



Activity levels among children and young people remains unchanged

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Posted On: December 13, 2021

The number of children and young people in England who are active remains unchanged between September 2020 to July 2021, as shown in the latest Sport England Active Lives Children and Young People report.

While activity levels remain down by 2.2%, or 94,000 as a population total, compared to pre-pandemic position, there has been no significant change compared to the number of children and young people in school years 1-11 (ages 5-16) who were less active during the 2019-20 academic year. The report shows that 44.6% (3.2 million) of youngsters are meeting guidelines of taking part in sport and physical activity for an average of 60 minutes or more per day.

Activity levels were less during times of disruption caused by the pandemic, including the Autumn term where tight restrictions were in place, and again in the Spring term as we entered a new national lockdown. While inequalities have increased, for some groups and teenage girls in particular, the opportunity to access alternative or adapted activities has led to increased activity levels compared to pre-pandemic.

For table tennis, results show that 2.7% (192,300) of children and young people in school years 1-11 took part in table tennis at least once a week during the period running from September 2020 to July 2021. This is down compared to the same period 12 months ago, where figures were 4% and 284,700.

With the exception of tennis, where there was no change, the findings for table tennis are consistent with other racket sports including badminton and squash.

Head of Development and Volunteering at Table Tennis England, Greg Yarnall says:

“The last 12 months have seen significant challenges for players of all ages to come back to activity. The results from the latest Active Lives C&YP results highlight this, particularly for indoor sports that were subject to higher restrictions for longer periods and the nervousness for some children or families on returning to indoor activity.

“Over the last few months we have seen an increasing number of young people return to their clubs, leagues and community sessions to resume their table tennis activity, alongside new players entering the sport for the first time. The TT Kidz programme saw record numbers in October with 391 new 7-11 year olds joining an eight week programme, across 28 different clubs across the country.

“A massive thanks to all of the clubs, coaches, volunteers and parents for continuing to provide opportunities for young people to be active and connect with other young people. If you would like to increase your offer for young people, please consider the [Level the Table funding here.](#)”

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