ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS ENGLAND

2026

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REPORT CARD

Children and young people in England

Evidence: January 2022-December 2025



11 INDICATORS

Behaviour / Settings / Systems

A B C D F INC

THE CENTRAL FINDING

England supports activity better than children's behaviour reflects

School and community grades are stronger than behavioural outcomes. In 2024-25, 49.1% of 5-16-year-olds met the physical activity guideline. Screen-time evidence is historical, and four national indicators lack sufficient evidence for a grade.

49.1%
Meet the activity guideline

~38%
Historical screen-time estimate

4 of 11
National indicators graded INC

WHAT THIS REPORT ASSESSES

Eleven indicators describe outcomes, enabling conditions and gaps in national surveillance.

The Report Card uses the harmonised Global Matrix 5.0 framework: ten core indicators plus Sleep and, for the first time in England, parallel grades for children and adolescents with disabilities (CAWD).

HOW THE GRADES WERE SET

Five national surveys informed expert-panel grading. The ten core indicators and parallel disability grades underwent AHKGA audit. Sleep was an optional, unaudited indicator.

1. Select the closest national estimate
2. Map prevalence to the A+ to F rubric
3. Use INC when the benchmark is not measurable
4. Grade CAWD in parallel where possible

GRADE BOUNDARIES

Percentage meeting the indicator benchmark

A	A+ 94-100% | A 87-93% | A- 80-86%
B	B+ 74-79% | B 67-73% | B- 60-66%
C	C+ 54-59% | C 47-53% | C- 40-46%
D	D+ 34-39% | D 27-33% | D- 20-26%
F	Fewer than 20%
INC	Insufficient or inadequate information

EVIDENCE: JANUARY 2022-DECEMBER 2025

Active Lives 2024-25 · National Travel Survey 2024 · Children's People and Nature Survey 2024/25 · HBSC England 2021/22 · DfE School and College Voice

Self-reported behaviours; ages vary by source. Screen-time evidence is a historical, panel-approved approximation.

THE NATIONAL SCORECARD

2026 grades at a glance

Changes are in grades, not necessarily outcomes: sport and community use non-comparable metrics.

01 Overall Physical Activity — C
UP 49.1% meet the guideline

02 Organized Sport and Physical Activity — C+
UP Team sport anchor: 58%

03 Active Play — INC
SAME Daily duration not measured

04 Active Transportation — B-
UP 61% use active travel

05 Sedentary Behavior — D+
SAME About 38% meet ≤2 h/day

06 Physical Fitness — INC
SAME No representative programme

07 Family and Peers — INC
SAME No PA-specific measure

08 School — B+
SAME Strong provision; KS4 concern

09 Community and Environment — B
UP Four-domain mean: 67.5%

10 Government — INC
SAME Policies lack outcome linkage

11 Sleep (in-training) — C-
NEW 42% meet threshold

Grades describe outcomes and enabling conditions. INC identifies a gap in usable evidence.

EVIDENCE COVERAGE ACROSS FIVE REPORTING CYCLES

Read letters as well as colours; INC is not a low grade.

	2014	2016	2018	2022	2026
Overall Physical Activity	D+	D-	C-	C-	C
Organized Sport & Physical Activity	C-	D	D+	D	C+
Active Play	INC	INC	INC	INC	INC
Active Transportation	C	C-	C-	C+	B-
Sedentary Behavior	INC	INC	D+	D+	D+
Physical Fitness	-	-	C-	INC	INC
Family & Peers	INC	INC	INC	INC	INC
School	A-	B+	B+	B+	B+
Community & Environment	B	B	C	C	B
Government	INC	INC	INC	INC	INC
Sleep (in-training)	-	-	-	-	C-

A band · B band · C band · D band · F · INC · - not assessed

2018 screen time: D+ in Global Matrix; INC in England's card. Grade changes are not necessarily outcome changes.

Movement and participation

Activity has improved modestly; team-sport participation is broadly stable.

49.1% C
Meet the daily activity guideline

58% C+
Take part in weekly team sport

61% B-
Used active travel in the past week

1 OVERALL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY — C



Fewer than half meet the guideline

49.1% of 5-16-year-olds meet the guideline. The grade uses the four-year mean (47.8%). Boys exceed girls by 5.9 points; the affluence gap is 12.9 points. CAWD C covers mainstream schools only.

Source: Active Lives 2024-25 [1]

2 ORGANIZED SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY — C+



Stable participation; persistent gender gap

Weekly team sport is 57.9%, broadly stable across the cycle (56.9-57.9%). The 23.5-point gender gap is close to its pre-pandemic level. The C+ rise uses changed measures, not demonstrated growth.

Source: Active Lives 2024-25 [1]

3 ACTIVE PLAY — INC



The benchmark is not measured

National surveillance records weekly frequency, not the Global Matrix benchmark of >2 hours/day of unstructured active play. A benchmark-aligned duration measure is needed.

Sources: Active Lives [1]; COSI measurement reference

4 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION — B-



Walking dominates

61% used active travel in the past week; 60% travelled actively to school on the survey day. Walking dominates, while cycling accounts for around 1-2% of school trips.

Sources: Active Lives 2024-25 [1]; National Travel Survey [2]

Daily behaviours and support

School provision is relatively strong, but behaviour and surveillance gaps remain.

~38%

Historical approximation from HBSC 2013/14, carried forward. Alignment to total recreational screen time is uncertain.

5 SEDENTARY BEHAVIOR

D+



Historical estimate, not a current outcome

The ~38% estimate comes from HBSC 2013/14. Separate weekday screen-use items leave alignment to total recreational screen time uncertain. No newer equivalent England estimate is available.

Source: HBSC England 2013/14 via 2022 card

6 PHYSICAL FITNESS

INC



No current national measure

England has no post-2022 representative field-battery programme. A rotating national fitness-surveillance module is needed.

Sources: historic shuttle-run and handgrip norms

7 FAMILY AND PEERS

INC



Activity-specific support is not measured

National surveys do not assess physical-activity facilitation, co-participation or peer encouragement. This indicator has been INC in every cycle since 2014.

Source: HBSC England 2021/22 [4]

8 SCHOOL

B+



Strong provision, uneven delivery

Median timetabled PE is 120 min/week at Key Stages 1-3 and 60 at Key Stage 4. Secondary PE teaching hours fell 12.6% from 2011/12 to 2023/24. Provision is not delivered activity.

Sources: School and College Voice [5]; School Workforce Census [6]

Places, policy and sleep

Local environments score well; policy accountability and sleep surveillance need improvement.

9 COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT — B



Four-domain mean: 67.5%

Use of local spaces is 63%, maintenance 72%, safety 68% and access 67%. Easy walking access fell from 74% in 2023 to 67% in 2025. The higher grade uses changed measures, not proven improvement.

Sources: People and Nature Survey 2024/25 [3]; HBSC England [4]

10 GOVERNMENT — INC



Policy effort is not linked to outcomes

Strategies and investment exist, but there is no auditable framework linking policy effort and spending to population outcomes. The WHO HEPA Policy Audit Tool offers a route forward.

Sources: Get Active [7]; School Sport and Activity Action Plan; PE and Sport Premium

11 SLEEP (IN-TRAINING) — C-



42% meet the threshold

42% of 11-, 13- and 15-year-olds report at least 8.5 hours on school nights. This is a comparison threshold, not an age-specific recommendation. Attainment is 63% at age 11 and 23% at age 15.

Source: HBSC England 2021/22 [4]

WHAT CHANGED SINCE 2022?

C-	to	C	**Overall Physical Activity**
D	to	C+	**Organized Sport and PA**
C+	to	B-	**Active Transportation**
C	to	B	**Community and Environment**
NEW	:	C-	**Sleep**

Sport and community use non-comparable metrics. Five of six graded prevalence estimates lie within two points of a grade boundary; School is assessed separately.

Equity, disability and priorities

Overall Physical Activity: who is being left behind?

England average: 49.1%

Average ≥60 minutes/day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity

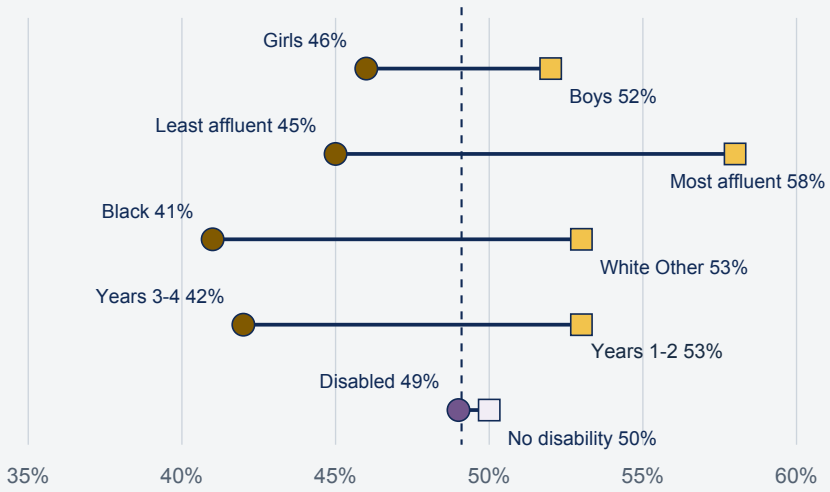
Gender
gap 5.9 pp

Family affluence
gap 13 pp

Ethnicity, extremes
gap 12 pp

Age, school years
gap 11.6 pp

Disability
mainstream only



Percentages are rounded; pp = percentage points.

Source: Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 2024-25 (Sport England) [1]

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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Only Overall Physical Activity is graded (C; four-year mean 49.8%). Special schools are excluded from its sampling frame. Similar activity levels in mainstream schools do not establish population-wide equity.

FOUR ACTIONS BEFORE THE NEXT CYCLE

1. **Add benchmark-ready items**

   Measure active-play duration, PA-specific family support and modern recreational screen use in existing surveys.

2. **Establish national fitness surveillance**

   Use a representative field battery on a rotating three- or four-year cycle, with adapted protocols for CAWD.

3. **Make disability disaggregation routine**

   Sample special and SEN schools and publish CAWD estimates across every indicator.

4. **Link policy investment to outcomes**

   Audit England with the WHO HEPA Policy Audit Tool and monitor delivered PE minutes, especially at KS4.

ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS ENGLAND

AN ACTIVE LIFE FOR EVERY CHILD

Working together so every child and young person in England can be active, healthy and happy.

#ReportCard2026 activehealthykidsengland.co.uk



PRINCIPAL SOURCES

1 Sport England. Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, academic year 2024-25.

2 Department for Transport. National Travel Survey 2024: England.

3 Natural England. Children's People and Nature Survey for England, 2024/25.

4 Brooks et al. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC), England National Report 2021/22.

5 Department for Education. School and College Voice, December 2023 wave.

6 Department for Education. School Workforce Census, 2023/24.

7 Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Get Active, 2023.

8 Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance. Global Matrix 5.0 benchmarks and audit process.

ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS ENGLAND EXPERT PANEL

Martyn Standage (University of Bath)
Laura Basterfield (Newcastle University)
Lynne Boddy (Liverpool John Moores University)
Anna Chalkley (University of Bradford)
Andrew Daly-Smith (University of Bradford)
Lydia Emm-Collison (University of Bristol)
Stuart Fairclough (Edge Hill University)
Lawrence Foweather (Liverpool John Moores University)
Matthew Hobbs (University of Canterbury)
Karen Milton (University of East Anglia)
Natalie Pearson (Loughborough University)
Lauren Sherar (Loughborough University)
Richard Tyler (Edge Hill University)
Max Western (University of Bath)

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Prepared from the England 2026 Report Card evidence synthesis and the harmonised Global Matrix 5.0 grading framework. This public-facing short version summarises the principal grades, inequalities, surveillance gaps and actions. Full methods and references are provided in the accompanying research paper and supplementary material.

Prepared by the Active Healthy Kids England Expert Panel

Contact: Professor Martyn Standage, University of Bath

Email: M.Standage@Bath.ac.uk

PA: physical activity · PE: physical education · CAWD: children and adolescents with disabilities
INC: insufficient or inadequate information · pp: percentage points