

Activity Check-In

South Asian girls
aged 13–19

The Activity Check-In tracks behaviours and attitudes among adults, children and young people towards sport and physical activity, revealing the impacts of a rapidly changing world. Each wave explores a topic of current relevance.

This publication focuses on the experiences of South Asian girls aged 13–19, including their attitudes towards being active, the opportunities available to them, and the practical barriers that may influence participation.

Full data sets are available on our website.

Drawing on findings from the Activity Check-In survey conducted in June and July 2026, this thematic report explores where and how South Asian girls take part in sport and physical activity, what motivates them to be active, and where opportunities exist to better support participation.

While some findings should be treated as indicative because of the relatively small sample size, they provide valuable insight into the experiences of South Asian girls aged 13–19 and where there may be opportunities to better support them to be active.

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Context

South Asian girls are less likely to be active than all girls aged 13–19, reflecting a longstanding pattern seen across successive Active Lives surveys.

- **37% of Asian girls aged 13–16 are active compared with 45% of all girls.**
- **45% of South Asian girls aged 16–19 are active compared with 56% of girls overall.**

For younger girls, Active Lives data cannot currently be broken down further than Asian overall.

Being active is defined as achieving an average of 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous sport and physical activity each day across the week.

Despite lower participation levels, the Activity Check-In findings suggest many South Asian girls already have positive attitudes towards being active. Almost nine in ten (89%) say they would like to do more physical activity, compared with 63% of all girls aged 13–19.

This suggests that motivation may not be the main challenge. Instead, understanding how opportunities fit around girls' everyday lives may be just as important in supporting more South Asian girls to be active.



Attitudes

Motivation does not appear to be the main challenge

The research paints a positive picture of how South Asian girls feel about sport and physical activity.

More than four in five say they have a choice in the activities they take part in (87%), feel confident being active (84%) and believe they have the ability to participate (81%). Eighty-three per cent also describe their experiences of sport and physical activity positively.

Although some of these findings appear more positive than those for girls aged 13–19 overall, the differences are not statistically significant because of the sample size. Even so, they suggest that low confidence and perceived capability may not be the principal issues for this group.



Girls already value being active

Enjoyment is one of the strongest messages to emerge from the research.

South Asian girls aged 13–19 are significantly more likely than all girls aged 13–19 to say they enjoy being active (87% compared with 68%).

The reasons girls give for taking part reinforce this picture. Almost every South Asian girl surveyed (99%) says they are active because it is fun and benefits their physical health.

Beyond enjoyment, there are no statistically significant differences between South Asian girls and all girls aged 13–19 in the reasons they give for taking part in sport and physical activity.

Together, these findings suggest that many South Asian girls already recognise the value of being active.

Helping girls translate that existing motivation into regular participation may therefore be just as important as encouraging positive attitudes towards sport and physical activity.



Experiences

Access to opportunities

South Asian girls aged 13–19 place a particularly strong emphasis on the importance of everyone being able to take part in sport and physical activity.

Almost all (96%) agree it is important that young people can take part in sport and physical activity in the way they choose. Most also feel they have opportunities to be active (85%) and can usually take part in activities they enjoy (80%).

Indicative findings suggest South Asian girls aged 13–19 may be less likely than all girls aged 13–19 to feel they have the same opportunities as other young people or know how to get involved and develop their skills across different activities.

Although these findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution because of the sample size, they suggest a possible disconnect between believing opportunities should exist and feeling able to access them in practice.



Where girls are active

South Asian girls aged 13–19 are active in a range of settings.

Nine in ten (90%) report having access to at least one outdoor place where they can be active, broadly similar to all girls aged 13–19.

More than eight in ten (83%) had taken part in activities outside school or college during the previous week, again similar to all girls aged 13–19.

However, South Asian girls were much less likely to report using online opportunities to be active. Eighty-five per cent had not used online activities during the previous week, compared with 62% of all girls aged 13–19.

Indicative findings also suggest South Asian girls may be less likely than all girls aged 13–19 to take part in sport and physical activity through school or college, or to get most of their activity through these settings.

Although these findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution because of the sample size, further research would help build understanding of why participation differs across settings and whether greater support is needed within education settings, beyond them, or both.



Everyday participation

Many girls balance school, college, family life and other commitments alongside being active.

Taking part in sport and physical activity depends not only on having opportunities available, but also on how easily they fit around everyday life.

Indicative findings suggest South Asian girls aged 13–19 may be less likely than all girls aged 13–19 to feel that sport and physical activity fits easily into their daily routine.

There are also indications that balancing physical activity alongside school, college, work or other commitments may be more challenging.

Although these findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution because of the sample size, they suggest that how opportunities fit around girls' everyday lives may influence participation.



Taking part in the way they need

Having opportunities available is only one part of the picture. Feeling able to take part in the way they need may also influence participation.

Most South Asian girls aged 13–19 say they can usually take part somewhere they feel safe (78%), while around two-thirds (66%) say they can usually take part in ways that meet their needs, whether for fun, to socialise or to compete.

However, indicative findings suggest South Asian girls aged 13–19 may be less likely than all girls aged 13–19 to feel that opportunities:

- are affordable
- include people like them
- reflect their cultural background and community.

Although these findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution because of the sample size, they suggest there may be opportunities to better understand how provision can support South Asian girls to take part in the ways they need.



Barriers

Challenges beyond motivation

The findings throughout this report suggest that many South Asian girls aged 13–19 already have positive attitudes towards being active. However, participation may be influenced by a range of factors beyond motivation alone.

Indicative findings suggest that concerns about appearance, expectations around family or future priorities, and balancing competing commitments may influence participation for some South Asian girls.

Although these findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution because of the sample size, they suggest that participation may be influenced by wider social and practical factors, alongside the opportunities available to be active.



Opportunities

The findings suggest several opportunities to better support South Asian girls aged 13–19 to be active.

Many South Asian girls already enjoy being active and recognise its benefits. Rather than focusing solely on increasing motivation, the findings suggest there is an opportunity to ensure that sport and physical activity is easier to access and better reflects girls' everyday lives and experiences.

Build on existing motivation

The research suggests that many South Asian girls aged 13–19 already have positive attitudes towards sport and physical activity. They enjoy being active, value its physical and social benefits and many would like to do more.

This provides a strong foundation for organisations working with young people. Supporting girls to turn that existing motivation into regular participation may be just as important as encouraging positive attitudes towards being active.



Design opportunities around girls' everyday lives

Throughout the research, practical considerations emerge as an important influence on participation.

The findings suggest that practical considerations, including flexibility, affordability and opportunities that fit around girls' everyday lives may be particularly important for supporting South Asian girls aged 13–19 to be active.

Some indicative findings also suggest South Asian girls may participate differently across education, community and online settings. While these findings require further exploration, they reinforce the importance of considering when, where and how opportunities are provided, alongside the activities themselves.

Together, the findings suggest participation is shaped not only by whether opportunities exist, but by how accessible, relevant and practical they feel.



Continue listening and building the evidence

Although many findings are encouraging, several are indicative because of the relatively small sample size and should be interpreted accordingly.

Future research could help build a deeper understanding of:

- participation in education settings
- practical barriers to participation
- wider social, family and cultural influences
- how opportunities fit around girls' everyday lives.

Continuing to build this evidence, alongside local insight and the voices and experiences of South Asian girls themselves, will help ensure future opportunities are relevant, accessible and better reflect the needs of the communities they are intended to serve.



Methodology

This report draws on findings from Wave 21 of Sport England's Activity Check-In, alongside the latest Active Lives Children and Young People Survey and Active Lives Adult Survey, to provide wider context on participation among South Asian girls.

The Activity Check-In survey was conducted between 26 and 30 June 2026, with additional fieldwork continuing until 7 July 2026 to boost responses from South Asian girls aged 13–19.

The boosted sample included 47 South Asian girls aged 13–19.

Throughout this report, differences between South Asian girls and girls of the same age overall are described as statistically significant only where they meet the required statistical threshold.

Other apparent differences are described as indicative. These findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution because of the relatively small sample size but are included where they provide useful insight into areas that may warrant further exploration.