

Shetland 2021 Lifestyle Survey Report

Active Shetland Strategic Group



Contents

Summary	3
Background	3
Survey Method	4
<u>Survey Results:</u>	5
Respondents & demographics	5
Physical activity levels	6
Preferred ways to be active	7
Where are people active?	7
Motivations for being active	8
Preferred activities	9
Barriers to being active	10
Changes that could support activity	11
Optional comments	12
Pupil specific questions	13
Actions	15
Conclusions	19
Appendix / Infographics	21

Summary

A working group formed by the 'Active Shetland Strategic Group' carried out a lifestyle survey across Shetland to gauge activity levels and barriers to participation across different demographics and areas of Shetland. The results show that most people consider the biggest barriers to being active are:

- poor weather
- lack of time/motivation
- cost
- lack of activities close to home
- lack of suitable routes for walking and cycling

Respondents identified improvements that could be made to support people to become (more) active including:

- more beginner activities
- reduced costs
- more family focused activities
- activities closer to home
- better walking and cycling routes

Background

The strategic group responsible for pulling together the Active Shetland Strategy consists of staff from Shetland Islands Council Sport & Leisure Service, NHS Shetland, Shetland Recreational Trust, SIC Transport, ZetTrans, sportscotland, Nature Scotland, SusTrans and Ability Shetland. The group decided to focus on three key areas of the strategy and created three working groups to develop ideas and projects. They are:

- Supporting the Inactive to Become Active
- Keeping Active Outdoors
- Poverty & Inclusion in Sport and Physical Activity

The working group focusing on 'supporting the inactive to become active' agreed that their initial piece of work should be designing and conducting a survey to gather some baseline information about activity levels in Shetland, and also the barriers that limit people's ability to be active.



Survey Method

The group held a series of online meetings to agree and finalise the survey questions. Two surveys were designed – one for adults and one for school pupils. The surveys were then produced in an online survey system called Smart Survey. There were also paper copies created which were available at leisure centres and health centres.

Posters were created (with QR codes for easy access) and displayed in some public areas. A press release was issued locally to disseminate information, explain the reasons for the survey and to encourage the public to take part. SIC Education agreed that the survey links could be shared in an email to parents via schools, with parents encouraged to support young children to complete the survey. It was reiterated that survey responses were sought from a diverse range of the population, including both active and inactive people from all ages and areas of Shetland.

The survey was open from 16th June to 30th September 2021. All paper responses were entered into the online system to allow easier analysis of results. A total of 1203 adult responses were received, and 260 pupils responses.



Survey Results



Respondents and Demographics

The respondents were predominantly female (72.6%) with 26% of the responses from males. It is believed this is largely due to the fact that the survey was widely shared by schools and the majority of their email contact addresses are the pupils' mothers. This could also help to explain the most popular age range for responses being 36-45 (27%) which will reflect that many respondents were parents of school aged children, and is a higher percentage than that of the general local population in this age range.*

18.6% of our total survey responses were pupil responses, which largely reflects Shetland's population profile of 18.2% of the population being aged 15 and under. People aged 65+ were under-represented in our survey (8% of adult responses versus 21% of the local population)*.

Using data from the 2011 census from National Records of Scotland, it is clear that the geographical location of Shetland residents was well represented in the survey responses. The percentages of responses from different areas of Shetland largely reflect the percentages of people resident there.

*population statistics provided by National Records of Scotland



Survey Results



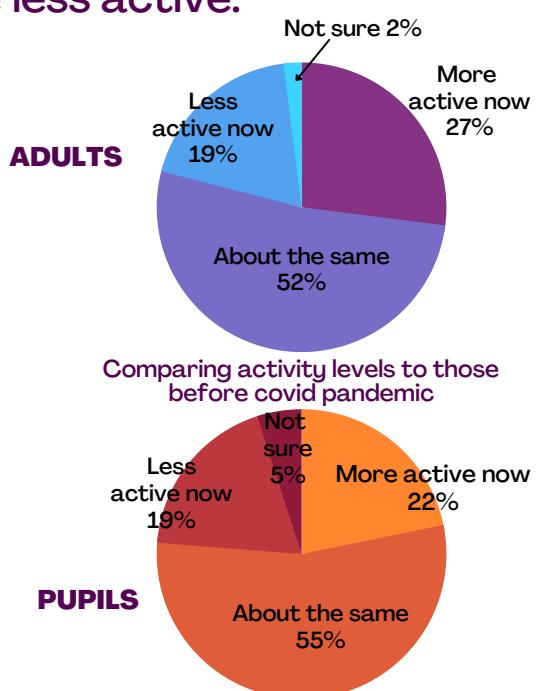
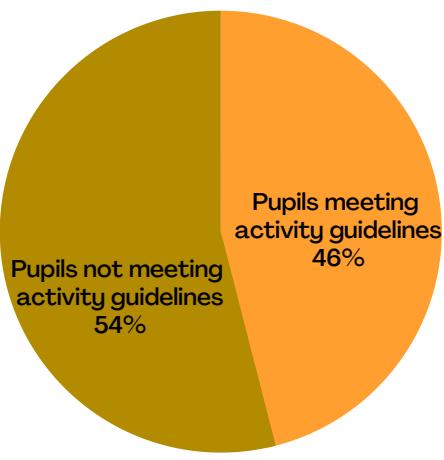
Physical Activity Levels

61.8% of adult survey responses indicated that they met the Chief Medical Officer's recommended levels of physical activity of 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week for adults. This is less than the Scottish statistic of 66%* for all adults in Scotland but perhaps more reflective of the high incidence of female respondents to our survey, for which the Scottish percentage meeting the recommended levels was 61%.

46.3% of pupil and survey responses indicated that they met the Chief Medical Officer's recommended levels of physical activity of 60 minutes per day for children. This is significantly lower than the national statistic 69%* of children under 16 who met the guidelines. Of the respondents in both surveys who did not meet the activity guidelines, 47% of adults and 53% of children were not aware of the Chief Medical Officers guidelines for physical activity.

When comparing respondents' current activity levels with their levels before covid, 52% of adults and 55% of children stated their activity levels were about the same. 27% of adults and 22% of children stated they were more active now than before covid. 19% of both adults and children stated they were less active.

*Scottish Health Survey 2019



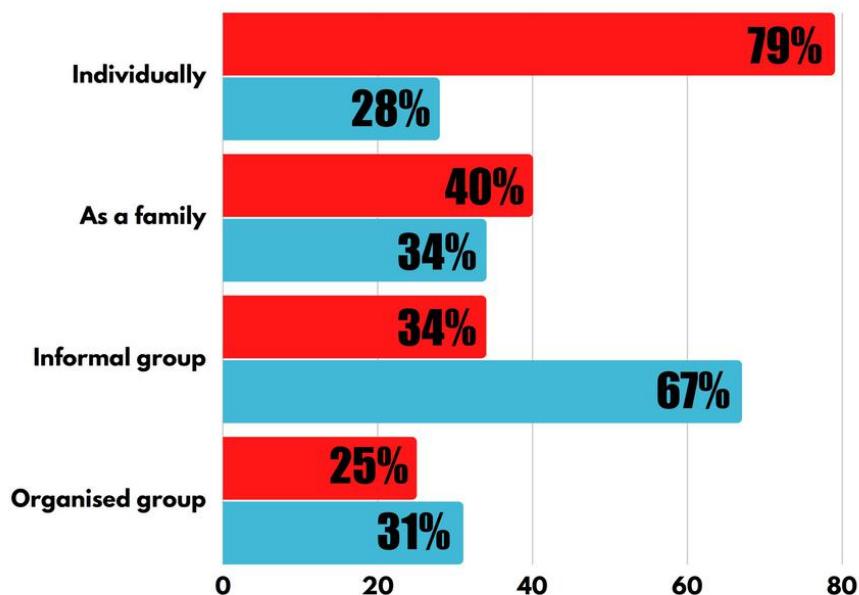
Survey Results



Preferred ways to keep active

PREFERRED WAYS TO KEEP ACTIVE—ADULT AND PUPIL RESPONSES

■ Adults ■ Pupils



Respondents were invited to select one or two options to indicate their preferred ways of keeping active. As the charts demonstrate, the common adult response was keeping active individually (79% selected this), and children indicated that their preference is to keep active with friends (67% selected this). Encouragingly, very low percentages - under 3% of adults and 1% of children - selected that they “do not tend to keep active”.

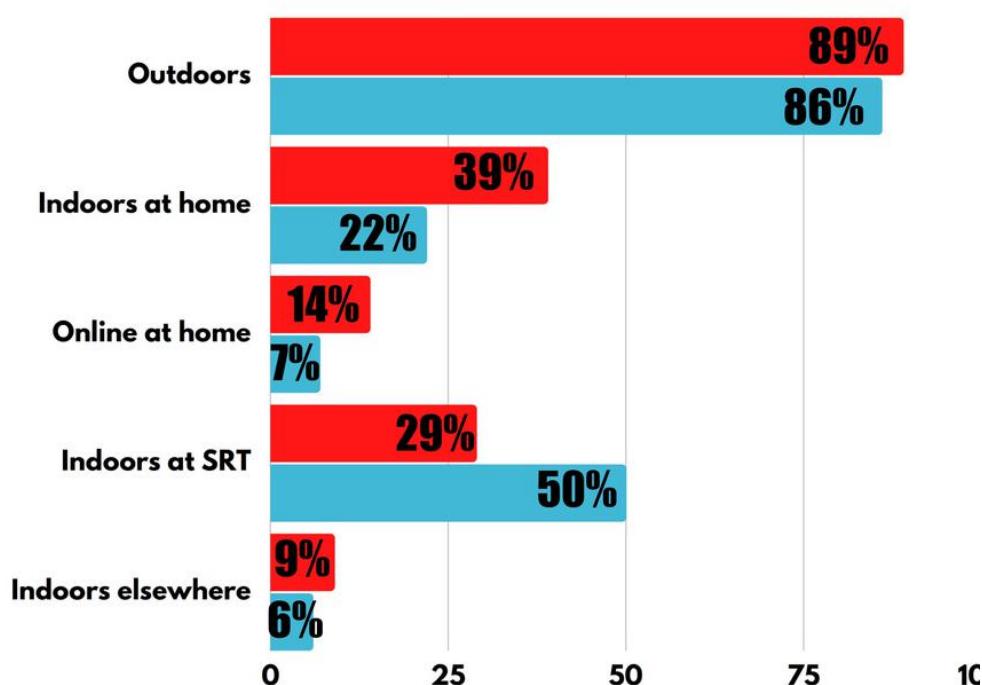


Where do people prefer to keep active?

A huge majority of respondents to both the adult and pupil surveys indicated that they like to keep active outdoors. For adults, the next most popular choice was keeping active indoors at home, and for children it was keeping active at a Shetland Recreational Trust leisure centre or swimming pool.

WHERE ARE THEY ACTIVE?

■ Adults ■ Pupils



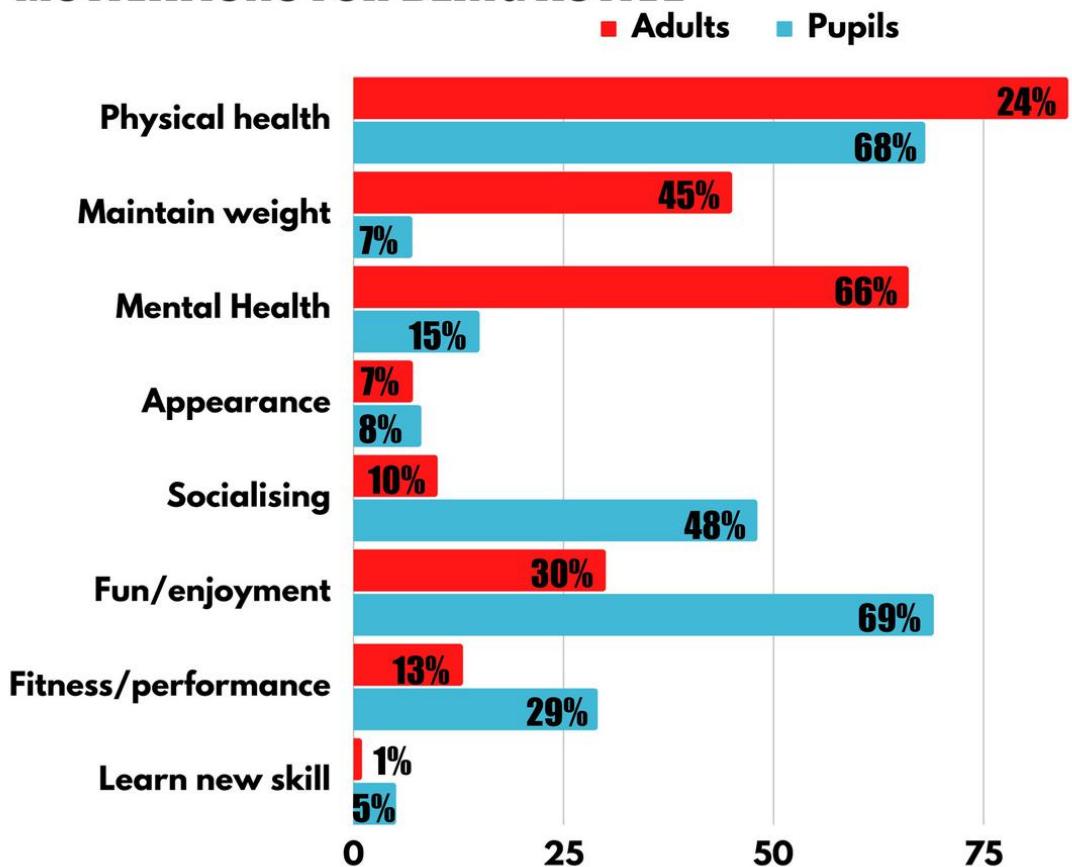
Survey Results



Motivations for being active

Participants were asked to select their main reasons for taking part in physical activity (up to 3). The results indicated that the most common motivation factors for adults are to improve or maintain physical health, weight or mental health. For children the most popular motivations were having fun, being healthy and socialising with friends. This difference is perhaps not surprising, but does reiterate the need to engage different audiences in different ways, and to ensure that the marketing of activities takes these findings into consideration.

MOTIVATIONS FOR BEING ACTIVE



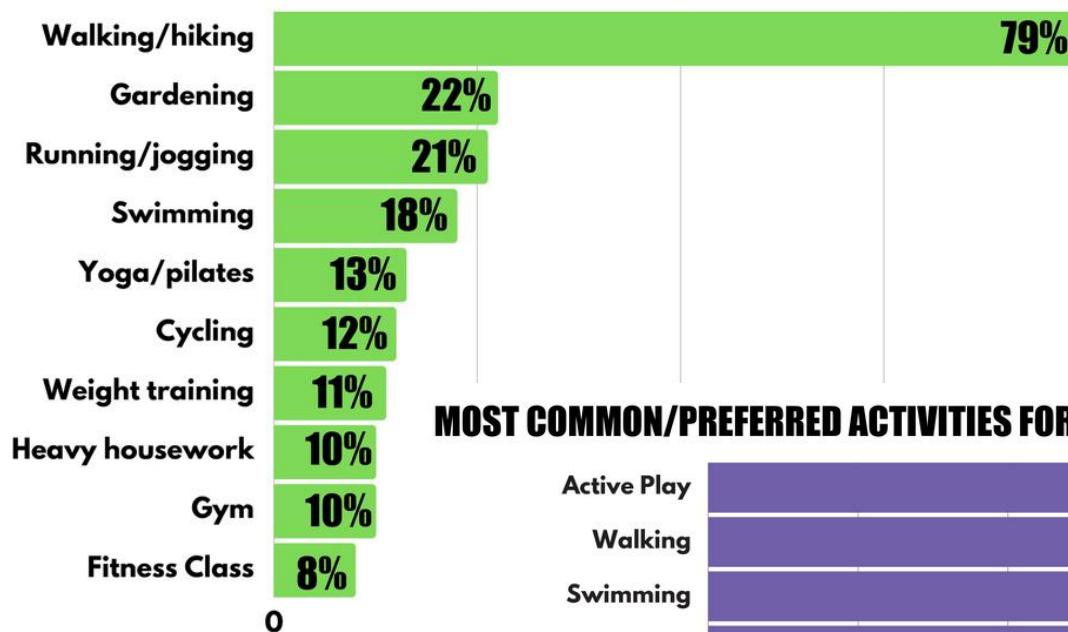
"Exercise is a very important part of my mental and physical well being, more so in current covid times. I have found going for a walk, no matter what the weather is such a stress releasing activity." Female, 56-65

Survey Results

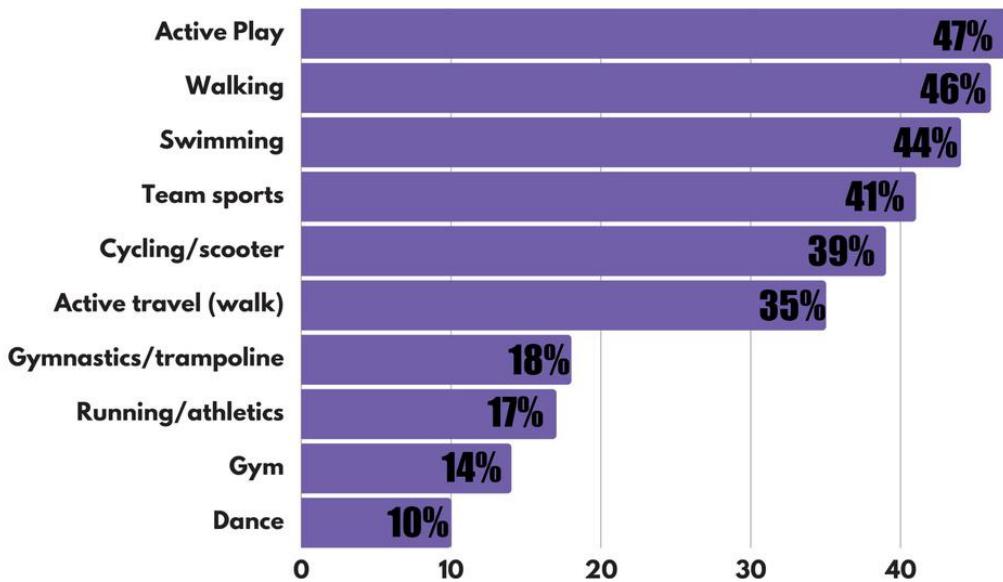


Preferred activities

MOST COMMON/PREFERRED ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS (>8%)



MOST COMMON/PREFERRED ACTIVITIES FOR PUPILS (>8%)



"Bowling indoors and outdoors is an essential part in keeping physically active and social contacts. This helps with overall well-being and should be actively promoted and encouraged."

Female, 66-75

As the chart shows, the overwhelming majority (79%) of adults selected walking and/or hiking as their preferred or most common physical activity.

With around three-quarters of the adult survey respondents being female, the statistics were also analysed considering male responses only for comparison. This showed that the three most popular choices for male adults were walking/hiking (63%), running/jogging (30%), and cycling (22%). Between 12-16% of male respondents also selected gardening, manual work, gym, weight training, swimming and football.

The most popular selection for pupils was 'active play' – again an important point to note when planning and designing activities and marketing for children.

Survey Results

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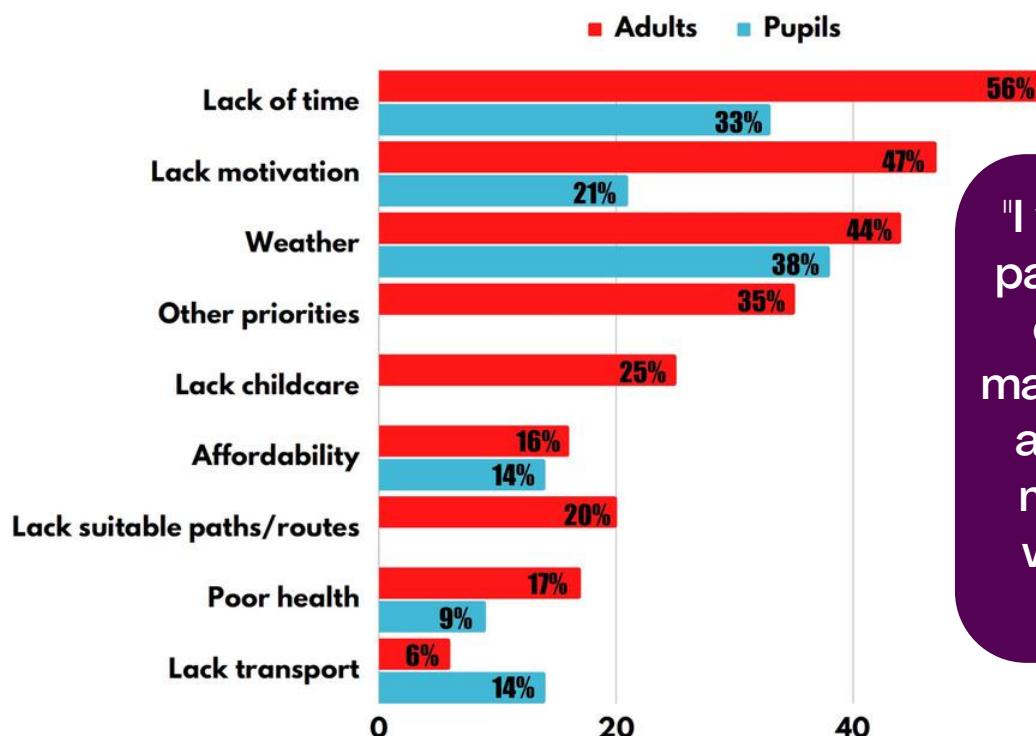
⚡ Barriers to being active

Respondents who had indicated that they did not meet recommended activity levels were asked to select all barriers to participation that were applicable to them. For adults, the most commonly chosen barrier was a lack of time, with more than half of them indicating that this limited their participation in physical activity. Lack of motivation was second, and perhaps unsurprisingly, weather was also selected by 44% of respondents as a barrier. ‘Having other priorities’ was selected by 35% of adult respondents. One quarter of respondents identified a lack of childcare as impacting their ability to be active, and one fifth identified a lack of suitable walking and cycling routes as a barrier.

For pupils, the most common barrier identified was the weather at 38% of responses, followed closely by a lack of time (35%). A lack of motivation was a barrier to 21% of pupils, which is significantly lower than the percentage of adults that identified a lack of motivation as an obstacle to being active. A larger percentage of pupils (14%) identified a lack of transport as an issue than adults (6%), possibly due to reliance on parents to get to activities.

35 adult respondents selected the ‘other’ option for this question and left comments. These comments mostly reflected that a health condition, old age or a disability created a barrier to them being active. Most of these respondents did not tick the ‘poor health’ box but chose to leave this information in the ‘other’ comments field. A lack of suitable cycle routes and roads being too dangerous for cyclists were also common responses in this field.

BARRIERS TO BEING ACTIVE

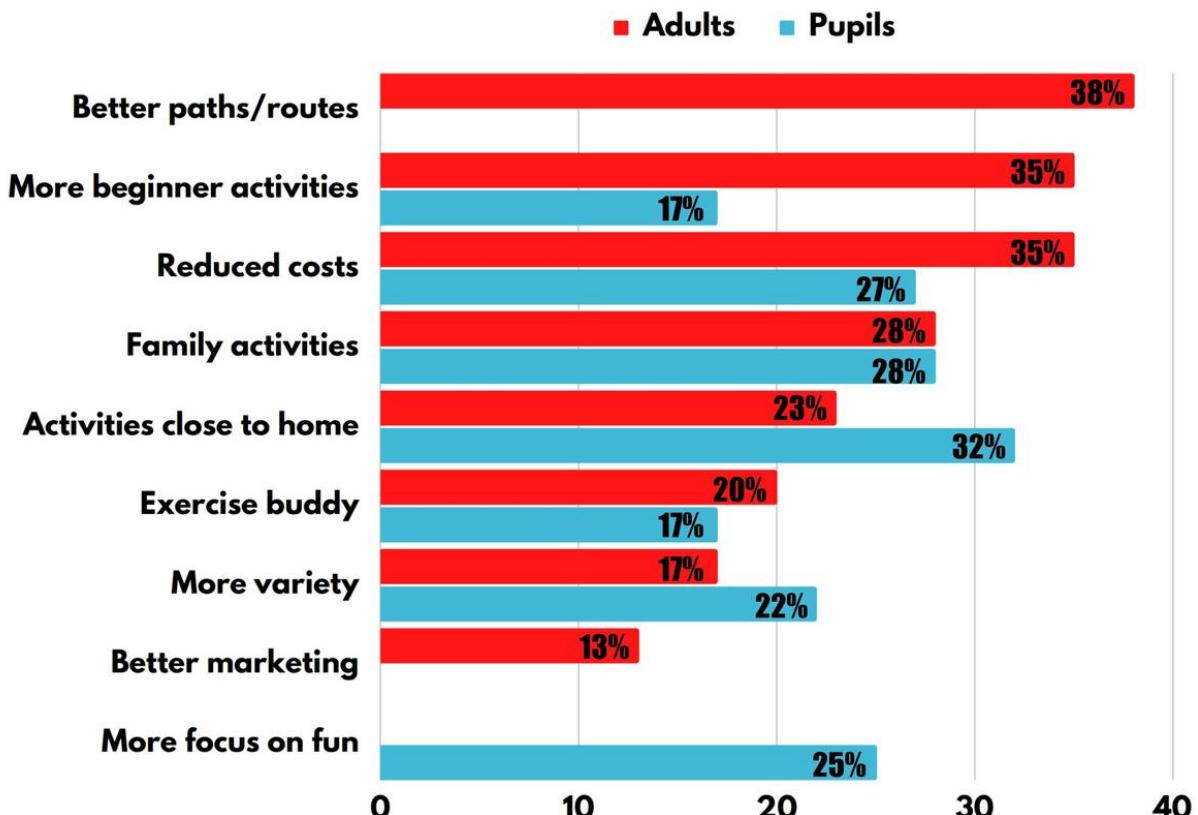


"I would like cycle paths connecting communities... making it safer for all, encouraging more people to walk and cycle"
Female, 36-45)

Survey Results



Improvements that could increase activity levels



All respondents (who did not meet recommended activity levels) were asked to select all options that were applicable to them when considering what changes or improvements could be made locally that would encourage them to be more active. More than one third of adult respondents (38%) selected better paths/routes for walking and cycling. 35% of adults selected 'more beginner activities' and 35% also selected 'reduced costs' as local improvements that would encourage them to be more active.

When looking at the comments left in the 'other' option, the most common responses were around childcare being offered alongside activities, improved walking and cycling paths, as well as improved transport links for people living in more rural areas.

The pupil survey had "more activities focused on fun" as an option which the adult survey did not, and the adult survey had "more marketing/information for activities" and "better path/routes for active travel" which the pupil survey did not. This is the reason that the chart only shows one response for those options.

Survey Results

Additional survey comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were also invited to leave any further comments relating to the subject of physical activity and healthy lifestyle. Adults identified the need for safer cycling and walking routes four times more often (around 40 times in total) than the next most mentioned issue which was the need for a gym and more variety of activities in the South Mainland (highlighted 9 times). The cost of being active was also highlighted.

The open-ended comments question for pupils did not have as many responses. The comments received were mostly about a lack of ability to participate due to timings and parents not being able to transport them to activities, the pandemic reducing the activities being available, and the cost of activities. Two pupils commented on the waiting times to join some activities or clubs.

"Full time work and lack of childcare is my 2 huge limiting factors. If childcare wasn't an issue I would exercise a lot.

As someone who was previously very active on a daily basis, I find it very difficult mentally to accept that I can't do much at the moment due to ages of children."

Female, 36-45



Survey Results



Pupil specific questions

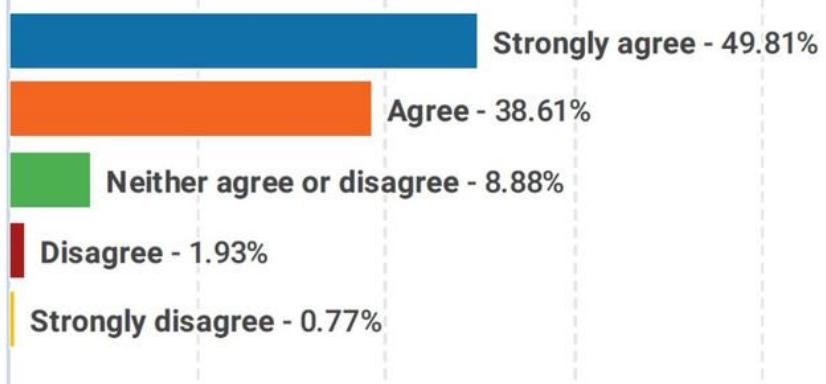
"I would like to have a basketball club in Shetland. It would be good to have a football group that you could go to that wasn't so competitive and that you could attend just for fitness and fun" Male, Secondary 2

The pupils were asked to rate different statements according to how strongly they agreed or disagreed. The results were very encouraging with 88.4% stating that they agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed taking part in exercise and sports. Only 2.7% of pupil respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. 85.7% of pupil respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to them to regularly take part in physical activities, and only 2.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

74.1% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt confident when they took part in exercise and sport. 6.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Of the 17 pupils who "disagreed", 12 were female, 3 were male, and 2 were 'other' or 'prefer not to say'. 14 of the 17 pupils who disagreed were secondary school pupils and only 3 were in primary school. All of the secondary school respondents who disagreed that they felt confident when exercising attended Anderson High School (where two thirds of all secondary pupils in Shetland are enrolled). Over a third of those who responded to say that they did not feel confident did however agree that they enjoyed taking part in exercise and sport, and 47% of them agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to them to regularly take part in physical activities. The pupils that did not feel confident exercising tended to identify other barriers to participating than the general respondents. Almost half of them (47%) identified poor mental health as a reason for them not achieving the activity guideline amounts. 40% identified poor physical health, and 40% selected that there was nothing available close to home that they wanted to do.

Pupils were also asked if there were any physical activities that they would like to take part in that are not available in their area. The most common responses were gymnastics, trampoline, badminton, dance and martial arts.

I enjoy taking part in exercise and sports

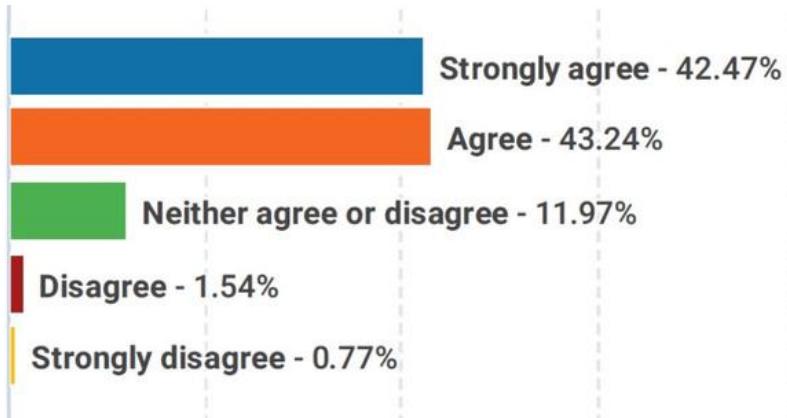


Survey Results

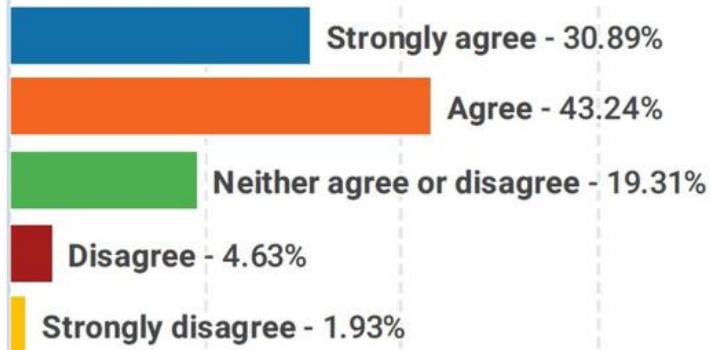


Pupils responses

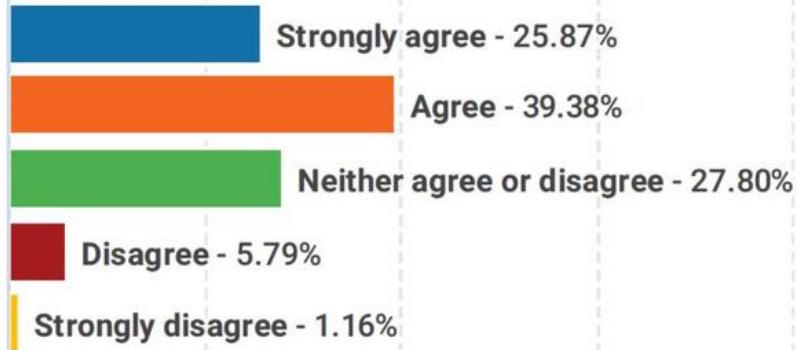
It is important to me to regularly take part in physical activities



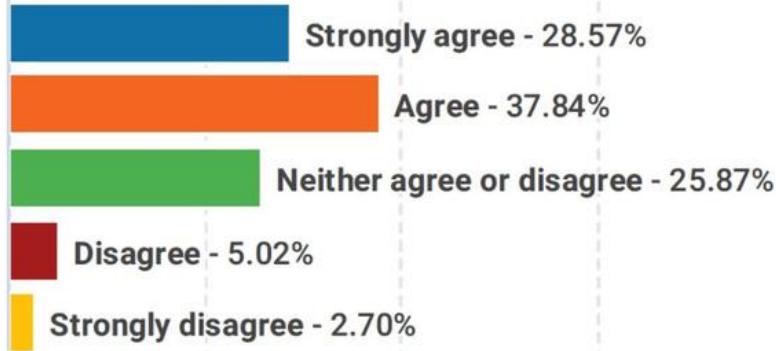
I feel confident when I take part in exercise and sport



I find exercise and sport easy



I would like to do more exercise and sport



Actions

Once the survey was closed and results collated, the working group had several meetings to agree some key actions for 2022 that will involve partnership working across the organisations in the group. The working group agreed that the initial actions for 2022 will be:

- Deliver a workplace campaign to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Create family-orientated and fun-focused activities in two rural areas.
- Develop and expand walking group opportunities in Shetland.
- Engage with a variety of groups and support agencies to better understand barriers to being active, and gain their input to future projects and ideas.
- Promote new and existing opportunities to be active, including Shetland Recreational Trust's new subscription and Access to Leisure schemes.

Although the actions are for 2022, the intention is for the group to work beyond this date and adopt new and updated plans moving forward.

Workplace campaign

The working group plans to work with one local workplace initially to trial a campaign to use the working environment as a place to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles. The workplace selected should ideally have a reasonably large range of staff representing a variety of ages and genders. The plan would initially involve discussion with the selected workplace to design a campaign around what could work best for them. Messaging around physical activity, healthy diet and lifestyle would form the core of the campaign. Some suggestions for the workplace campaign included Physical Activity Champions, Deskercise and the promotion of 'Exercise Snacking'. An assessment would be undertaken before the campaign to gauge staff's activity levels and attitudes to healthy lifestyles etc, and again afterwards to measure whether these have changed in any way. Should the trial be a success, similar campaigns could be delivered in other workplaces.



Actions



Family Activities in two Rural Areas

Many respondents to both adult and pupil surveys identified that more family orientated activities would encourage them to be more active. Many also expressed a desire to have more activities that were closer to their home. By working together to combine physical and staffing resources, it was agreed that the group would organise and deliver trial blocks of activity sessions in two rural areas. The sessions will be designed for family participation and have a focus on fun. The suggested locations for the trial were Mossbank and South Mainland. Although Shetland does not have any SIMD areas among the 20% most deprived in Scotland, Mossbank has one of the highest levels of low income households in Shetland. 40% of survey respondents from Mossbank identified the lack of facilities nearby as a barrier to participation. South Mainland was particularly highlighted as lacking activity provision via the survey comments.

It was suggested that the process could begin with an 'open day' in the areas selected where families could come along to attend activities and/or be part of a social element for example coffees/teas and cakes. This could offer an opportunity to engage with the local population and gather their input around how a programme of local activity in their areas could work.

Transport could be an issue for our target groups to attend any sessions and should be taken into consideration.



Walking groups

NHS Shetland will take the lead on delivering Walk Leader training with the aim of creating more walking groups around Shetland, particularly in the North Mainland and Isles. NHS Shetland will work alongside SRT to train staff at each leisure facility as Walk Leaders. With newly trained walk leaders available locally, there will be more opportunity to offer walks for targeted groups, for example new mums/buggy walks and people with long term health conditions such as dementia. The walks themselves will be free and will be designed to target complete beginners or those starting to get active, which supports our survey findings of "more beginner opportunities" and "reduced costs". All partner organisations will support the initiative by publicising the training opportunities and advertising the walks. By working together in partnership, this will allow a greater number of walking groups to be set-up around all local areas in Shetland. This will also reduce the barrier of accessibility and should help encourage more people to start getting active, to socialise, and to bring communities together.

Actions



Engage with variety of groups & support agencies

It was agreed that it would be beneficial to engage with some disadvantaged groups and the agencies that support them. Through meaningful conversation it could be possible to better understand their barriers to being active. Their input would be extremely valuable for developing plans for moving forward, and may also help to ensure their buy-in to projects set up for their benefit.

All organisations around the table are keen to be involved in this initiative and the support agencies that could be approached include: Shetland Alcohol & Drug Misuse Service, Children & Adult Mental Health Services, Bridges Project, Food for the Way, Shetland Food Bank, SIC Through Care & After Care, Ability Shetland, Adult Learning among others. Shetland Recreational Trust has already begun discussions with some focus groups targeting inactive people.

It was reiterated that the organisers needs to ensure that the mental health benefits of being active, as well as other wider benefits, are being promoted when engaging with disadvantaged groups.

There was discussion about 'social prescribing', which is being considered by the NHS. Locally, the NHS is currently in the process of recruiting a Community Link Worker whose remit was designed by GPs and who will work across health centres and with Health Improvement and other agencies. Their involvement and advice in this working group would be very beneficial once they are in post.

Promotion of new and existing opportunities

The group believe there are several activity opportunities available locally that more people would take advantage of if they were aware of them, and better signposting is needed. Shetland Recreational Trust's new reduced cost subscription scheme now has a reasonably priced family option. There is also an 'Access for Leisure' scheme which enables people in low income families to participate in activities at the leisure centre at the much reduced cost of £1 per session. It is important that these opportunities are promoted and awareness raised among families who could benefit directly from this, and their support agencies.

There is a desire to create an online place where activity information from various organisations including sports clubs can be located centrally. This would make it easier for the public to find information. It was noted that the previous online 'Community Directory' was a huge piece of work that required regular updating and was eventually withdrawn for this reason. This does not mean a public information directory site is not possible, but it is important to be aware of the challenges of maintaining information to ensure it is accurate and useful.

Cost as a barrier to being active 18

The cost of being active was highlighted in many survey responses as a barrier to participation, and since the survey closed, Shetland Recreational Trust [SRT] has launched a new reduced-price subscription scheme called 'MORE4life'. There is also a 'family subscription' option which is excellent value. Many survey respondents expressed a desire for a family subscription option and there has been a good uptake on this option since it was launched. The 'MORE4life' membership scheme includes access to more facilities and activities within its leisure centres than the previous membership scheme offered, including fitness classes and racquet sports. The scheme also enables members to gain access to fitness centres in Highland, Moray, Orkney, Western Isles, Live Borders, Sport Aberdeen and Argyll & Bute through the 'Scottish Leisure Link Partnership'. At the time of completing this report, the MORE4life scheme has 3609 members -a vast increase on the previous subscription scheme membership of 1053.

The Recreational Trust has also offered an 'Access to Leisure' scheme for those who can demonstrate that they receive income support benefits including free school meals, disability benefits, Income Support, and Job Seekers Allowance. People who qualify for Access to Leisure will pay £1 for activities included in the MORE4life scheme on a 'pay when you use' basis.

The 'Poverty and Inclusion in Sport' working group has also arranged for affordability in sport to become an agenda item on local Community Sports Hubs meetings. They intend to work with local sports clubs to investigate the possibility of allowing people who receive income support benefits and their children to join local sports clubs at zero or reduced cost.



Conclusions

The 'Supporting the Inactive to Become Active' working group organised a Lifestyle survey to gauge current activity levels and barriers to participation across Shetland. They were very pleased with over 1400 responses and the fact that all age ranges and areas of Shetland were represented.

The results demonstrated that around 62% of adults and 46% of pupils met the Chief Medical Officer's recommended weekly activity levels. (The national statistics for Scotland are 66% and 69% respectively). As around three quarters of the adult survey responses were from females, the lower activity rate is reflective of the national average for women which is 61%. The percentage for children was much lower than the Scottish average. Around half of the adult and pupil respondents who did not meet the activity guidelines were not aware of them.

While the adult responses indicated that the main motivations for being active were for physical and mental health and weight maintenance, the most popular choices for pupils were fun/enjoyment, physical health and socialising with friends.

Walking was overwhelmingly the most common/preferred activity for adults - 79% selected this compared to the second most selected option which was gardening at 22%. For children the most common/preferred activities were active play, walking, swimming and team sports.

The main barriers to activity for adults was lack of time, lack of motivation, poor weather, having other priorities and a lack of childcare. For pupils, the main barriers were poor weather, lack of time and lack of motivation.

For adults, the most popular change that could be made locally to encourage them to be active would be better routes for active travel, more beginner activities, reduced costs, more family activities and more activities closer to home. The pupils mostly selected activities closer to home, family activities, reduced costs and more variety.

Conclusions

20

Taking these findings on board, the working group agreed 5 actions for 2022:

- Deliver a workplace campaign to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Create family-orientated and fun-focused activities for all in two rural areas.
- Develop and expand walking group opportunities for all in Shetland.
- Engage with a variety of groups and support agencies to better understand barriers to being active, and gain their input to future projects and ideas.
- Promote new and existing opportunities for all to be active, including Shetland Recreational Trust's new subscription and Access to Leisure schemes.

The actions for pupils were amended slightly as follows:

- Support schools to complete the School Sport Award and develop plans for a school campaign to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Create family-orientated and fun-focused activities for all in two rural areas.
- Develop and expand walking group opportunities for all in Shetland.
- Engage with existing youth groups and young leaders, and create new panels where needed, to better understand the barriers to being active that young people face.
- Promote new and existing opportunities for all young people to be active, including Shetland Recreational Trust's new subscription and Access to Leisure schemes.

Although these actions are for 2022, it is understood that the work of the group will continue beyond this period and into the future.



Appendices

Shetland Physical Activity Consultation 2021 - Adults

This consultation was carried out to gain insight on the current physical activity levels in Shetland, including the impact that Covid-19 has played: the barriers that restrict activity; and what could be done to support people to be more active. This data has been used to help shape and plan initiatives to support inactive people in Shetland to become more active whilst working towards the Active Shetland Strategy and Shetland Partnership Plan.

This consultation was carried out by members of the Active Shetland working group which was borne out of the Active Shetland Strategic group. Data was collected from 16th June 2021 until 30th September 2021. Survey was created and analysed using Smart Survey. Data was obtained through online and paper copy routes.

Response rate and demographics: 1203 adults



RESULTS

61.8% are currently physically active*

*Are achieving the Chief Medical Officer's Recommended Physical Activity Guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week.

47%

of those not achieving the Chief Medical Officer's recommended activity levels are NOT aware of these guidelines.

Top motivators to being active:

84.6% say for physical health



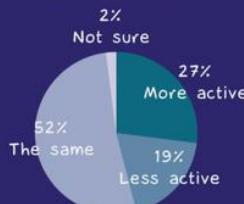
66.5% say for mental health

45.2% say to maintain a healthy weight

79.2% say their most common or preferred way of being active is through walking/hiking

89.2% tend to keep active outdoors

Impact of Covid-19 on physical activity levels



Top perceived barriers to keeping active:

1. Lack of time



2. Lack of motivation



3. Poor weather

Top ways to help people be more active:

37.6% say better paths and routes for active travel



35.2% say more beginner opportunities



34.7% say reduced costs

ACTION PLAN

In 2022 we will:

1. Develop a workplace campaign to promote healthy lifestyles.
2. Create family-orientated and fun-focused activities for all in two rural areas.
3. Develop and expand walking group opportunities for all in Shetland.
4. Engage with a variety of groups and support agencies to better understand barriers to being active, and gain their input to future projects and ideas.
5. Promote new and existing opportunities to be active, including SRT's new subscription and access to leisure schemes.

Infographic detailing adult survey responses

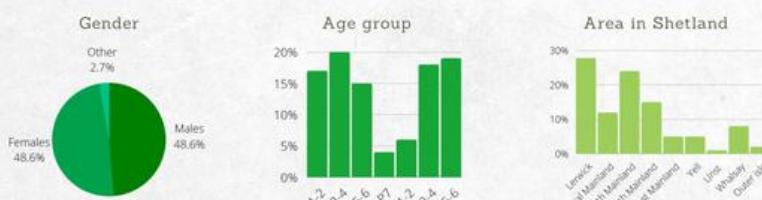
Appendices

Shetland Physical Activity Consultation 2021 - Children

This consultation was carried out to gain insight on the current physical activity levels in Shetland, including the impact that Covid-19 has played; the barriers that restrict activity; and what could be done to support young people to be more active. This data has been used to help shape and plan initiatives to support inactive people in Shetland to become more active whilst working towards the Active Shetland Strategy and Shetland Partnership Plan.

This consultation was carried out by members of the Active Shetland working group which was borne out of the Active Shetland Strategic group. Data was collected from 16th June 2021 until 30th September 2021. Survey was created and analysed using Smart Survey. Data was obtained through online and paper copy routes.

Response rate and demographics: 260 pupils



RESULTS

46.3% are currently physically active*

*Are achieving the Chief Medical Officer's Recommended Physical Activity Guidelines of 60 minutes of moderate-vigorous intensity activity per day (data accounts for 6-7 days/week)

Top motivators to being active:

69.1% say to have fun



68.3% say to keep healthy

47.5% say to socialise and be with friends

The most common / preferred way of keeping active is through:

1. Active play
2. Walking
3. Swimming



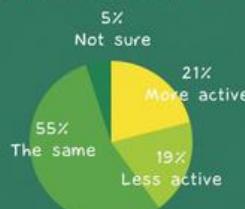
86.5% tend to keep active outdoors



whilst 50.2% keep active indoors at a sports centre



Impact of Covid-19 on physical activity levels



Top perceived barriers to keeping active:

1. Poor weather
2. Lack of time
3. Lack of activities and/or facilities near by



Top ways to help young people be more active:

37.6% say more activities closer to home



35.2% say more family-orientated activities



34.7% say cheaper / free activities



ACTION PLAN

In 2022 we will:

1. Support schools to complete the School Sport Award and develop plans for a school campaign to promote healthy lifestyles.
2. Create family-orientated and fun-focused activities for all in two rural areas.
3. Develop and expand walking group opportunities for all in Shetland.
4. Engage with existing youth groups and young leaders, and create new panels where needed, to better understand the barriers to being active that young people face.
5. Promote new and existing opportunities for young people to be active, including SRT's new subscription and Access to Leisure schemes.

Infographic detailing pupil survey responses