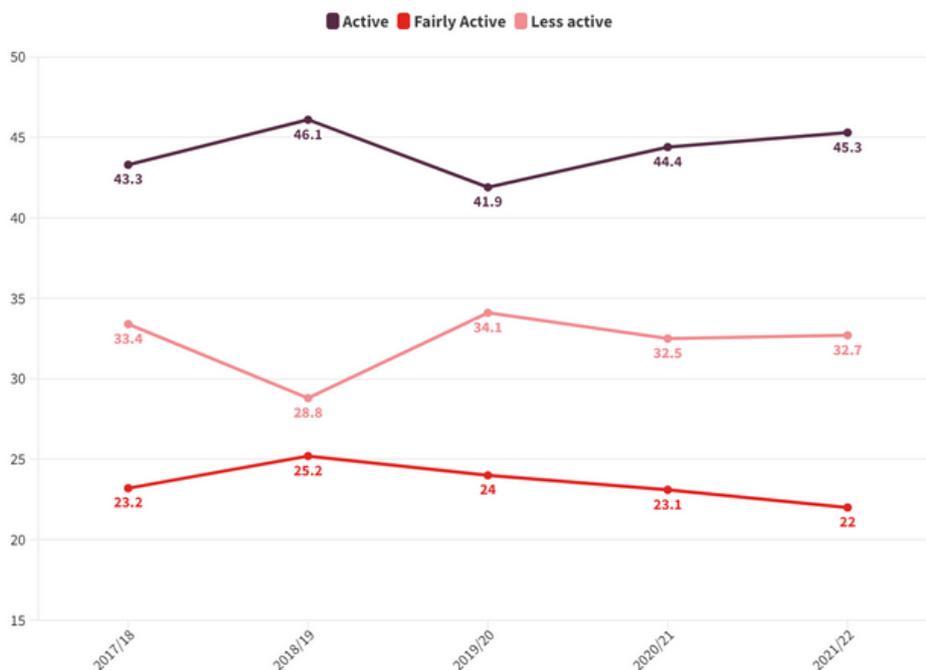


CYP activity levels in London were 44.4% in the previous year; there is no significant change in activity rates from last year's results.

Activity levels were low even prior to 2020, however, the pandemic dramatically worsened these figures. The latest data shows an increase since 2020, but activity levels have not yet matched the pre-pandemic levels of 46.1%, suggesting that London has not yet fully recovered from the impacts of COVID-19.

It is still too early to evaluate the full impact that the cost of living crisis has had on CYP activity levels, but it is likely to have contributed to London's difficulty in reaching pre-pandemic levels.

Year-on-year changes for CYP across London (% of population)



ACTIVITY LEVELS: LONDON VS ENGLAND

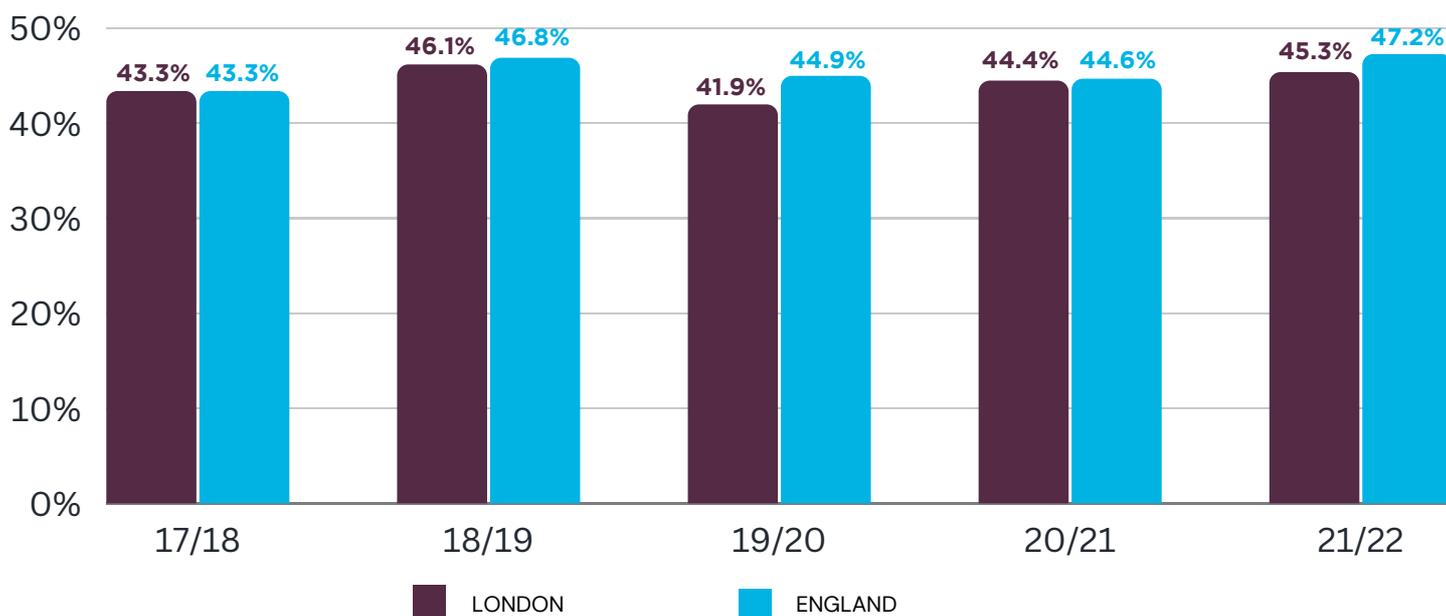
When looking at the rates of active CYP across England, London is in the bottom quartile out of 45 areas (defined by 'Active Partnerships' in Sport England's Active Lives Survey).



London has continued to have a lower level of active CYP compared to the national average. There has been greater annual increase (2.6%) in levels of active CYP in England, returning to pre-pandemic figures.

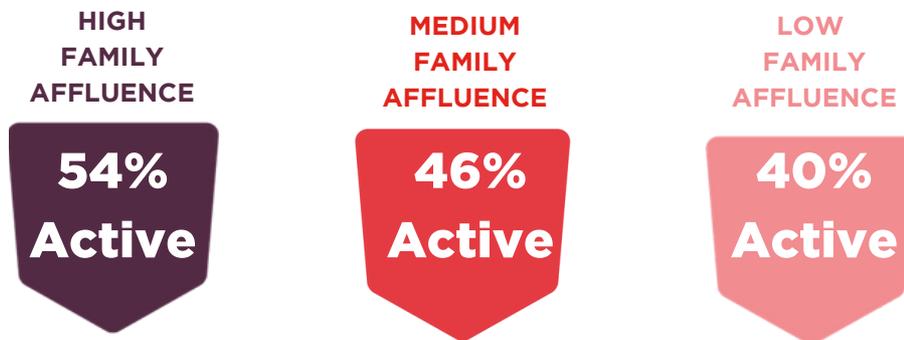
There does not appear to be a correlation between activity levels and population size, with other large population regions varying in CYP activity levels (Merseyside 53.3%, Greater Manchester 49.3%, Birmingham 41.6%).

Year-on-year changes for Active CYP across England & London



ACTIVITY BY FAMILY AFFLUENCE

Children from the most affluent families in London are 14% more likely to be active compared to children from the least affluent families.*



ACTIVITY BY SCHOOL YEAR

Activity levels have in general increased from previous years, with the greatest changes to be seen in Years 7-8 (52.5% from 45.3% in 2020-21)

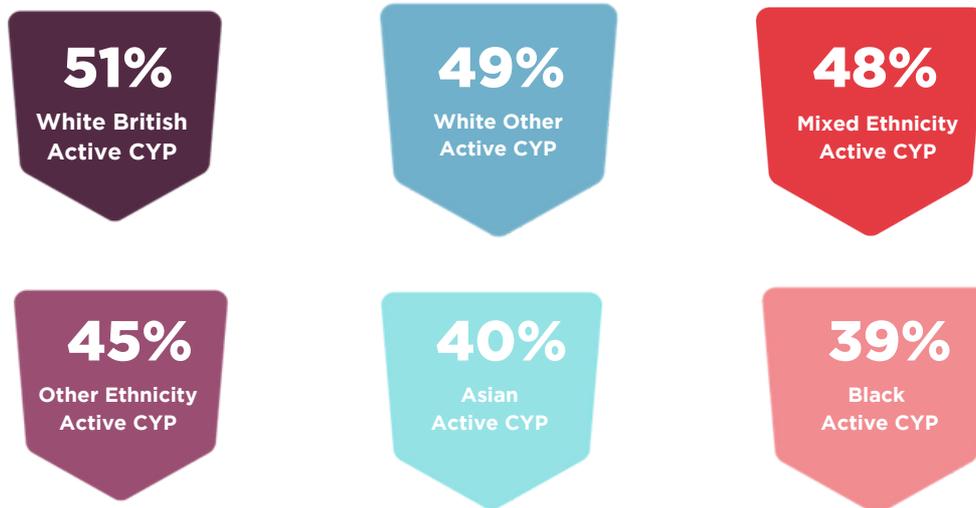
The trend of activity levels increasing every school year until Years 9-11 has returned, with 2020-21 being the exception (activity levels started to drop at Years 7-8).

Year Group	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Year 3-4	39.8%	45.1%	41.3%	36.8%	34.1%
Year 5-6	45.3%	49.7%	46.8%	50.1%	48.4%
Year 7-8	47.5%	51.3%	47.2%	45.3%	52.5%
Year 9-11	38.0%	39.4%	40.1%	42.1%	42.7%

*Sport England measures family affluence using a series of survey questions including ownership of cars and number of household computers. The most recent data is not comparable to other years as questions have changed (e.g. previous years included questions on travelling which were removed due to COVID-19 restrictions)

ACTIVITY LEVELS BY ETHNICITY

Black (38.9%), Asian (40.0%), and Other (45.2%) ethnicities are the least likely to be active. The activity ranking by ethnicity mirrors that of the rest of England.



Black children are the least likely to be active compared to children of any other ethnicity, with the gap between Black and White British children in London at 12%.

While the gap between the most active and least active ethnicity group has improved from last year (from 21% to 12%), this gap has persistently been over 10% since before the pandemic, suggesting that there is far more work to do to tackle the inequalities in London.

Year-on-year changes for Active CYP in London by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
White British	45.4%	50.7%	44.0%	55.0%	50.7%
White Other	47.1%	44.5%	51.5%	50.2%	48.8%
Asian	44.0%	44.1%	41.5%	43.3%	40.0%
Black	37.7%	40.5%	31.9%	36.0%	38.9%
Mixed	46.3%	50.0%	42.5%	45.0%	47.6%
Other	35.0%	40.9%	39.6%	34.1%	45.2%

ACTIVITY LEVELS BY GENDER

The gap between boys and girls in London is still significant, with boys more than 7% likely to be active than girls. The gap in London is also wider than the national figures (49.8% for boys vs 44.9% for girls).

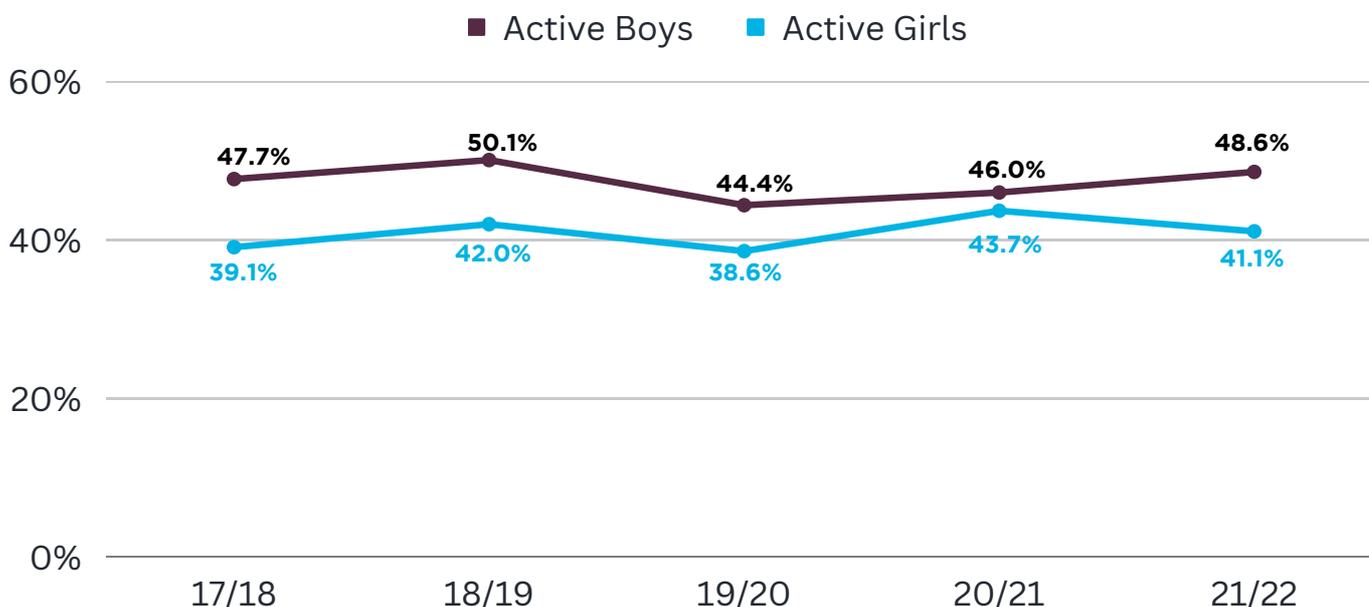


Historically, we have always seen a gender gap between the activity rates of boys and girls. This gap narrowed in the 2020/21 academic year, but the activity gap has widened again (from 2.3% in 2020-21 to 7.5% in 2021-22), returning to pre-pandemic levels.

The increase in the gap from last year may be partly explained by the unusual increase in activity levels amongst girls during the pandemic which has since dissipated. According to last year's Active Lives Survey, activity levels for girls actually increased during the pandemic. Among older teenage girls, it's likely that the choice of activities during the pandemic suited them better, e.g. walking and fitness activities at home*.

However, the positive activity habits formed by girls during the pandemic do not appear to have been retained this year. While boys' activity levels have likely improved partly due to the reintroduction of team sports, the widening of the activity gap in the latest data may suggest that the 'normal' routine has not been as appealing for girls, and that more work needs to be done to understand how best to close the gap.

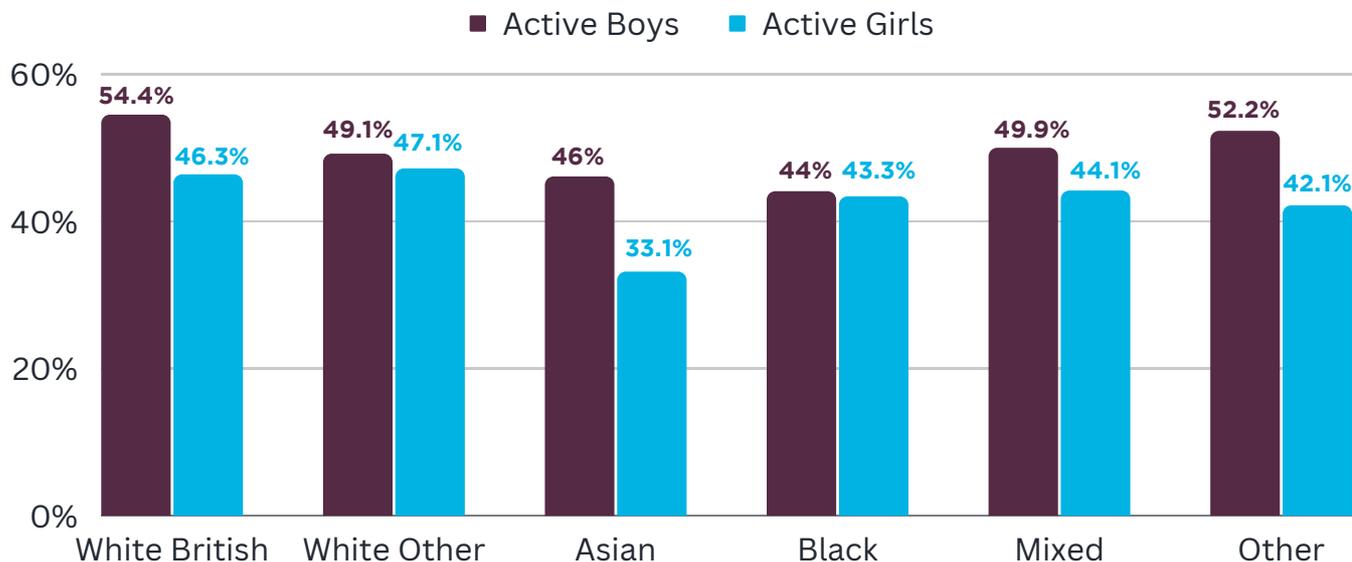
Year-on-year changes for Active CYP in London by gender



*Active Lives Children and Young People Suvery, Academic year 2020-21 - Sport England, December 2021

GENDER VS ETHNICITY

As seen on the previous page, girls are far less likely to be active than boys in London. This is consistent across every ethnicity group.



Activity levels gaps are even more prevalent when taking into account both gender and ethnicity.

Non-white girls have consistently been far less active than White British or White Other boys, with the gap between the most active boys and least active girls reaching over 20% every year since 2017-18.

Year-on-year changes for Active CYP in London by gender & ethnicity

Gender & Ethnicity	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Boy - White British	48.7%	55.5%	46.8%	54.0%	54.4%
Boy - White Other	46.2%	47.1%	59.9%	54.1%	49.1%
Boy - Asian	49.3%	44.6%	47.0%	50.0%	46.0%
Boy - Black	45.7%	49.7%	38.4%	27.8%	44.0%
Boy - Mixed	50.2%	49.1%	33.4%	44.2%	49.9%
Boy - Other	41.2%	47.6%	44.1%	39.7%	52.2%
Girl - White British	42.0%	45.8%	41.4%	56.9%	46.3%
Girl - White Other	47.2%	42.5%	40.9%	45.7%	47.1%
Girl - Asian	38.7%	44.0%	37.7%	36.3%	33.1%
Girl - Black	30.1%	33.3%	26.4%	44.5%	34.3%
Girl - Mixed	42.3%	50.0%	53.7%	47.2%	44.1%
Girl - Other	30.9%	34.5%	35.3%	29.3%	42.1%

CONTACTS

If you would like further detail on this report and the data presented, or if you would like get in touch with London Sport to see how we can work together to improve the lives of Londoners through sport and physical activity, please contact the relevant member of staff below.

Research & Insight Contact

Insight@londonsport.org

Communications Contact

Anil Manji

Head of Communications and Marketing

anil.manji@londonsport.org

For more information about London Sport's Insight Consultancy Services:

Josh Denington

Impact & Innovation Commercial Manager

josh.denington@londonsport.org

