SPORT ENGLAND

Active Lives Children and Young People Survey

Academic year 2023-24

Published December 2024

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Key information

This report presents data from the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey for the academic year 2023-24. Data is presented for children and young people in school Years 1-11 (ages 5-16) in England.

Release dates

This release: 5 December 2024
Next release: 4 December 2025

Find out more

For more information on the data presented in this report, please visit the Active Lives section of our website or refer to the technical note.

Lead statistician

Helen Price - activelives@sportengland.org

Welcome

This report summarises the sport and physical activity behaviours of 5-16-year-olds in England over the 2023-24 academic year (September 2023-July 2024).

This year's survey shows us that less than half of children and young people are doing an average of 60 minutes of activity or more each day – the level recommended by the Chief Medical Officers. While this is an improvement on the position seen when our survey first began, in recent years we have not seen the gains that so many in our sector have been striving for.

This report provides fascinating insight behind that headline number and I'd encourage all those working to get young people active to understand the trends and the insight it brings.

We can see, for example, that children and young people's activity levels are made up of both in-school and out-of-school activity, so attempts to increase participation levels need to focus on both – not see just one as a panacea.

We can also see some significant demographic differences, with girls less likely to be active than boys, those who are more affluent being more active and those from a White or Mixed background more likely to be active than Black or Asian children and young people.

But even more significantly, those with two or more characteristics of inequality, for example Asian girls, or someone less affluent from a Black background, are significantly less likely to be active than their peers with no characteristics of inequality at all. This is why our 10-year strategy, Uniting the Movement, is unashamedly focused on addressing those inequalities.

The report offers vital insight into how children and young people feel, with happiness, keep trying and trust scores all lower than when the survey began. Given the positive association between activity levels and these outcomes, it further demonstrates the need to better support more children and young people to get more active.

It also points to how that might be achieved, with those with a greater number of positive attitudes towards sport being more likely to be active than those with no positive attitudes. This is why our work enhancing youth voice in decision-making, and to put children and young people first through our Play Their Way campaign, is so important to our success in the future.

As ever, it's only possible to provide a summary in this report. You can use the links in it to access the detailed data tables, or visit the Active Lives Online tool, updated shortly after each release, to explore trends over time, audiences not covered in this report and more specific activities.

Finally, I'd like to thank the schools, children, parents and carers, and teachers who took the time to complete the survey, and the network of Active Partnerships who've, once again, played a key role in working with the schools.

Nick Pontefract, Chief Strategy Officer

Executive summary

1

There has been little movement over the last two years, with activity levels, volunteering and positive attitudes all remaining unchanged.

2

There are clear inequalities in sport and physical activity engagement. Children and young people with 2+ characteristics of inequality are the least active, least likely to volunteer and have the lowest levels of positive attitudes and wider outcomes.

3

We continue to see a positive association between activity levels and mental wellbeing.

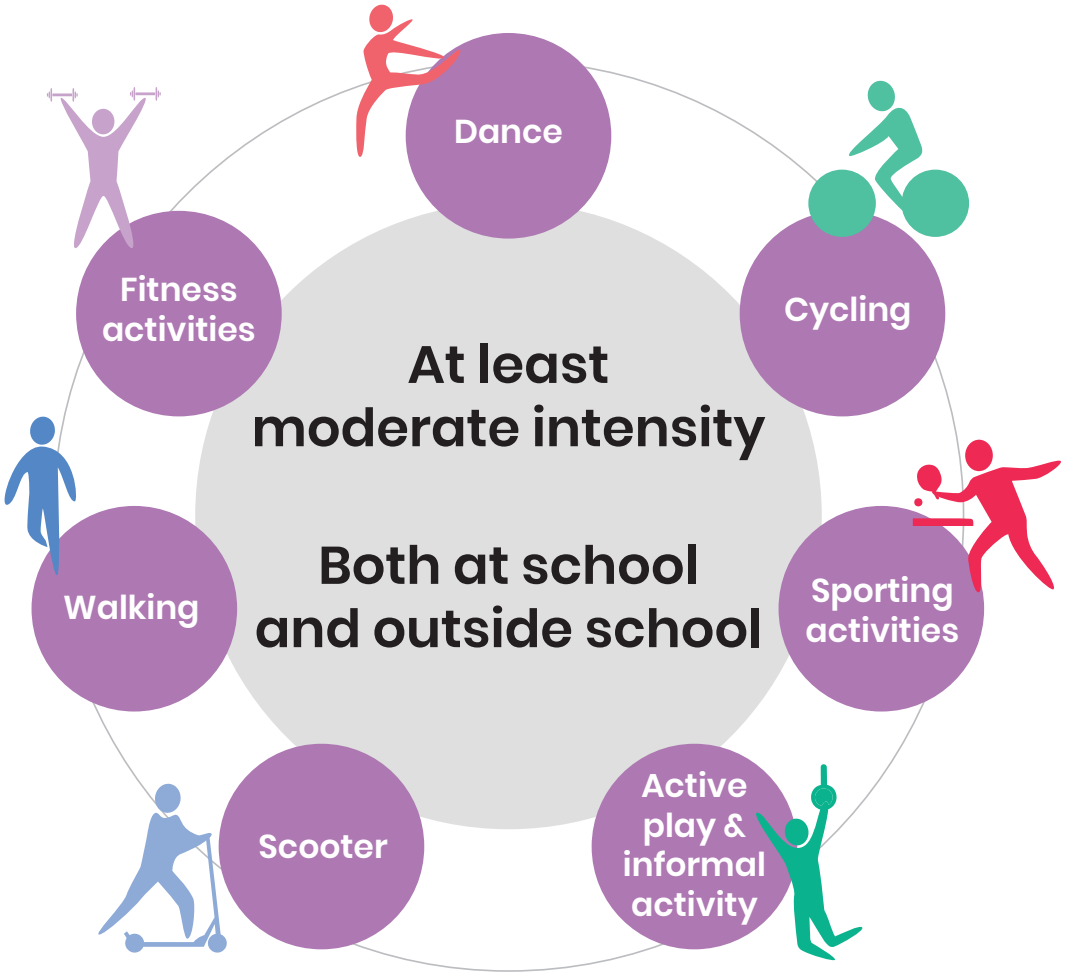
Levels of activity

Definition

This chapter presents information on three levels of activity:

- **Active** (an average of at least 60 minutes a day)
- **Fairly active** (an average of 30–59 minutes a day)
- **Less active** (less than an average of 30 minutes a day).

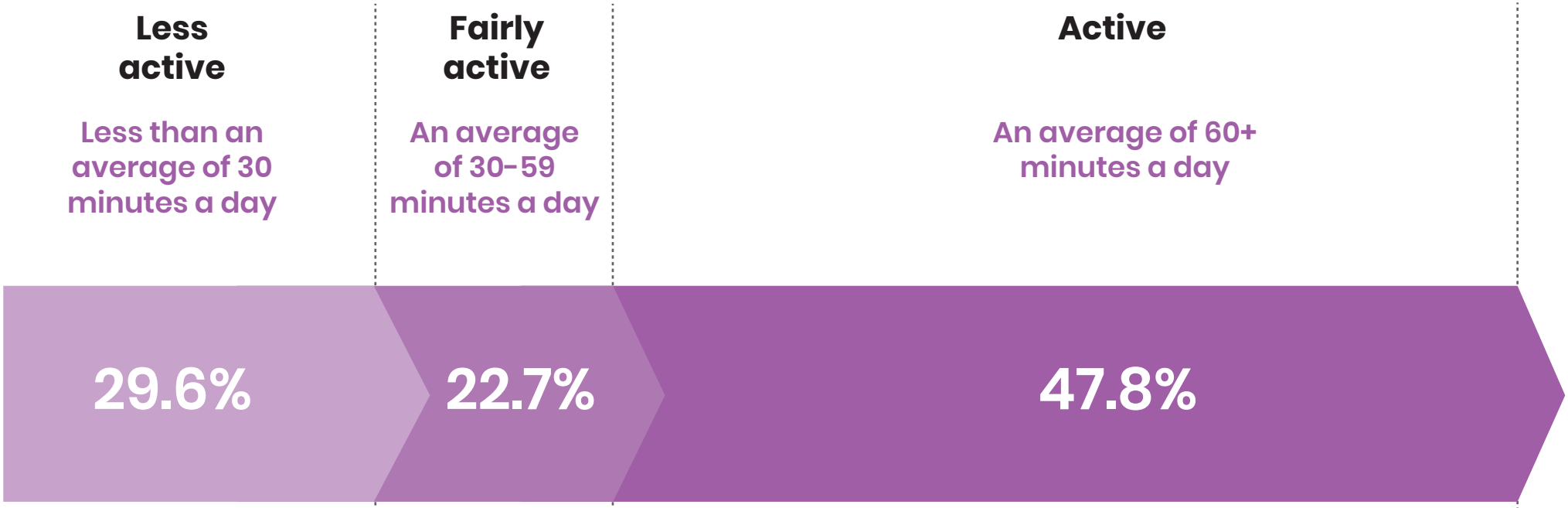
What do we mean by physical activity?



Levels of activity

Headlines

Our data shows that 47.8% of children and young people (3.5 million) are meeting the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines of taking part in sport and physical activity for an average of 60 minutes or more every day. Meanwhile, 29.6% (2.2m) do less than an average of 30 minutes a day.



Link to data tables

Levels of activity

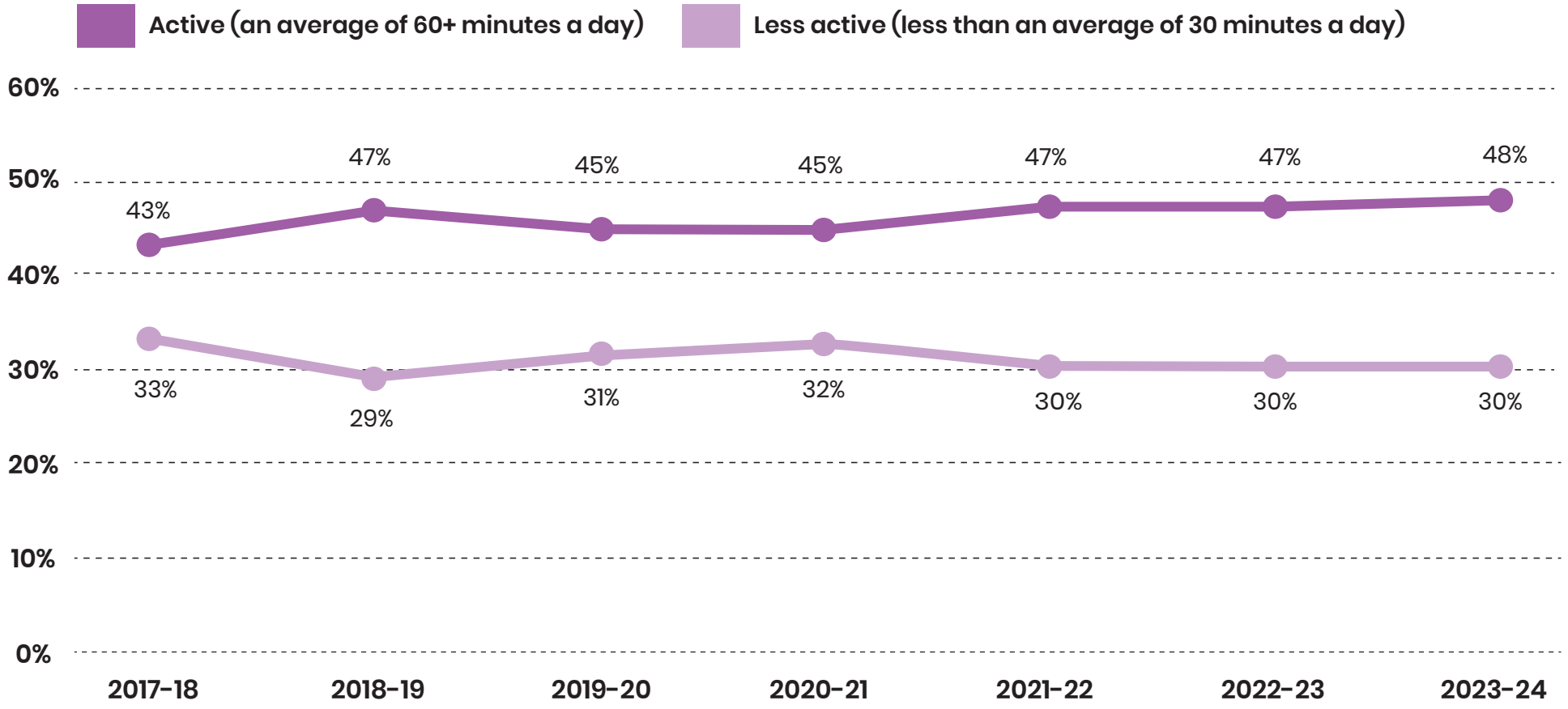
Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

ACTIVE LIVES CHILDREN SURVEY 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR

SPORT ENGLAND

Activity levels have remained unchanged over the last two years

The dips across 2019-20 and 2020-21 coincide with the restrictions imposed during the coronavirus pandemic. There remains growth over the longer term, compared to academic year 2017-18, with the proportion who are active having increased by 4.5%, meaning there are 508,000 more active children and young people compared to six years ago, while the proportion who are less active has decreased by 3.3%, or 114,000 fewer less active children and young people.



Link to data tables

*Activity can be either during or outside of school hours.
For details on how we measure change, see the notes pages.

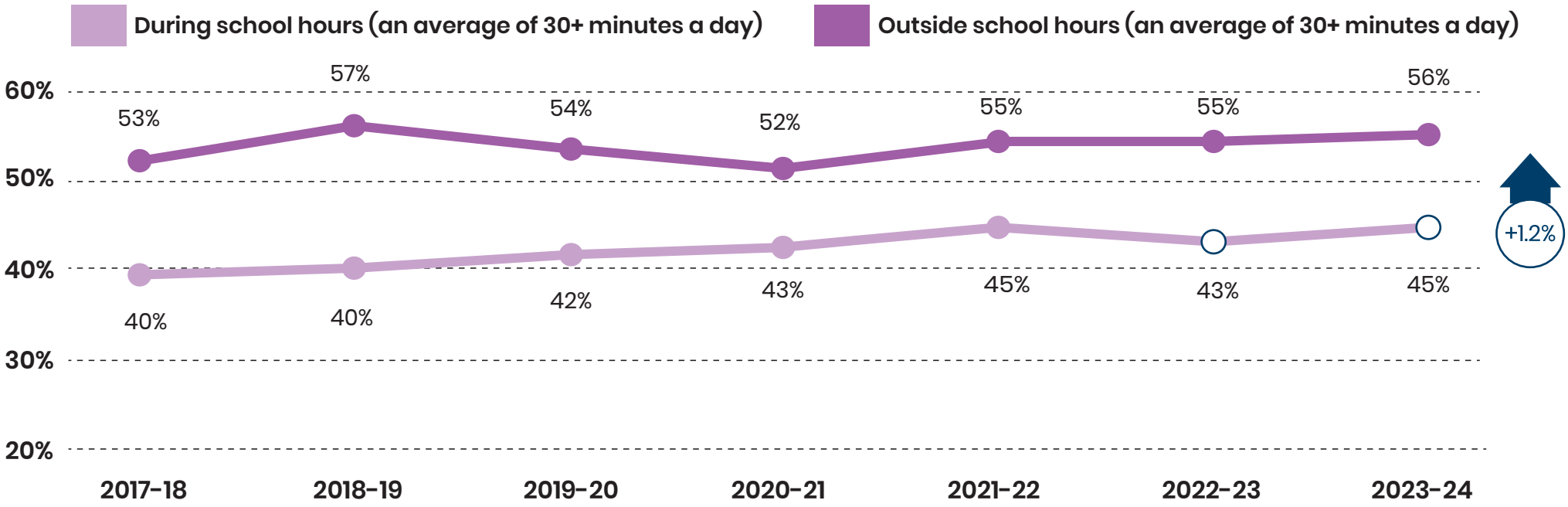
Levels of activity

During vs outside of school hours

Government guidelines recommend that children and young people do 30 minutes of their daily activity through the school day and 30 minutes outside of school. Our data show that 45% do an average of 30 minutes or more a day during school hours, while 56% do so outside of school hours.

Outside-of-school hours activity has broadly followed the same patterns as activity overall, with an increase of 3.2% or 451,000 more active children and young people compared to six years ago (academic year 2017-18). In contrast, activity during school hours saw steady increases between 2017-18 and 2021-22. As a result, the proportion who are active during school hours has increased by 5.1%, or 534,000 more active children and young people compared to six years ago (academic year 2017-18).

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change



Link to data tables

Note: During school hours refers to between the morning and afternoon school bells; all other time is counted as outside of school hours.

Levels of activity

ACTIVE LIVES CHILDREN SURVEY 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR

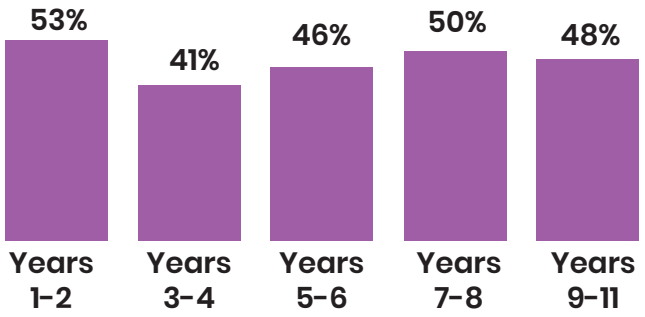
SPORT ENGLAND

Summary of demographic differences

Active (an average of 60+ minutes a day)

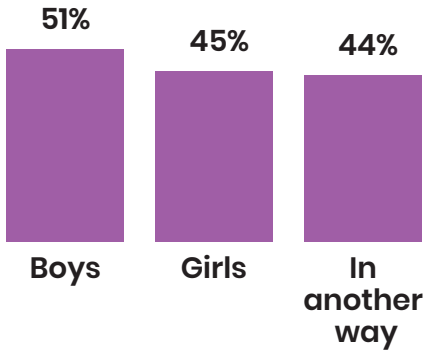
1 Year group

Activity levels are lowest for those in school Years 3-4 (ages 7-9, 41%).



2 Gender

Boys (51%) are more likely to be active than girls (45%).

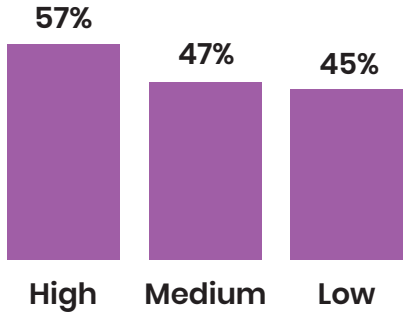


Link to data tables

See our definitions page for the full definition of each demographic group.

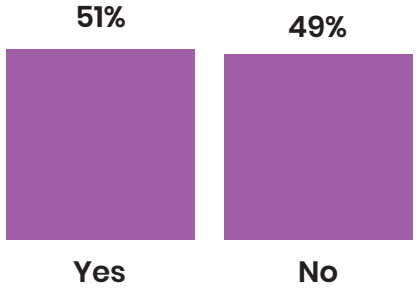
3 Family affluence

Those from the least affluent families are the least likely to be active (45%).



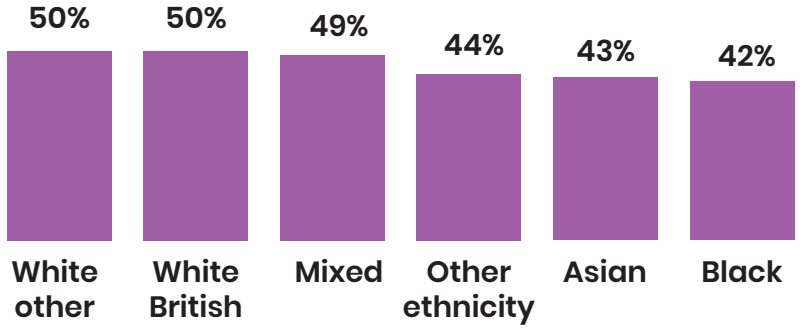
4 Disability and long-term health conditions

Children and young people with a disability or long-term health condition are equally likely to be active as those without one.



5 Ethnicity

Children and young people of Black, Asian and Other ethnicities are the least likely to be active.



ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

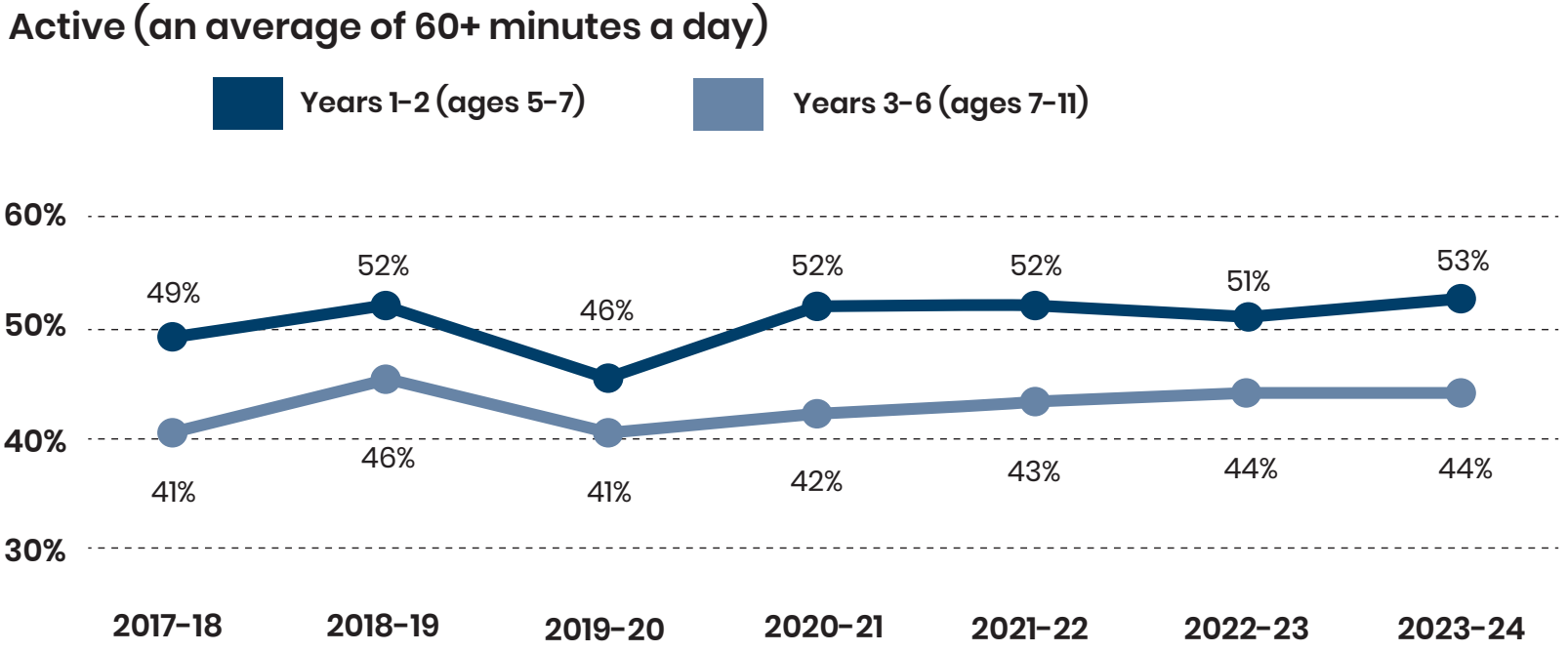
SPORT ENGLAND

There has been little change in activity levels over the last three years among primary-age children

Activity levels among infant-age children (school Years 1-2, ages 5-6) have been fairly stable since academic year 2018-19, barring a drop during the height of the coronavirus pandemic restrictions in 2019-20. Compared to academic year 2017-18 we are recording a 4.0% increase, or 31,000 more active Year 1-2 children.

Among those in school Years 3-6 (ages 7-11), the proportion of children classified as active is up slightly over the longer term. This means there are 2.6%, or 121,000 more active Years 3-6 children compared to six years ago (academic year 2017-18).

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change



Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

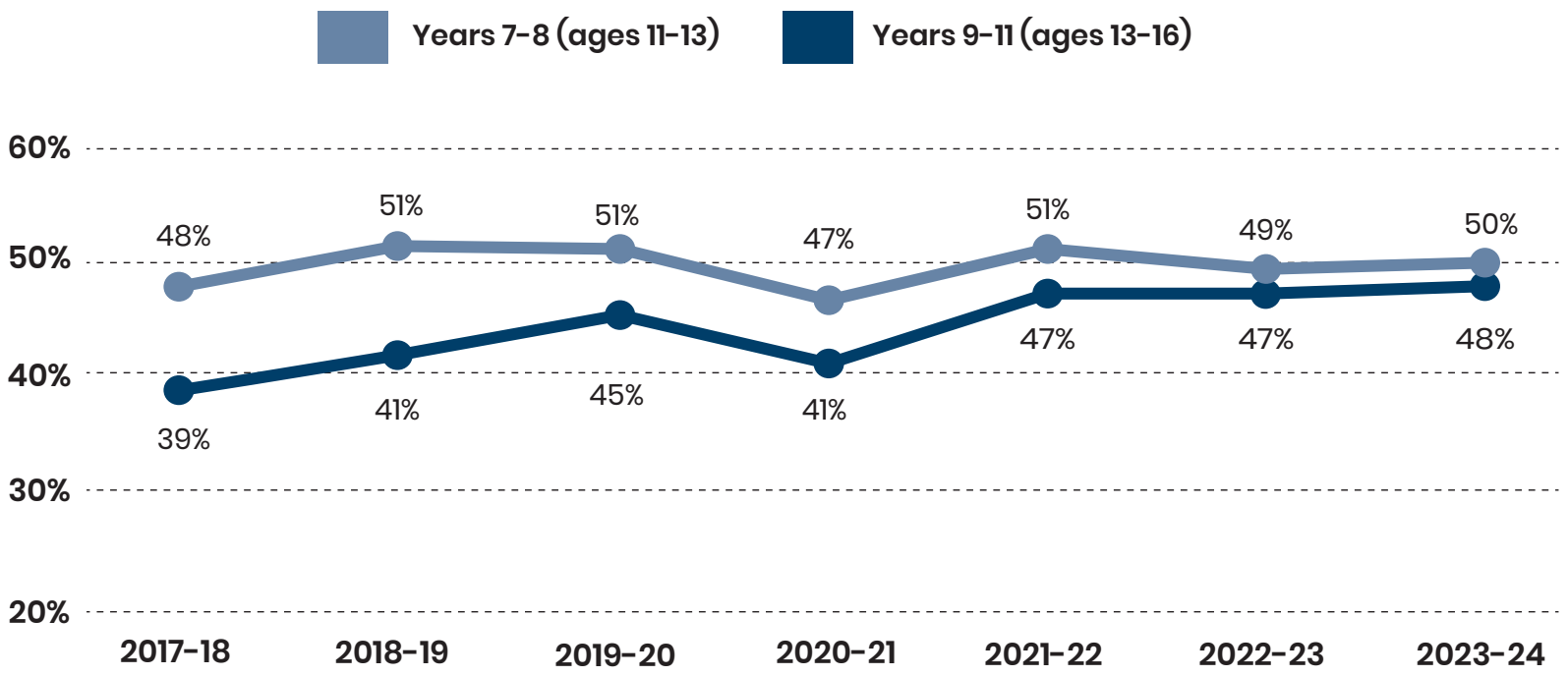
Activity levels are broadly unchanged over the last two years among secondary-age young people

The proportion of children and young people classified as active has remained fairly stable over the longer term among young people in school Years 7-8 (ages 11-13).

Activity levels have remained unchanged over the last two years among young people in school Years 9-11 (ages 13-16), following a period of growth over preceding years. As such, over the last six years (since academic year 2017-18), we've seen activity levels increase by 9.5%, or 263,000 more active young people.

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Active (an average of 60+ minutes a day)



Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

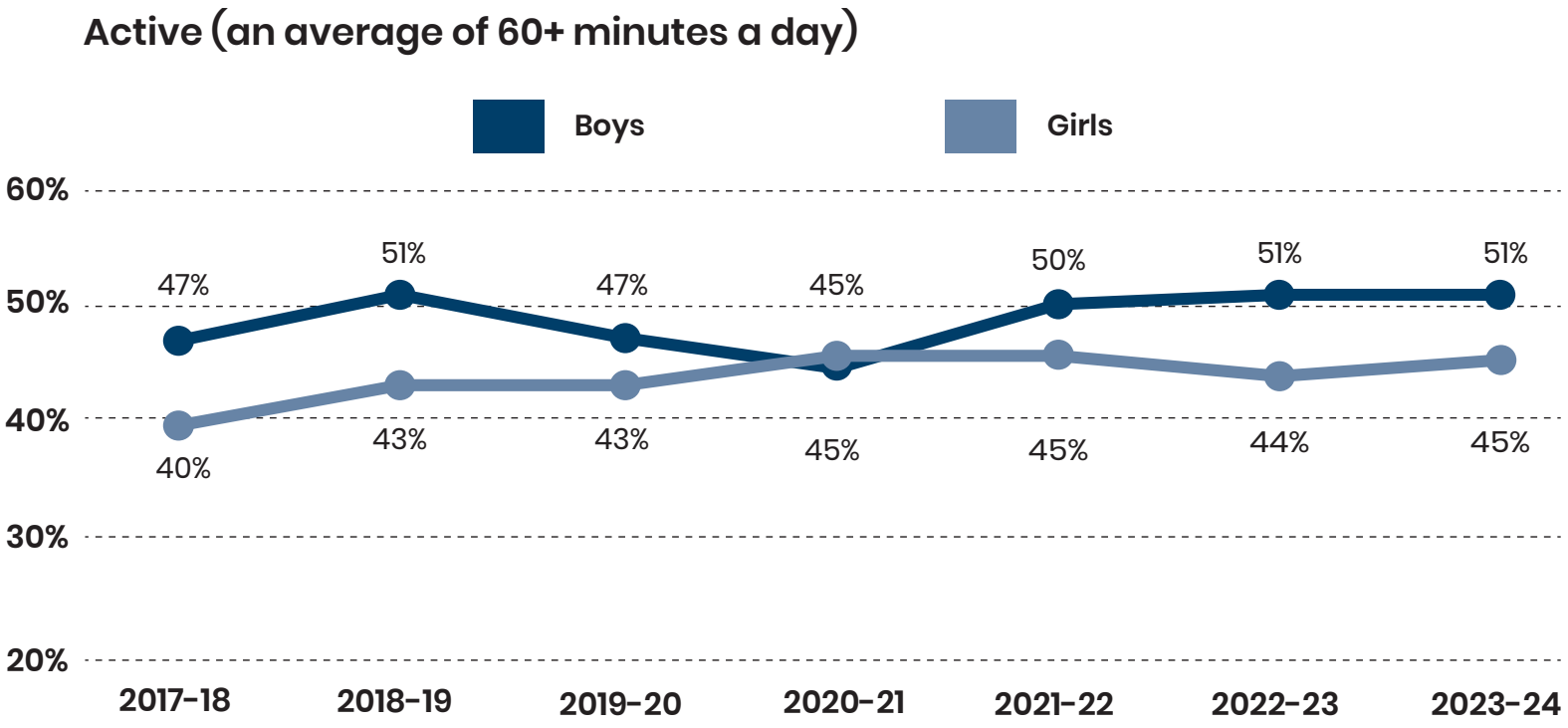
Both boys and girls have seen activity levels increase over the last six years

Activity levels have been stable over the last two years for boys and girls, with growth over the longer term slightly greater for girls (+5.1%) than boys (+4.4%). As a result, the gender gap between boys and girls currently stands at 6.4%, slightly narrower than the gap recorded in 2017-18 (7.1%).

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

There are notable gender differences when considering specific age groups:

- Infant-age boys (school Years 1-2, ages 5-7) have seen greater long-term growth in activity levels than infant-age girls (4.8% vs 3.2%). As a result, the gender gap for this age group has widened to 7.9% (from 6.3% in academic year 2017-18).
- Teenage girls (school Years 9-11, ages 13-16) have seen greater long-term growth in activity levels than teenage boys (11.6% vs 8.9%). As a result, the gender gap for this age group has narrowed to 6.8% (from 9.5% in academic year 2017-18).



Link to data tables

Disability and long-term health conditions

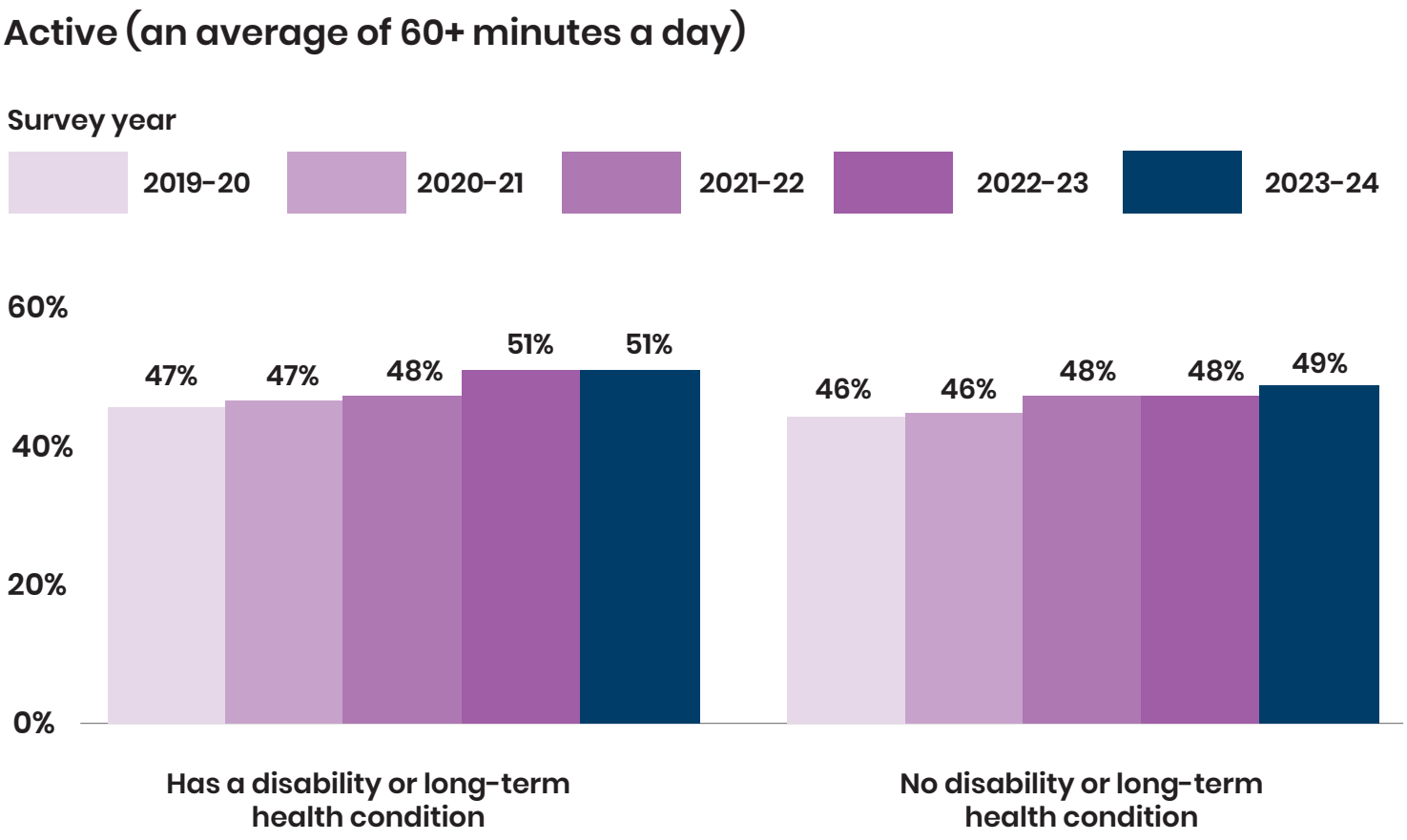
Activity levels have increased by more for children and young people with a disability or long-term health condition than for those without

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

The proportion of active children and young people, both with and without a disability or long-term health condition, has remained unchanged compared to 12 months ago. Both groups have seen growth over the last four years, but this has been slightly greater for those with a disability or long-term health condition (up 4.1% vs 3.2% for those without).

There is no reportable difference in activity levels for those with, as compared to those without, a disability or long-term health condition.

Note: A new question was introduced for 2019-20 to capture consistent disability and long-term health condition data across all year groups. See the definitions page for more detail.



Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

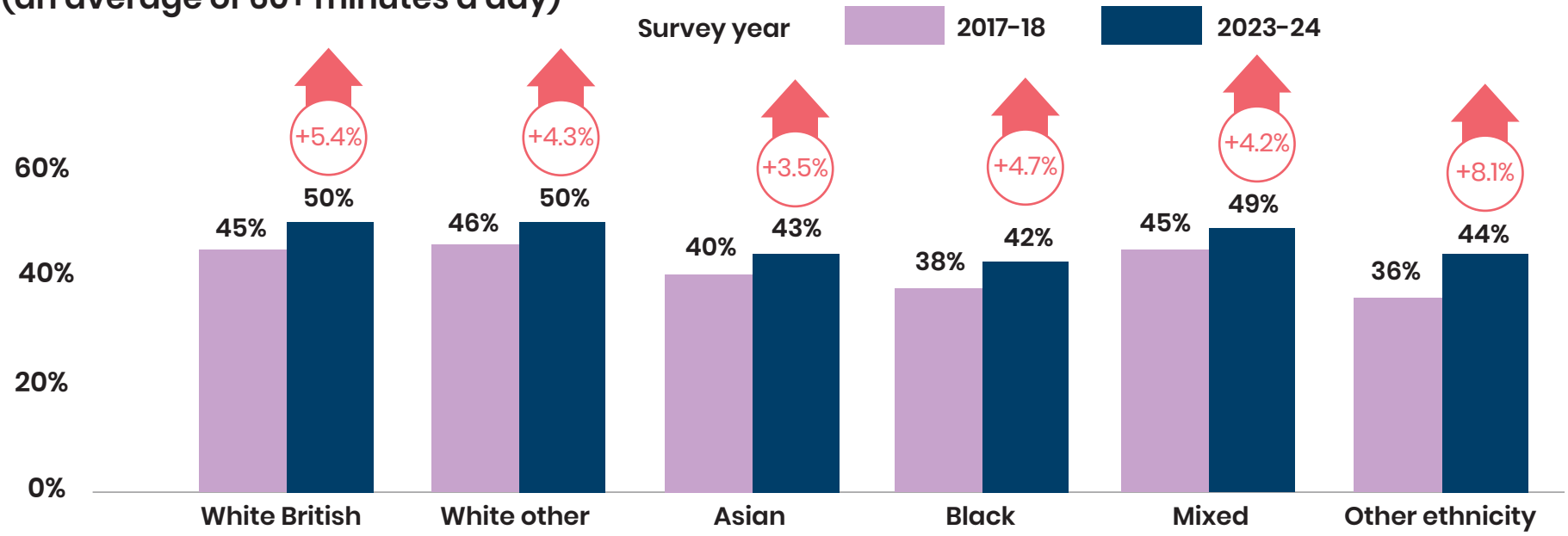
Arrows show change from six years ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Activity levels are up over the longer term among all groups

We have recorded a small increase (+2.8%) in activity levels among Asian children and young people compared to 12 months ago, which has been driven by Asian girls. All groups are now recording increases over the longer term (compared to academic year 2017-18). Despite this, Asian, Black and children and young people of other ethnic backgrounds remain the least likely to be active.

The gender gap is currently widest between Black girls and boys (13.1%), following an increase in activity levels for Black boys (+5.0%) compared to 12 months ago. This is followed by Asian girls and boys (9.5%), where the gap has narrowed slightly following an increase in activity levels for Asian girls (+3.5%) compared to 12 months ago.

Active (an average of 60+ minutes a day)



Link to data tables

Note: After White British, the largest ethnic groups within the child population are Asian (10%) and Mixed (7%), with White other (6%), Black (5%) and Other ethnic groups (4%) making up the remainder. As such, caution should be applied when looking at change for these groups due to smaller sample sizes and therefore wider confidence intervals.

All affluence groups have seen activity levels increase over the longer term

Children and young people from the least affluent families are the least likely to be active, with only 45% meeting the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines — compared to 57% of those from the most affluent families.

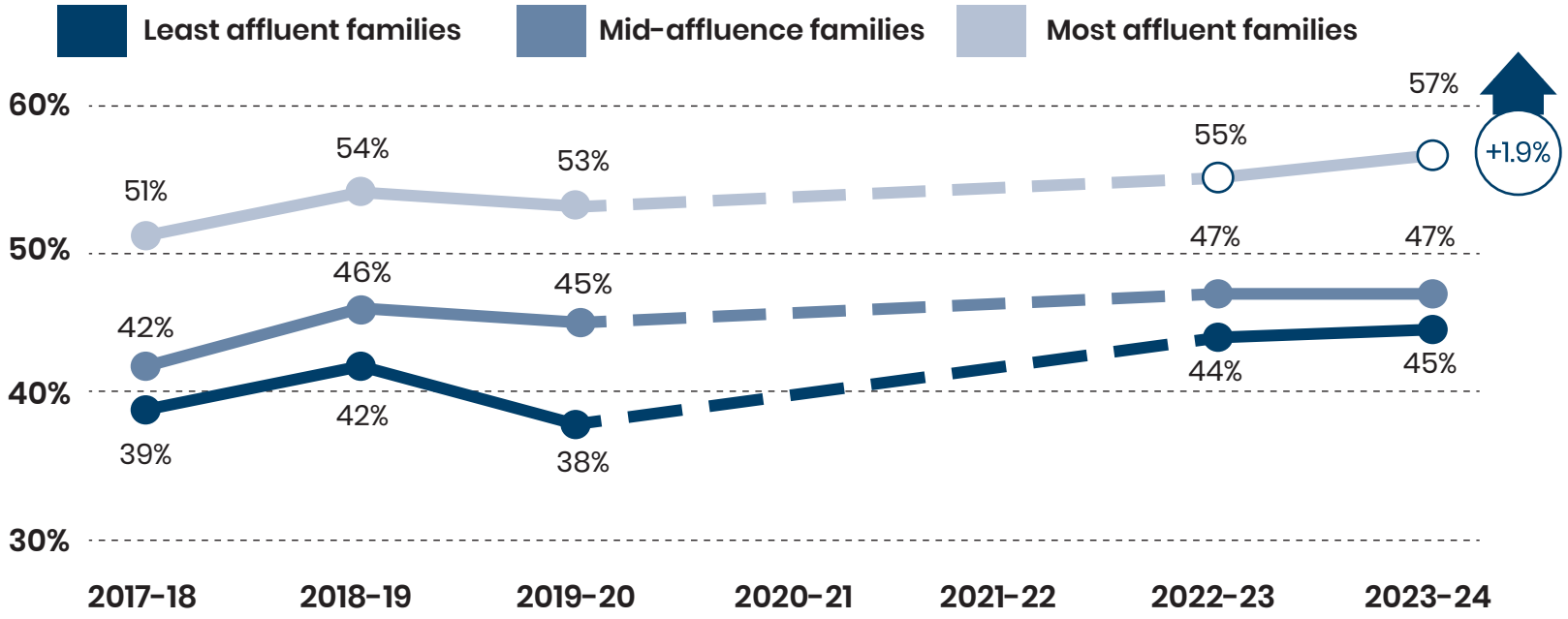
A small increase in activity levels among those from the most affluent families compared to 12 months ago has slightly widened the gap to those from the least affluent families.

Over the longer term, however, the gap remains slightly narrower, with activity levels increasing by more for those from the least affluent families (up 6.5% vs 5.5% for most affluent, compared to academic year 2017-18). Long-term growth in activity levels is slightly lower for those from mid-affluence families (+4.9%).

Link to data tables

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Active (an average of 60+ minutes a day)



Note: During the coronavirus pandemic, one of the components of the family affluence scale wasn't applicable. As such, comparable data is not available for that period. See the definitions page for more details.

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

Activity levels are lowest for those with two or more characteristics of inequality

Children and young people with two or more characteristics of inequality are the least likely to be active, with only 40% meeting the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines — compared to 47% of those with one characteristic and 52% with no characteristics of inequality.

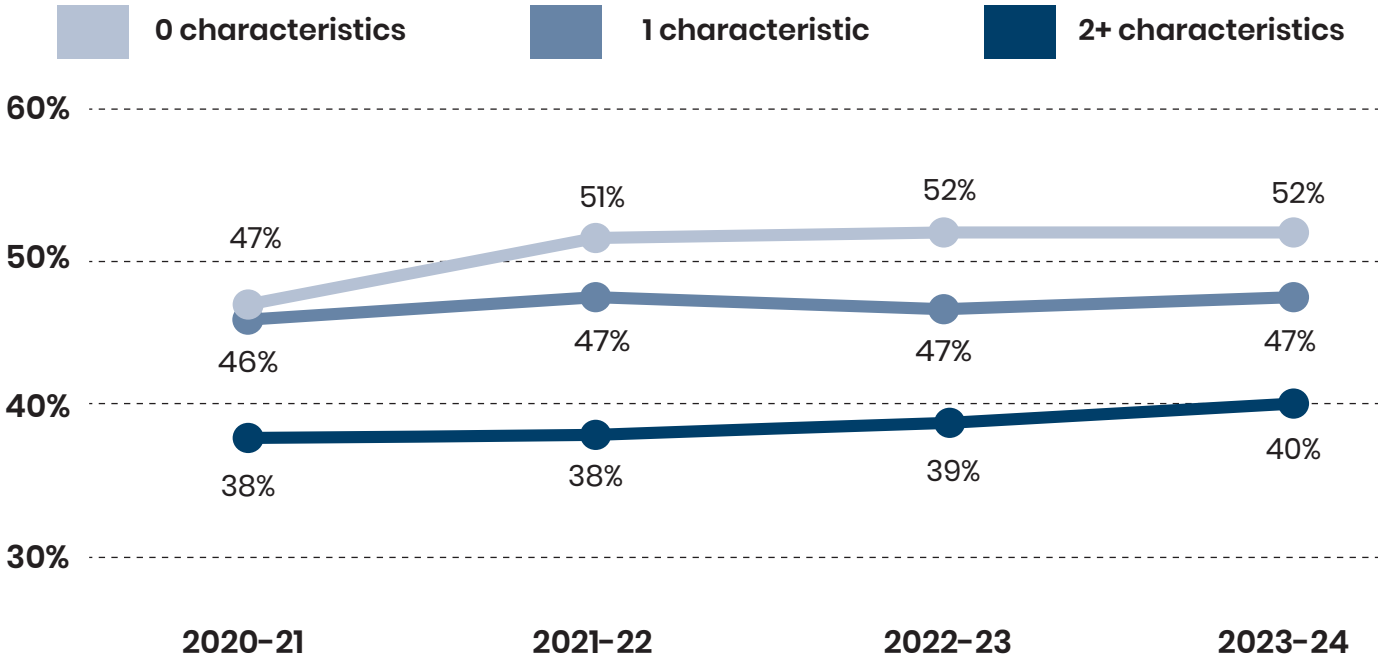
While the data suggest that the gap has widened compared to three years ago (academic year 2020-21), this is likely to be an adjustment post-pandemic. For all three groups, activity levels have remained unchanged since academic year 2021-22.

Note: Some of the data used to compile the Inequalities Metric were not introduced into the survey until academic year 2020-21 and, as such, data for the metric cannot be reported before that date. See the definitions page for more details on how the metric is comprised.

Link to data tables

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Active (an average of 60+ minutes a day)



Variety of activity

Definition

This chapter presents information in two formats:

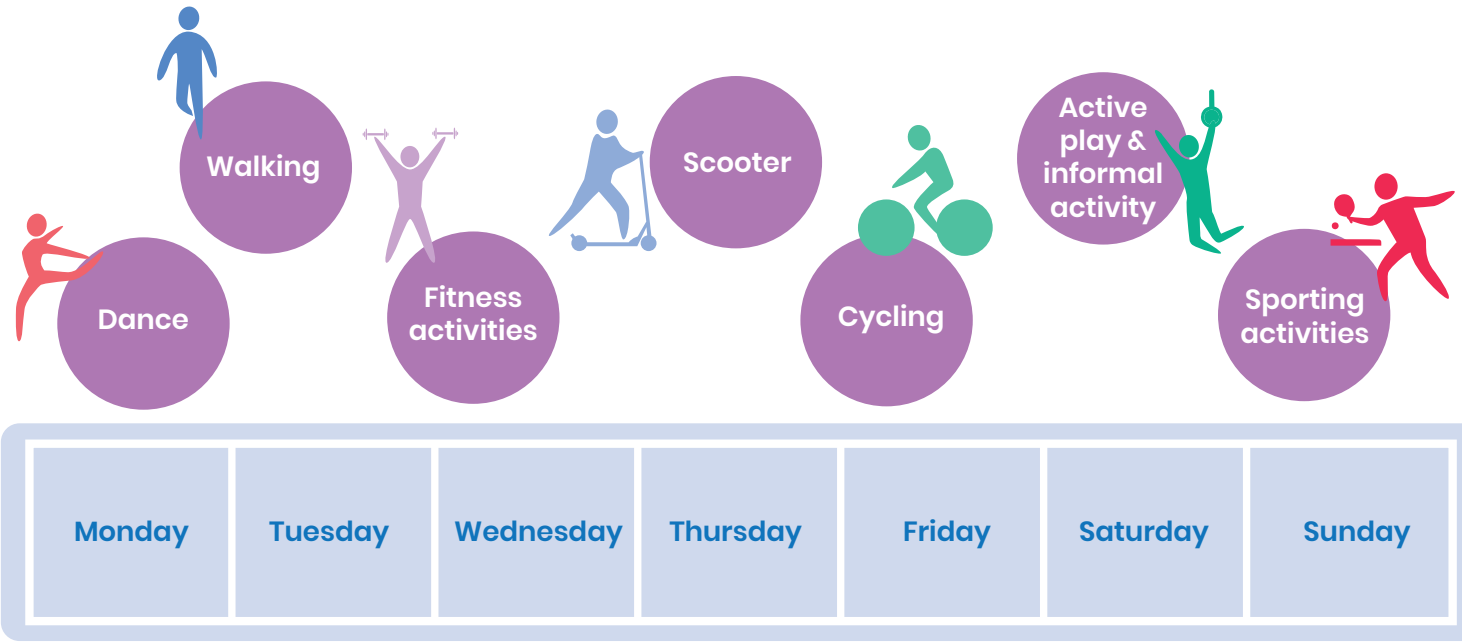
- **Mean number of days** (average number of days a week)
- **Distribution of days** (number of days a week grouped by 0, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7 days).

The Chief Medical Officers' guidelines recommend that children and young people should engage in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscular fitness and bone strength.

This is measured as the number of days on which a child takes part in two or more activities at any intensity.

We measure the variety of sport and physical activity done in...

- Mean number of days per week undertaking **two or more activities**
- Distribution of days per week undertaking **two or more activities**



Variety of activity

Arrows show change from six years ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

ACTIVE LIVES CHILDREN SURVEY 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR

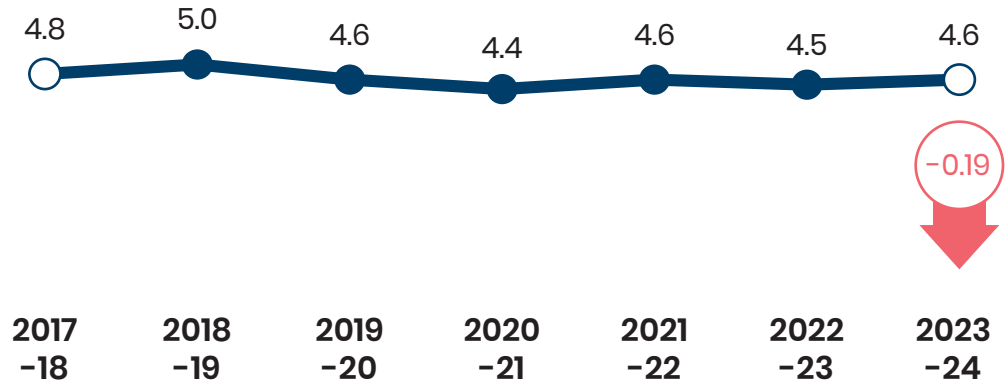
SPORT ENGLAND

Most children and young people take part in two or more activities on five or more days across the week

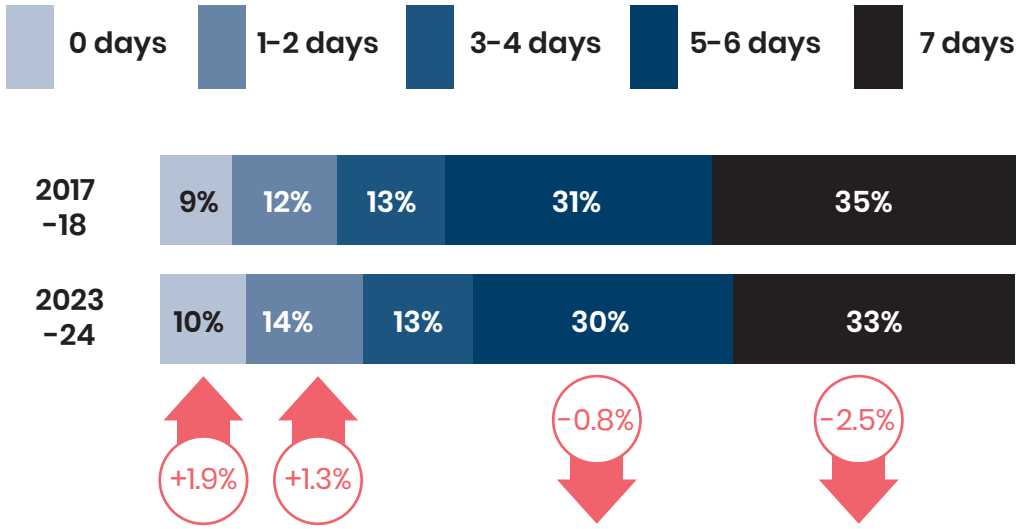
On average, children and young people in school Years 1-11 (aged 5-16) take part in two or more activities on 4.6 days a week. This is relatively unchanged over the last six years, recording a drop of just 0.2 days since academic year 2017-18.

This average is, however, pulled down by the third of children and young people who do so on four or fewer days, which has increased from 33% to 37% (+3.3%) compared to academic year 2017-18. A tenth of children and young people do not meet this guideline on a single day.

Mean number of days undertaking 2+ activities



Distribution of days undertaking 2+ activities



Link to data tables

Volunteering

Definition

Giving up time to help other people to be active is amazing, no matter your age. Not only do those people benefit, but the volunteer benefits too — gaining experience, making friends and learning new skills.

And evidence suggests those who give their time when young are more likely to continue to volunteer in later life.

We count a child or young person as having volunteered if:

They've taken part in a volunteering role to support sport/physical activity in the last 12 months

(A full list of roles can be found in our definitions at the end of this report.)

Link to data tables

Note: The volunteering questions were only asked of children in Years 5-11.

Volunteering

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

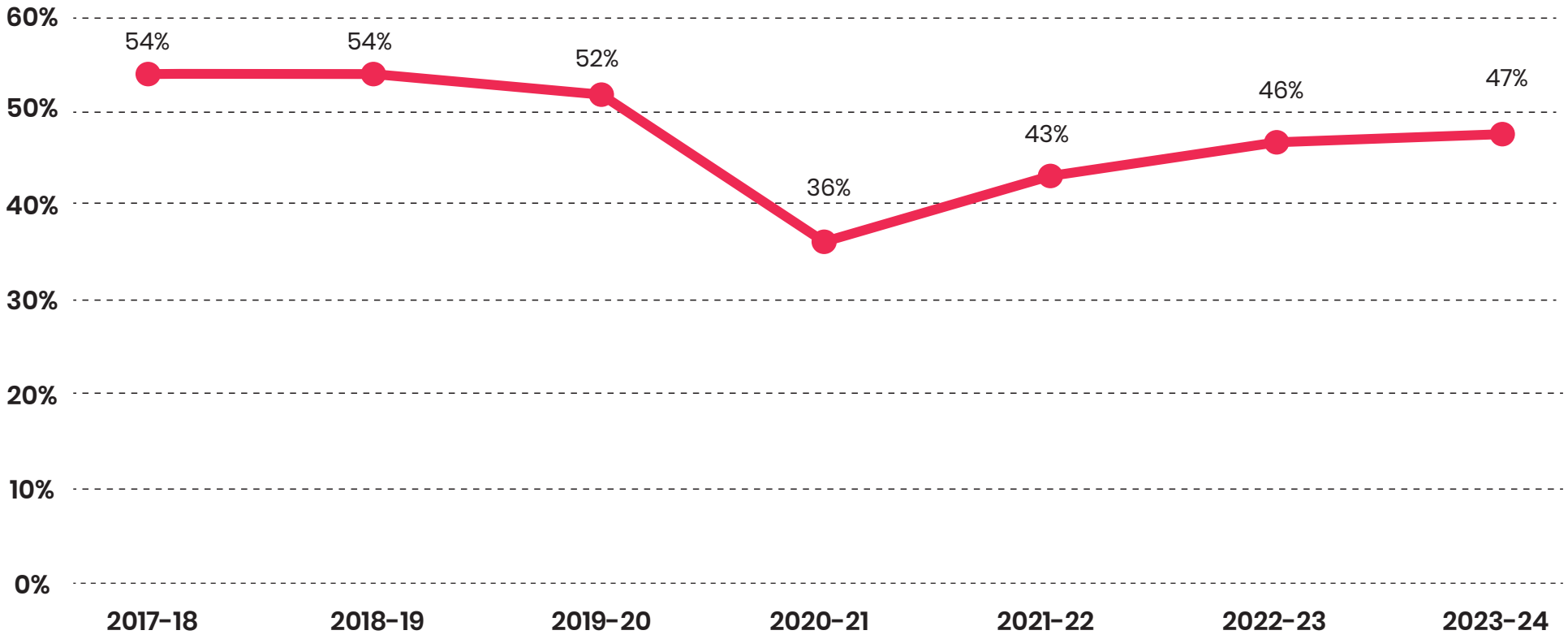
ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

2.2 million (47%) children and young people volunteered to support sport and physical activity in the last 12 months

Volunteering rates remain unchanged compared to 12 months ago, suggesting they might be settling at a lower level than pre-pandemic. There are 6.9%, or 71,000 fewer children and young people volunteering compared to six years ago (academic year 2017-18).

Volunteered in the last year



Link to data tables

Volunteering is only asked of children and young people in Years 5-11 (ages 9-16).

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

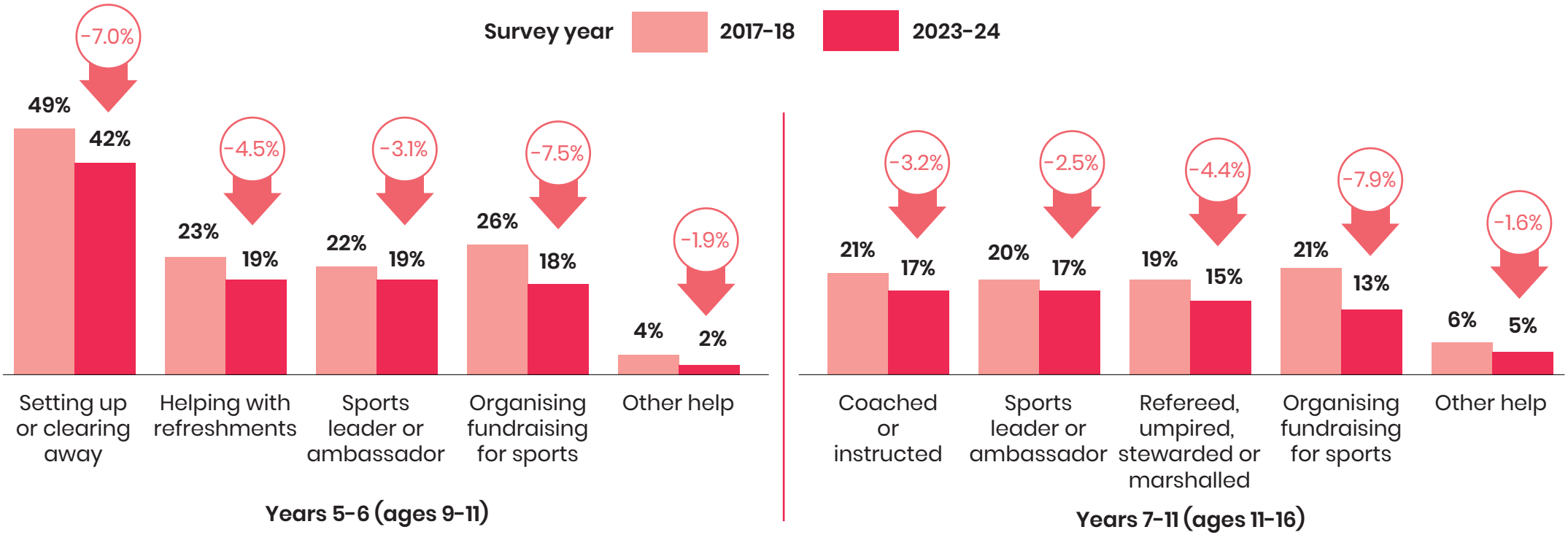
SPORT ENGLAND

Fewer children and young people undertake each volunteer role compared to six years ago

Organising fundraising and setting up and clearing away have seen the largest drops compared to academic year 2017-18, with 7-8% fewer children and young people volunteering in these ways. Despite this, setting up and clearing away among Year 5-6 children (ages 9-11) remains the most common way to help out. There is a fairly even spread of children and young people taking part in most other roles.

% Arrows show change from six years ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Roles performed in the last year



Link to data tables

Years 5-6 (ages 9-11) have a slightly different question to Years 7-11 (ages 11-16), to ensure the volunteering roles asked about are relevant.

Volunteering

Note: All data relates to young people in Years 5-11 (ages 9-16).

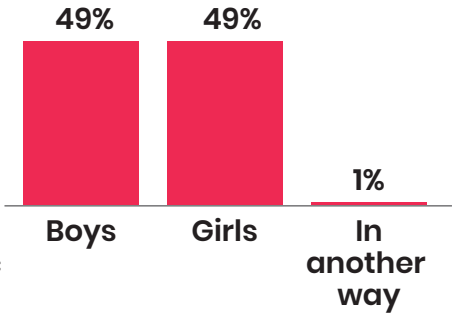
Volunteer profile | Population profile

Summary of demographic profile

Our data shows there are some inequalities:

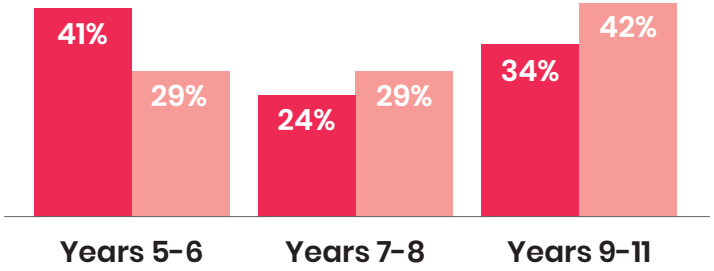
1 Gender

Boys and girls are fairly equally represented among volunteers.
*In another way comprised 1.4% of the population



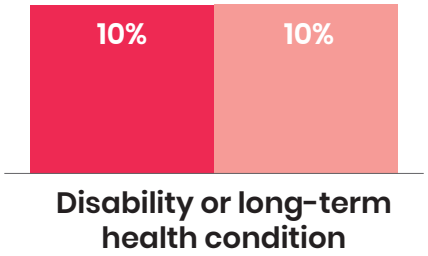
2 School year

Older children are under-represented among volunteers.



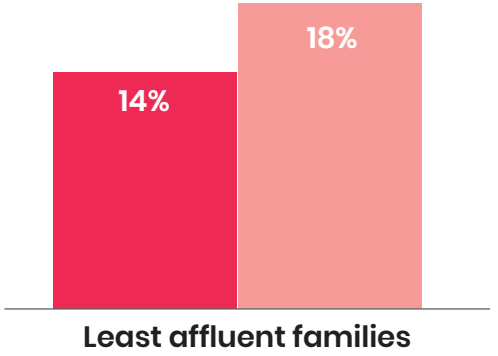
3 Disability and long-term health conditions

The profile of children and young people with a limiting disability, or long-term health condition, who volunteer is representative of the population.



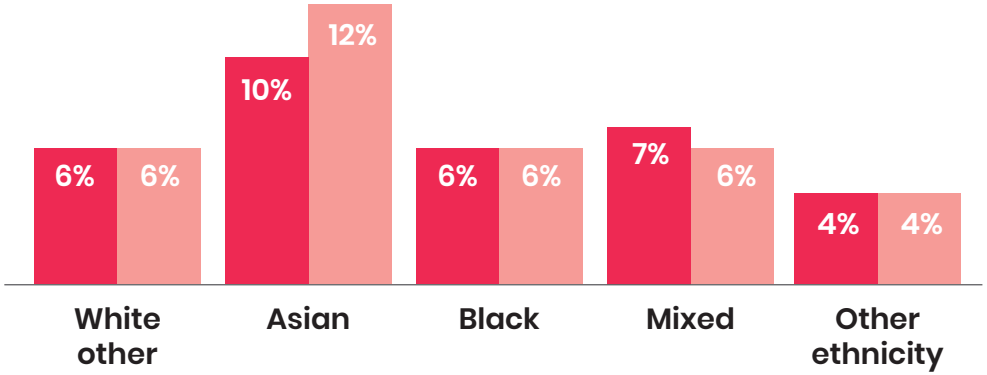
4 Least affluent families

Children and young people from the least affluent families are under-represented. They make up 18% of those in Years 5-11 (ages 9-16), but only 14% of volunteers.



5 Ethnicity

The volunteer profile generally reflects the ethnicity of the population, with the exception that Asian children are under-represented as they make up 12% of the population but only 10% of volunteers.



Link to data tables

See our definitions page for the full definition of each demographic group.

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

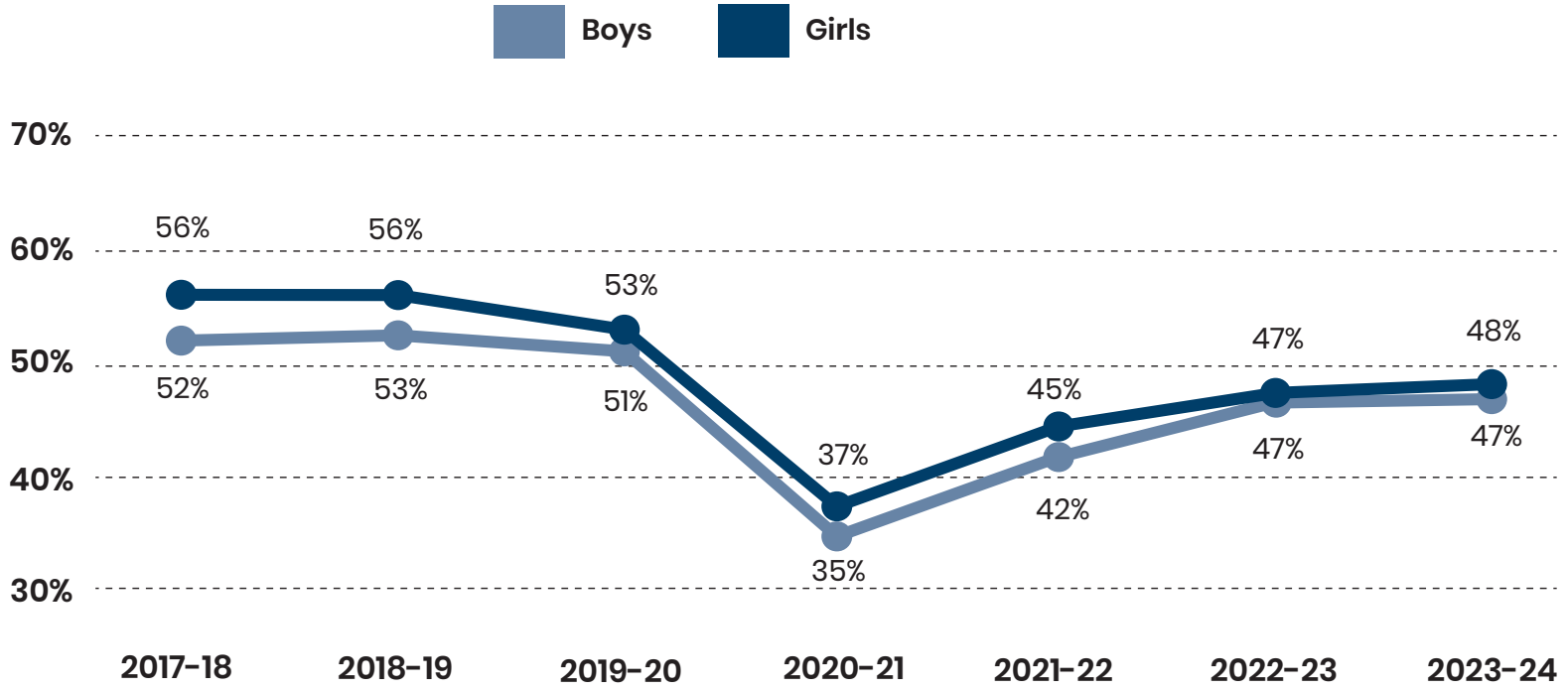
SPORT ENGLAND

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Volunteering rates are similar between boys and girls

There is no reportable difference in volunteering rates between boys and girls overall. However, we do record a slightly higher rate for Years 5-6 (ages 9-11) girls compared to boys of the same age (66% vs 62%). Changes over time are consistent by gender across all age groups.

Volunteered in the last year



Link to data tables

Volunteering

School year

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

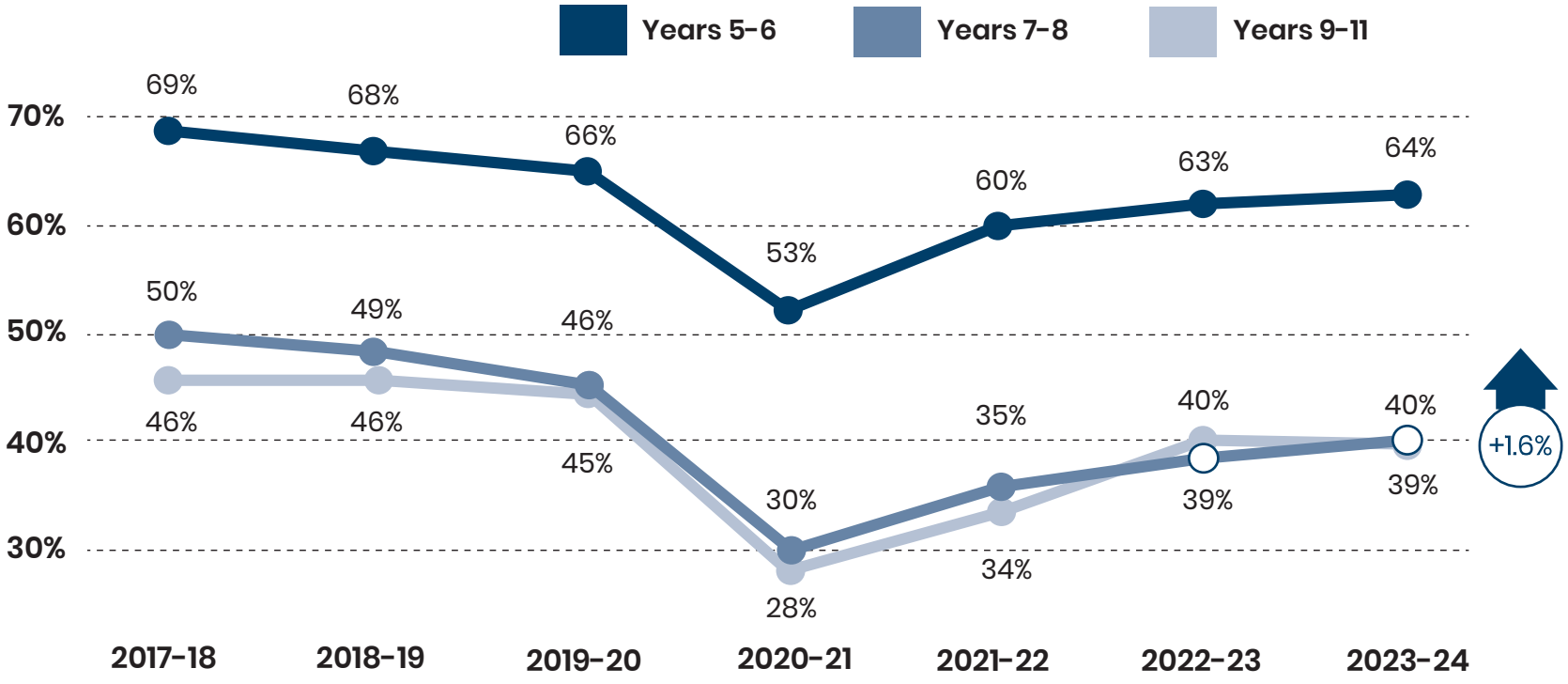
Secondary-age young people are less likely to volunteer than upper primary-age children

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Volunteering rates are higher for children in school Years 5-6 (ages 9-11) compared to those in Years 7-8 (ages 11-13) and Years 9-11 (ages 13-16), with little difference between the latter two age groups. Setting up and clearing away appears to be the key role driving this difference.

Longer-term drops are smaller for Years 5-6 children (down 5.3% vs 7.7% across Years 7-11).

Volunteered in the last year



Link to data tables

Disability and long-term health conditions

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

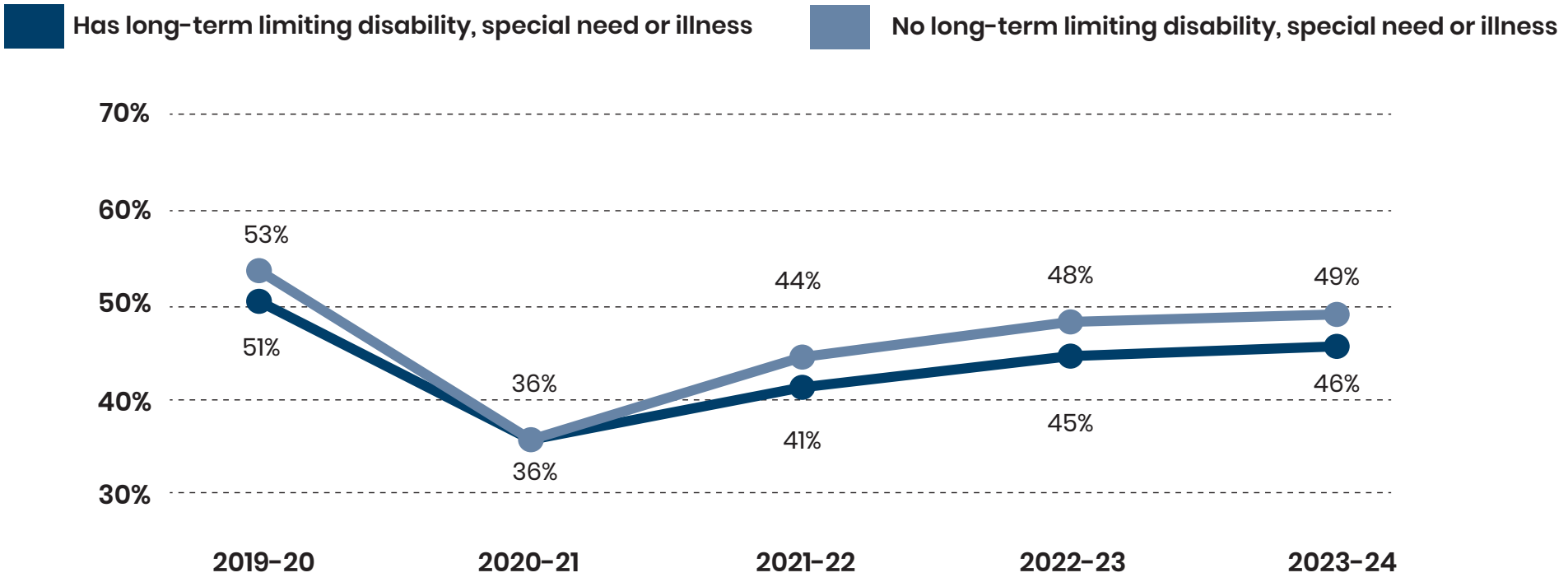
SPORT ENGLAND

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Just under half (46%) of children and young people with a disability or long-term health condition give up their time to help others

Volunteering rates are slightly lower for children and young people with a disability or long-term health condition compared to those without; however, changes over time are similar between the two groups.

Volunteered in the last year



Note: A new question was introduced for 2019-20 to capture consistent disability and long-term health condition data across all year groups. See the definitions page for more detail.

Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

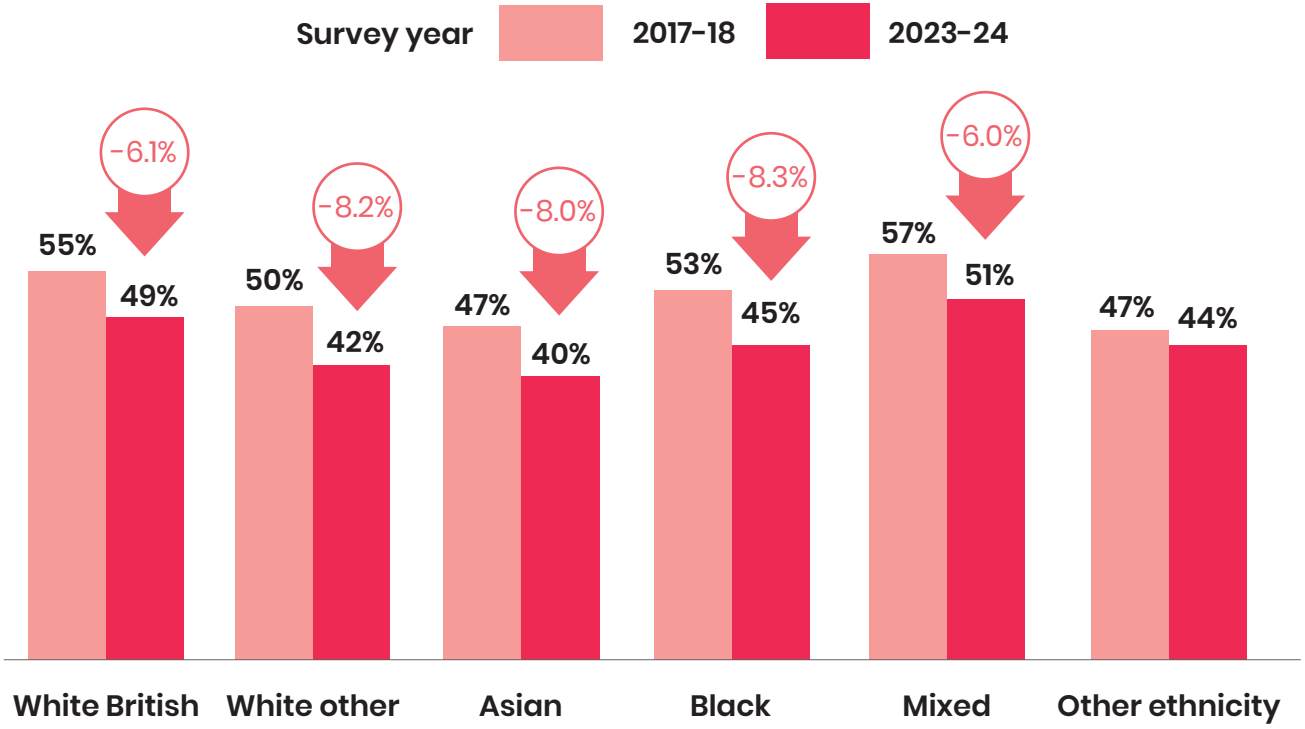
SPORT ENGLAND

% Arrows show change from six years ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Drops are greatest among White other, Asian and Black girls

Children and young people of Asian and White other backgrounds are the least likely to volunteer to support sport and physical activity. It is these groups, alongside Black children and young people, who have seen the largest drops compared to academic year 2017-18. It is specifically girls within all three of these groups that are seeing the largest drops, down 10.2%, 9.7% and 12.0% for White other, Asian and Black girls respectively.

Volunteered in the last year



Note: After White British, the largest ethnic group within the Year 5-11 child population is Asian (12%), with Mixed (6%), White other (6%), Black (6%) and Other ethnic groups (4%) making up the remainder. As such, caution should be applied when looking at change for these groups due to smaller sample sizes and therefore wider confidence intervals.

Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

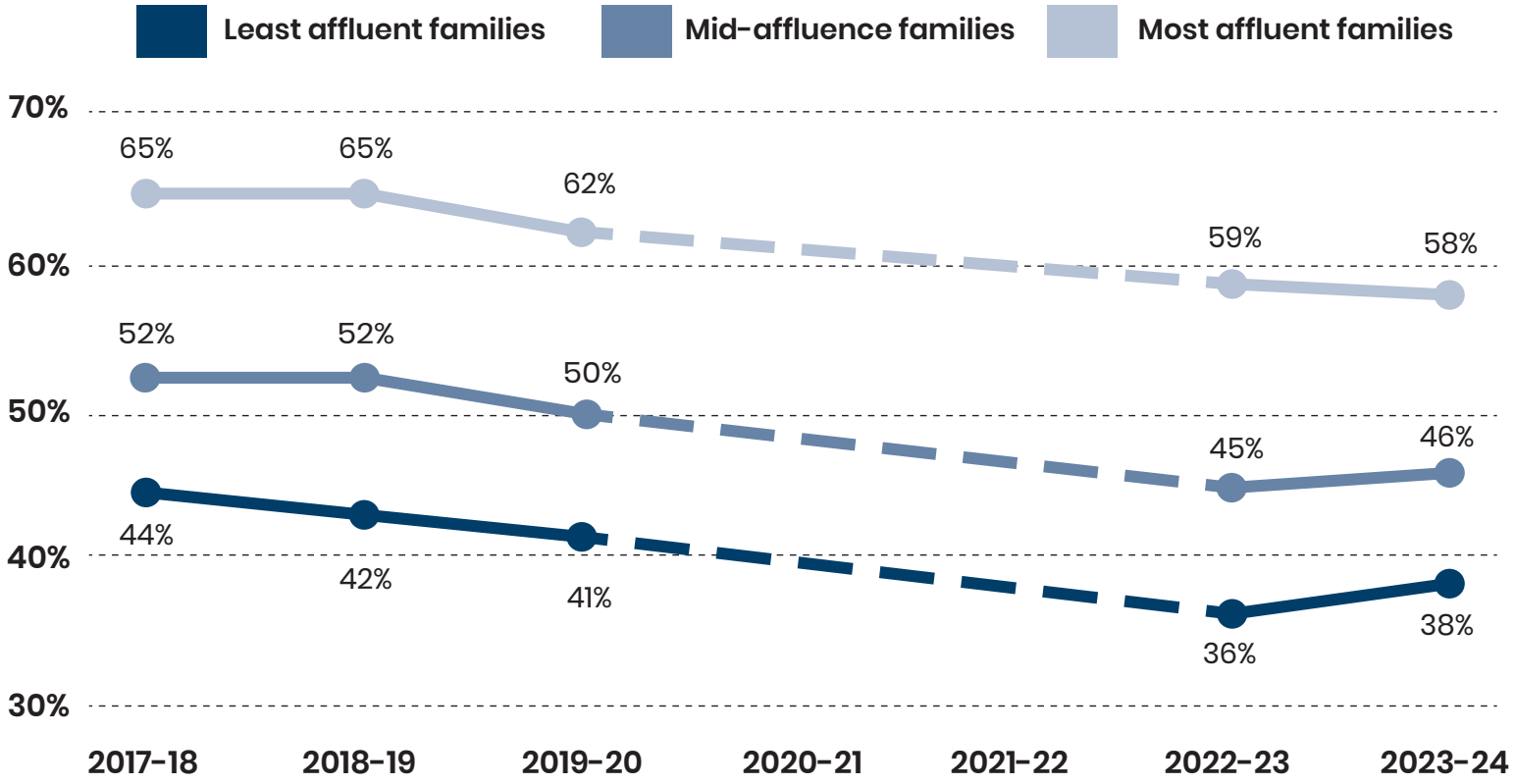
SPORT ENGLAND

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Just fewer than two in five children and young people from the least affluent families volunteer to support sport and physical activity

Children and young people from the least affluent families are less likely to volunteer to support sport and physical activity compared to those from the most affluent families. Volunteering levels have dropped consistently across all three groups since academic year 2017-18.

Volunteered in the last year



Note: During the coronavirus pandemic, one of the components of the family affluence scale wasn't applicable. As such, comparable data is not available for that period. See the definitions page for more details.

Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

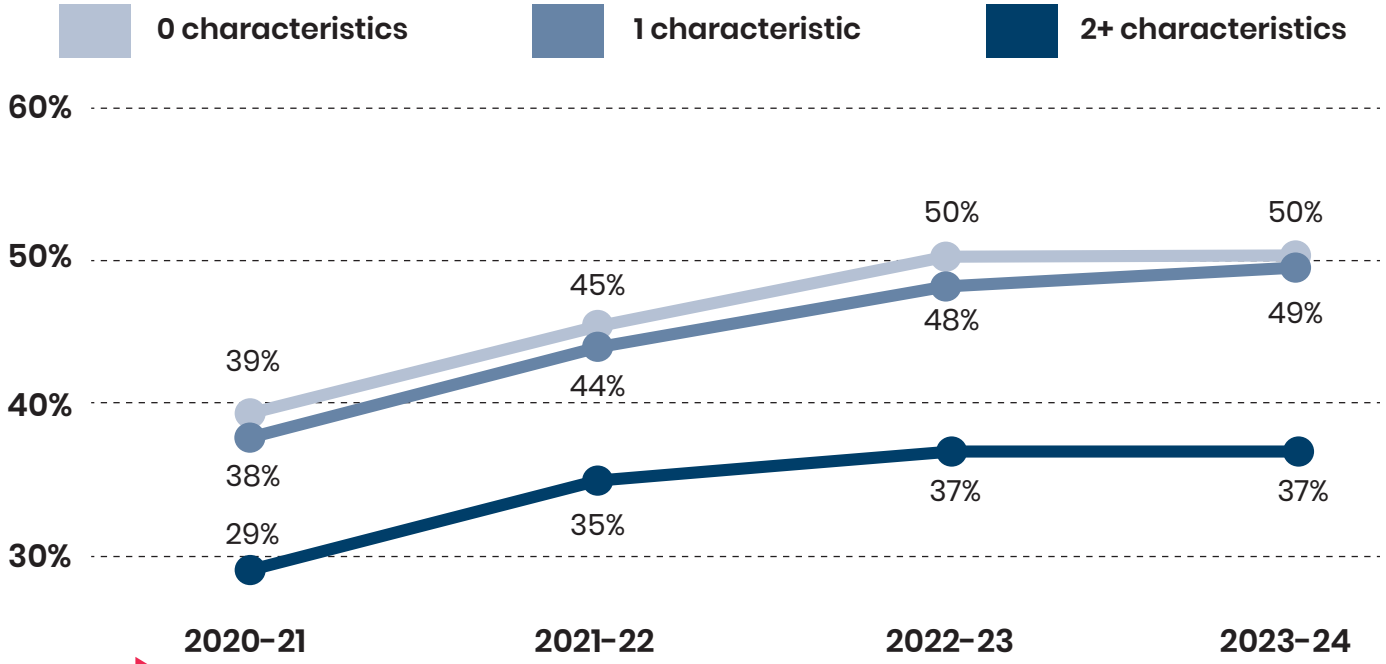
% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Fewer than two in five children and young people with two or more characteristics of inequality volunteer to support sport and physical activity

Children and young people with 2+ characteristics of inequality are notably less likely to volunteer; however. there is no difference in levels between those with 0 or 1 characteristic. Since the height of the pandemic (academic year 2020-21), where volunteering levels hit a low, all three groups have seen similar increases.

This difference in volunteering levels is most pronouced among secondary-age young people (Years 11-16), where we see fewer young people with 2+ characteristics of inequality volunteering across all roles. In contrast, for children in school Years 5-6 (ages 9-11), it is only in organising fundraising for sport and being a sports leader or ambassador where levels are lower among those with 2+ characteristics of inequality.

Volunteered in the last year



Note: Some of the data used to compile the Inequalities Metric was not introduced into the survey until academic year 2020-21 and, as such, data for the metric cannot be reported before that date. See the definitions page for more details on how the metric is comprised.

Link to data tables

Wellbeing, individual and community development

Outcomes definition

This section presents data looking at the wider outcomes for children and young people, both overall and linked to their levels of engagement in sport and physical activity.

Measures covered are:

- Mental wellbeing
- Individual development
- Social and community development.

Link to more information on measures and demographics

Link to data tables

	Physical wellbeing	Mental wellbeing	Individual development	Social & community development	Economic development
Sport and physical activity can...	• Help improve and maintain fitness, strength and balance • Help prevent and manage medical conditions.	• Contribute to happiness and improved self-esteem • Reduce stress, anxiety and depression.	• Help develop soft/social skills and increase persistence and perseverance • Impact positively on employment opportunities.	• Bring people together • Build trust and reduce isolation.	• Promote economic growth • Create jobs.
Measured by...	Proportion of children and young people who: • Undertake an average of 60+ minutes a day of sport and physical activity See the first section for more details	On a selection of 'happy', 'neutral', or 'sad': • How do you feel today? (Years 1-2) Score out of 10 for: • How happy did you feel yester-day? (Years 3-11) • How satisfied are you with your life nowadays? (Years 7-11) • Do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile? (Years 7-11)	Strongly agree with: • If I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it. (Years 3-11)	Agreement with: • How much do you feel you can trust people who are a similar age to you? (Years 3-11)	The economic value of sport, as reported in: • DCMS's Sports Satellite Accounts • Our estimated social value of sport and physical activity

Mental wellbeing

Arrows show change from six years ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

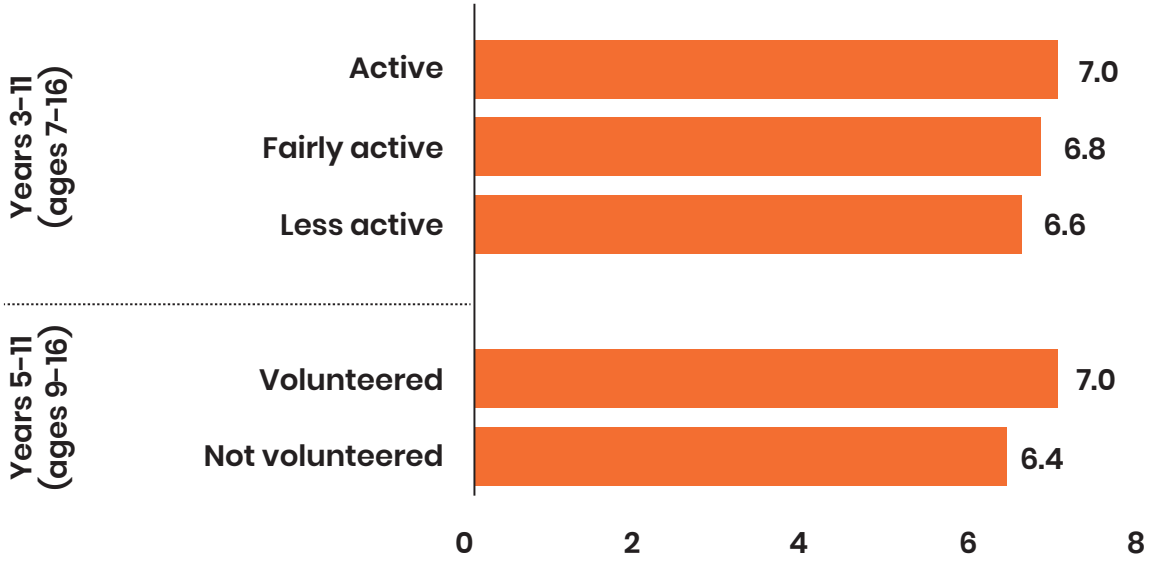
ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

There's a positive association between levels of engagement in sport and physical activity and levels of mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing (happiness measure shown here) scores are higher for those who are active than those who are fairly active, which in turn are higher than for those who are less active. There's also a positive association between all mental wellbeing measures and volunteering to support sport and physical activity.

How happy did you feel yesterday? (mean score out of 10, where 10 is very happy and 0 is not happy at all)

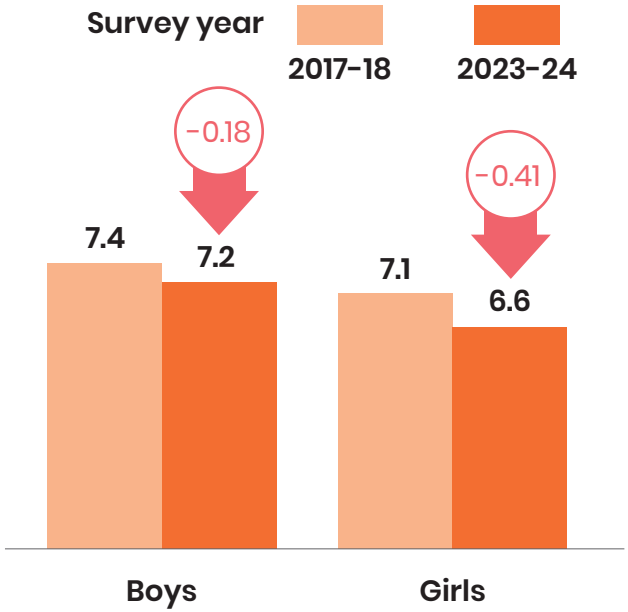


Link to data tables

Summary of change

Happiness scores remain unchanged over the last two years, at 6.9 out of 10, having fallen by 0.26 points compared to six years ago (academic year 2017-18).

- Young people in school Years 9-11 (ages 13-16) have not seen a drop.
- Girls have seen a greater drop than boys.



Individual development

Arrows show change from six years ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

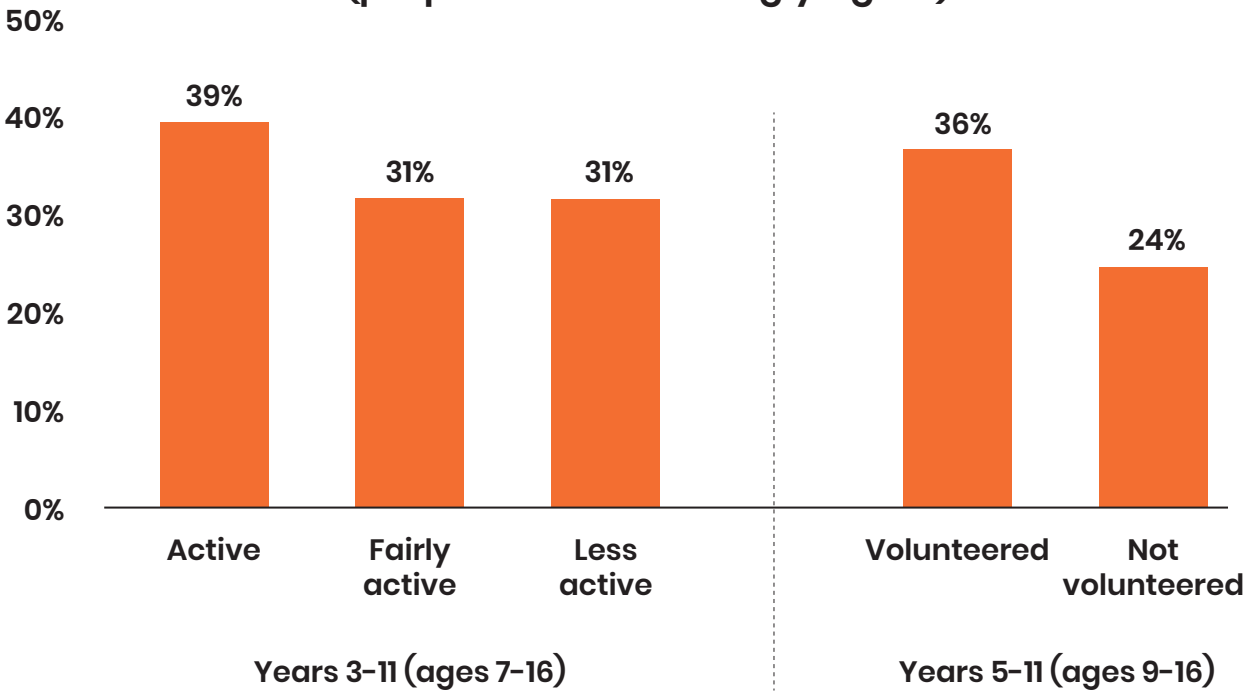
ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

There's a positive association between levels of sport and physical activity, and levels of individual development

The proportion strongly agreeing with the statement 'if I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it' is higher for those who are active than those who are fairly or less active. There's also a positive association between individual development and volunteering to support sport and physical activity.

If I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it (proportion who strongly agree)

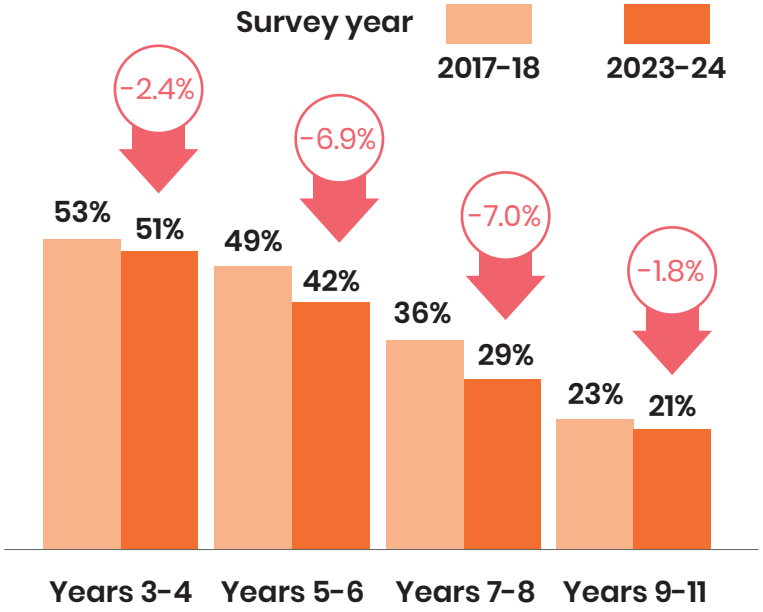


Link to data tables

Summary of change

Levels of individual development remain unchanged at 34% over the last three years, having fallen by 4.5% compared to six years ago (academic year 2017-18).

- Children in school Years 5-6 and 7-8 (ages 9-13) have seen larger drops.
- Girls (down 6.7%) have seen a greater drop than boys (down 2.3%).



Community development

Arrows show change from six years ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

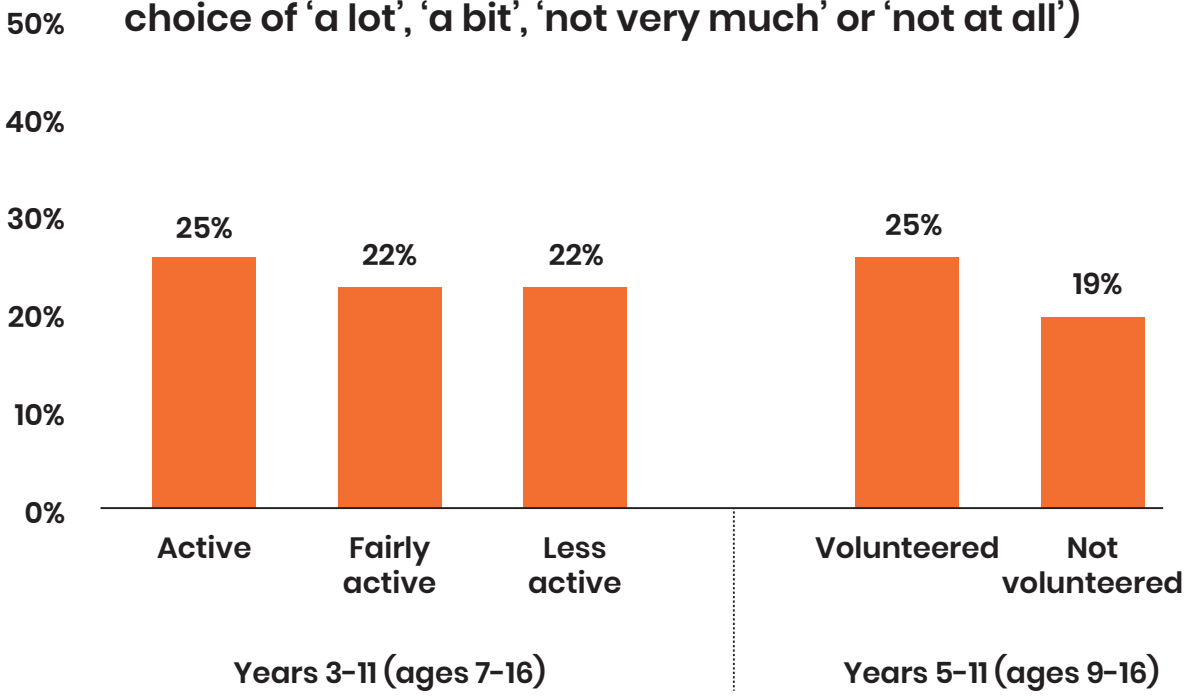
ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

There's a positive association between levels of sport and physical activity, and levels of community development

Active children and young people are more likely to strongly agree they can trust people of a similar age to themselves, than those who are fairly or less active. There's a clear positive association between community development and volunteering to support sport and physical activity.

How much do you feel you can trust people of a similar age to you? (proportion who say 'a lot' when given the choice of 'a lot', 'a bit', 'not very much' or 'not at all')

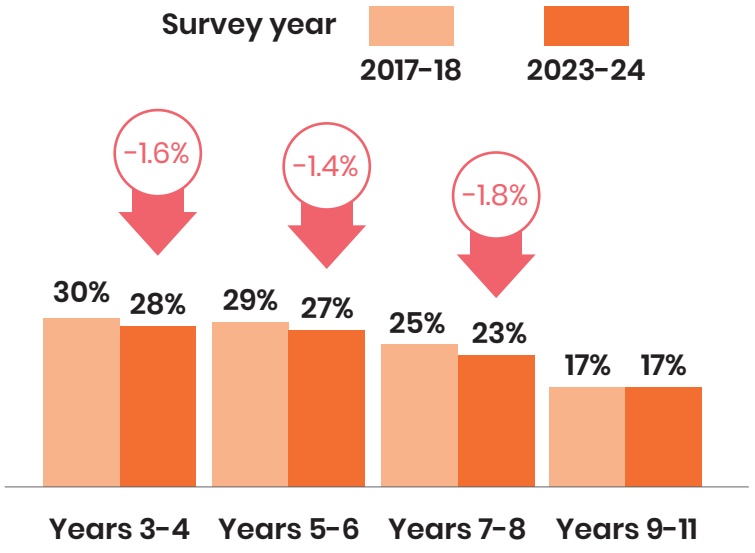


Link to data tables

Summary of change

Levels of social trust remain at 23%, unchanged over the last two years, having seen a small dip compared to six years ago (academic year 2017-18, down 1.3%).

- Young people in school Years 9-11 (ages 13-16) have not seen a drop.
- Girls (down 2.5%) have seen a drop, whereas boys have not.
- Those from the least affluent families (down 1.9%) have seen a drop, whereas those from the most affluent families have not.



Positive attitudes and opportunity

Definition

Physical literacy is personal, as the nature of a person's relationship with movement is complex and ever-changing. As such, there can be no one measure of physical literacy; however, we capture a variety of data on positive attitudes and opportunities to be active, as set out in this chapter, that combine to provide a good indicator of a person's relationship with sport and physical activity.

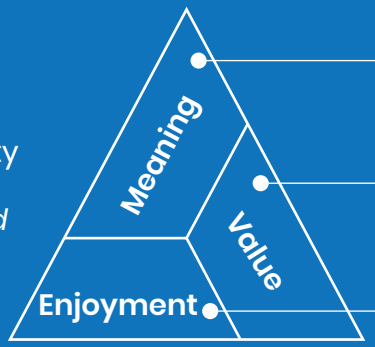
The Physical Literacy Consensus Statement for England was published in September 2023. The list of attitude statements set out in this chapter is not an exhaustive list but rather provides a top-level indicator for each domain.

Most data in this chapter relate to children and young people in school Years 3-11 (ages 7-16). A simpler set of attitude questions are asked to Year 1-2 (age 5-7) children, and data showing these results are included at the end of the chapter. Please see the definitions page for a list of the statements asked and which year groups each apply to.

Physical literacy is our relationship with movement and physical activity throughout life.

A personal relationship
Having a positive and meaningful association with movement and physical activity

It's personal and influenced by our own strengths, needs, circumstances, and past experiences.



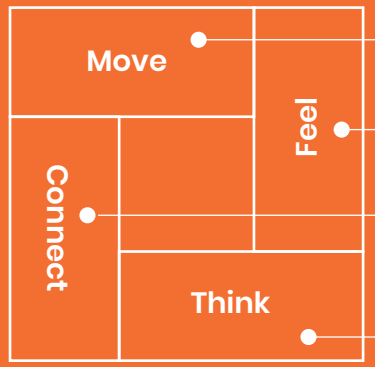
We capture this by:

Importance to them when moving*

Benefits of being active* / How it makes them feel*

Enjoy being active

Movement and physical activity
How we move (physical), connect (social), think (cognitive) and feel (affective) during movement and physical activity plays a crucial role.



Find sport easy / Believe they are good at sports* (competence)

Are confident being active / Show resilience when it is difficult*

Build relationships* / Build social skills*

Understand why it is good for them / Know how to get involved

Underpinned by perceived **opportunity** to be active

*These statements will be added in the next report (Dec 2025).

Positive attitudes and opportunity

Years 3-11 (ages 7-16)

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

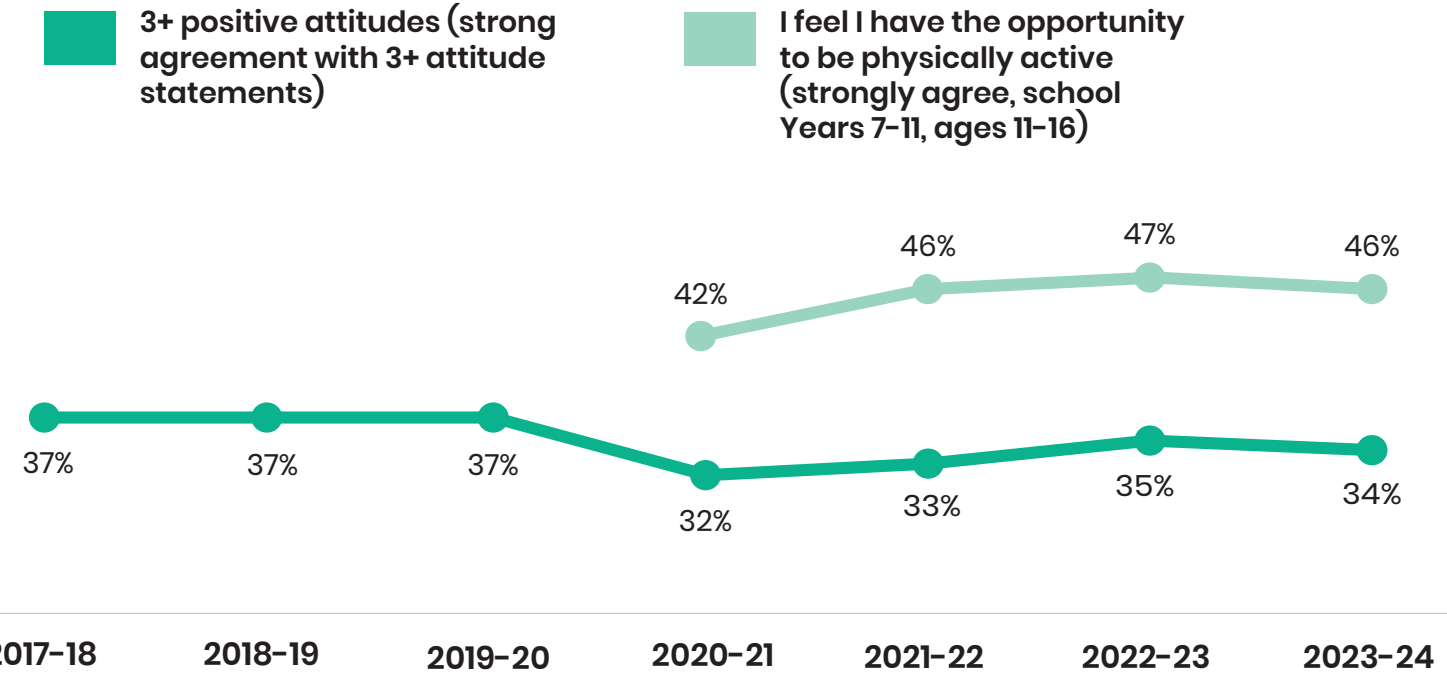
Just over a third of children and young people report three or more positive attitudes; under half of secondary-age young people feel they have the opportunity to be active

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

The proportion of children and young people strongly agreeing with three or more attitude statements (enjoyment, competence, confidence and knowledge or understanding) has remained unchanged over the last two years, suggesting positive attitudes have settled at a new lower level post-pandemic. There are 2.5% fewer children and young people with three or more positive attitudes compared to academic year 2017-18.

Understanding why it's good for them (63%) and enjoying taking part (49%) remain the attitudes they are most likely to strongly agree with, while perceived competence (finding sport easy, 23%) remains the attitude the fewest children and young people report strong agreement with.

The proportion of secondary-age young people (school Years 7-11, ages 11-16) strongly agreeing that they feel they have the opportunity to be physically active has remained unchanged over the last two years.



Link to data tables

Positive attitudes

Years 3-11 (ages 7-16)

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

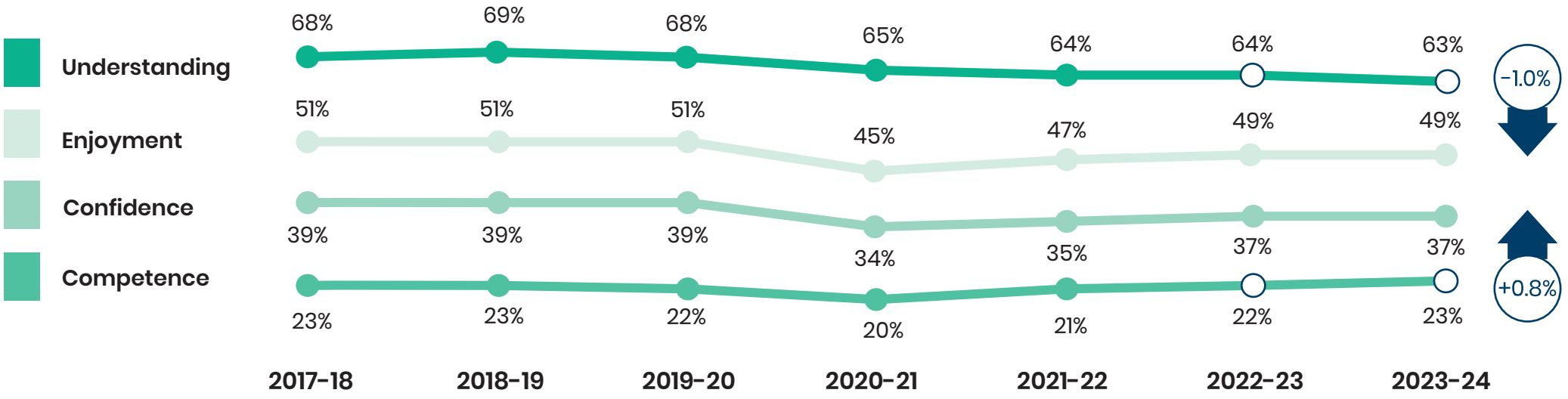
Understanding why activity is good for them has fallen compared to 12 months ago

Those reporting that they understand why being active is good for them (how they think) has fallen compared to 12 months ago, indicating an emerging downward trend and a notable drop of 5.2% since academic year 2017-18. In contrast, perceived competence (how they move) is back in line with, and marginally up on, levels seen six years ago (academic year 2017-18), following a small increase compared to 12 months ago.

The proportion of children and young people reporting that they enjoy taking part (enjoyment), feel confident when doing so (how they feel) and know how to get involved in sport and physical activity (how they think) is unchanged compared to 12 months ago and so remains down over the longer term, having seen the proportion of children strongly agreeing with each statement fall during the pandemic. Enjoyment is down by 2.0%, confidence by 2.7% and knowledge by 1.2% compared to academic year 2017-18.

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Attitudes towards sport and physical activity (proportion who strongly agree)



Link to data tables

Positive attitudes

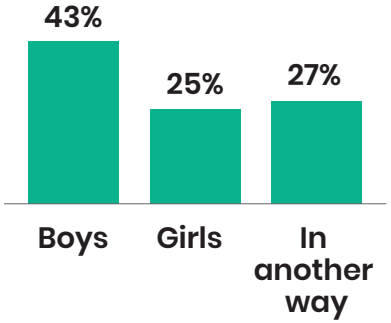
3+ positive attitudes (Years 3-11, ages 7-16)

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

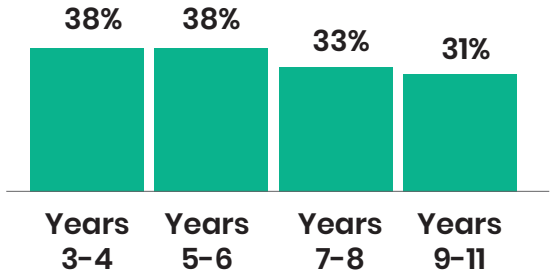
1 Gender

Boys are more likely than girls to have three or more positive attitudes.



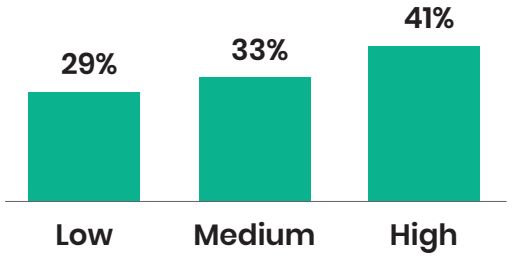
2 Year group

The likelihood of having three or more positive attitudes decreases with age.



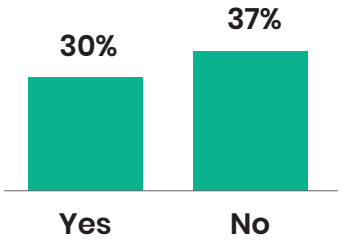
3 Family affluence

The likelihood of having three or more positive attitudes increases with affluence.



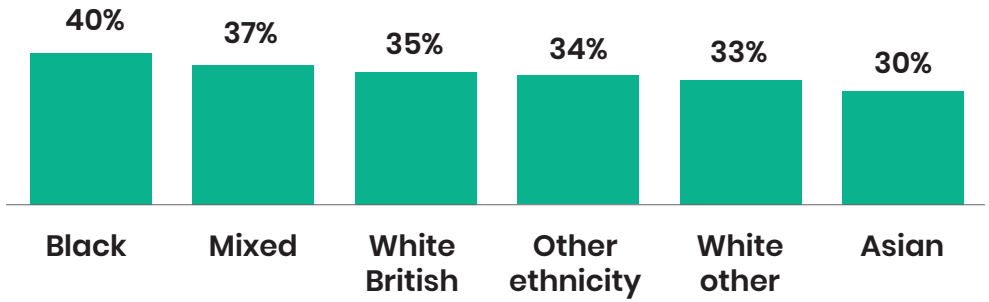
4 Disability and long-term health conditions

Children and young people with a disability or long-term health condition are less likely to have three or more positive attitudes, compared to those without.



5 Ethnicity

Black children and young people are the most likely to have three or more positive attitudes, while Asian children and young people are the least likely to.



Link to data tables

See our definitions page for the full definition of each demographic group.

Positive attitudes and opportunity

School year

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

SPORT ENGLAND

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

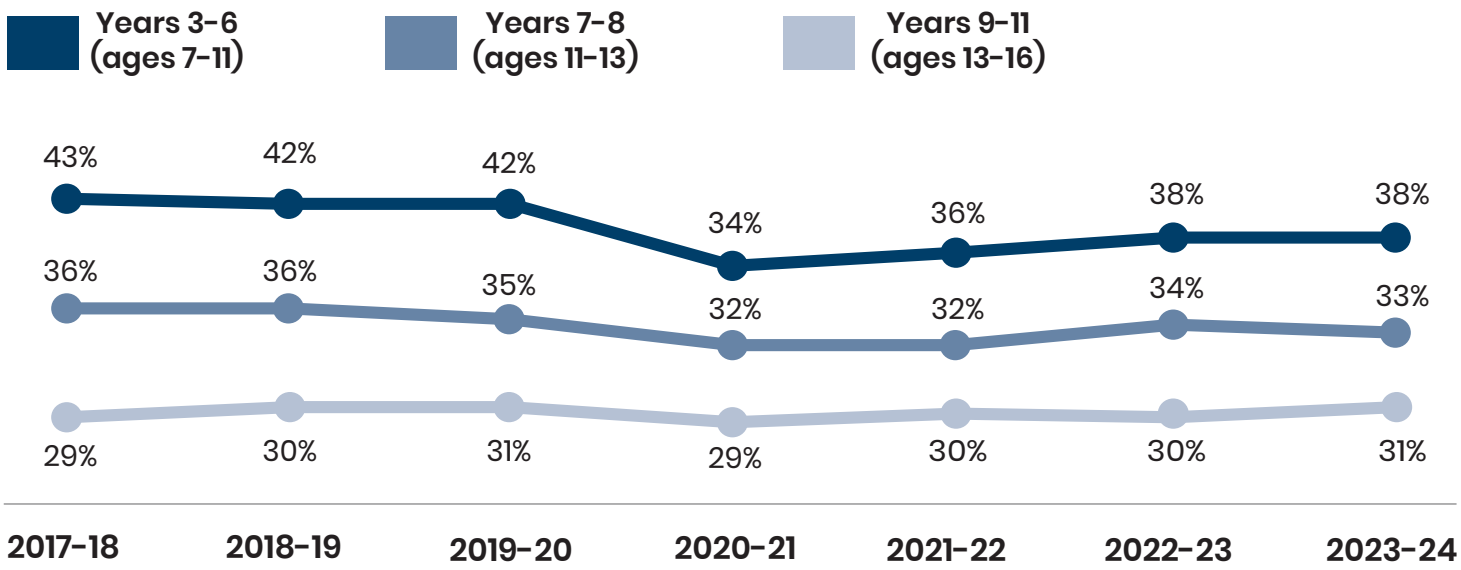
The proportion reporting 3+ positive attitudes remains unchanged for all school ages in the short term

Junior-age children (school Years 3-6, ages 7-11) are driving the overall trend with a long-term drop in 3+ positive attitudes (down 4.9% since academic year 2017-18). Young people in school Years 7-8 (ages 11-13) follow a similar trend but with smaller changes over time (down 3.1%). For teenagers (school Years 9-11, ages 13-16), however, there's a small increase over the same period (up 1.8%) and an underlying flat trend over time.

We also note the following differences for individual attitude statements that they strongly agreed with:

- Young people in school Years 9-11 (ages 13-16) see increases for all attitudes over the longer term, except understanding (where they see a drop) and knowledge (where they see no change).
- It is those in school Years 7-8 (ages 9-11) who are driving the decreases in understanding (down 7.6% to 62%),
- Perceived competence (finding sport easy), at 27%, remains down 1.0% over the longer term among junior-age children (ages 7-11).

Three or more positive attitudes (attitudes they strongly agreed with)



Link to data tables

Positive attitudes and opportunity

Gender

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

SPORT ENGLAND

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

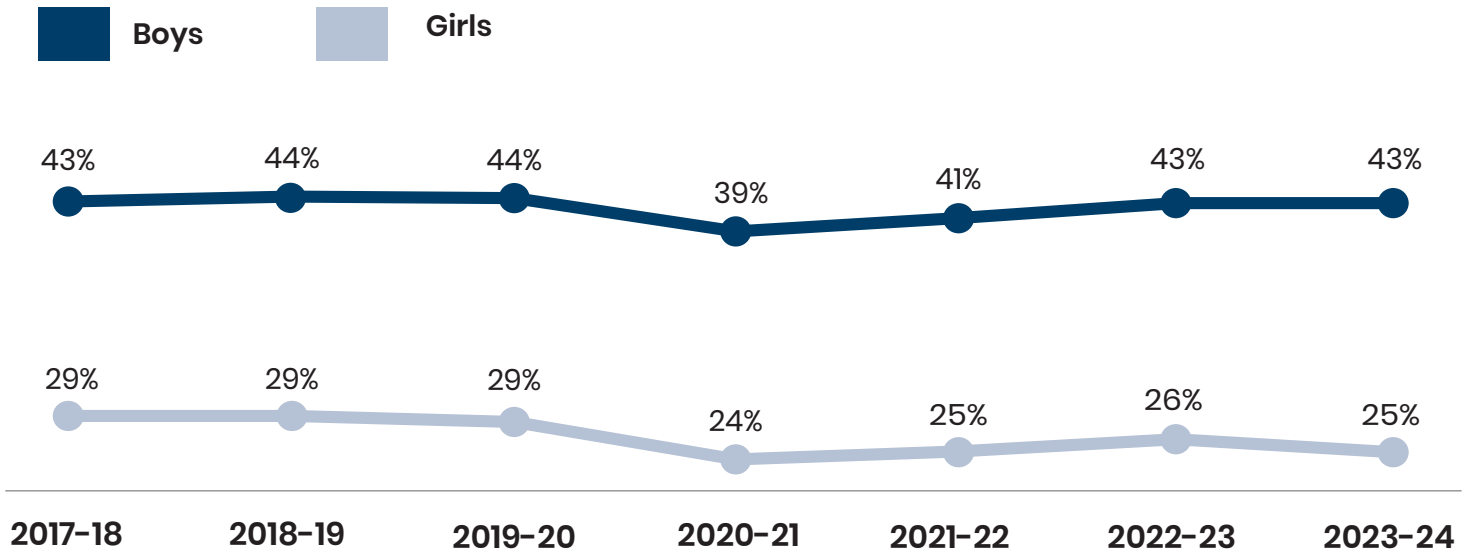
Over the longer term, positive attitudes have fallen for girls but remain unchanged for boys

Girls are following the overall trend in 3+ positive attitudes, with no change over the last three years following a drop during the pandemic (down 4.4% compared to academic year 2017-18). In contrast, boys have seen levels settle back in line with six years ago (academic year 2017-18).

Within this, perceived competence (finding sport easy) has increased compared to 12 months ago for boys (up 0.9% to 28%), contributing to an increase of 1.5% compared to academic year 2017-18, whereas girls have seen no change over the same period. These longer-term differences between boys and girls are not observed for those in school Years 9-11 (ages 13-16), where both boys and girls record a small long-term increase.

Neither boys nor girls have seen a change in the proportion strongly agreeing that they have the opportunity to be physically active over the last two years; however, boys have driven the longer-term increase, up 7.0% (from 47% to 54%) compared to academic year 2020-21, whereas girls are showing no reportable change over the same period.

Three or more positive attitudes (attitudes they strongly agreed with)



Link to data tables

Disability and long-term health conditions

Fewer children and young people report 3+ positive attitudes irrespective of whether they have a disability or long-term health condition

The proportion of children and young people reporting 3+ positive attitudes is lower among those with a disability or long-term health condition than those without. However, both groups record a drop in this proportion since academic year 2019-20.

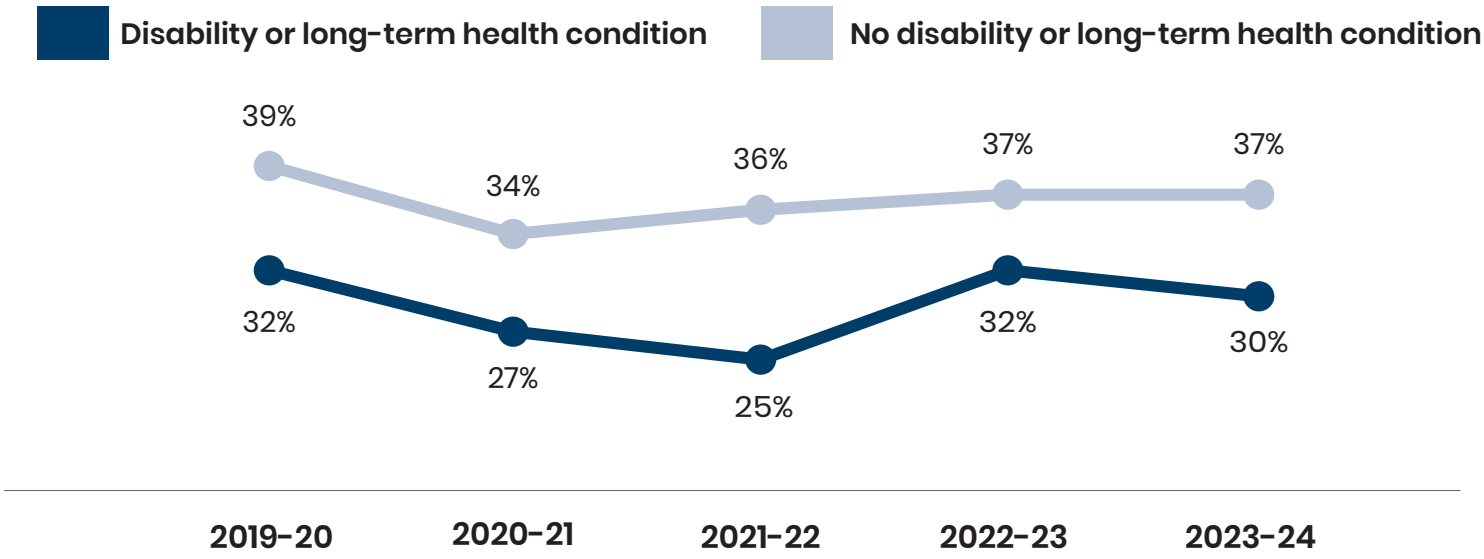
For children with a disability or long-term health condition, this drop is driven by drops in knowledge and understanding, while for those without it is driven by drops in confidence and understanding. Both groups have seen an increase in perceived competence (finding sport easy) over the same period.

Notably, the proportion strongly agreeing they have the opportunity to be physically active is also lower for those with a disability or long-term health condition (40%) than for those without (50%). Both groups have seen this increase compared to academic year 2020-21.

Link to data tables

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Three or more positive attitudes (attitudes they strongly agreed with)



Note: A new question was introduced for 2019-20 to capture consistent disability and long-term health condition data across all year groups. See the definitions page for more detail.

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

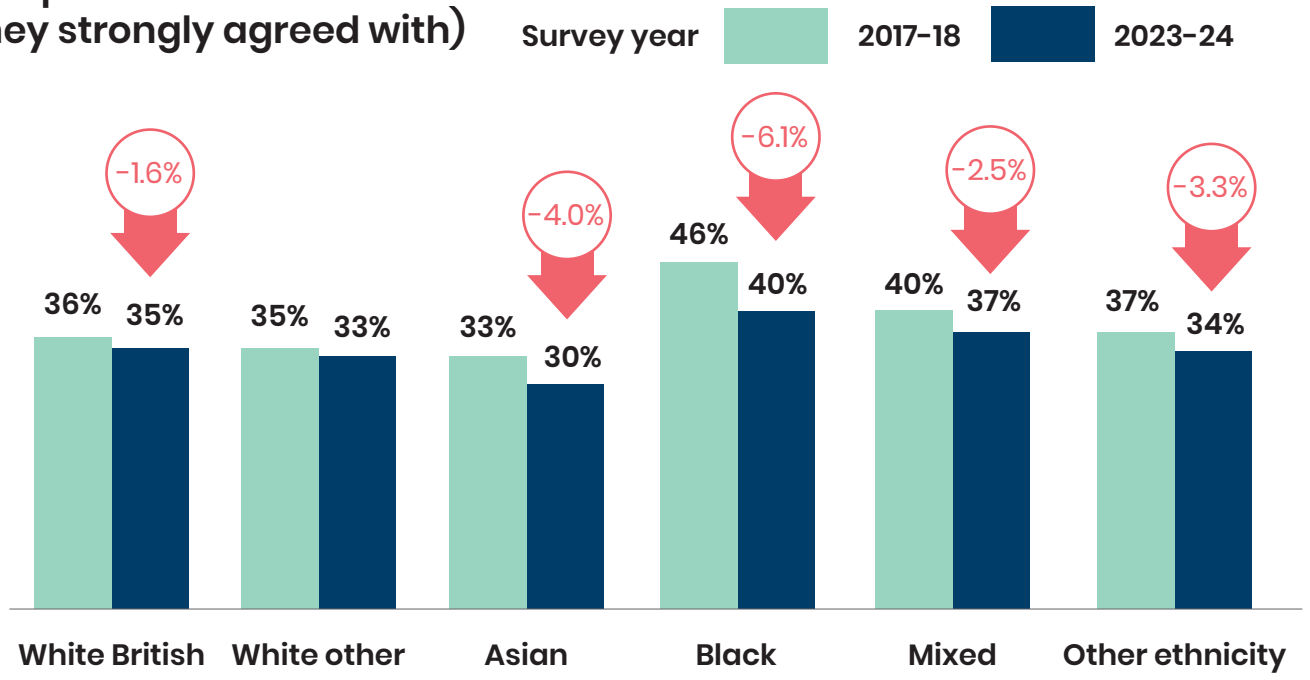
SPORT ENGLAND

Black children and young people have seen the largest long-term drops in those reporting 3+ positive attitudes

All groups broadly follow the same pattern, with little or no change in the proportion reporting 3+ positive attitudes over the last three years following a drop around the time of the pandemic. Despite seeing the largest long-term drop, Black children and young people continue to be the most likely to report 3+ positive attitudes, while Asian children and young people remain the least likely to.

Asian young people (Years 7-11, ages 11-16) have not recorded an increase in perceived opportunity compared to academic year 2020-21.

Three or more positive attitudes (attitudes they strongly agreed with)



% Arrows show change from six years ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Note: After White British, the largest ethnic groups within the Year 3-11 child population are Asian (11%) and Mixed (7%), with White other (6%), Black (6%) and Other ethnic groups (5%) making up the remainder. As such, caution should be applied when looking at change for these groups due to smaller sample sizes and therefore wider confidence intervals.

Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

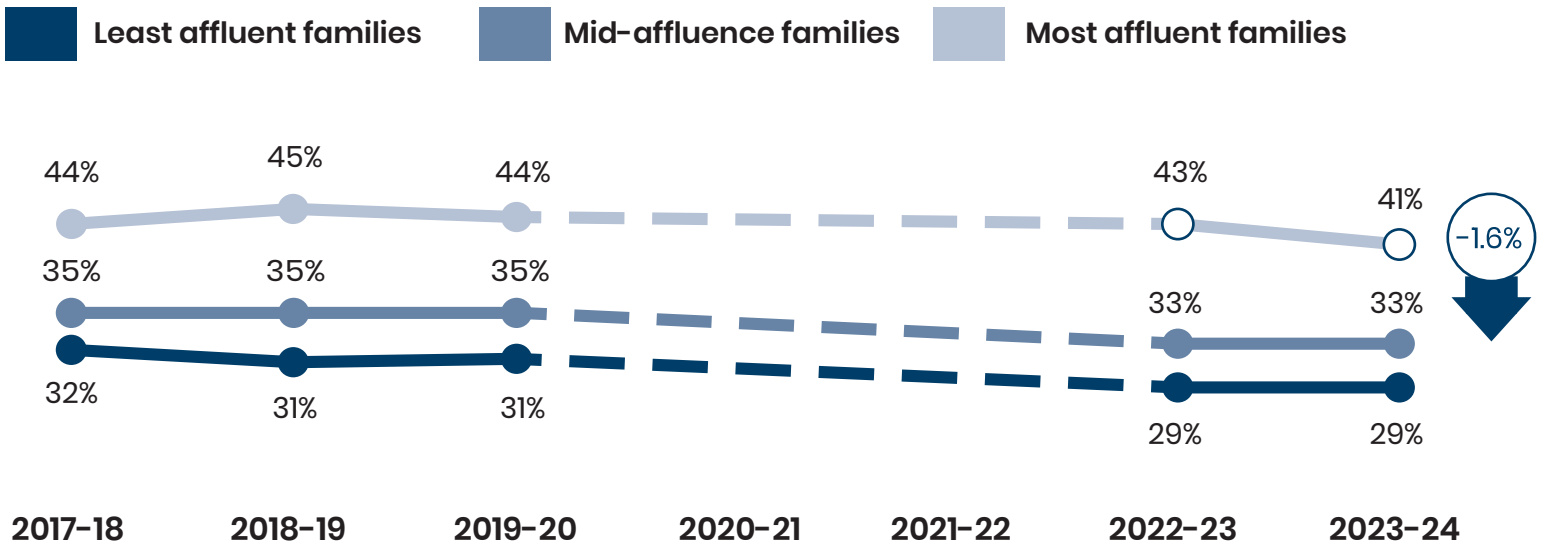
Positive attitudes are down over the longer term for all affluence groups

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Children and young people from the least affluent families are the least likely to report 3+ positive attitudes.

A small drop for those from the most affluent families compared to 12 months ago (driven by a drop in understanding) indicates that levels for all three groups remain down, following a drop during the pandemic as observed for all children and young people.

Three or more positive attitudes (attitudes they strongly agreed with)



Link to data tables

Note: During the coronavirus pandemic, one of the components of the family affluence scale wasn't applicable. As such, comparable data is not available for that period. See the definitions page for more details.

Positive attitudes and opportunity

Inequalities

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

There are notable inequalities in reported positive attitudes

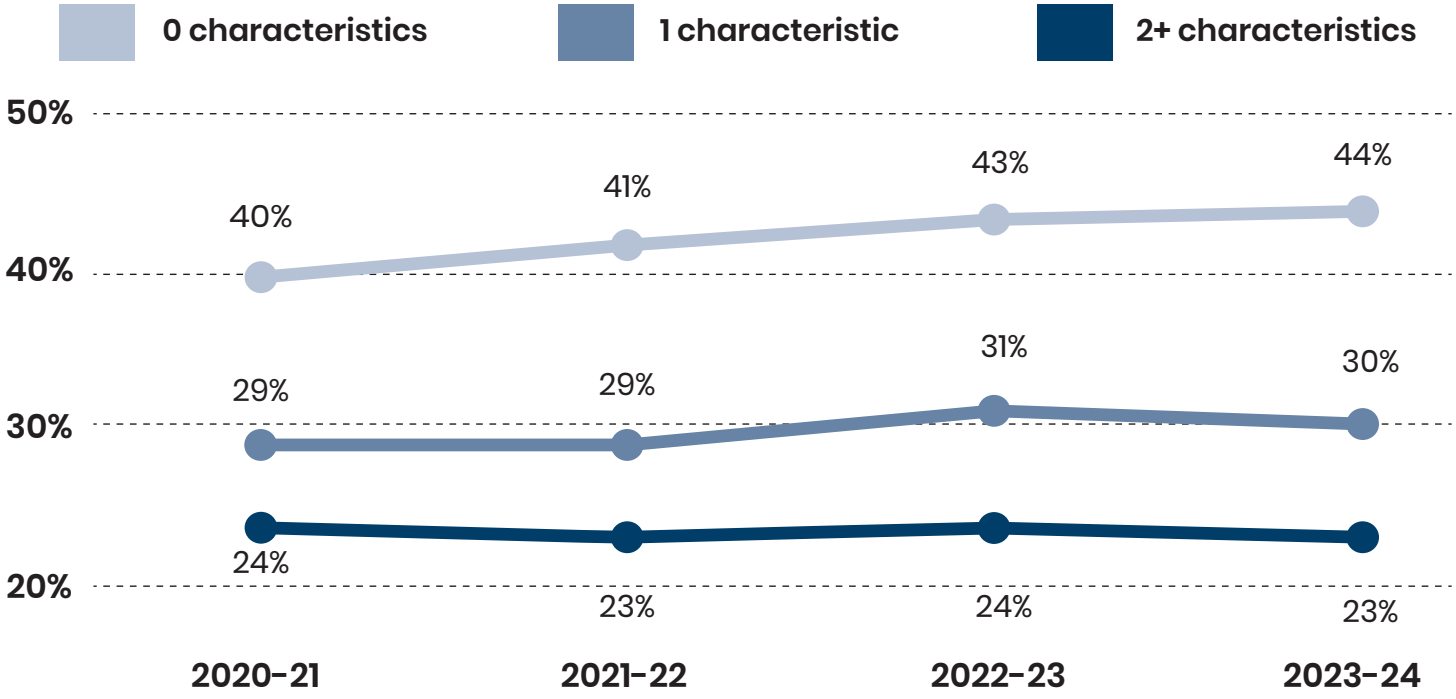
Children and young people with two or more characteristics of inequality are less likely to report 3+ positive attitudes than those with one characteristic, who in turn are less likely to than those with none.

There have been no changes compared to 12 months ago for any of the groups; however, for those with zero characteristics of inequality we have seen an increase of 4.0% since academic year 2020-21. This is accompanied by a smaller increase of 1.6% for those with one characteristic and no change for those with 2+ characteristics of inequality.

This divergence is seen across all attitude statements, and also for perceived opportunity to be active.

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Three or more positive attitudes (attitudes they strongly agreed with)



Link to data tables

Note: Some of the data used to compile the Inequalities Metric was not introduced into the survey until academic year 2020-21 and, as such, data for the metric cannot be reported before that date. See the definitions page for more details on how the metric is comprised.

Positive attitudes

Associations with activity levels

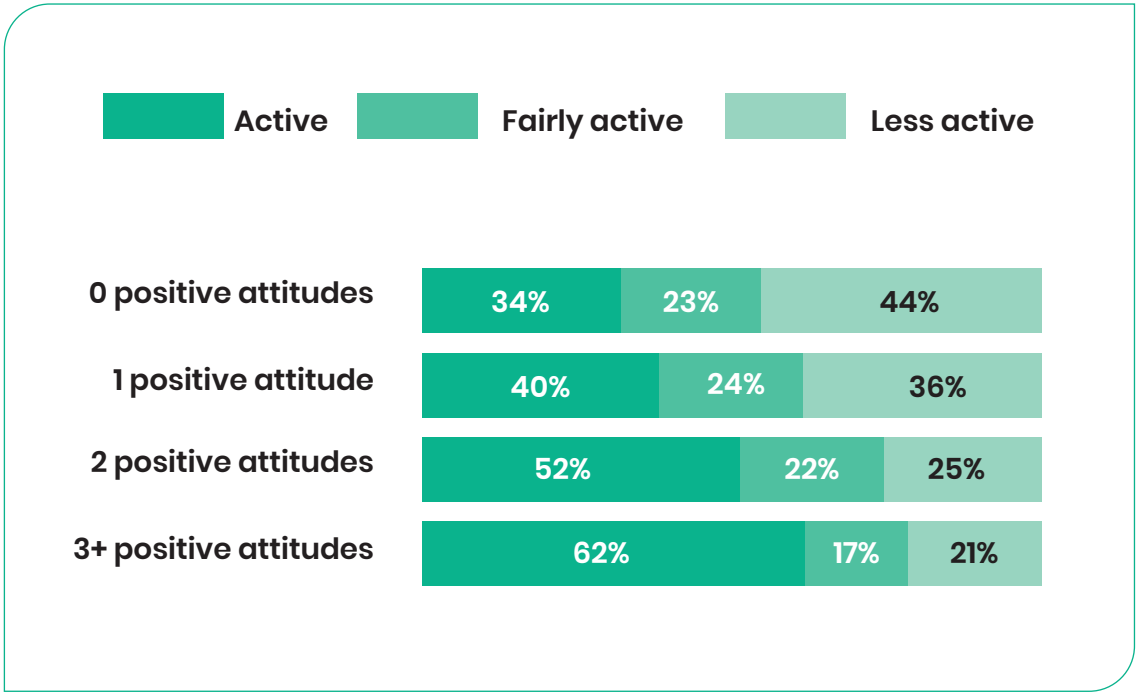
ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

The presence of positive attitudes is a strong indicator of activity levels, a greater number of positive attitudes being associated with being more active

Of the children and young people who report three or more positive attitudes (indicating a meaningful relationship with activity), 62% are active, compared to just 34% of those who report no positive attitudes.

Gaining just one additional positive attitude could have a positive impact on activity levels (just as being more active could lead to more positive attitudes) and, as such, reinforces the importance of supporting all children and young people to have the best possible experience of being active.



Note: A positive attitude towards sport and physical activity is defined as strongly agreeing with one of the attitude statements (enjoyment, confidence, competence and knowledge or understanding). See the definitions page for more detail.

Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

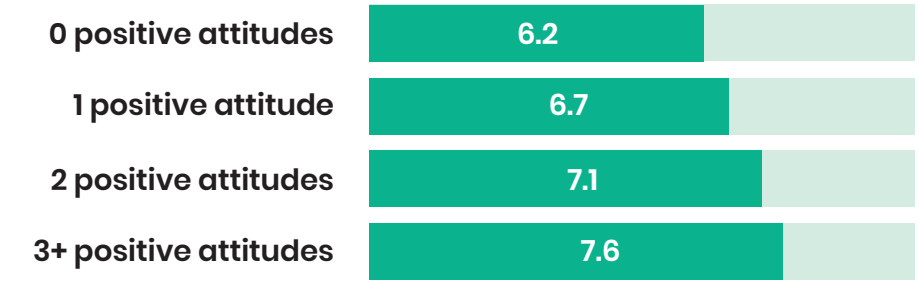
SPORT ENGLAND

Children and young people who have a positive and meaningful relationship with activity are happier, more likely to keep trying until they can do something and more likely to trust others of a similar age to themselves

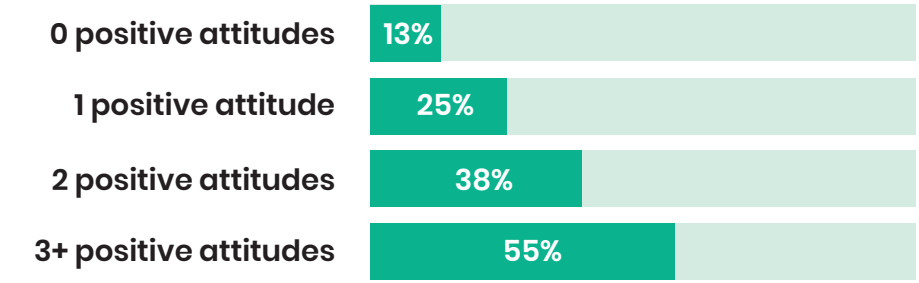
The positive association between positive attitudes (having a meaningful relationship with activity) and each of the wider outcome measures reinforces the importance of supporting all children and young people to have the best possible experience of being active.

- Children and young people who report three or more positive attitudes score, on average, 7.6 out of 10 on happiness (the measure used for mental wellbeing). This falls to 6.2 for those who report no positive attitudes.
- Of children and young people who report three or more positive attitudes, 55% strongly agree with the statement 'if I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it' (the measure used for individual development). This falls to 13% for those who report no positive attitudes.
- Of children and young people who have a positive attitude to three or more statements, 32% strongly agree they can trust people of a similar age to themselves (the measure used for community development, not charted). This compares with 18% for those who report no positive attitudes.

How happy did you feel yesterday?
(where 10 is very happy and 0 is not happy at all)



If I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it
(proportion who strongly agree)



Link to data tables

Positive attitudes

Years 1-2 (ages 5-7)

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

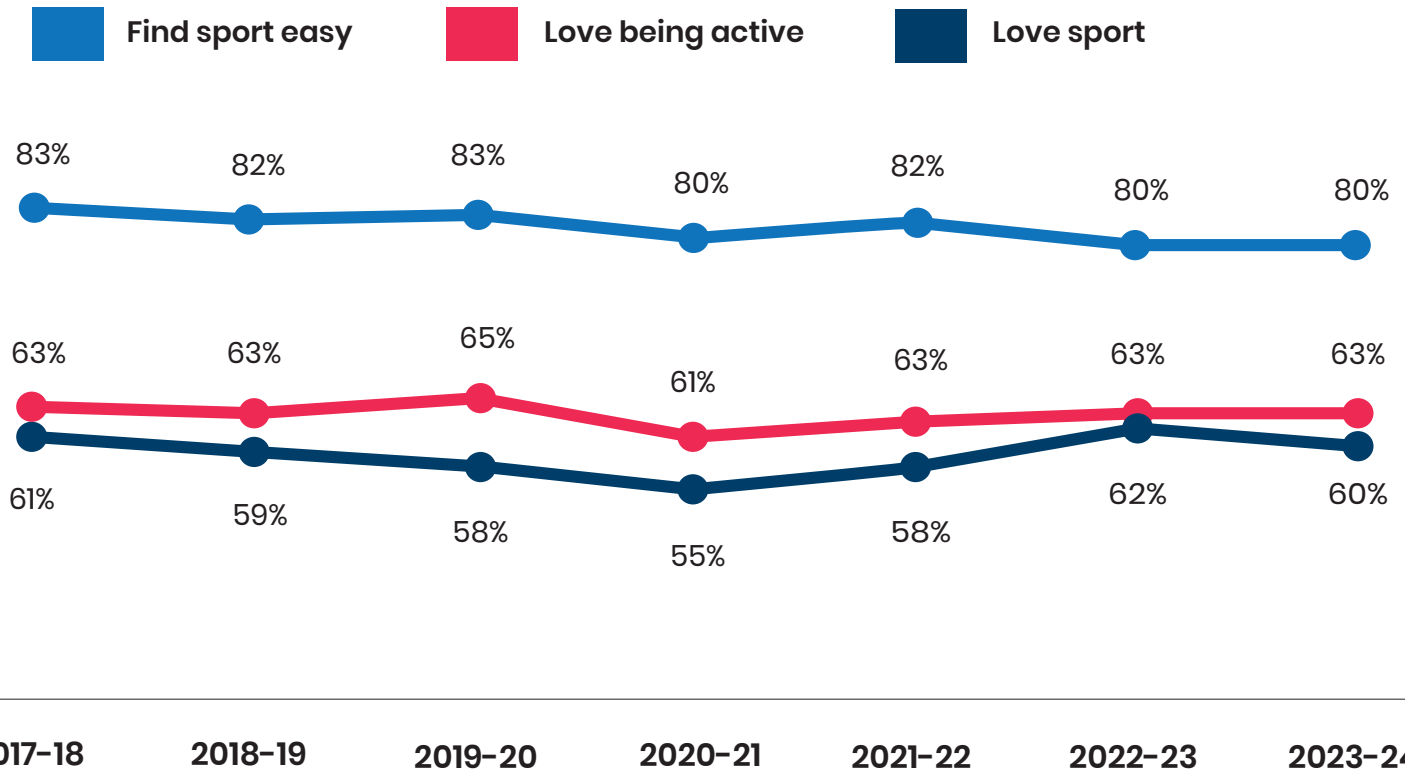
SPORT ENGLAND

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Attitudes are unchanged among the youngest children

There are no reportable changes in either the short or long term in the attitudes of infant-age children (Years 1-2, ages 5-7) towards sport and physical activity.

Attitudes towards sport and physical activity



Note: For this question, data for children in school Years 1-2 are collected directly from the children.

Link to data tables

Types of activity

Definition

This chapter presents data broken down by activity group and looks at those who've participated at least once in the last week.

Within this section, data are also provided for swimming confidence and capability, swimming lessons offered by schools, mode of travel to school and the extent to which schools monitor and promote active travel to school.

Looking at participation at least once in the last week provides:

- an entry-level view of participation overall
- an understanding of which activities contribute to the make-up of an active day.

We measure sport and physical activity if it's done...

- in the last week
- at least moderate intensity
- either at school or outside school.

Link to data tables

Types of activity

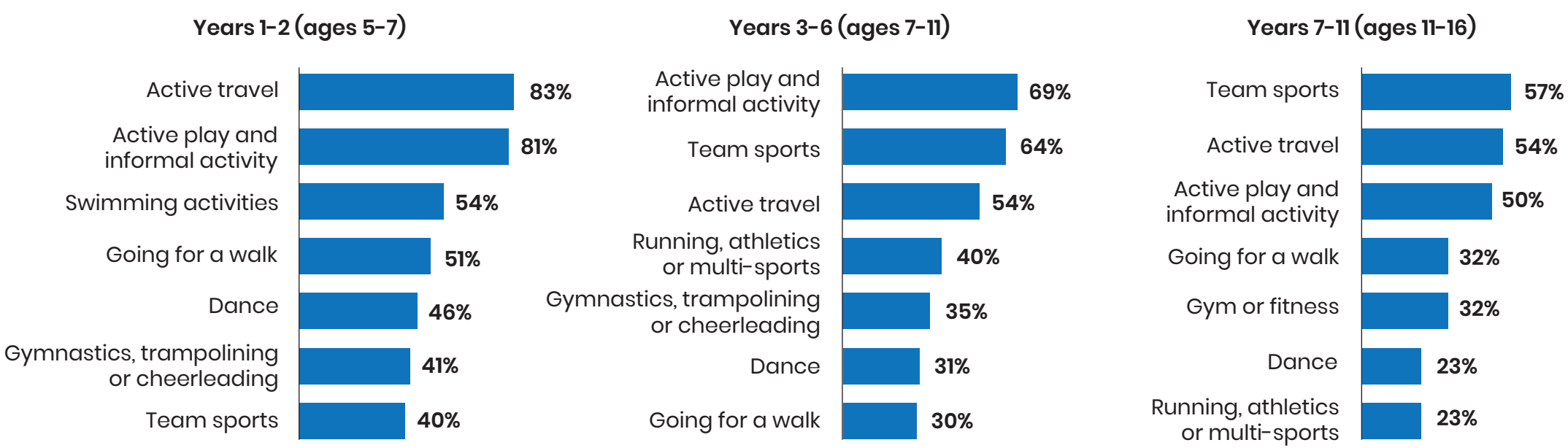
As children and young people get older, the activities they participate in change

Active play (62%), active travel (59%) and team sports (57%) are the most common activities done in the last week across all children and young people.

Team sports are less common among infant-age children (school Years 1-2, ages 5-7) but gain in relative importance with age. Similarly, gym or fitness becomes more common as children get older. Conversely, going for a walk, dancing or swimming are all more prevalent among the youngest children (school Years 1-2, ages 5-7).

Running, athletics or multi-sports (including the active mile) are most prevalent among junior-age children (school Years 3-6, ages 7-11).

Most prevalent activity groups (at least once in the last week)



Link to data tables

Notes: Individual activities are reported in the data tables.

Trends: long-term growth

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

SPORT ENGLAND

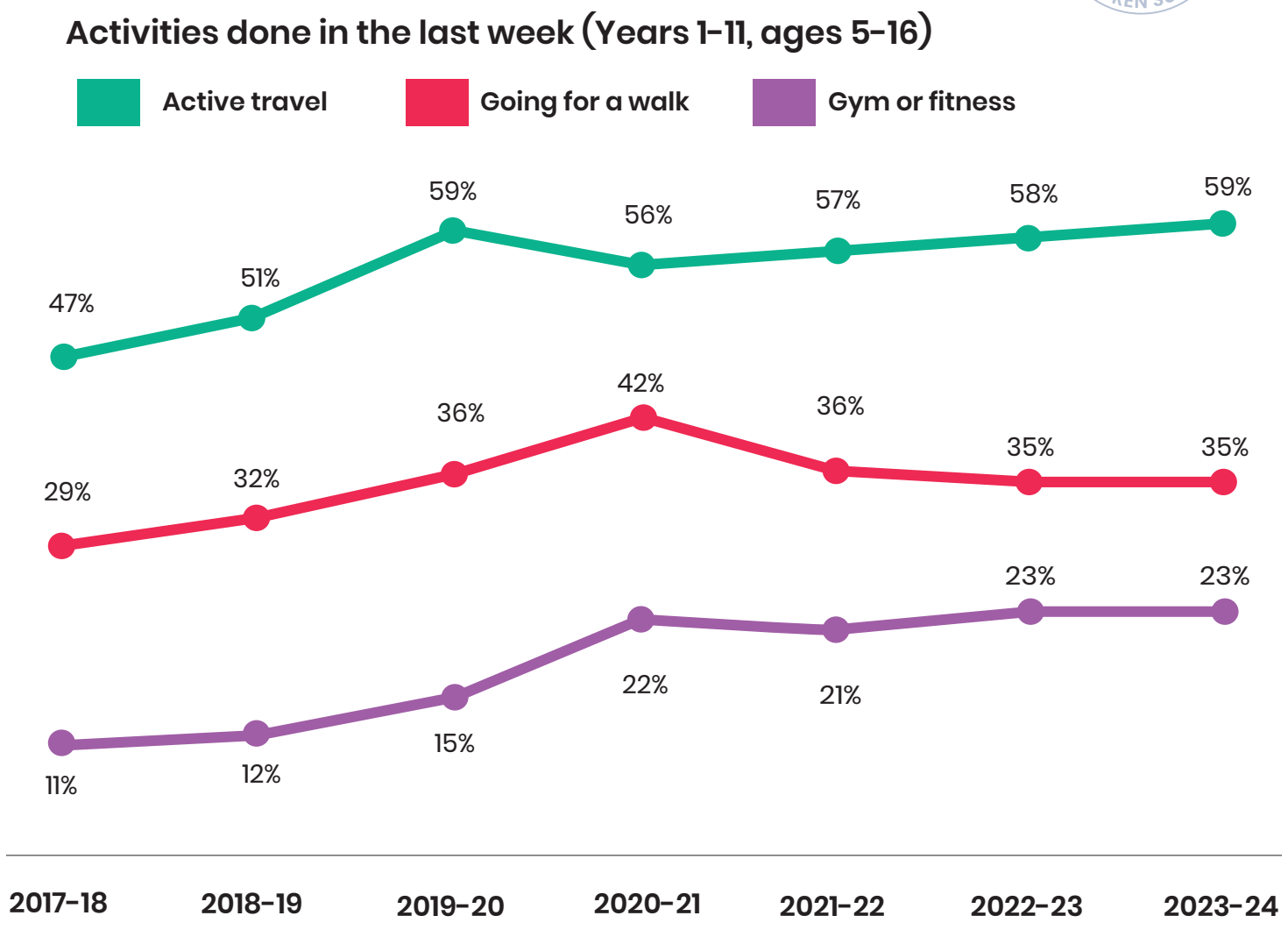
ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

While active travel, going for a walk and gym and fitness all see activity levels remain unchanged in recent years, they have grown over the longer term

The proportion of children and young people walking, cycling or scootering to get to places (active travel) has remained relatively unchanged since academic year 2019-20, having grown before stabilising at just under 60%. There are now 12.4% or 1.1 million more children and young people travelling by active means than six years ago (academic year 2017-18).

We see a similar picture for children and young people going for walks, with levels remaining around 35-36% since academic year 2019-20 barring the peak during the pandemic. Again this follows a period of growth before then. There are 6.3% or 583,000 more children and young people going for a walk than six years ago.

Gym and fitness levels have remained unchanged compared to academic year 2020-21, maintaining the peak reached during the pandemic. As a result of this earlier growth, we're seeing 12.0% or 939,000 more children and young people taking part in gym and fitness compared to six years ago.



Link to data tables

Types of activity

Trends: flat

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

SPORT ENGLAND

Active play, team sports and swimming all have underlying flat trends over the longer term

Active play, team sports and swimming levels remain similar to those seen six years ago (academic year 2017-18), with no notable movements when discounting the two years impacted by the pandemic.

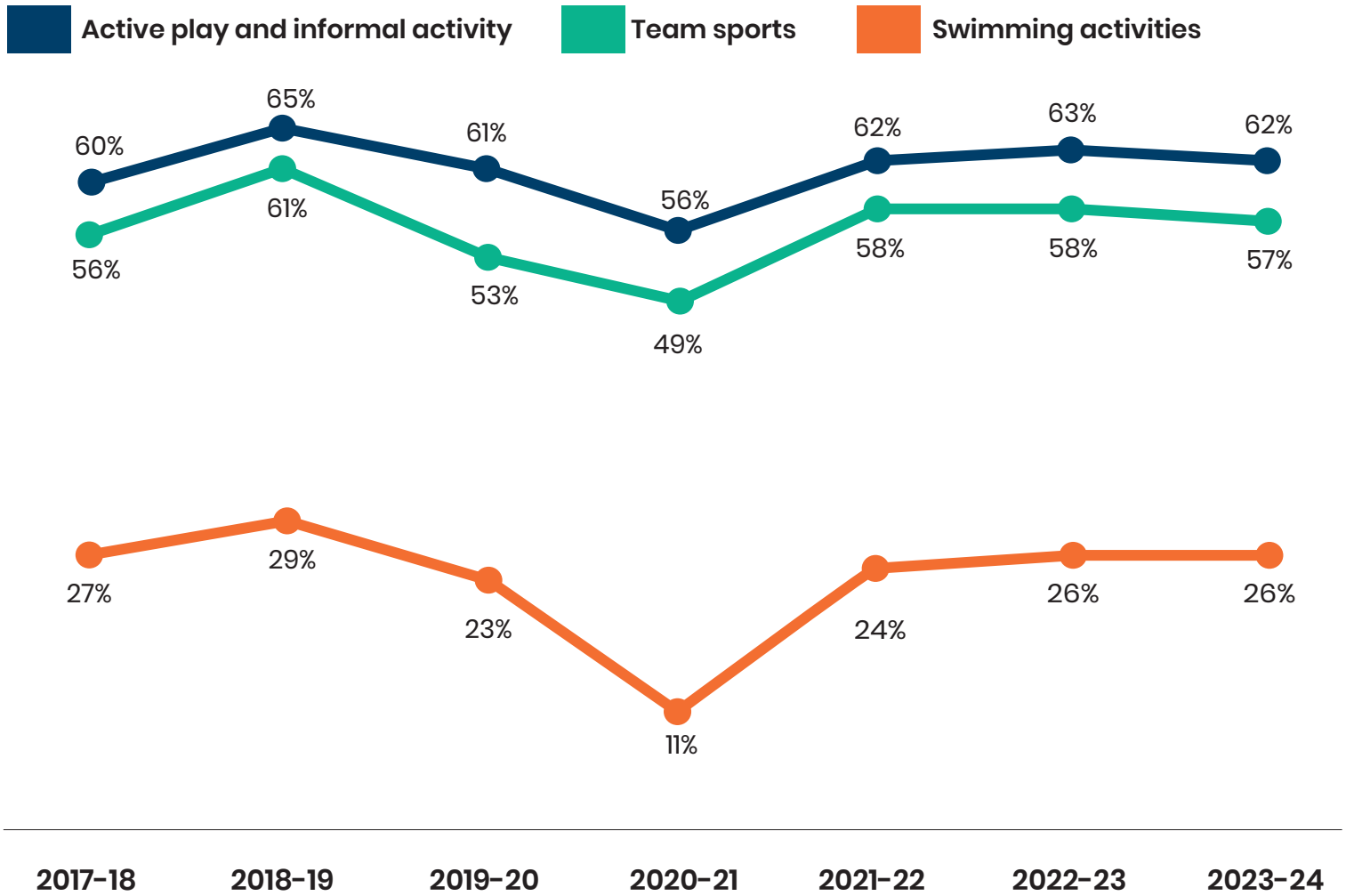
This picture is consistent across all school phases.

*Team sports refers to a group of activities that are typically played in teams. All participation in these activities is included, regardless of whether it's team play, training or individual skills.

Link to data tables

Activities done in the last week (Years 1-11, ages 5-16)

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY



Trends: drop back

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

SPORT ENGLAND

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

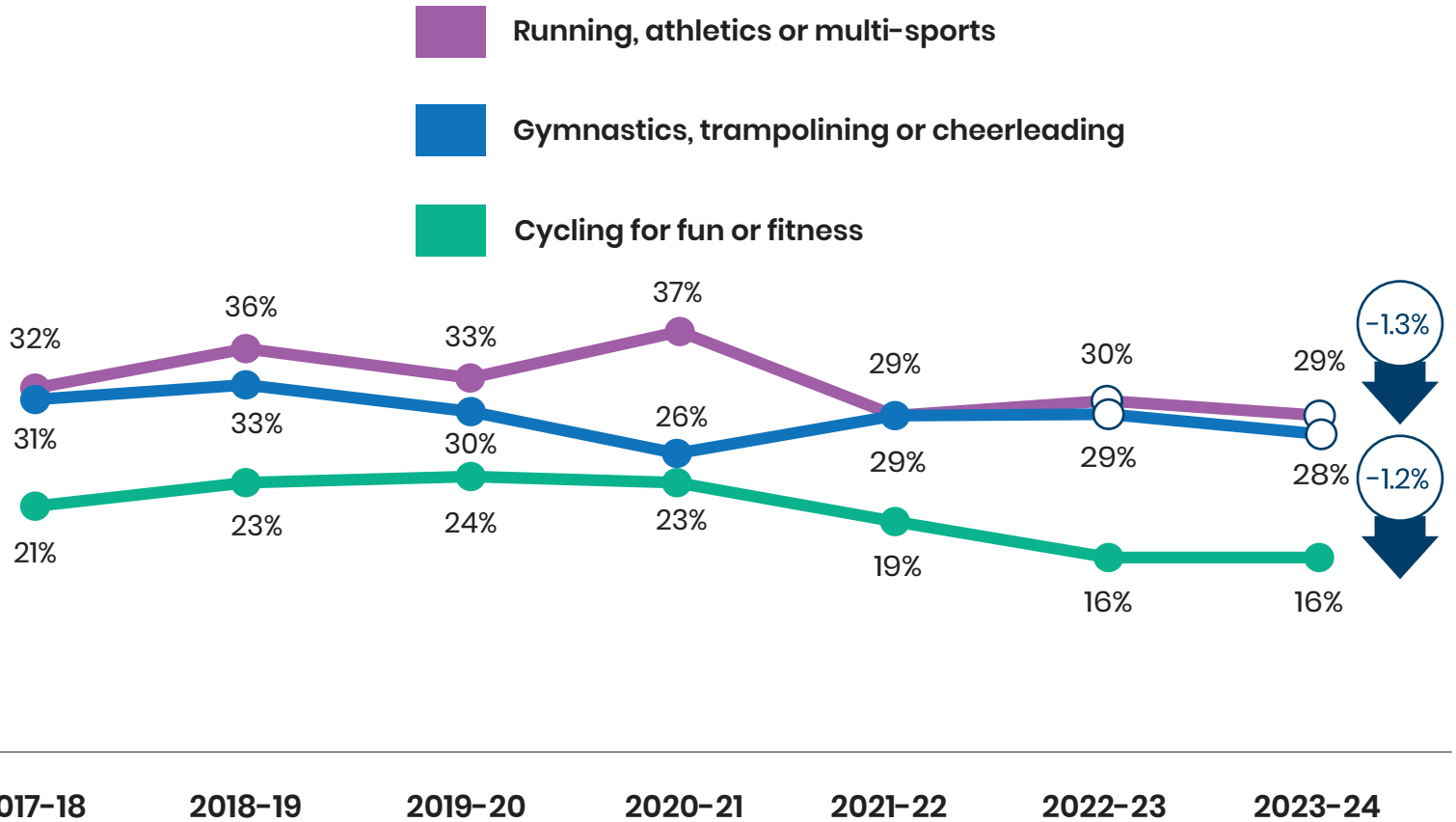
Running and gymnastics levels have dropped slightly compared to 12 months ago

Despite a small drop compared to 12 months ago, running, athletics and multi-sports levels are relatively unchanged over last two years, following a drop coinciding with the end of the pandemic. As such, there are 2.9% or 90,000 fewer children and young people taking part compared to six years ago (academic year 2017-18).

Similarly, gymnastics, trampolining or cheerleading levels are down over the longer term, with 3.7% or 151,000 fewer children and young people taking part compared to academic year 2017-18.

Going on a bike ride has not changed compared to 12 months ago, following two years of drops, suggesting we might be seeing a stabilisation. Levels have, however, fallen below those seen six years ago and, as such, there are now 5.0% or 287,000 fewer children and young people going on a bike ride compared to academic year 2017-18.

Activities done in the last week (Years 1-11, ages 5-16)



Link to data tables

Swimming confidence and capability

70% can swim 25 metres unaided by the time they leave primary school

Just 70% of children in school Year 7 (first year of secondary school, ages 11-12) meet the guidelines that children should be able to swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25m by the time they leave primary school.

An average of 60% of all children and young people in school Years 1-11 (ages 5-16) can swim 25m unaided, with proficiency increasing with age. This remains 4.7% or 91,000 fewer than in academic year 2017-18.

Within this headline picture there are two very different pictures emerging, with primary-age children starting to see some strong recovery but secondary-age young people seeing continued drops.

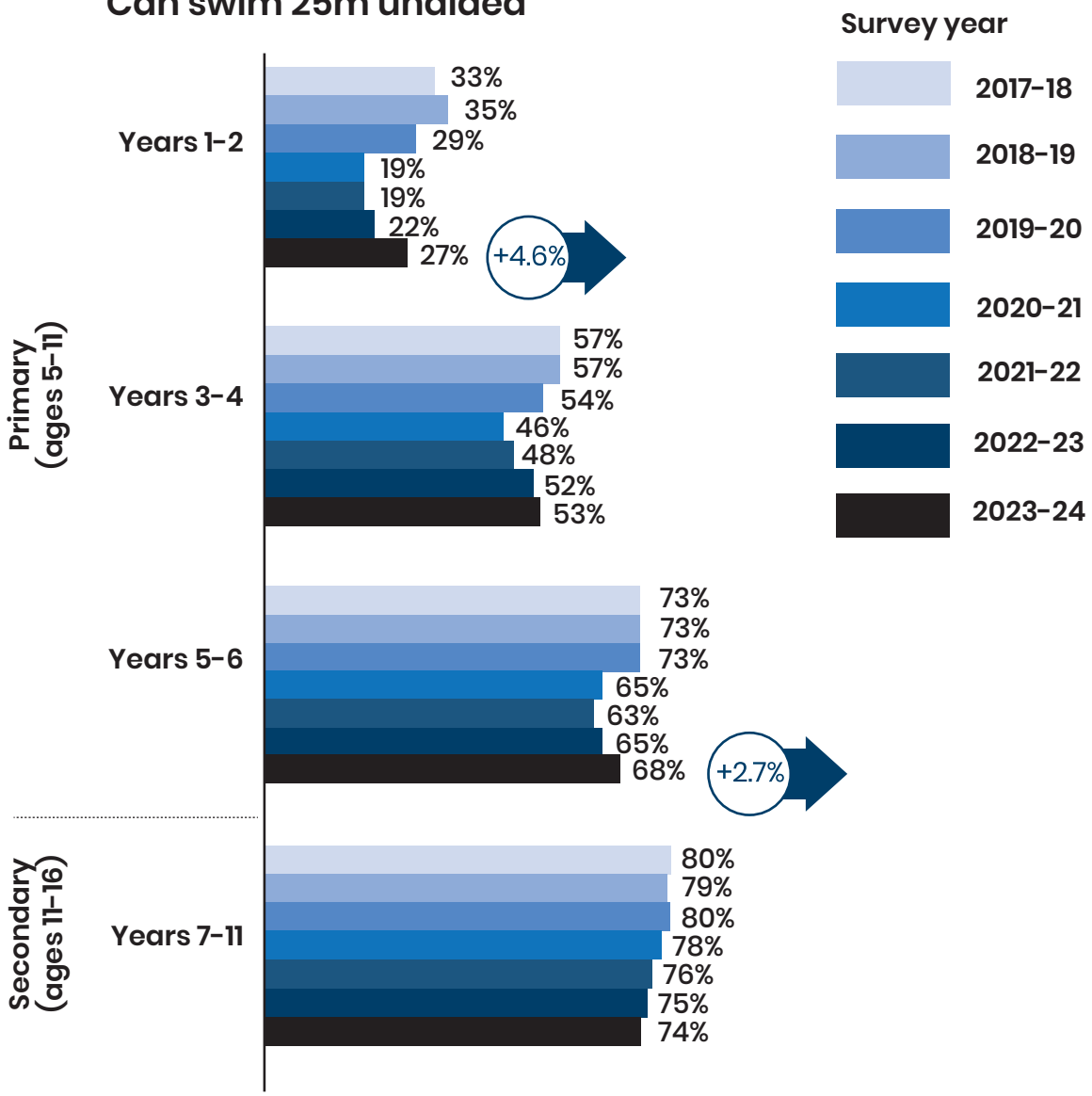
- Year 1-2 children (ages 5-7): 6.3% fewer can swim 25m unaided compared to academic year 2017-18; however, at the peak this difference was 14.1%.
- Year 3-6 children overall (ages 7-11): 4.3% fewer can swim 25m unaided compared to academic year 2017-18; however, at the peak this difference was 9.3%.
- Year 7-11 young people (ages 11-16): 6.0% fewer can swim 25m unaided compared to academic year 2017-18; this proportion is still falling.

Link to data tables

% Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

ACTIVE LIVES CHILDREN SURVEY 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR

SPORT ENGLAND



Travel to school

ACTIVE LIVES 23-24 ACADEMIC YEAR CHILDREN SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

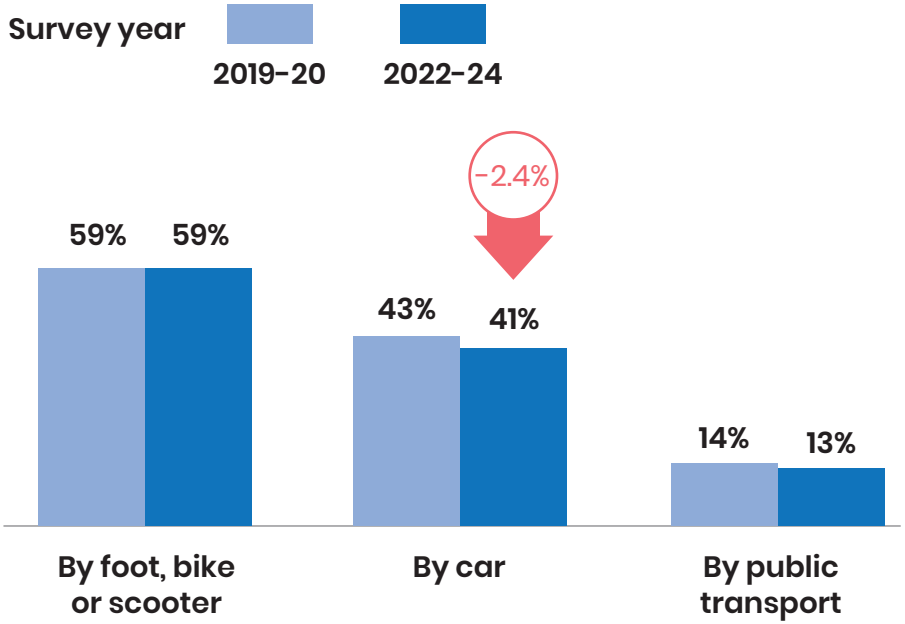
Active travel is the most common mode of transport for getting to school

Over half of all children and young people use active travel (walk, ride, scooter) to get to school; however, two-fifths reported being taken by car. Junior-age children (school Years 3-6, ages 7-11) are the most likely to be taken by car (49%), while secondary-age young people (school Years 7-11, ages 11-16) are the most likely to use public transport (25%).

There's been a small drop in car usage (down 2.4%) but no changes in the other modes of travel to school compared to four years ago (academic year 2019-20).

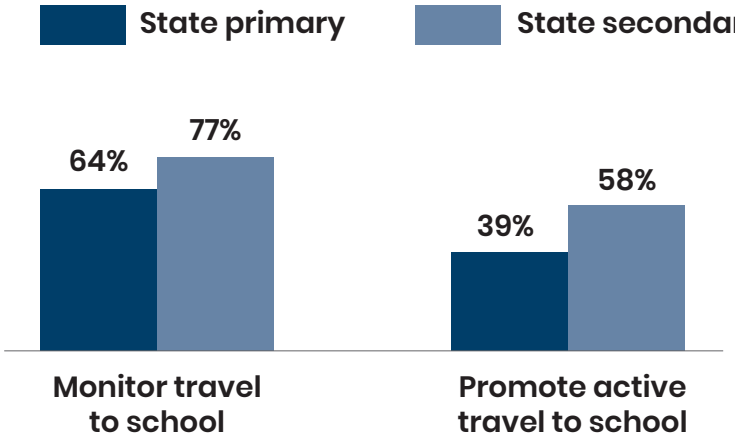
% Arrows show change from four years ago (academic year 2019-20). No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

How did you get to school today?



Teachers in 68% of schools told us their school monitors how their pupils travel to school, while half (50%) said they promote active travel to school, the latter having increased by 8.8% since academic year 2017-18 (up from 41%).

In both instances this is higher for state secondary than state primary schools.



Link to data tables

Note: The question on how they got to school was not introduced into the survey until academic year 2019-20 and, as such, data for the metric cannot be reported before that date.

Further breakdowns

Local level data

Data for local areas (regions, Active Partnerships and local authorities) are available for the following measures:

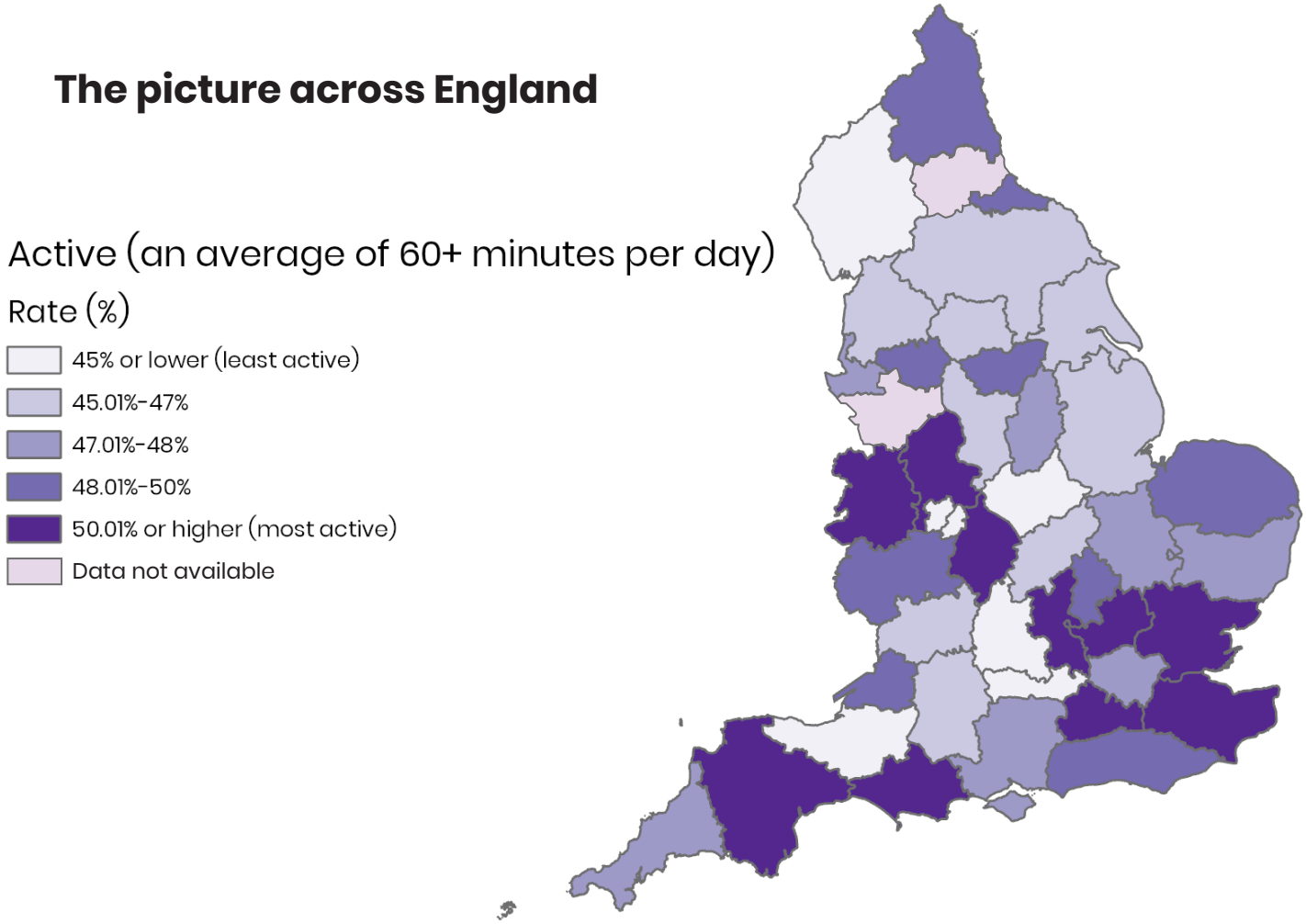
- Levels of activity
- Volunteering in the last 12 months.

Exploring the data

Please use the Active Lives Online Tool to run your own analysis of the data – the tool will be updated with the latest data shortly after its publication.

Link to data tables

The picture across England



Definitions

Activity guidelines

The Chief Medical Officers recommend:

- Children and young people should engage in moderate-to-vigorous-intensity activity for an average of at least 60 minutes a day across the week. This effectively means they need to do at least 420 moderate minutes a week to meet the guidelines.
- Children and young people should engage in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscular fitness, and bone strength.

You can read the guidelines here.

Link to more information on measures and demographics

Moderate activity is defined as activity where you raise your heart rate and feel a little out of breath (in 2018-19 this was updated to ask children whether the activity made them breathe faster than sitting down reading).

Vigorous activity is defined as activity which makes you hot or tired.

Associations

Where associations between positive attitudes, wellbeing, individual and community development, and engagement in sport and physical activity are referenced, this doesn't tell us about causality. We don't know the direction of the association or whether we're seeing a direct or indirect link.

Schools data

Where references are made to schools data, these data are collected from the teacher questionnaire – one teacher per school is invited to complete a response providing contextual school data. These data are included in the linked tables.

Volunteering roles are defined as:

- Raised money for a sports club, organisation or event, only including fundraising for sport, not fundraising by taking part in a sports event or activity
- Been a 'sports leader' or 'sports ambassador'
- Helped with setting up or clearing away (Years 5-6 only)
- Helped with refreshments: food or drink (Years 5-6 only)
- Coached or instructed an individual or team(s) in a sport, dance or fitness activity – other than solely for family members (Years 7-11 only)
- Refereed or umpired at a sports match, competition or event (Years 7-11 only)
- Acted as a steward or marshal at a sports or dance activity or event (Years 7-11 only)
- Given any other help (Years 5-6 only)
- Provided any other help for a sport, dance or fitness activity, e.g. helping with refreshments, setting up sports kit or equipment, scoring matches, first aid (Years 7-11 only).

Definitions

Physical literacy

The Physical Literacy Consensus Statement for England was published in September 2023. We have added new statements to the survey and, from next year, our data will more fully support the understanding of various elements of this.

Here we detail the statements we are able to include in this publication.

Link to more information on measures and demographics

Positive attitudes

If a child or young person strongly agrees with a statement, they're reported as having a positive attitude towards that element.

The number of positive attitudes a child or young person has refers only to their strong agreement with enjoyment, confidence, competence and either knowledge or understanding.

A full list of statements included in this publication are as follows:

Years 3-11 (ages 7-16)

- I enjoy taking part in exercise and sports (Enjoyment)
- I feel confident when I exercise and play sports (Confidence)
- I find exercise and sports easy (Competence)
- I understand why exercise and sports are good for me (Understanding)

Years 7-11 (ages 11-16)

- I know how to get involved and improve my skills in lots of different types of exercise and sports (Knowledge)
- I feel that I have the opportunity to be physically active (Opportunity)

Years 1-2 (ages 5-7)

- Do you find sport easy? (Yes/No)
- Do you like playing sport? (love/like/don't like/hate scale)
- Do you like being active? (love/like/don't like/hate scale)

Definitions

Standard demographic questions aren't always applicable for children of all ages; therefore simpler questions were often used.

Link to more information on measures and demographics

Age
The survey is undertaken in schools, therefore we've used school year as the main age variable.

Gender
Young people in Years 7-11 were given the option to select 'boy', 'girl', 'non-binary', 'prefer to self-describe' or 'prefer not to say'. Children in Years 3-6 were given the options of 'boy', 'girl' and 'other', while children in Years 1-2 were only given the options of 'boy' and 'girl'.

Disability or long-term health condition
Disability or long-term health condition refers to children and young people who report they have a disability, special need or illness which has a big effect on their life (is limiting) and is expected to last for a year or more (is long term).

The question used is designed to align as closely as possible to the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) harmonised disability question, with the language adapted to be more appropriate to children. This is an updated question for academic year 2019-20 onwards.

Special schools don't form part of the sample. While more than 90% of those with a disability or long-term health condition attend mainstream schools, some children and young people with the most complex needs aren't covered by the survey design.

Ethnicity
Children and young people in Years 3-11 were asked a simplified question about ethnicity, while parents of Years 1-2 children were asked the full ONS standard question. For the purposes of analysis, Chinese has been grouped with 'Other' from the parent responses.

Family Affluence Scale
The Family Affluence Scale gives an indication of the social status of children and young people's families. The scale is derived from a series of questions about their home and family, such as car ownership, computers and foreign holidays. During the pandemic, given foreign holidays weren't as likely, an adjusted scale was used and those data are not comparable with data taken from the full definition used in this report – please see the technical note for further details. Care should be taken when looking across year groups as the age of the child is likely to impact on certain elements of the scale (e.g. families with older children may be more likely to own digital devices).

Inequalities
In 2024 we launched the Inequalities Metric, which recognises the intersectionality of individuals' characteristics and aims to create a comprehensive measure of inequalities. Please see our website to find out more.

Notes

About the survey

The Active Lives Children and Young People Survey is an online survey. Carried out by Ipsos, it involves online questionnaires being completed during school lesson time, with secondary schools being given the option to complete it at as homework.

Parents of Years 1-2 children are asked to complete a separate online questionnaire providing behavioural data for these children – the children themselves answer basic questions about their attitudes only. The survey covers both state and independent schools.

More information on the survey can be found here.

Link to more information on measures and demographics

The achieved sample

Behavioural responses:

- Pupils in Years 3-11 and parents of pupils in Years 1-2: 109,503 in 2017-18, 113,728 in 2018-19, 89,303 in 2019-20, 86,828 in 2020-21, 104,404 in 2021-22, 122,347 in 2022-23 and 122,480 in 2023-24.

Attitudinal responses:

- Pupils in Years 3-11: 104,263 in 2017-18, 109,248 in 2018-19, 86,222 in 2019-20, 79,689 in 2020-21, 98,729 in 2021-22, 116,623 in 2022-23 and 115,952 in 2023-24.
- Pupils in Years 1-2: 25,927 in 2017-18, 23,587 in 2018-19, 14,576 in 2019-20, 13,886 in 2020-21, 17,304 in 2021-22, 17,361 in 2022-23 and 18,361 in 2023-24.

Schools data:

- Teachers: 1,623 in 2017-18, 1,523 in 2018-19, 1,186 in 2019-20, 1,166 in 2020-21, 1,289 in 2021-22, 1,380 in 2022-23 and 1,326 in 2023-24.

Data have been weighted to Department for Education (DfE) pupil population estimates from 'Get Information about Schools' (2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23) for geography and key demographics. Data from teachers have also been weighted using the same source information on the schools.

Population totals are estimated values and have been calculated using 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 DfE pupil population estimates. Confidence intervals also apply to these. More detail can be found here.

Population profile

Within the volunteering section, to show the representativeness of volunteers, the demographic profile of volunteers has been compared to the population profile.

Given the limited availability of demographic population data by school year, the weighted profile of the survey has been used to generate these proportions as the survey is weighted to be nationally representative.

Confidence intervals can be found in the linked tables. These indicate that if repeated samples were taken and confidence intervals computed for each sample, 95% of the intervals would contain the true value. Only significant differences are reported within the commentary. Where results are reported as being the same for two groups, any differences fall within the margin of error.

Notes

Sport spectating

While not covered in this report, data tables showing the number of children and young people attending live sports events form part of this release.

Link to data tables

Significance tests can be found in the linked tables. The tests indicate that if repeated samples were taken, 95% of the time we'd get similar findings, i.e. we can be confident the differences seen in our sampled respondents are reflective of the population. When sample sizes are smaller, confidence intervals are larger, meaning differences between estimates need to be greater to be considered statistically significant.

How we measure change

Figures reported are based on the responses of the children and young people (and parents of Years 1-2) sampled, which we then scale up to provide an England-wide picture. That means there'll naturally be small fluctuations when we compare the figures we have now with 12 months ago.

In accordance with Government Statistical Service good practice guidance, we highlight changes within the report where we're confident they're genuine differences. If the data are showing only small differences which are within the margin of error, they're noted as 'no change'.

All changes reported are percentage point changes. We've used '%' as shorthand to represent this throughout.

Data collection during the coronavirus pandemic

Fieldwork continued throughout the pandemic but a few small changes should be noted:

- In academic year 2019-20, fieldwork ended two weeks early in the Spring term of 2020 and started slightly later (mid-May) in the Summer term.
- In periods during which schools were closed to most pupils, significant numbers of children and young people completed the survey at home rather than, as is usually the case, at school.
- Small questionnaire changes were made to ensure the survey remained relevant in the summer term 2020 and were retained throughout the academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Details of these can be found in the technical note.

Link to more information on measures and demographics