

Title	Physical Activity and Schools: Where are we now and where do we want to go?
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Report of:	Dr Jane O’Grady – Director of Public Health
Lead contacts:	Tom Burton – Public Health Practitioner

Purpose of this report:

To provide members of the Health & Wellbeing Board with an understanding of the issues and opportunities around children and young people’s levels of physical activity in Buckinghamshire, and the role schools can play within this. The publication of the two key national strategies due to inform this report - The Childhood Obesity Strategy and Sport England’s plan to deliver key elements of Sporting Future: A new strategy for an Active Nation.

Summary of main issues:

Introduction

There is compelling evidence that regular physical activity during childhood impacts positively on a wide variety of health and wellbeing outcomes. We also know that active children are more likely to go on to become active adults.

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for England stipulates that children and young people aged 5-18 should aim to engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day. These recommendations also state that activities that strengthen muscle and bone should be incorporated at least three days a week; and to minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary for extended periods¹.

According to research undertaken for the national Change4Life campaign², there is strong and consistent evidence around the impact of regular physical activity on the following health outcomes:

Physiological: Cardio-metabolic health; Muscular strength; Bone health; Cardiorespiratory fitness

Psychological: Self-esteem; Anxiety/stress; Academic achievement; Cognitive functioning; Attention/ concentration

Social: Confidence; Peer acceptance

¹ Department of Health (2011) Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries’ Chief Medical Officers

² Chalkley A, Milton K, Foster C (2015) Change4Life Evidence Review: Rapid evidence review on the effect of physical activity participation among children aged 5 – 11 years. London: Public Health England

How active are children and young people in Buckinghamshire?

Although data on activity levels isn't specifically available for Buckinghamshire across all age ranges, in the South East region, only 26% of boys and 16% of girls aged 5-15 achieve recommended guidelines set out by the CMO. Even more concerning is the level of physical inactivity, with 32% of boys (slightly lower than national average) and 48% of girls (slightly higher than national average) classed as inactive across the South East region³. Data also shows that levels of activity decrease with age, particularly amongst girls, and levels of activity are generally lower than they were in 2008.

When applying these proportions to Buckinghamshire population figures, almost 12,000 boys and just over 17,000 girls aged 5-15 are inactive and therefore at significantly greater risk of poor health outcomes.

Research undertaken by Public Health England (PHE)⁴ to understand lifestyle choices of 15 year-olds across England, including the views of around 1000 young people in Buckinghamshire, also provides a picture of physical activity levels. According to this data, in Buckinghamshire only 14.1% of this age group meet CMO guidelines (lower than average South East levels).

Evidence also shows sedentary behaviours to be an increasing concern amongst children and young people. Average total sedentary time for 5-15 year olds (excluding time at school) was similar for boys and girls on weekdays (3.3 hours and 3.2 hours respectively) and weekend days (4.2 hours and 4.0 hours respectively)³.

How do we increase levels of physical activity in schools?

NICE guidelines⁵ suggest that educational settings should play a key role in developing supportive environments through multi-component programmes that encourage physical activity amongst children and young people.

In October 2015, PHE, in partnership with the Youth Sports Trust and the Association of Colleges Sport, and supported by a number of governmental departments including the Department of Health, Department for Transport and Department for Education, published a briefing for key stakeholders to show what works in schools and colleges to increase physical activity⁶. The evidence has been distilled into eight promising principles for practice, which have been tested with children and young people and practitioners:

1. Develop and deliver multi-component interventions
2. Ensure skilled workforce
3. Engage student voice
4. Create active environments
5. Offer choice and variety

³ Health Survey for England (2012)

⁴ PHE What About YOUTH? Survey (2014)

⁵ NICE guidelines 2009 (PH17) Physical activity for children and young people

⁶ PHE (2015) What Works in Schools and Colleges to Increase Physical Activity? A briefing for head teachers, college principals, staff working in education settings, directors of public health and wider partners

6. Embed in curriculum, teaching and learning
7. Promote active travel
8. Embed monitoring and evaluation

What do we do in Buckinghamshire schools to get children and young people active?

Primary Schools

The Government has now committed to continue Primary School Sport Premium (PSSP) funding until 2020. The premium is used to fund additional and sustainable improvements to the provision of PE and sport in every primary school to encourage the development of healthy, active lifestyles. Buckinghamshire primary schools receive an average of £9,300 p.a each. Leap (The Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Sport and Activity Partnership) has an official role advising schools how best to spend their PSSP, and is tasked with reporting results back to the funders (Sport England/Department for Education) and Ofsted as part of inspections. Leap's latest survey/audit revealed that many schools are using their funding to employ external sports coaches to deliver their PE/sport sessions.

Leap has been commissioned by the Buckinghamshire Public Health Team to work with a number of schools to deliver the Physical Literacy training programme across Key Stage 1 settings in Buckinghamshire. Although still in its pilot phase, the programme involves training teaching staff to follow a curriculum during PE lessons that develops the fundamental movement skills of pupils and include such skills as running, hopping, catching, throwing, striking and balancing. They are the foundation movements necessary for 3–8-year-old children as a precursor to the more specialised, complex skills used in play, games, sports, dance, gymnastics, outdoor education and physical recreation activities⁷.

Secondary Schools

At present all secondary schools are given the opportunity to set up a 'Satellite Club' on their site, delivered by local sports clubs, that helps develop school-club links. Of the 38 secondary schools in Buckinghamshire, 35 of them have engaged with local clubs to deliver a Satellite Club. A total of 57 satellite clubs have been delivered across the 3 year programme. This has increased participation in schools for pupils aged 11-18 across the county in a number of popular sports.

Although not necessarily linked directly to schools, the national Sportivate funding programme, delivered locally by Leap, has enabled increased opportunities for this age group to access regular sporting activity. In addition, there has also been a real focus on girls engagement with programmes such as 'Feeling like a Fox' (funding from Leap for girls-only activity) and various National Governing Body of Sport girls-only programmes to increase participation.

⁷ Fundamental Movement Skills Teacher Resource, Education Dept., Western Australia 2004

School Games

As part of a national programme, every student in Buckinghamshire (primary and secondary) is given the opportunity to take part in competitive sport through the School Games. Delivered at 4 levels:

- Level 1: Intra-school competition (within the school environment)
- Level 2: Inter-school competition (schools vs schools)
- Level 3: County-level competition (culmination/winners of Inter-school competitions)
- Level 4: National competition (culmination/winners of County competitions)

Leadership and Volunteering

Buckinghamshire has a large support system in place to help young coaches, leaders and volunteers and support them in their development – including through school projects. Alongside a programme of courses and training, the County Young Coaches Academy (a mentoring programme for young coaches), Project 500 (funding to increase number of female coaches) there are a number of ways in which we help to support the young sporting workforce in the county.

Horizon scanning

Leap is currently funded through Sport England (from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport - DCMS) to deliver against the current Sport England strategy (2012-2017) seeking an increase in sports participation for people aged 14+. The DCMS published its new sport and physical activity strategy 'Sporting Future: A new strategy for an Active Nation' in December 2015 which has some fundamental changes that will address the issues of inactivity, obesity and low sports participation of those aged 5+. Sport England will play a key role in delivering this strategy, and although the detail is yet to be fully understood, it is anticipated this new approach and funding will play a significant role in engaging school-aged children in regular sport and physical activity.

Recommendation for the Health and Wellbeing Board:

The Health and Wellbeing Board note the update on physical activity in schools and have a wider discussion when the national Childhood Obesity Strategy and Sport England's plan to deliver key elements of 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation' are finally published.