

Sport England Families Fund

Quantitative Data Report Key Headlines

Version 1.0
June 2021

1.0 Headlines

- This report covers the period from the start of the Families Fund programme in summer 2018 until the end of April 2021.
- At the end of this period, 37 projects had submitted data to the Families Fund Data Portal.
- Collectively, the projects had engaged 7,113 families and 21,033 participants (or an average of 192 families and 568 participants per project).
- Of the participants engaged, 37% were adults, 19% were 'children' (defined as aged between 5 and 7) and 25% were 'young people' (defined as aged between 8 and 17).¹
- Projects have delivered 5,948 sessions with 90,243 attendances (or an average of 15 participants per session).

2.0 Socio-demographic profile of families and participant attending

- Close to three-quarters (74%) of parents and carers attending projects in the reporting period were female.
- The gender distribution of children and young people was relatively even, with 45% of both children and young people being female.
- Close to a third of all participants (30%) were from Black, Asian and other culturally diverse communities.
- 12% of all participants reported having a disability.
- Close to two-thirds (65%) of children and young people attending projects were aged between 5 and 10 years of age. 90% were aged 13 or younger.
- Close to 40% of families attending projects reported living in the 20% most deprived areas in England, although this varies significantly on a project-by-project basis. At 12 projects, over 50% of families reported living in the 20% most deprived areas in England, whilst the same was true of over 70% of families at 6 projects.

3.0 Physical Activity profile of participants attending

- 50% of adults attending projects were 'inactive' at first engagement.² This is close to double the current national average (27.6%) as measured by Sport England's Active Lives survey.³
- 30% of children attending projects were 'less active' at first engagement.⁴ This is 5 percentage points higher than the current national average for children aged between 5 and 7 (24.8%).⁵

¹ The remaining 20% of participants are classified as 'unknown' due to incomplete baseline data collection.

² 'Inactive' adults are those doing less than 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity per week.

³ <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-04/Active%20Lives%20Adult%20November%202019-20%20Report.pdf?VersionId=OjWdwCLn13dNgDwp3X4ukcODJIDVG7Kd>

⁴ 'Less active' children and young people are those doing on average less than 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity per day.

⁵ https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-01/Active%20Lives%20Children%20Survey%20Academic%20Year%202019-20%20report.pdf?VersionId=4Ti_0V0m9sYy5HwQjSiJN7Xj.VInpiV6

- 63% of young people attending projects were less active at first engagement. This is close to double the current national average for young people aged between 8 and 16 (32.9%).⁶
- Of the families engaged with at least one 'active' child or young person at baseline,⁷ 53% also contained at least one active adult.⁸

4.0 The relationship between 'baseline' physical activity levels and physical literacy

- Of the adults attending projects, those who were active at first engagement were much more likely to say they **enjoy** and **understand** the importance of sport and physical activity compared with their inactive or 'fairly active' counterparts.⁹ For example, adults who were active at baseline were 32% more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement 'I find sport and exercise enjoyable and satisfying' than inactive adults.
- Young people who were active at first engagement were similarly more likely to say they **enjoy** taking part in sport than less active or 'fairly active' young people.¹⁰ For instance, 93% of active young people said they agree or strongly agree with the statement 'I enjoy taking part in sport and physical activity', compared with 79% of inactive young people. Active young people were also more likely to say they feel **confident** when playing sport or exercising (84% of active young people vs 71% of inactive young people).
- Clear links between physical activity levels and different elements of physical literacy were not always evident for adults and young people. For instance, only small variations were seen between active and inactive young people regarding their baseline **competence** and **knowledge** of why and how to be physically active. This suggests that increasing a person's knowledge of why they should be physically active - or their competence in being so - will not *necessarily* drive them to be more active as other factors may also be in play.
- There were also no observable links between levels of physical activity and physical literacy for children who, regardless of how active they are, were overwhelmingly positive in their attitudes towards sport and physical activity.

5.0 The relationship between 'baseline' physical activity levels and personal and social wellbeing

- Adults who were active at first engagement had higher average rates of life satisfaction, happiness, feelings of 'life being worthwhile', self-efficacy and social trust than their inactive counterparts.
- Only in the context of feelings of anxiety was there no correlation between adults' personal wellbeing and their levels of physical activity.
- Young people who were active at first engagement also had higher average rates of happiness and self-efficacy than less active young people. In contrast with adults,

⁶ Ibid

⁷ 'Active' children and young people are those doing on average 60 minutes or more of at least moderate intensity physical activity per day.

⁸ 'Active' adults are those doing 150 minutes or more of at least moderate intensity physical activity per week.

⁹ 'Fairly active' adults are those doing between 30 and 149 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity per week.

¹⁰ 'Fairly active' children and young people are those doing on average between 30 and 59 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity per day.

however, there was no clear relationship between young people's levels of physical activity and social trust.

- There is no observable relationship between children's happiness and their levels of physical activity. Indeed, 89% of all children said they were 'happy' when completing the survey, regardless of their level of physical activity.

6.0 Attendance data

- Attendance data has been received for 41% of participants (8,566 in total).
- Amongst participants with attendance data, 55% had attended between 1 and 6 sessions in the reporting period; 18% between 7 and 12 sessions; and 27% over 12 sessions.
- 27% of participants had engaged with projects for up to one month; 11% for between 1 and 3 months; 13% for between 3 and 6 months; and 49% engaged for more than 6 months.
- Female participants (11.3 sessions); participants from Black, Asian and other culturally diverse communities (13.9 sessions); and those living in the 20% most deprived areas in England (13.8 sessions) had on average attended more sessions than any other groups.
- 50% of attendances recorded by projects were for family groups containing one adult and one or more child/young person.
- Only 7% of attendances recorded were for family groups containing two or more adults and one or more child/young person.
- 31% of attendances recorded were for adults only and 8% were for children only. This suggests that not all projects are always delivering activities to whole family groups.

7.0 Changes in physical activity levels

- Projects have been asked to re-survey participants after 12 weeks of engagement to gather data on changes in levels of physical activity and a range of other outcomes. This first-stage 'follow up' data has so far been collected from 3,837 participants (or 23% of the 16,853 participants who completed the baseline survey).
- After engaging with projects for 12 weeks, 43% of adults reported increases in their weekly minutes of (at least moderate intensity) physical activity.
- After the same period, 49% of children and 46% of young people reported increases in their daily minutes of physical activity.
- 46% of adults, 46% of children and 26% of young people who were classed as inactive/less active or fairly active at baseline increased their physical activity classification by at least one category after 12 weeks.
- 34% of adults, 23% of children and 11% of young people who were classed as inactive/less active at baseline were reclassified as active after 12 weeks.
- Amongst adults who were inactive or fairly active at baseline, participants living in the 20% most deprived areas of England were more likely to have increased their activity level after 12 weeks compared with participants living elsewhere (by 8.5 percentage points).
- Similar patterns were also observed amongst young people and, to a more marginal degree, children. Less active and fairly active young people living in the 20% most deprived areas were more likely to have increased their physical activity level than young people living elsewhere by 10.7 percentage points.

- Projects have also been asked to re-survey participants for a second time, either 12 weeks after they have *ceased* engagement or 9 months after they were first engaged (if they are still in contact). This second set of follow up data has so far been collected from 1,408 participants (or 8% of the participants who completed the baseline survey).
- Through the second follow up survey, 40% of previously inactive adults and 39% of previously less active children reported increasing their physical activity classification since baseline by at least one category. Whilst these proportions are smaller than those seen after 12 weeks of engagement, they do suggest that most adults and children who increased their levels of physical activity through Families Fund projects have retained these benefits over longer periods.
- 34% of previously less active young people reported increasing their level of physical activity by at least one category in the second follow up survey. This is 7 percentage points higher than the equivalent figure after 12 weeks of engagement and may suggest that some young people have taken longer than adults and children to change their physical activity habits through Families Fund projects.

8.0 Changes in physical literacy levels

- After 12 weeks of engagement, between 27% and 32% of all adult participants agreed more strongly that:
 - They find sport and exercise enjoyable and satisfying (30%)
 - It is important to do sport/physical activity regularly (32%)
 - They feel guilty when they do not do sport or physical activity (28%)
 - They do sport or physical activity because they don't want to disappoint other people (27%)
- In all instances, adults who increased their level of physical activity were more likely than others to have changed their attitude positively towards sport and physical activity. For instance, whilst 26% of adults with an unchanged physical activity level more strongly agreed with the statement 'I find sport and exercise enjoyable and satisfying', this was true of 43% of adults who had become more physically active.
- Similar trends were also observed for measures of physical literacy amongst young people. Young people who increased their level of physical activity from baseline were 74% more likely than other young people to agree more strongly with the statement 'I know how to get involved in sport and physical activity and improve my skills'. The same group were also 75% more likely to agree more strongly with the statement 'I understand why sport and physical activity are good for me'.
- Changes in children's enjoyment of sport and physical activity - and their feelings of competency - did not correlate significantly with changes in their levels of physical activity.
- In the second follow up survey, participants were again asked to report on their current levels of physical literacy. Whilst the increases observed for adults through the first follow up survey were largely maintained, larger proportions of both children and young people reported improvements through the second follow up survey in different aspects of physical literacy. For instance, over a third (35%) of all children reported increases in enjoyment of being physically active in the second follow up survey, up from 25% after 12 weeks. Similarly, 39% of all young people reported an increase in their level of competence in the second follow up survey, an increase of 13 percentage points on the same measure after 12 weeks.

9.0 Changes in personal and social wellbeing levels

- After 12 weeks of engagement, between 41% and 48% of adults reported being more satisfied, happier and less anxious than they were previously.
- 36% of adults also said that that life was more 'worthwhile' after 12 weeks of engagement, whilst around a third reported increased feelings of self-efficacy and social trust.
- In all cases, adults who increased their levels of physical activity were more likely to report improvements in their personal and social wellbeing than those whose activity levels remained the same. For instance, whilst 57% of adults who increased their levels of physical activity reported increased life satisfaction, this was true of only 40% of those whose activity levels were unchanged.
- Amongst young people, 35% said they were happier after engaging with projects for 12 weeks, whilst 26% said they were more resilient and 25% said they were more trusting of others.
- In contrast to adults, it was only in relation to happiness and social trust that young people who had increased their level of physical activity were more likely to report improvements than those whose activity levels were unchanged (and then only marginally). This suggests that personal and social wellbeing may not be as strongly correlated with levels of physical activity amongst young people as they are amongst adults.
- Most children reported unchanged levels of happiness after 12 weeks of engagement. This is because over 90% of them were already 'happy' at first engagement.
- In the second follow up survey, participants were again asked to report on their current levels of personal and social wellbeing. Amongst adults, greater proportions of participants reported increases in their feelings of self-efficacy, feelings that 'things are worthwhile' and social trust than was the case after 12 weeks. In addition, over 61% of adults reported *decreases* in their feelings of anxiety in the second follow up survey, up from 48% after 12 weeks. Greater proportions of children and young people also reported increases in specific areas of personal and social wellbeing in the second follow up survey. For instance, whilst 25% of young people reported increases in social trust after 12 weeks, this rose to 38% in the second follow up survey.

10.0 Outcomes for families

- After 12 weeks, over 90% of adults and young people said they agreed or strongly agreed that their family's attendance at projects had:
 - Brought them closer together (94% of adults and 92% of young people)
 - Increased the amount of time they were spending together (95% of adults and 94% of young people)
 - Helped them to enjoy being together more (94% of both adults and young people)
- 83% of adults and 90% of young people also agreed/strongly agreed that projects had helped their family to 'support each other more', whilst close to three quarters of adults (72%) and 84% of young people said the project had helped their family to communicate better.
- Adults were also asked to estimate how often they and their family were physically active together before and after their engagement with projects. Whilst 25% of adults

said their family were *regularly* physically active together prior to engagement (defined as 4 times a month or more), this rose to 70% after engagement.

- 94% of adults also said that they intend to continue to be physically active with their families after engagement with their project has ended.

11.0 Families' experiences of projects

- After 12 weeks of engagement, over 83% of adults agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:
 - I have personally enjoyed attending the project (97%).
 - The project has been enjoyable for the children and/or young people in my family (97%)
 - The project has helped my family be more physically active together (93%)
 - My family has enjoyed the experience of being physically active together (95%)
 - We have felt listened to as individuals and as a family (84%)
 - I now have more knowledge and understanding of how and where we can do physical activities together as a family (83%)
- Similar proportions of young people also agreed/strongly agreed with these statements:
 - I have enjoyed attending the project (97%)
 - The project has helped my family be more physically active together (94%)
 - I have enjoyed doing physical activities with my family (93%)
 - I have had a say in which physical activities my family has done as part of the (87%)
 - I know how my family and I can be physically active together (92%)
- 99% of children said they had 'loved' or 'liked' the activities they had done at projects and the general experience of being physically active with their parents or carers. Over 89% of them also said they would like to do more sport and physical activity with their families.