



Identifying priority places for expanding our place-based partnerships 2023–28

► Version One – November 2023

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Context

Uniting the Movement Implementation Plan 2022–25 said...

// In order to focus our investment and resources on the communities that need it most, we'll significantly increase the number of places across England that we partner with and invest in, building the movement from the ground up by working with organisations and communities to understand the issues and barriers facing people to get active, and working together to develop local solutions...'

This will be a collaborative and transparent process, with an understanding that each place is different, and will therefore have different needs.

We'll work with a consortium of partners in each place, supporting the development and practical application of skills, capabilities and collaborations within these networks of people.

Investing most in those that need it most

We'll weight our investment decisions towards demographic groups, or geographic areas, that need the greatest levels of support and experience the greatest levels of inequality. This will apply across our entire investment portfolio, and within individual programmes and individual investments, to ensure more of what we invest goes to the people and places with the greatest need.

Finding the right blend of national and local action

We'll find this blend through the investment we make into our long-term partners, through the work we do with national organisations to understand their role in places, by supporting the network of Active Partnerships so they take an even more fundamental role in our investment portfolio, by expanding our direct investment into places, by building on the success of our local delivery pilots, and by further enhancing the role of our capital investment and statutory planning work.



Identifying places of greatest need

One of the three Guiding Principles in Uniting the Movement directly relates to our goal of tackling inequalities; 'investing most in those that need it most'.

We'll do this by following the established concept of 'proportionate universalism' in the work that we do, balancing targeted and universal provision in a way that's proportionate to the level of need.

For expanding our place-based partnerships, we will classify a place as somewhere of 'greatest need' based on where the data indicates there is a 'sport and physical activity need' and a 'social need'.

This is because we know that people who are less active tend to have worse outcomes and that these people and communities have more to gain from a change in physical activity behaviour.

Data categories

We have established the following categories of data that can help us to identify places of greatest need:



Sport and physical activity need:

data that describes the physical activity behaviour we are seeking to change. This data speaks most directly to our mission to increase activity, reduce inactivity and reduce inequalities.



Social need: data that describes places where outcome data is less favourable. On the basis that sport and physical activity can provide a range of benefits, we believe there is the greatest potential for individuals and communities to benefit from increased activity levels where both outcomes and activity levels are lower.



We recognise there is a correlation between sport and physical activity need and social need, and that relevant data on each type of need will often lead us to the same places. Given both aspects are central to delivering Uniting the Movement, using data of both types will validate and reinforce the approach.

Data sources

Please see Appendix - Data overview for information on the data used within the Place Need Classification.

Data considerations

It is important to note that data sources differ in nature, and this will affect how we best utilise them to identify places of greatest need. Each source of data has been judged and selected based on the following criteria.



Relevance – the data sources selected are, based on current understanding, the most relevant measures to understand sport and physical activity need and social need.



Data quality / coverage – we will use high quality data that has representative England-wide coverage.



Direct estimates, modelled / inferred estimates, and proxy measures – we will identify places of greatest need based on direct estimates, supplemented with high-quality, modelled data where it can provide a useful, more detailed picture. Proxy measures will be used to provide context and more detailed description.



Geographic detail – most of the data we will use is available at local authority level. This aligns well with the ecosystem for delivering sport and physical activity in a place. However, in some instances, we have access to data at a more local level (MSOA, LSOA, OA). This can be used to identify specific ‘pockets’ (neighbourhoods) of need, within wider local authority areas, that might otherwise get overlooked.



Timeliness – in most instances we have used the most recent available data. However, datasets are published and updated at different times and intervals. We will review and update the data as outlined within the ‘Maintenance of the Place Need Classification’ section.



Indices – indices are data sources that themselves draw on a range of data and have made judgements about what to include / exclude, how to rank that data, and how to weight each source of data to provide the basis for an overall assessment. These indices generally reflect a large amount of effort by leading experts and agencies in the relevant field of public policy (e.g. DLUHC, ONS). As such, it is considered reasonable to accept the domains and measures, formulae, and weighting they have selected.

Place Need Classification (PNC)

In order to help identify places of greatest need we have established a Place Need Classification (PNC) to support prioritisation and decision making.

The PNC contains data based on the data categories listed above. This has been collated and ranked for each place across England. The places that fall within the top 10%, 20% and 25% for both a measure of sport and physical activity need and a measure of social need are identified within the PNC.

The PNC considers two levels of data:

- **Local authority-level:** a general level of need identified across the whole of, or a significant proportion of, a local authority (LA) area
- **Neighbourhood-level:** need identified within specific pockets or neighbourhoods within a LA

The PNC is not about 'ruling out' places – we do not want the expansion of our place-based partnerships to feel like there are 'winners and losers' or a 'dash for cash'.

It is designed to provide us with the opportunity to prioritise some places, in line with the principles of proportionate universalism, in a non-competitive spirit, through a robust, objective, and defensible approach.

How we best utilise the data to design local approaches will be co-designed and co-produced with place partners.



Local intelligence and qualitative insight

Whilst data is a powerful and objective way of helping to identify places of need, it is not the only consideration. Alongside this objective need data, we will consider local intelligence, tactical, and strategic factors in establishing where place partnerships are likely to be most effective.



These may include:



Readiness

- capacity
- skills
- experience and capability of the approach(es)
- community infrastructure



Willingness

- to work collaboratively to help deliver Uniting the Movement
- to disrupt traditional ways of working
- to test and learn
- local leadership



Shared purpose and values

- alignment with our purpose and values
- commitment to the mission



Sport England context

- historic and existing work and relationships
- previous investment
- fairness



Strategic alignment and other work happening locally

- Big Issues
- Catalysts for Change
- system partners
- other Arms Length Bodies and The National Lottery distributors
- local priorities, specialisms, and strengths
- existing partnerships and collaboration
- other investments



Politics

- mix
- governance models
- levelling up
- devolution



Geography

- national spread
- urban, rural, coastal
- size and scale

Maintenance of the Place Need Classification

The current classification reflects our assessment of the best available data upon which to identify places of greatest need and how it is most appropriately applied.

Our understanding will be dynamic, developing and improving over time. The classification will be updated as quickly as is practically possible when new data becomes available. This will be reviewed at regular intervals and may include:

- When new 24-month Active Lives datasets become available.
- Updates to other datasets used in the classification.
- As other datasets are updated or become available (e.g., Census outputs, new measures / indices of sport and physical activity or social need).

As the data is updated this may result in new places appearing within the classification, or places that previously appeared no longer doing so. In these circumstances we are clear that any work or investment that may have commenced in those places that no longer appear will continue to be supported in a proportionate manner by Sport England.



Appendix – Data overview

The table below provides an overview of the individual data sets currently used within the Place Need Classification and intended future updates.

Key Questions		Supporting Data	Source	Geographic detail
Data used to identify Sport and Physical Activity Need: Data that describes the physical activity behaviour we are seeking to change				
1	Where is there a low proportion of adults who are active at a local authority level?	The proportion of adults doing an average of at least 150 minutes physical activity a week is low	Active Lives Adult Survey	Local authority
2	Where is there a high proportion of adults who are inactive at a local authority level?	The proportion of adults doing an average of 30 minutes or less physical activity a week is high		
3	Where are the highest levels of inequalities in physical activity among adults at a local authority level?	The proportion of adults with two or more characteristics of inequality who are inactive is high		
4	Where is there a low proportion of adults who are active at a neighbourhood level?	The proportion of adults doing an average of at least 150 minutes physical activity a week is low.	Active Lives Small Area Estimates	MSOA
5	Where is there a high proportion of adults who are inactive at a neighbourhood level?	The proportion of adults doing an average of 30 minutes or less physical activity a week is high.		

Key Questions		Supporting Data	Source	Geographic detail
6	Where is there a low proportion of CYP who are active at a local authority level?	The proportion of CYP doing an average of at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day is low	Active Lives Child Survey	Local authority
7	Where is there a high proportion of CYP who are less active at a local authority level?	The proportion of CYP doing an average of less than 30 minutes of physical activity a day is high		
8	Where are the highest levels of inequalities in physical activity among CYP at a local authority level?	The proportion of CYP with two or more characteristics of inequality who are less active is high		
9	Where is there a low proportion of CYP who are active at a neighbourhood level?	The proportion of CYP doing an average of at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day is low.	Active Lives Small Area Estimates	LSOA / MSOA
10	Where is there a high proportion of CYP who are less active at a neighbourhood level?	The proportion of CYP doing an average of less than 30 minutes of physical activity a day is high.		
Data used to identify Social Need: Data that describes where population outcomes are less favourable				
11	Where are the places with the poorest health outcomes at a local authority level?	The Health Index ranking is high	The Health Index for England	Local authority
12	Where are the places with the highest levels of deprivation at a local authority level?	The Index of Multiple Deprivation rank of average rank for local authority areas is high	Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	Local authority
13	Where are the places with the highest levels of deprivation at a neighbourhood level?	The Index of Multiple Deprivation – at least one LSOA in the MSOA is in the 10% / 20% / 25% most deprived		LSOA
14	Where are the most “left behind” places at a local authority level?	The Community Needs Index ranking is high	OCSI Community Needs Index	Local authority
15	Where are the most “left behind” places at a neighbourhood level?	The Community Needs Index ranking is high		MSOA



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