

# **Southampton Strategic Assessment (JSNA)**

## **Physical activity page content**

**Last updated June 2023**

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## 1. Physical activity background

Physical activity is defined as ‘any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure’. All movement, whether experienced during work, leisure or for transport to get to and from places, can be defined as physical activity. Moderate intensity physical activity includes activities such as brisk walking and cycling, while vigorous intensity physical activity includes playing football, dancing or swimming.

### 1.1 Why is physical activity important?

[Office for Health Improvement and Disparities](#) suggests that regular physical activity has been shown to improve an individual’s physical and mental health. This includes preventing and managing diseases and a range of conditions such as hypertension, depression, and diabetes. as well as wider benefits such as improved confidence and self-esteem. Increasing physical activity of individuals can also benefit the wider community in a range of ways including:

- Increasing productivity in the workplace
- Improving learning and attainment in schools
- Building stronger communities and increasing social cohesion
- Cost savings for the health and social care system
- Decreasing road congestion and air pollution through active travel such as cycling

More information can be found in the physical activity dashboard and in the resources section below.

[Physical activity dashboard](#)

### 1.2 What amount of physical activity should individuals be aiming for?

According to national guidelines, from the [UK Chief Medical Officer](#) (CMO), children aged 5 to 18 should be aiming to do an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity a day across the week. Children who do less than 30 minutes a day are defined as less active, while those that do between 30 and 59 minutes are fairly active. The guidelines include activities that develop movement skills, reduce inactivity and increase muscle and bone strength.

Adults between the ages of 19 and 64 should take part in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity a week. Adults who do less than 30 minutes of moderate activity a week as defined as inactive, while those that do between 30 and 149 minutes are fairly active. The guidelines also include building strength, improving balance, and reducing inactivity.

There is separate guidance for children [under 5 years](#), [adults over 65](#), and [people with disabilities](#).

It is safer for people with long term conditions to be physically active. The [Benefits outweigh the risks: consensus statement](#), from the British Medical Journal (BMJ) on the risks of physical activity for people living with long-term conditions states the benefits outweigh the risks. Regular physical activity, in combination with standard medical care, has an important role in the management and prevention of many long term conditions.

More information can be found in the physical activity dashboard and in the resources section below.

[Physical activity dashboard](#)

### 1.3 Southampton strategy

As of March 2022, Southampton has adopted the '[We Can Be Active Strategy](#)' in line with Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The aim of this strategy is to 'inspire and support active lifestyles so we can all be active in a way that suits us with success measured as 'people who once struggled to be active feeling the positive benefits of increased activity'.

In order to achieve this, it is recognised that the following need to be achieved:

- **Positive early experiences** for children and young people
- **Opportunities** that meet our needs, interests and are accessible and easy to find
- **Places and travel routes** where we all feel safe and are encouraged to be active
- **Support** to help us get started or keep moving when we feel that we can't do it alone
- **Bold Leaders** working together to create happier and healthier communities

The Physical Activity Alliance (PAA) is a partnership of a wide range of stakeholders who are committed to improving physical activity in Southampton. Members come from a variety of backgrounds to deliver an action plan informed by the [We Can Be Active strategy from Southampton City Council](#). Partners meet quarterly to share information and developments, network, and solve problems together. For more information on the Physical Activity Alliance, please contact [publichealth@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:publichealth@southampton.gov.uk)

More information can be found in the physical activity dashboard and in the resources section below.

[Physical activity dashboard](#)

## 2. Children

Children in Southampton are currently the 2<sup>nd</sup> least active when compared to its 9 Office for National Statistics (ONS) comparators and 2 local neighbours. In the 2021/22 Sport England [Active Lives Survey](#), only 41.3% of young people aged 5 to 16 year olds in Southampton were self-reported as being active. This is 5.9 percentage points lower than the national average of 47.2%. In England it was found that both deprivation and ethnicity impacted physical activity levels.

The [What About YOUth study](#) (2014/15) survey found that when looking specifically at 15 year olds, the percentage of individuals who were physically active for at least one hour per day for seven days a week was 12.5%, compared with 13.9% in England. It also found that 74.1% of 15 year olds in Southampton were reported to be sedentary for over 7 hours a day, compared with 70.1% nationally.

All schools provide 5 to 16 year olds with a minimum of 2 hours weekly physical education, which can be counted towards the physical activity levels outlined by the [CMO guidelines](#). If this was combined with using a more active form of travel such as walking and cycling, many students would be well on their way to reaching the recommended physical activity levels.

In the Active Lives Survey conducted by Sport England it was established that the most popular physical activity type children took part in was active play and informal activity. Team sports were much more popular in children aged 7+. Activity levels are now back in line with those seen pre-pandemic (2018-19) with a 2.6% increase nationally in children who are active and a 2.3% decrease of those children inactive.

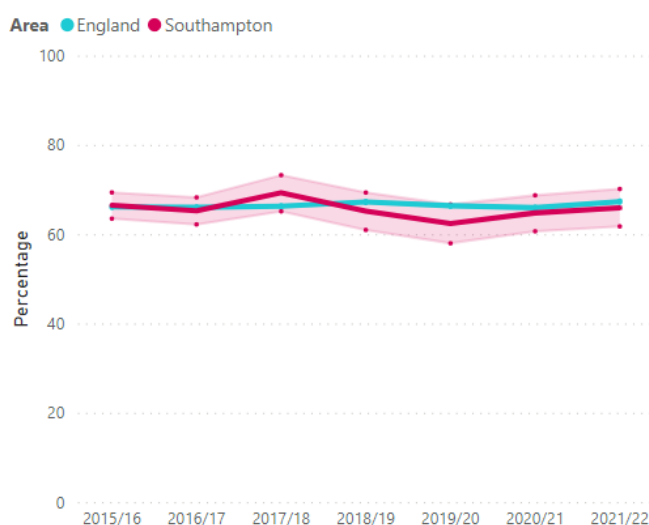
More information can be found in the physical activity dashboard and in the resources section below.

[Physical activity dashboard](#)

## 3. Adults

In the 2021/22 Sport England [Active Lives Survey](#) 65.9% of adults aged 19 and over, in Southampton, were considered active. This is statistically similar to the England average of 67.3% but is still the third lowest within Southampton’s ONS comparators and the lowest for Southampton’s local neighbours. The trend since 2019/20 is slowly increasing, following the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it is unclear what the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on activity levels is. In England, the proportion of adults considered active has remained similar over the last five years.

Percentage of physically active adults (at least 150 moderate intensity equivalent minutes of physical activity per week) aged 19 years and over, England, Southampton: 2015/16 to 2021/22



The proportion of active adults varies across the city from 54.4% in the least active areas to 77.2% in the most active areas. The most active parts of the city are located within the central area, with the exception of Northam which has a slightly lower proportion of active adults. This loosely maps to the least deprived areas of the city, similar to what is seen in national areas, as well as being areas with high student populations.

In Southampton, 95% of the city have access to green space, of at least 2 hectares (just under the size of five football pitches), within 5 minutes walking time, whilst the whole city can access an area of greenspace, with a minimum size of 100 hectares, within a 5km drive. [Southampton Common](#) is the nearest area of greenspace, for two-thirds of Southampton’s population and provides access to organised events such as a weekly Parkrun and Junior Parkrun, a children’s play area, and cycle paths. In Southampton there are 55 parks and 8 Green Flag awards for 5 Central Parks (as a collective award), St James’ Park, Portswood Rec, Riverside Park, Freemantle Lake Park, Town Quay Park and new in August 2023 Mayfield Park and Peartree Green. There are over 147 other green spaces and 75 eco areas “managed for wildlife” which cover over 95 hectares. Southampton City Council also maintain over 100 play areas, 24 multi use games areas, 6 Skateparks and 7 Tennis courts and a mini-golf course.

More information can be found in the physical activity dashboard and in the resources section below.

[Physical activity dashboard](#)

## 4. Active travel

One possible way for adults to meet physical activity guidelines is to incorporate walking or cycling as a means of travel into their day. In the 2019/20 [Active Lives Adult Survey](#) from Sport England, 22.4% of people aged 16 plus, walked for travel at least three days a week. Compared to the national average of 15.1%.

In the same survey 1.9% of respondents aged 16 plus, cycled for travel at least three days a week. Compared with the national average of 2.3%. [Cycling Southampton 2017-2027](#) sets out Southampton City Council's approach to investing in and realising the vision for cycling between 2017 and 2027. To make cycling treated as a normal form of transport and create a liveable and thriving city. It outlines what work has already been undertaken, develops a policy approach for cycling, and sets out a delivery plan of proposed improvements to the cycle network and initiatives to realise the vision for cycling in Southampton.

More information can be found in the resources section below.

## 5. Resources

### 5.1 Physical activity dashboard

The physical activity dashboard presents a range of data regarding physical activity, to provide intelligence to help drive strategic decision making, such as the Southampton Physical Activity and Sport Strategy and Cycling Southampton. Analysis includes benchmarking against statistical neighbours and trends over time. Some indicators include analysis at a sub-city level.

- [Physical activity dashboard](#)

### 5.2 We Can Be Active Strategy

We Can Be Active is a joint mission to inspire and support active lifestyles so we can all be active in a way that suits us.

- Energise Me - [We Can Be Active Strategy for Hampshire and Isle of Wight](#)

### 5.3 Cycling Southampton strategy

Cycling Southampton 2017-2027 sets out Southampton City Council's (SCC) approach to investing in and realising our vision for cycling between 2017 and 2027. To make cycling treated as a normal form of transport and create a liveable and thriving city. It outlines what work has already being undertaken, develops a policy approach for cycling, and sets out a Delivery Plan of proposed improvements to the cycle network and initiatives to realise the vision for cycling in Southampton.

- Southampton City Council – [Cycling Southampton, A strategy for our city 2017-2027](#)

### 5.4 Department for Health and Social Care - UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines

The report is an update to the 2011 physical activity guidelines issued by the four Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK CMOs draw upon global evidence to present guidelines for different age groups, covering the volume, duration, frequency and type of physical activity required across the life course to achieve health benefits.

- Department for Health and Social Care – [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#)

### 5.5 Health matters: physical activity - prevention and management of long-term conditions

Health Matters focuses on the benefit of physical activity for the prevention and management of long-term conditions in adults. In the new UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs) physical activity guidelines launched in September 2019, the CMOs reiterated a clear message about physical activity: "If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat."

- OHID - [Health matters: physical activity - prevention and management of long-term conditions](#)

### 5.6 Sport England

Active lives survey which measures the activity levels of people across England. Sport England run two surveys, Adults that runs twice a year and children and young people which is published annually.

- Sport England - [Adult Active Lives Survey](#)
- Sport England - [Active Lives Children and Young People Survey](#)
- Sport England - [Active Lives data tables](#)
- Sport England - [data query builder](#)



### 5.7 Fingertips – physical activity tool

The Physical Activity tool is part of a series of products produced by Office for Health Improvement and Disparities providing local data alongside national comparisons to support local health improvement. The physical activity tool brings together data for the whole of England on physical activity, including walking and cycling, as well as data on related risk factors and conditions such as obesity and diabetes. The tool presents data at local level to help promote physical activity, develop understanding, and support benchmarking, commissioning and service improvement.

- OHID fingertips - [Physical Activity](#)

### 5.8 Moving Medicine

The benefits of physical activity for people living with long term conditions are well established. However, the fear of increasing symptoms or worsening long term problems commonly stops people from moving more. Many healthcare professionals also feel unsure about what advice they should give to people living with symptomatic medical conditions.

- Moving Medicine - [It's safer for people with long term conditions to be physically active](#)

### 5.9 British Medical Journal (BMJ)

The benefits of physical activity for people living with long-term conditions (LTCs) are well established. However, the risks of physical activity are less well documented. The fear of exacerbating symptoms and causing adverse events is a persuasive barrier to physical activity in this population.

- BMJ - [Benefits outweigh the risks: a consensus statement on the risks of physical activity for people living with long-term conditions](#)

### 5.10 NHS – Benefits of exercise

Step right up! It's the miracle cure we've all been waiting for. It can reduce your risk of major illnesses, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer and lower your risk of early death by up to 30%. It's free, easy to take, has an immediate effect and you don't need a GP to get some. Its name? Exercise.

- NHS England – [Benefits of exercise](#)

### 5.11 My Journey Southampton

Whether you are looking for information about local cycle routes to work, walking maps or links to public transport you can access it all here from our website. We offer advice about travel choices in your area that may result in saving you time and money. You may also benefit from improved wellbeing and reduce your carbon output at the same time. As well as providing personalised travel plans for local residents, we also work with schools, colleges and work places to deliver fun, community based travel challenges.

- Active travel - [My Journey Southampton](#)

## 5.12 Southampton City Council - Parks and open spaces

Information on parks and open spaces in Southampton

- Southampton City Council - [Parks and open spaces](#)