



sport
impacts
children

The Impact of Team Sport Participation on Children and Young People



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For the first time our five sports have come together to demonstrate the impact of team sport participation on children and young people. We believe it is vital to take a collaborative approach to fight rising levels of inactivity and poor mental and physical wellbeing in children. As part of our joint work, we are delighted to share with you our report on 'The Social and Economic Value of Childhood Sport Participation in England'.

49% of children and young people take part each week across our five team sports. This contributes £4.53 billion in value annually in economic, health and social outcomes. Pre-pandemic, a network of 1.9m volunteers supported the delivery of our sports alongside a workforce of 48k individuals. Each year childhood participation has resulted in 65k fewer cases of poor mental health and 204k fewer cases of obesity, as well as contributing £789m in GDP growth from improved educational outcomes.

However, COVID-19 has led to unprecedented impact on children's activity levels. If we do not act now, we risk a lost generation of children who never experienced the benefits of this participation. The most recent Active Lives Children and Young People Survey showed four million children aged between five and 16 failed to meet minimum recommended activity levels during the last year. Organised team sport has been hit particularly hard, with only 49% of our nation's children participating now compared to 61% pre-pandemic. Our findings show that the decrease in participation in our five sports due to COVID-19 has led to a decrease in annual value of £1.45bn - contributing to the increasing levels of poor mental and physical wellbeing. Without this participation millions of children will not develop skills teamwork and communication or develop the physical literacy that will enable them to lead active, healthy lives as adults.

As demonstrated in this report, team sport is uniquely positioned to tackle this crisis directly. Taking part in team sports is proven to enhance physical and mental wellbeing, boost social cohesion, develop leadership and communication skills, and boost resilience levels. The nature of team sport means these benefits are greater than with other forms of activity. The impact is often more pronounced for disadvantaged communities, young girls, and individuals living with disability.

As the CEOs of some of our nation's most popular sports, we absolutely recognise our responsibility to support children and young people. We need to make sure that our offer to them is as broad, accessible, and inviting as possible, so that they and their families can benefit from getting back to sport and improving their activity levels. However, this cannot be achieved alone, and we call on the Government and wider sports sector to join us in achieving the ambition of every child having equal access and opportunities to participate in team sport.




Tom Harrison




Nick Pink




Fran Connolly




Bill Sweeney




Mark Bullingham

Five team sports have come together for the first time in a unique coalition to understand the benefits team sport participation brings to children & young people



INITIAL OBJECTIVES



Demonstrate the **scale** of childhood team sport* participation



Provide an **evidence base** of the benefits of team sport on children and young people



Deliver detailed insight on the **drivers of participation and the implications** for policymakers and the sports industry

ROBUST METHODOLOGY

Literature review
to identify studies to be included



Data collection
of data looking at 100+ metrics



Analysis
of NGB and cohort data



Test and review
with academics from leading universities

WITH THE ULTIMATE AIMS OF



Beginning a debate around policy change at the national and local level



Increasing the scale of ongoing collaboration



Ensuring that all children have equal opportunities to play team sport and be physically active

*Childhood participation in rugby, netball, cricket, football and hockey

Executive summary and highlights

- **4.5m children** participate weekly in the five team sports, contributing **£4.53bn in economic, health and social value** annually across England. Children who play team sports receive unique health and social benefits
- There is a significant **gender gap** in team sport participation driven by:
 - Unequal sports provision in **schools**
 - Stark differences in **mindsets** and attitudes towards sport participation between boys and girls
 - Imbalanced access to **facilities** and programmes that activate those spaces
- If the gender gap is closed it will bring an additional £1.37bn per year in value, and if all children play the five sports, there is the **potential for total value of £9.23bn** of benefit to society
- COVID-19 has caused **unprecedented disruption** to participation in team sports, resulting in an annual loss of £1.45bn* to society

A cross-department and team sport taskforce is needed to act now to increase participation, drive greater impact and prevent further disruption



*Calculations based on the participation decrease in the five sports between Summer 2019 and Summer 2020. This does include results from the latest Active Lives Children and Young People Survey released on 8th December 2021.

4.5m children participate in the five team sports each week, contributing £4.53bn annually in economic, health and social value across England

Each week the five sports get

4.5m*

children & youth taking part in team sport



...that's more than

49%*

of individuals



...**64%** of all boys...

...and **34%** of all girls

This generates

£4.53bn

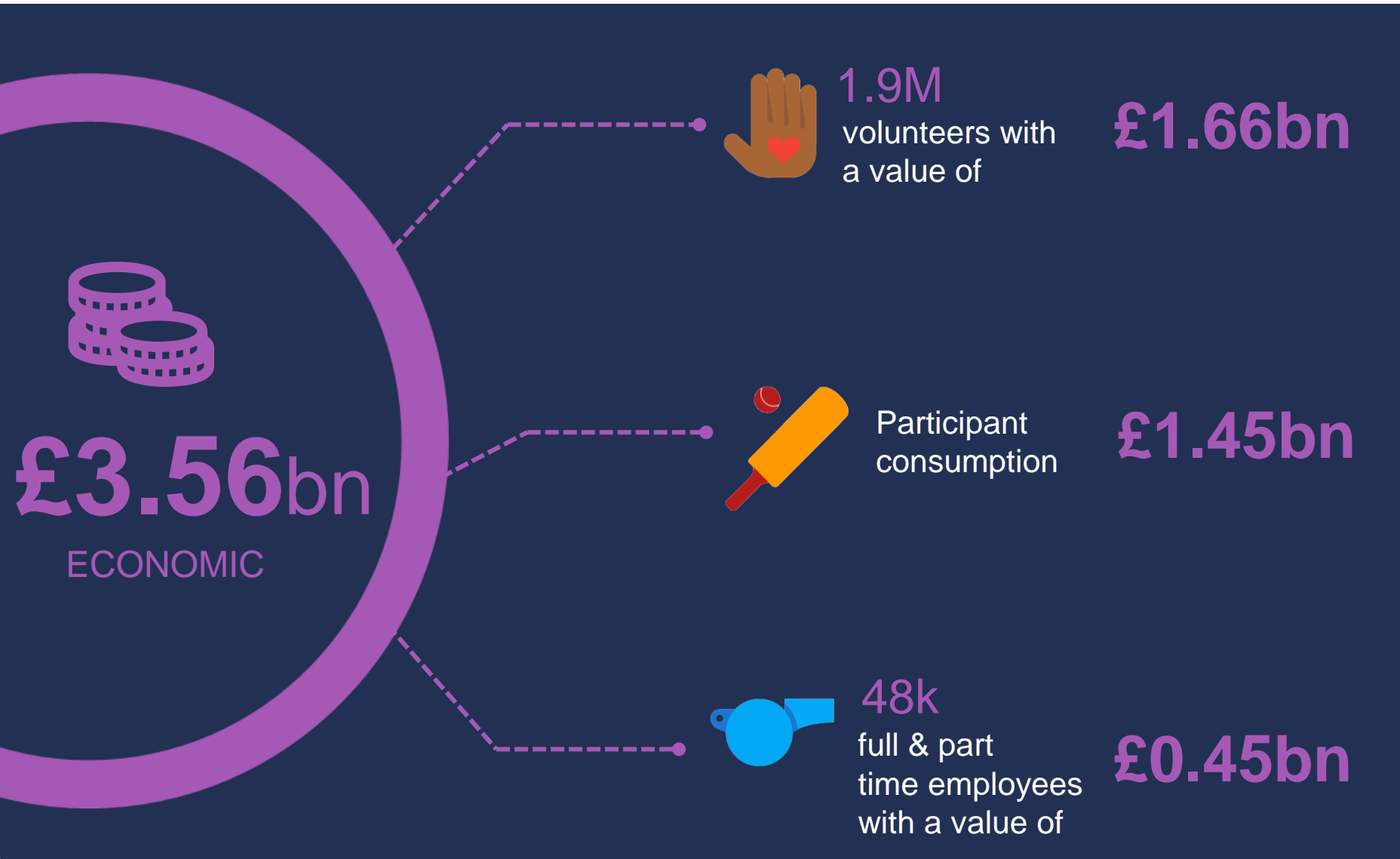
In socio-economic value each year



*Figures relate to children aged 5-18. Based on participation pre-COVID-19.

Source: Active Lives Survey Children and Young People (2018/19); Active Lives Survey (2018/19) Portas analysis

£3.5bn of annual economic impact, from workforce, volunteers and participant consumption, results from childhood participation in the five sports in England



*Figures relate to children aged 5-18. Based on participation pre-COVID-19.
Source: NGB data; Portas analysis

Children's mental and physical wellbeing is significantly enhanced by playing team sport

The five sports contribute to healthcare savings of:

MENTAL HEALTH



£66m
per annum

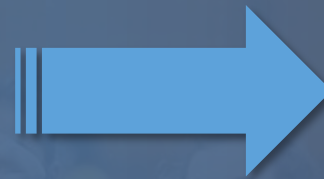
Reduction in cases of poor mental health



65k



Fewer cases of depression and anxiety



Happy children are more likely to be happy adults:

2x

less likely to drop out of school if no childhood psychological condition

35%

Increase in family income by the age of 42 if no childhood psychological condition

PHYSICAL HEALTH



£112m
per annum

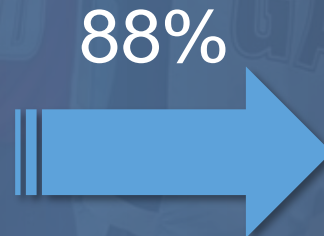
Reduction in childhood obesity cases



204k



Fewer cases of obesity



88%

of obese children become obese adults

These children will go on to be healthy adults, which has the potential to save:

£112m

Direct (NHS) Savings



£500m

Indirect Societal Savings

*Figures relate to children aged 5-18. Based on participation pre-COVID-19.

Source: Goodman et al (2011); Kremer et al (2014); Portas analysis

The positive habits established in childhood continue to bring significant benefits with age

Playing team sport as a child leads to:



Improved Mental Wellbeing

20% less likely to suffer from a mental health disorder¹



Enhanced Educational Skills

Physically active children report **13% higher leadership** and **9% higher teamwork** skills²

Higher employability

Young graduates who take part in sport earn on average **£6,965** more⁵ and are **2.5%** less likely⁶ to be unemployed compared to those who do not play sport



Healthier Behaviours

Girls and boys playing sport are **3.9x** and **6.8x** more likely to be active adults respectively – this impact is greater in team sport³

Youth sport participants are almost **2x** more likely to have healthy habits in adulthood⁴

Reduced risk of chronic disease

Physical activity in adulthood reduces the risk of Cardiovascular disease, Type 2 Diabetes and Breast Cancer by **~25%**⁷



Overall Healthcare Savings

At the age of 40, childhood team sport participation will have contributed to the reduction of up to **112k** disease cases in one year...

...Saving society **£189m** and **£549m** in direct and indirect healthcare savings – a total of

£738m
per annum

Team sport participation also benefits children socially, particularly in educational development

Children who participate in sport report greater educational development skills**:



252m+

hours of positive interaction leading to greater social cohesion



£789m*

in GDP growth due to improved educational performance,

This improvement is **1.5X** greater in children with access to free school meals



1230

fewer juvenile crimes



13% higher leadership scores

9% higher communication skills

14% higher confidence levels.
This benefit is **greater in girls** than boys

Girls report **11%** higher resilience levels.
This benefit is **greater in girls** than boys

*GDP growth through education and obesity healthcare savings are accrued once children reach adulthood **Through becoming physically active. In comparison to inactive children. All figures statistically significant p<0.001

Team sport has a unique positive impact on children's mental wellbeing and social wellbeing

IMPROVED MENTAL WELLBEING

6% higher happiness and **12% higher life satisfaction**¹

This effect is greatest in children who are disabled or from a **low SEG**



HIGHER SOCIAL TRUST

5% higher levels of social trust compared to those who do not play team sport¹

Greatest impact in **disabled children**



MORE SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Are **24% more likely to volunteer**² compared to those who do not play team sport

Impact greatest in those from a lower socio-economic group



Children who play team sport



INCREASED SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

More friends than those who play individual sports or those who do not play sports²

71% children who play football felt they had **met people from new communities** through the sport³



BETTER BONE HEALTH

Up to **17% higher bone mineral content** in active children⁴

Greatest impact in weight bearing and impact sports



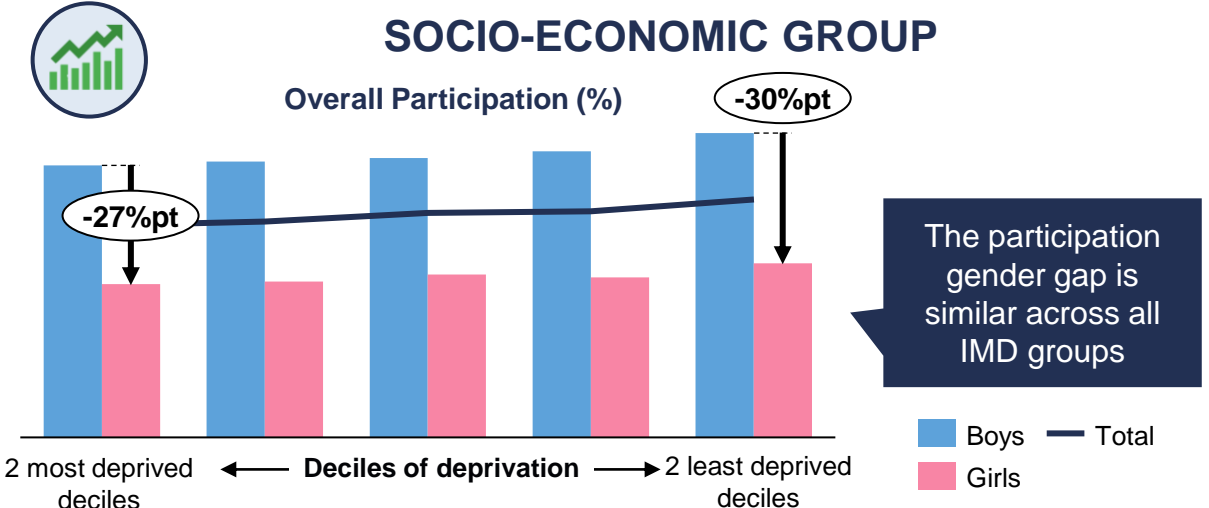
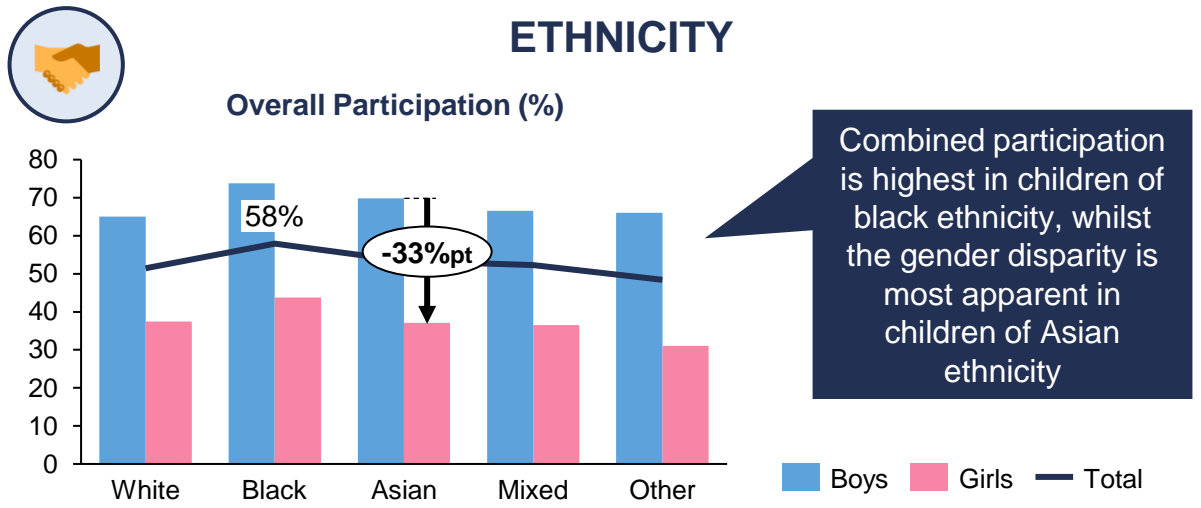
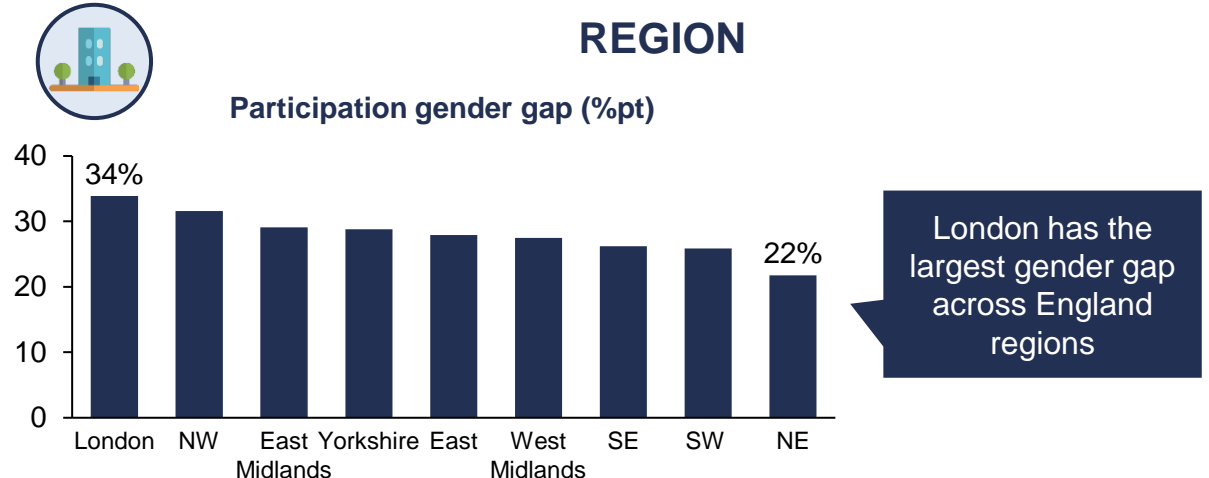
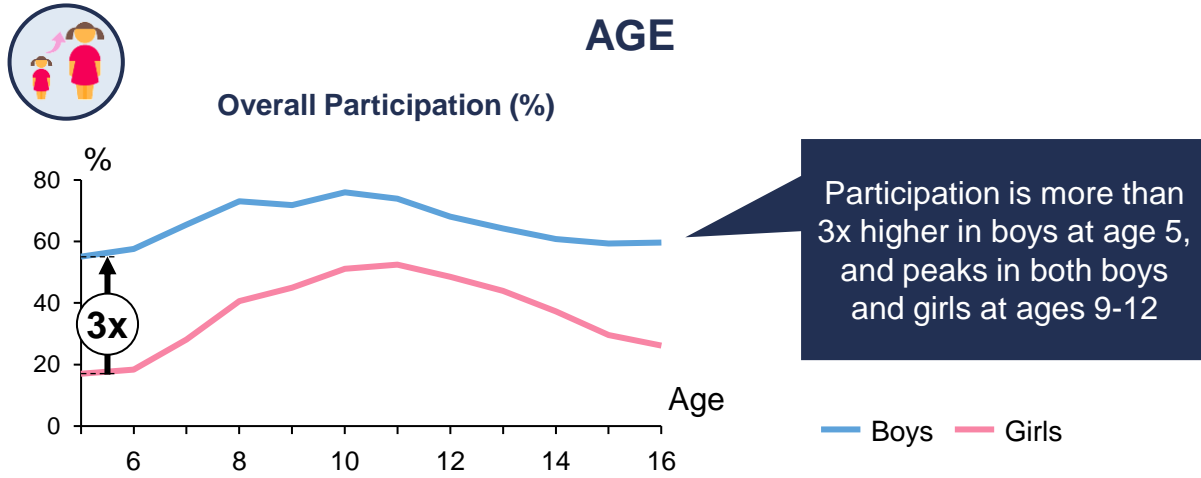
ALL these effects are greater for team sports than individual sports*

*Based on regression analysis comparing association between team sport participants, individual sport participants and non-participants. All figures statistically significant p<0.001

Source: 1) Active Lives Survey Children and Young People (2018-19); 2) Understanding Society Survey: Wave 8 3) The FA Participation Tracker 4) Bailey et al (1999); Portas analysis

There is a gender gap in children's team sport participation, with 3 times more boys taking part at an early age

A gender gap exists in the five sports across all ages, location, ethnicities and socio-economic groups*



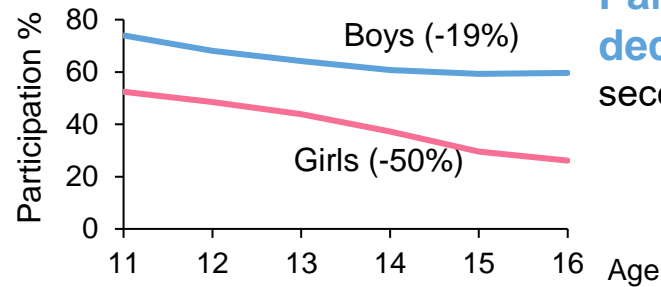
*All graphs based on children aged 5-16
 Source: Active Lives Survey Children and Young People (2018-19); Portas analysis

Providing equal access to team sport in schools could help address the gender gap in team sport participation

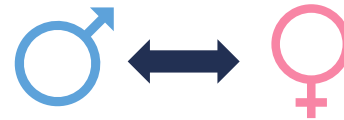
The Five Sports in Schools



Girls and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds take part in fewer minutes and a smaller range of activities



Participation decreases during secondary school...



...and the gender gap widens

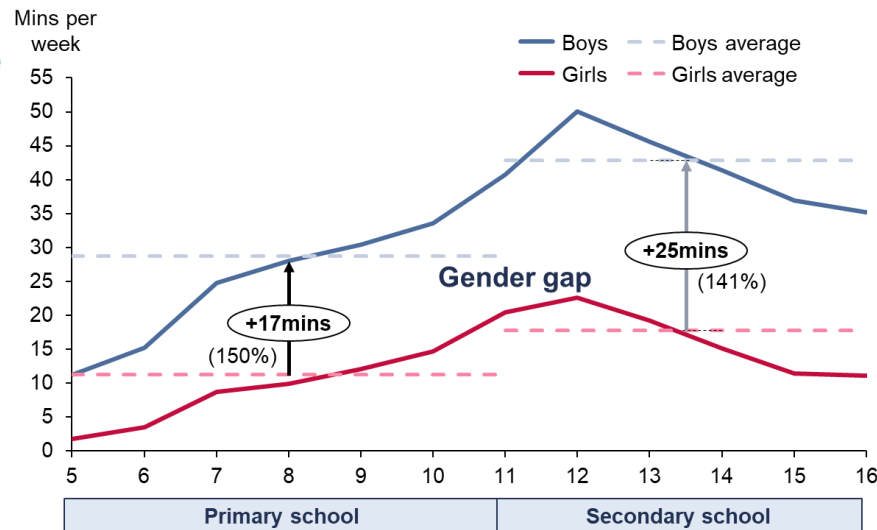
Boys take part in a wider range of activities than girls



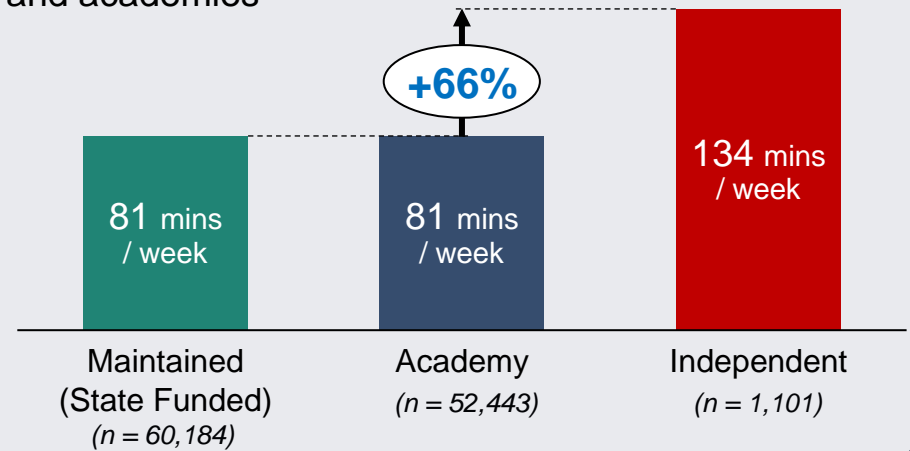
By age 16, female participants play

25 mins

less of the five sports per week than boys



On average, independent school students spend more time playing the five sports than those from state schools and academies



*Schools, facilities and mindsets were prioritised for analysis as they have been of recent focus for government and academics. Other potential drivers (e.g. level of investment) were not analysed in detail in this study. Source: Active Lives Survey Children and Young People (2018/19); Portas analysis

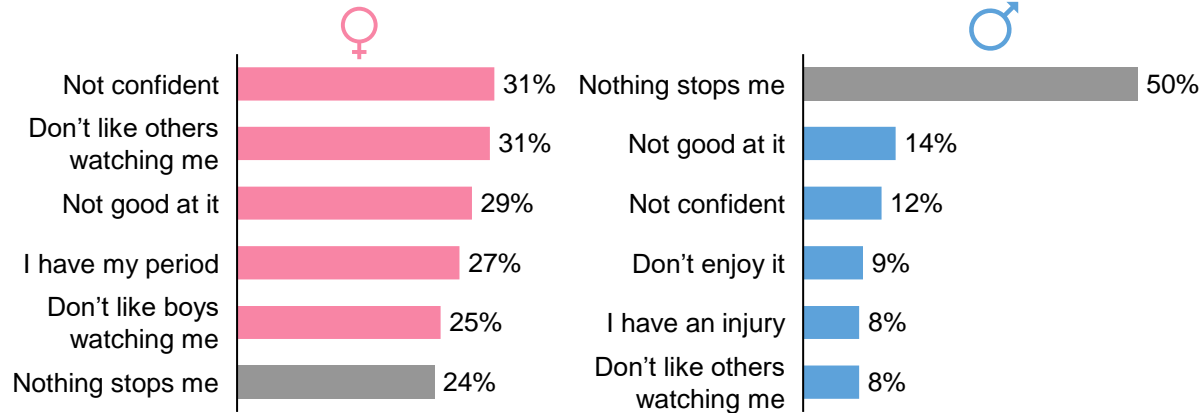
Mindset differences between boys and girls in childhood should be the target of programmes and campaigns to increase participation

Mindsets



Girls and boys have similar motivations for playing sport, but girls face unique barriers

Top reasons for children not taking part in sport*



Girls are more likely to cite **confidence** as a barrier for sport participation compared to boys



Targeted programmes and campaigns can address these factors to encourage more boys and girls to participate



The FA **We Only Do Positive** campaign educates parents and coaches on their role in creating a fun and safe environment for children

- ✓ Insight driven campaign
- ✓ Targeted at specific motivations and barriers

Top reasons for children playing sport, boys and girls*

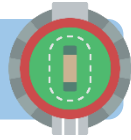


- To have fun
- Develop a new skill
- To be healthy
- Try new activities
- To feel good

*Children aged 12-14

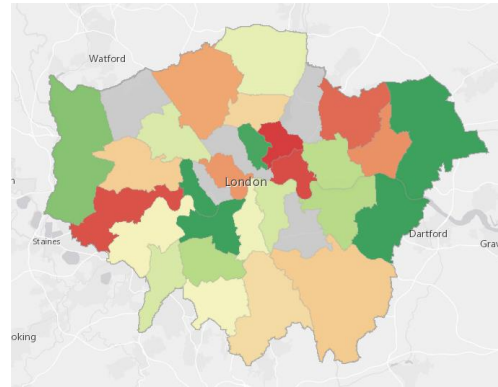
Team sport participation can be boosted by increasing access to and activation of facilities in under-provisioned areas

Facilities



Determining coverage of facilities, sport clubs and parks can pinpoint the most valuable locations for targeted programme activation*

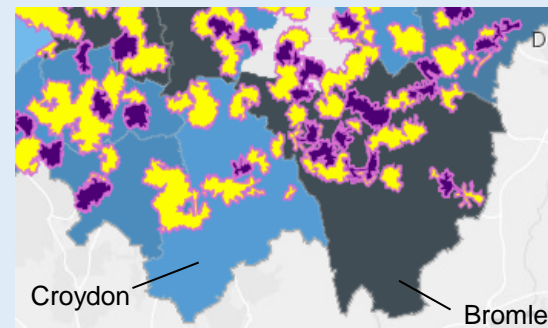
The **Demographically-adjusted Activity Performance Index** adjusts participation based on an area's **sociodemographic profile** to understand what **supply-side factors** are driving participation



On average, in **overperforming**** **8%** London boroughs more households have access to **Open Space**

Example facility efficacy analysis: Cricket

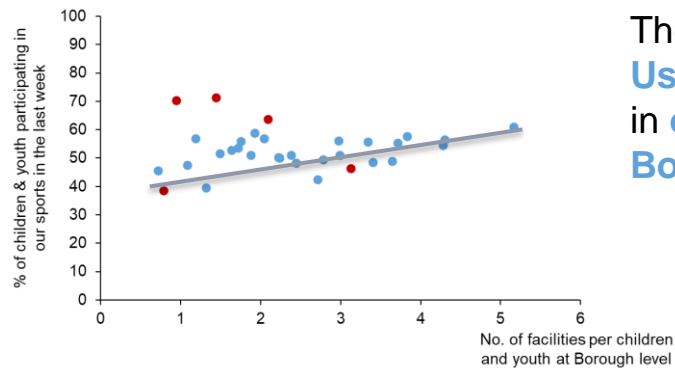
All Stars Cricket (ASC) programmes account for **40%** of cricket facility coverage across London, but **55%** of total cricket participation



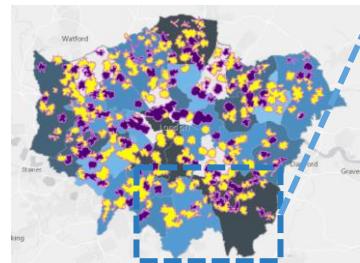
Yellow: Coverage*** area for non-ASC facilities
Purple: Coverage area for ASC facilities



Cricket participation can be boosted in under-performing boroughs (e.g. Croydon) by **introducing targeted ASC facilities**



The number of **Private Use Facilities** is higher in **overperforming**** Boroughs



Dense urban areas have **fewer facilities** — which correlates with **lower participation**

*Due to sample sizing London data was used for local analysis ** Positive scores indicate the Borough is overperforming in delivering the five sports after controlling for demographics.

***Good coverage is defined to be within a 1km walking distance of a facility

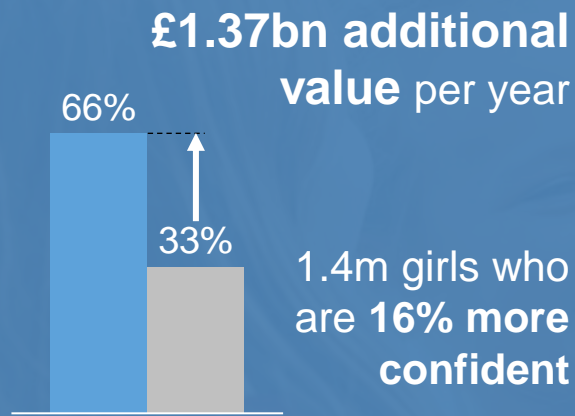
If more children play the five sports, there is the potential for a total of £9.23bn in economic, health and social benefits to society each year

Currently

4.5m* children are currently playing our sports...

... contributing £4.53bn to society each year

Closing the gender gap



Increasing by an additional 10%pt

£2.29 Bn additional value per year



That's 2.3m children who are **6% happier...**

...which could contribute to reducing an additional **20k cases of depression and anxiety** each year



Getting every child playing our sports

Would result in a total of **9.2m children** playing our sports

Which has the potential to contribute a total of **£9.23bn** to society across economic, health and social outcomes annually

The additional value is almost 10% of the annual funding for state schools¹



*Children aged 5-18

COVID-19 has caused unprecedented disruption to participation in the five sports, resulting in an annual loss of £1.4bn to society*



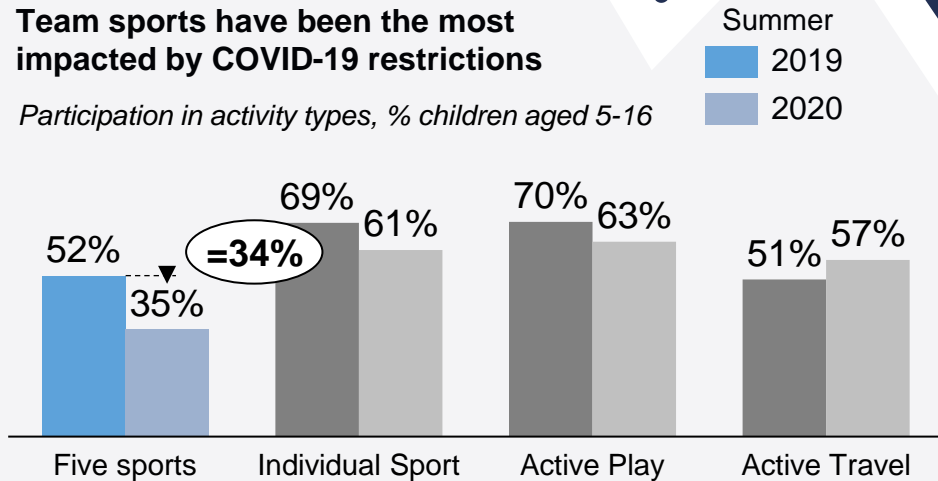
Participation in our sports dropped by

34%

*between Summer 2019 and Summer 2020

Team sports have been the most impacted by COVID-19 restrictions

Participation in activity types, % children aged 5-16



This is equivalent to a decrease in value of **£1.45bn*** annually

CHANGE vs Summer 2019

ECONOMIC



WORKFORCE CONTRIBUTION



VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING



PARTICIPANT CONSUMPTION

HEALTH



CASES OF MENTAL ILLNESS



CASES OF OBESITY



HEALTHCARE SAVINGS

SOCIAL



JUVENILE CRIME



CONTRIBUTION TO GDP THROUGH EDUCATION



HOURS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

*This does not calculate the direct impact of COVID-19 in sport delivery. Factors not covered include, but are not limited to, reduced volunteering, furlough and job losses, reduction in household spending, increases in mental illness, reduced social interactions
 Source: Active Lives Survey Children and Young People (2018/19), (2019/20); Portas analysis

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the delivery of team sport, and without urgent action on participation it will take several years to recover to pre-pandemic levels

Reduced volunteering and staff

38% of Sported Community Groups cited lack of volunteers and staff as a main challenge to re-opening¹



Facility closures

28% of team sport facilities are yet to re-open²



Lower participation frequency

24% of team sport clubs have not restarted activities since the pandemic²



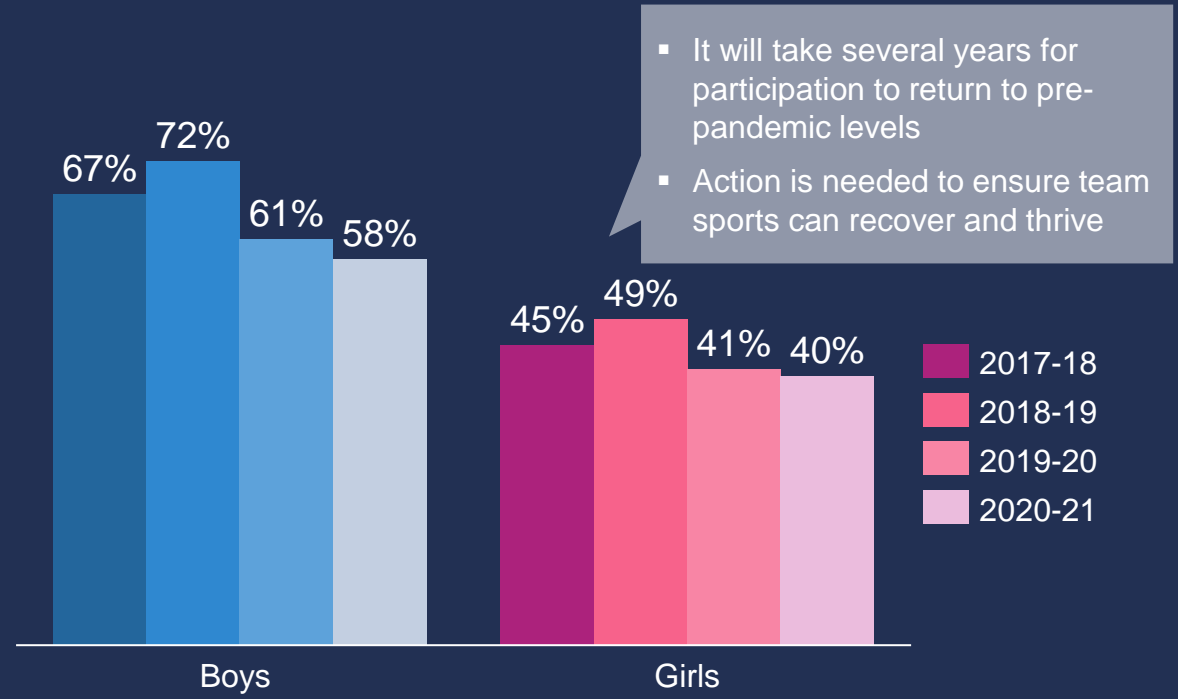
School restrictions

Around **4 in 10**³ schools reported they would be delivering no extra-curricular sport in Autumn 2020



Team sport participation has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic rates

Participation in Team Sports, aged 5-16⁴



A cross-department and team sport taskforce is needed to act now to increase participation, drive greater impact and prevent further disruption

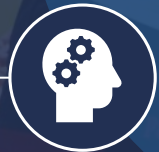
Action: Ensure **school offerings** provide every child with the opportunity to play team sport



Action: Improve **access** to multi-sport and other team sport facilities



Action: Ensure **mindsets and behaviours** are addressed in sport campaigns



Action: Improve data collection and research on children across the sport sector



Experts from across Government, Sport, Health and Education will jointly:

- Publicly communicate the challenges, aims and objectives of the taskforce
- Establish the taskforce (Government and Sport) to kick off and manage initial 18 months programme of work
- Support the taskforce with access to data, agency support, and ongoing communications and stewardship

Portas Consulting* is proud to have supported this review and would like to thank the following organisations for their contribution to this report:

NGBs:



Charities and Institutions:



With special thanks to:

Professor Charlie Foster OBE for conducting an independent academic review of the report and methodology
Sport England for providing access to the Active Lives Children and Young People dataset, and advice on the report

*Portas Consulting is the premier global management consultancy dedicated to sport and physical activity. Working with international governments, sports bodies and corporates, we provide independent advice to senior leaders on their most critical and complex challenges.