



WARRINGTON
Borough Council

Warrington Physical Activity Needs Assessment

April 2024

Produced by

Warrington Borough Council Public Health

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- Warrington School Sports Partnership
- Warrington Voluntary Action
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Executive Summary

- In 2023, approximately 69.1% of adults in Warrington were physically active. Previous trend data indicates that Warrington is more active than England and the North-West region but not significantly more active.
- Key factors investigated in this needs assessment that influence physical activity levels include age, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability; all of which have the potential to interact and create populations that are significantly more or less physically active.
- Men are more likely to meet the UK CMOs' physical activity guidelines (72.4%) than women (65.9%), in keeping with the national pattern. Women are less likely to complete two strength-based activities per week and more likely to be physically inactive. Men are more likely to cycle once per week than women. Physical activity decreases with increasing age and people living with disabilities are less likely to be active than people without disabilities.
- People from deprived areas are less likely to be physically active than those from least deprived areas. The absolute gap in physical activity levels between those from least deprived areas (73%) and most deprived areas (63.6%) is 9.4%, whilst between those in professional jobs (75.5%) and those in long term unemployment or in routine/semi-routine employment (52.7%) is 22.8%. Uptake of physical activity programmes and services can be lower in residents from deprived areas.
- Inequalities in physical activity start in childhood. Warrington primary school girls self-reported lower levels of physical activity than boys and are less likely to play for their school sports team. The gender gap in self-reported physical activity levels widens between primary and secondary school. In addition, children on free school meals and with lower family affluence are found to have reduced swimming ability and physical activity levels, respectively. Children and young people from more deprived areas are less likely to access swimming facilities and physical activity programmes for children with disabilities than those from less deprived areas.
- Young women and middle-aged women from deprived areas were less likely to be as active as they wanted to be. Common barriers to increasing physical activity levels include lack of time, lack of energy, health issues and affordability. Individuals that cited poor accessibility as a barrier had the lowest rates of physical activity (as defined by meeting UK CMOs' guidance).
- Cycling weekly is most common amongst men and residents in the most and least deprived areas. Around a quarter (23%) of residents do not cycle but would like to. The percentage that reported this rose to 35% amongst young women and 26-29% for those living in more deprived areas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of the working population cycling to work was greatest in those from deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas.
- Two-thirds (68%) of parks, amenity greenspace, natural/semi-natural greenspace and spaces for children and young people are deemed high quality and 92% are high value. Most residents are satisfied with the availability and quality of open space; however, some residents are very unsatisfied with quality and availability (8.5%).

Background

Physical activity is a key health-promoting behaviour that can enable people to live happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives. As part of the redevelopment of Warrington Borough Council's (WBC) Active Strategy, which will outline how WBC and Warrington system partners plan to promote physical activity in the future, an assessment of the current baseline physical activity position in Warrington has been undertaken. This physical activity needs assessment has been developed in partnership with Active Warrington Strategy members, who have provided up-to-date data and intelligence to inform the analysis. The resources provided by Active Warrington Strategy partners have been essential to completing this physical activity needs assessment.

The aims of the needs assessment are to:

- Give an overview of physical activity levels in Warrington.
- Outline which groups of people are less likely to be physically active and the barriers that prevent them from becoming more active.
- Describe key physical activity services and public engagement with these services.
- Outline recommendations to increase physical activity amongst people living, working, and visiting Warrington.

To complete the needs assessment, data was used from:

- Warrington Health and Wellbeing Survey 2023
- Active Lives Children and Young People Survey
- Active Lives Adult Survey
- Public Health Outcomes Framework: Physical Activity Profile
- Pupil Activity and Wellbeing Survey 2023
- Communication from Active Warrington Strategy partners
- Warrington Borough Council Strategies, Policies, Plans and Assessments

Where possible, data will be presented by:

- Age-group
- Sex
- Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 quintiles (area deprivation)
- Disability
- Geography (including England, North-West of England, Warrington, Cheshire Active Partnership)

Data Limitations

There are several limitations in data and metadata of this physical activity needs assessment. Firstly, several sources of physical activity data define active and inactive as meeting the definitions defined in the UK CMOs' physical activity guidance.¹ Whilst a clear measure, this does not take into account evidence of the dose-response relationship between physical activity and health benefits (including reduced non-communicable disease mortality), which means that regardless of what threshold is reached, more physical activity is better.² As such, looking at the proportion of a population reaching a threshold, may not evaluate the total scale of physical activity and its health benefits.

Many of the data sources use self-reported surveys of physical activity rates, for which there can be recall and response bias.³ This may be particularly true for self-reported surveys completed by children. The national surveys used, including Active Lives, also have varying sample sizes at the local authority level for each year which affects the power of the survey. This in turn affects the certainty of the physical activity prevalence estimates and the ability to examine activity levels by personal characteristics e.g., family affluence scale.

Missing data was an issue, particularly for the service use assessment for swimming, and can lead to an incomplete assessment of a physical activity service. In addition, the task of trying to measure all, or a representative sample, of physical activity service use in Warrington is exceptionally difficult given the wide range of types of activity. Therefore, decisions on what services are within and outside of the scope of the needs assessment and what data is shared will play a significant role in determining the findings of this section.

Whilst some of the included local surveys asked questions on attitudes towards current physical activity services and ideas for improvement, the main focus of this needs assessment was on assessing the scale of physical activity engagement. Further public engagement will occur as part of Warrington Active Strategy development.

¹ UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines (publishing.service.gov.uk)

² Dose–response relationship between physical activity and mortality in adults with noncommunicable diseases: a systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective observational studies | International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity | Full Text (biomedcentral.com)

³ A comparison of direct versus self-report measures for assessing physical activity in adults: a systematic review - PMC (nih.gov)

Analysis

The data used in this physical activity needs assessment originates from a variety of sources including national and local surveys, performance data from Warrington commissioned services, and data shared by physical activity partner organisations.

Active Lives Survey

The Active Lives Adult and Active Lives Children and Young People surveys are two surveys that Sport England publishes annually.⁴ The Adult Survey is sent out to a random sample of households across England. By aiming to sample at least 500 responses from each Local Authority annually (with boosted samples for some areas with low response rate), the survey can give useful estimates of physical activity participation at a local level over time.

For the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, primary and secondary schools are randomly sampled in each Local Authority to provide an estimation of local participation in physical activity and attitudes towards physical activity.⁵ A short simple questionnaire is provided for parents/carers of children in years 1 and 2, and year 3-11 children completing a longer questionnaire. Given the wide age range of those completing the questionnaire, different age-appropriate questions are asked to different year groups.

Trend in Physical Activity Levels

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) update the physical activity indicators taken from the Active Lives Adult Survey to include gardening as a physical activity and classify adults as aged 19 and over.⁶ This is published online in the Public Health Outcomes Framework³ and consistent with UK CMO's Physical Activity Guidelines that recommends each week adults should complete at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise, or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity exercise.⁷

Adults

The percentage of Warrington adults that are physically active has varied over time (Figure 1). Whilst the North West of England has consistently had significantly lower percentages of physically active adults compared to England, Warrington has had similar levels to England, except for being significantly better in 2016/17 (69.7%) and significantly worse in the year 2017/18 (59.6%). From 2017/18, the percentage of physically active adults have increased significantly to 69.2% in 2021/22, which is greater than the

⁴ [Active Lives | Sport England](#)

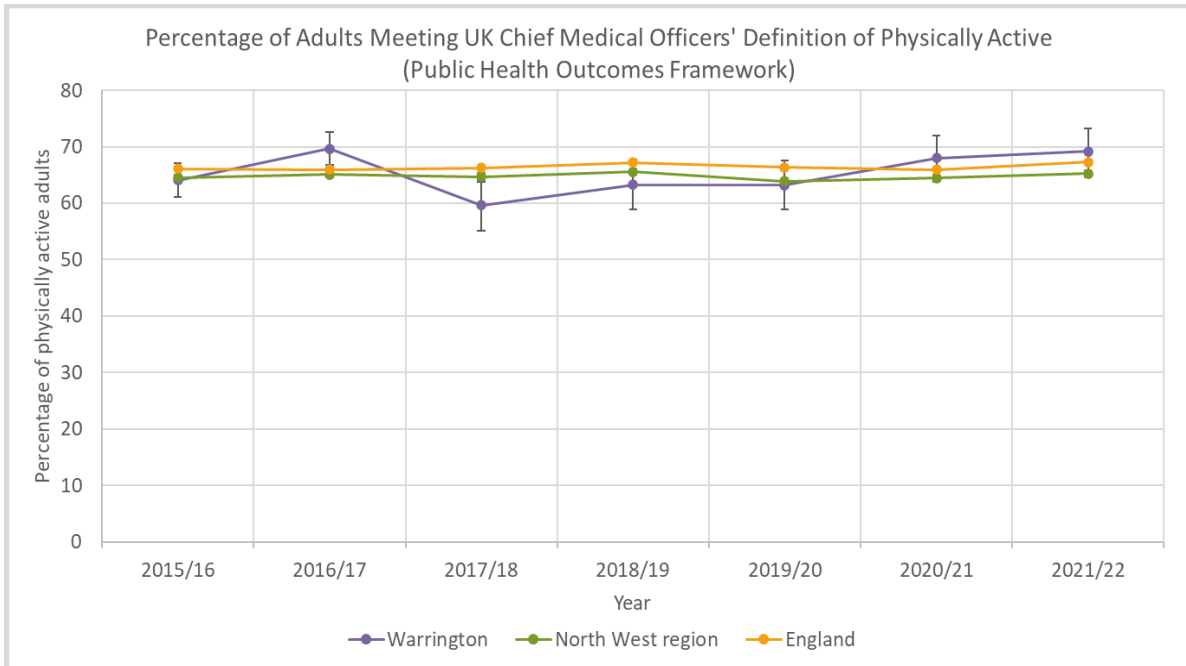
⁵ Active Lives Children and Young People Technical Note 2021-22 (Ipsos) (sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

⁶ Physical Activity - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)

⁷ UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines (publishing.service.gov.uk)

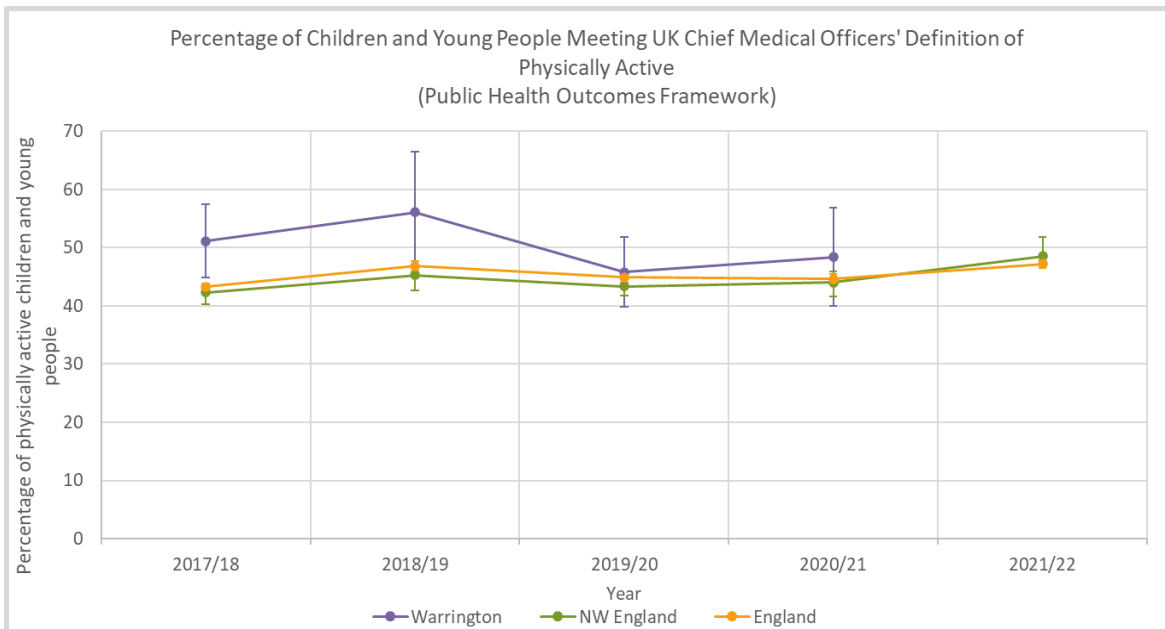
national and regional average.

Figure 1: Percentage of Adults Meeting UK Chief Medical Officers' Definition of Physically Active.



Children and Young People

Figure 2: Percentage of Children and Young People Meeting UK Chief Medical Officers' Definition of Physically Active.

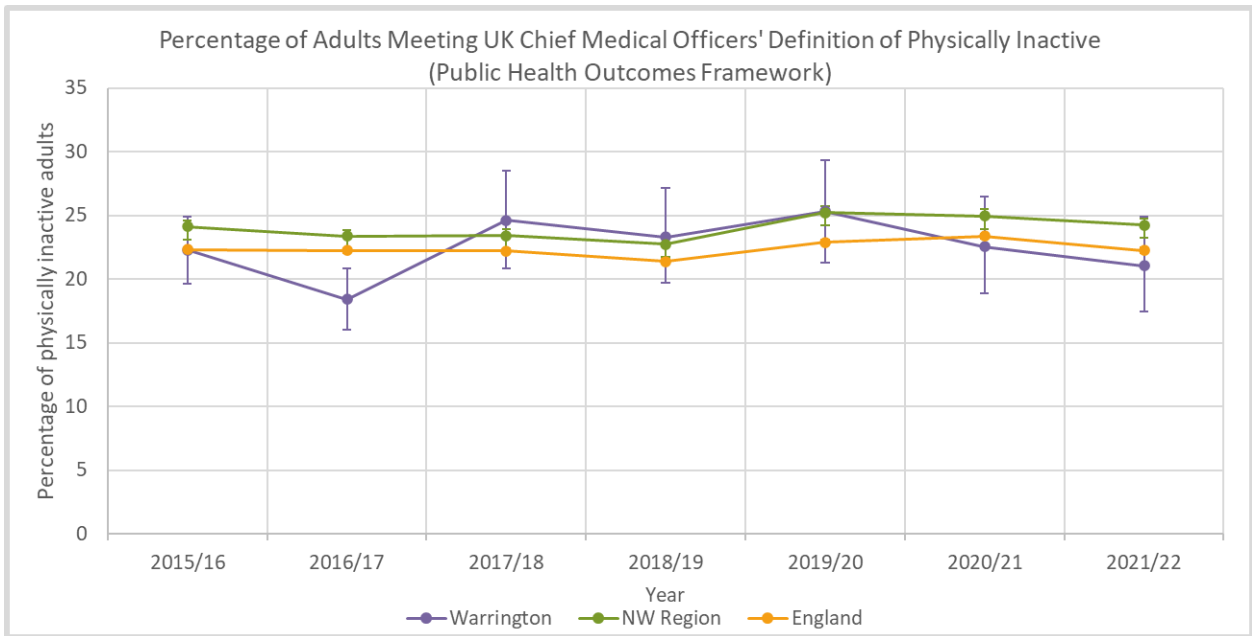


In Warrington, the percentage of children and young people (aged 5 to 16) meeting the CMOs' Guidelines of at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity per day (across the week) has varied over time (Figure 2). From having a significantly greater percentage of children physically active compared to England in 2017/18 (51.2%), the proportion has declined to 48.4% in 2020/21. Whilst greater than the national

average, this is not statistically significant. Physical activity data for children from the Active Lives Survey for Warrington was unavailable for 2021/22 at the time of drafting this report.

Adults (Inactivity)

Figure 3: Percentage of Adults Meeting UK Chief Medical Officers' Definition of Physically Inactive.



Physical inactivity is defined as engaging in less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week and is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality⁸.

In Warrington, physical inactivity levels in adults are lower than the regional and national average for 2021/22 (Figure 3). However, levels have not differed significantly from the national average since 2016/17, when inactivity was significantly less with 18.4% of adults classified as physically inactive. Since then, physical inactivity increased until 2019/20 before declining in subsequent years to 21.1% of the Warrington adult population. By comparison, the North West of England has consistently had significantly worse physical inactivity levels than the national average since 2015/16.

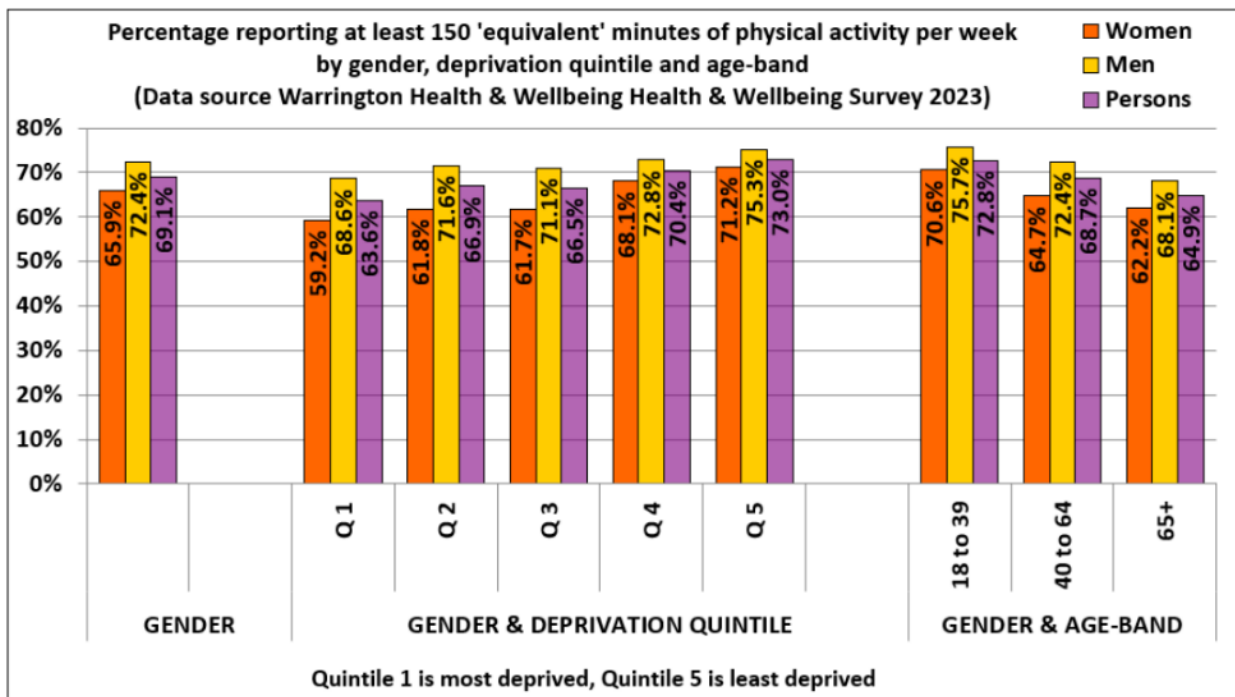
⁸ Physical Activity - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)

Warrington Health and Wellbeing (HW) Survey 2023

A large, comprehensive local survey of Warrington adults was undertaken in April-June 2023 which covered a range of health and wellbeing issues.⁹ Letters were posted to a sample of Warrington residents over the age of 18 who were selected to achieve a representative sample by age, gender, and postcode. A total of 4,932 responses were received, sufficiently allowing for analysis of physical activity data by age-group, gender, and index of multiple deprivation quintile in Warrington.

Physical Activity

Figure 4: Percentage Reporting at least 150 'equivalent' minutes of physical activity per week by gender, deprivation quintile and age-band.



Overall, 4,170 valid responses were received to the question asking respondents to quantify the amount of moderate and vigorous physical activity undertaken in a week. Respondents were asked about 'the amount of physical activity you do which increases your breathing rate and makes your heart and muscles work harder. Moderate and vigorous activity can be differentiated by the 'talk test': if doing moderate activity, you would be able to talk but not sing whilst vigorous activity you would have difficulty talking without pausing. Include any activities which last for 10 minutes or more'.

Figure 4 highlights the differences in physical activity levels among Warrington respondents by gender, age-group, and deprivation quintile. Overall, 69.1% of respondents reported that they were physically active (meeting the CMOs recommendation of 150 minutes per week). This is similar to the 69.2% reported in

⁹ Warrington Borough Council Knowledge and Intelligence Team. Warrington Adult Health and Wellbeing Survey 2023 General Health and Health Related Behaviour Report. October 2023. [Warrington Health Wellbeing Survey 2023 - Health Related Behaviours](#)

2021/22 from the Active Lives Adult Survey. However, it should be noted that the Warrington HW Survey includes participants over the age of 18 whilst the Adult Lives Adult Survey data reports adults over the age of 19. Furthermore, the last Warrington HW Survey in 2013 reported that 76.4% of adults were physically active, demonstrating there has been a decline in physical activity over the last decade.

Men (72.4%) are more likely to meet the CMO definition of physically active than women (65.9%) and this is consistent across all age-bands and deprivation quintiles. There is a clear gradient of physical activity levels and area socioeconomic deprivation levels with 63.6% of Warrington residents in the 20% most deprived areas (quintile 1) in England achieving 150 minutes of weekly moderate physical activity compared to 73% in the least deprived areas (quintile 5), corresponding to an absolute difference of 9.4%. Physical activity also declines with increasing age with 72.8% of 18-39 year-olds, 68.7% of 40-64 year-olds and 64.9% of over-65s achieving at least 150 minutes of weekly physical activity.

Women aged 40-64 in quintiles 1 and 2, and women aged 65+ in quintile 2, were statistically significantly less likely to meet the recommended levels of physical activity than Warrington overall. Men aged 18-39 in quintile 1, and men aged 40-64 in quintile 5 were significantly more likely.

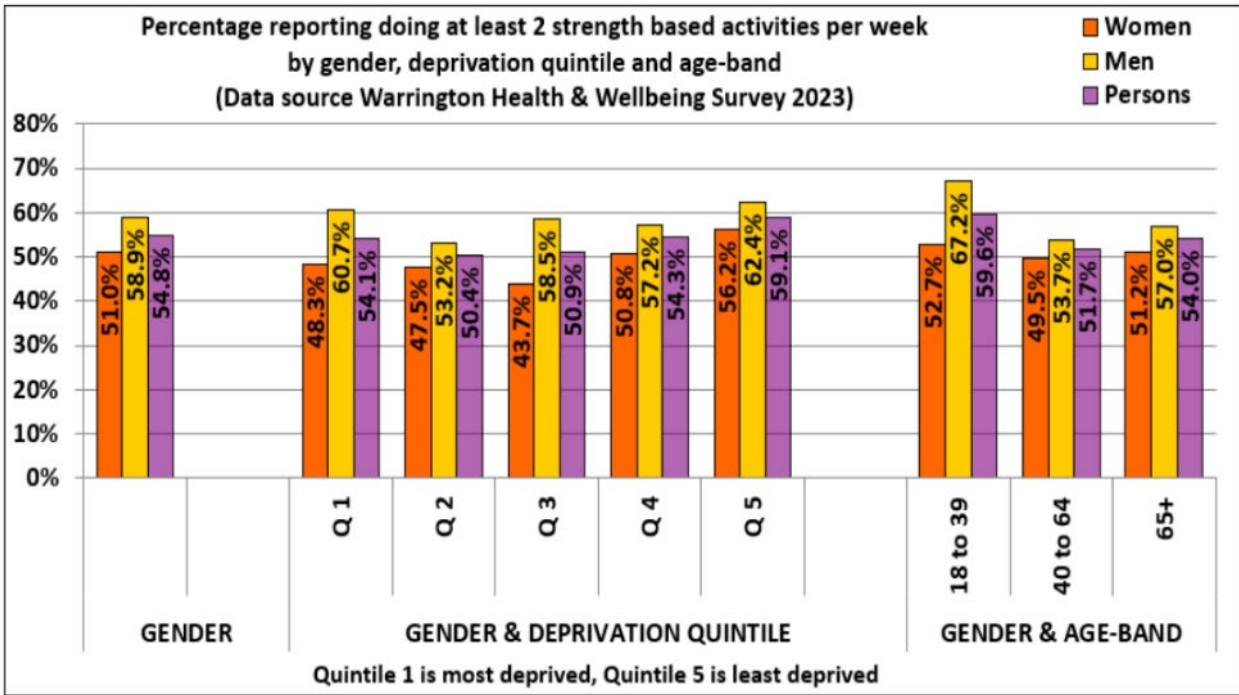
Strength-based Activities

CMO guidelines state that 'at least twice a week, all adults should undertake activities which increase or maintain muscle strength (resistance training)'.¹⁰ Survey respondents were asked on average, how many days a week they do strength based or muscle strengthening activities (e.g., lifting weights, working with resistance bands, heavy gardening, such as digging and shovelling, climbing stairs, hill walking, cycling, dance, push-ups, sit-ups and squats, yoga).

Of the 4,230 valid responses, 54.8% indicated that they undertake at least 2 strength-based activities per week (Figure 5). The proportion was higher in men (58.9%) than women (51%) and varied with age as 59.6% of 18-39 year-olds undertook twice weekly strength-based activities compared to 51.7% of 40-64 year-olds and 54% of over-65s. There was no clear pattern by area deprivation.

¹⁰ UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk))

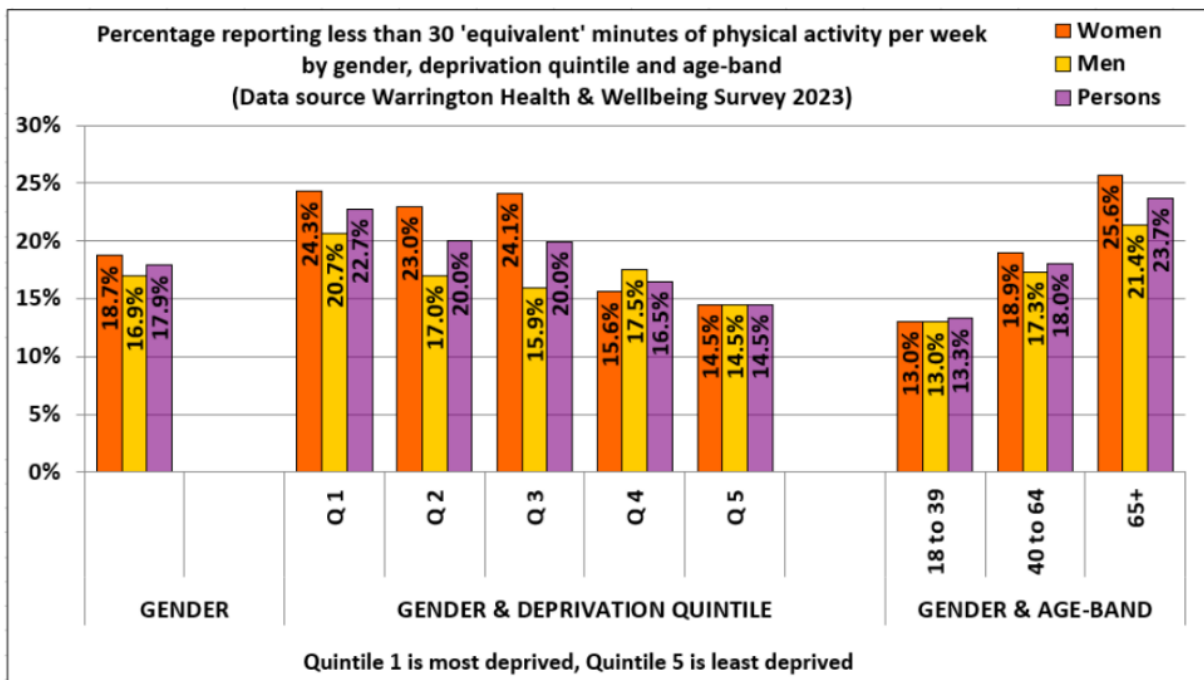
Figure 5: Percentage Reporting doing at least 2 strength based activities per week by gender, deprivation quintile and age-band.



Compared to the Warrington average, 40-64 year-old women in quintiles 1-3 were statistically significantly less likely to undertake strength-based activities twice weekly whilst 18-39 year-old men in quintiles 1, 3 and 5 and over-65 men in quintile 5 were significantly more likely.

Physical Inactivity

Figure 6: Percentage reporting less than 30 'equivalent' minutes of physical activity per week by gender, deprivation quintile and age-band.



Of the 4,170 valid responses, 17.9% of respondents reported they did less than 30 'equivalent' weekly minutes of physical activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more (Figure 6). This compares to 13.3% reported in the 2013 Health and Wellbeing Survey, indicating a rise in inactivity over the last decade. In comparison, the Active Lives Adult Survey reports 2021/22 levels of physical inactivity are approximately 23.6% in England and 21.1% in Warrington, however, these Active Lives figures do not include 18 year-olds, unlike the 2023 Warrington HW Survey.

More women (18.7%) than men (16.9%) said they did less than 30 minutes of weekly active. The gap between men and women is largest in deprivation quintiles 1-3, with a smaller gap between men and women in the less deprived quintiles of 4 and 5. There was an increase in physical inactivity levels with age as 23.7% of over-65s were inactive compared to 18% and 13.3% in 40-64 year-olds and 18-39 year-olds, respectively. The proportion of physically inactive adults also increased with levels of deprivation with 22.7% of quintile 1 and 14.5% of quintile 5 people undertaking physical activity for less than 30 minutes per week.

Multiple groups were statistically significantly different to the Warrington average with themes of significantly higher physical activity amongst men, people from less deprived areas and younger age-groups.

COVID-19 Impact on Physical Activity

Table 1: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Has Affected Physical Activity Levels in Warrington.

Group	Worse than before	Same as before	Better than before
Men	26.1%	62.3%	11.6%
Women	33.3%	55.2%	11.5%
18 to 39	30.6%	53.3%	16.1%
40 to 64	30.0%	58.9%	11.2%
65+	28.7%	65.3%	6.0%
Quintile 1 (most deprived)	35.4%	55.4%	9.2%
Quintile 2	27.9%	61.0%	11.1%
Quintile 3	31.5%	57.7%	10.7%
Quintile 4	30.0%	58.2%	11.8%
Quintile 5 (least deprived)	27.2%	59.7%	13.1%
Overall	29.9%	58.6%	11.5%

In the Warrington Health and Wellbeing Survey 2023, residents were asked if current physical activity levels were better, worse or the same as before the COVID-19 Pandemic. Of the 3,882 Warrington adults that completed the question, men and women from all age-groups and deprivation quintiles were more likely to report worse physical activity levels after COVID-19 than better (Table 1). Around a third (29.9%) reported worse physical activity levels, 58.6% reported similar levels and 11.5% reported improvements in physical activity levels.

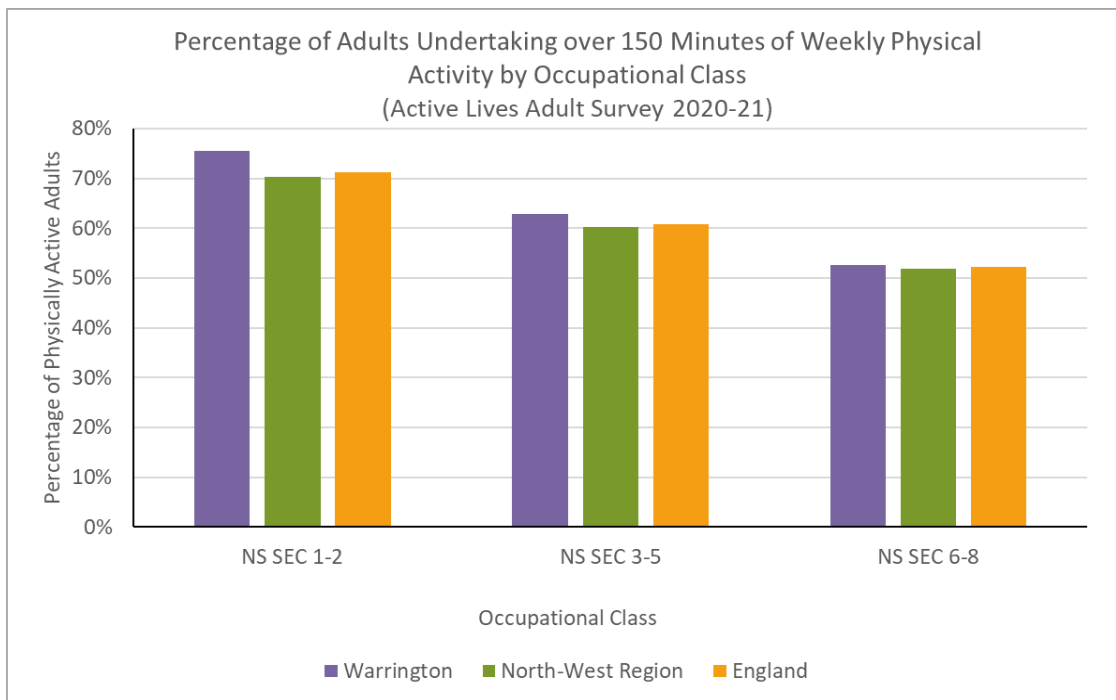
Women were more likely to report worse physical activity levels following COVID-19 (33.3%) than men (26.1%). Whilst the 18-39 age group were more likely to report an improvement in physical activity levels (16.1%) than 40-64 year-olds (11.2%) and over-65s (6%). However, similar proportions reported worsening physical activity levels in all three age-groups. People from quintile 1 areas are more likely to report worsening physical activity levels (35.4%) following the COVID-19 pandemic than those from the least deprived quintile 5 areas (27.2%).

Women from deprived areas were statistically significantly more likely to report worsening physical activity levels following the COVID-19 pandemic (43.3% and 46.5% in 40-64 year-olds and over-65s, respectively) compared to the Warrington average. Men from quintile 5 areas were statistically significantly less likely to report a decline in physical activity levels following the COVID-19 pandemic (21.8%). Quintile 5 18-39 year-

old men and women were significantly more likely to report an improvement in physical activity levels (18.2%) compared to the Warrington average.

Occupational Class

Figure 7: Percentage of adults undertaking over 150 minutes of weekly physical activity by occupational class.



The Active Lives Adult Survey collects participant data on occupation and classifies jobs according to the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS SEC). NS SEC groups 1-2 include higher and lower managerial and professional occupations, groups 3-5 include intermediate occupations, small employers and own account workers and lower supervisory and technical occupations whilst groups 6-8 include routine and semi-routine occupations and the long-term unemployed¹¹.

¹¹ The National Statistics Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC) - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Figure 8: Percentage of adults undertaking less than 30 minutes of weekly physical activity by occupational class.

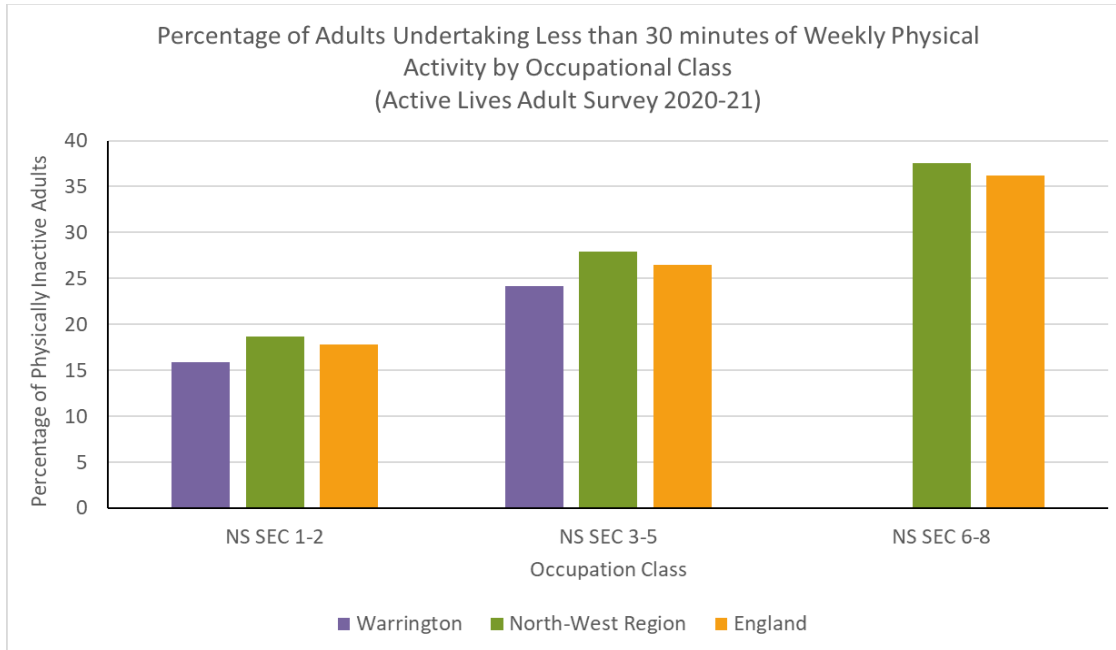


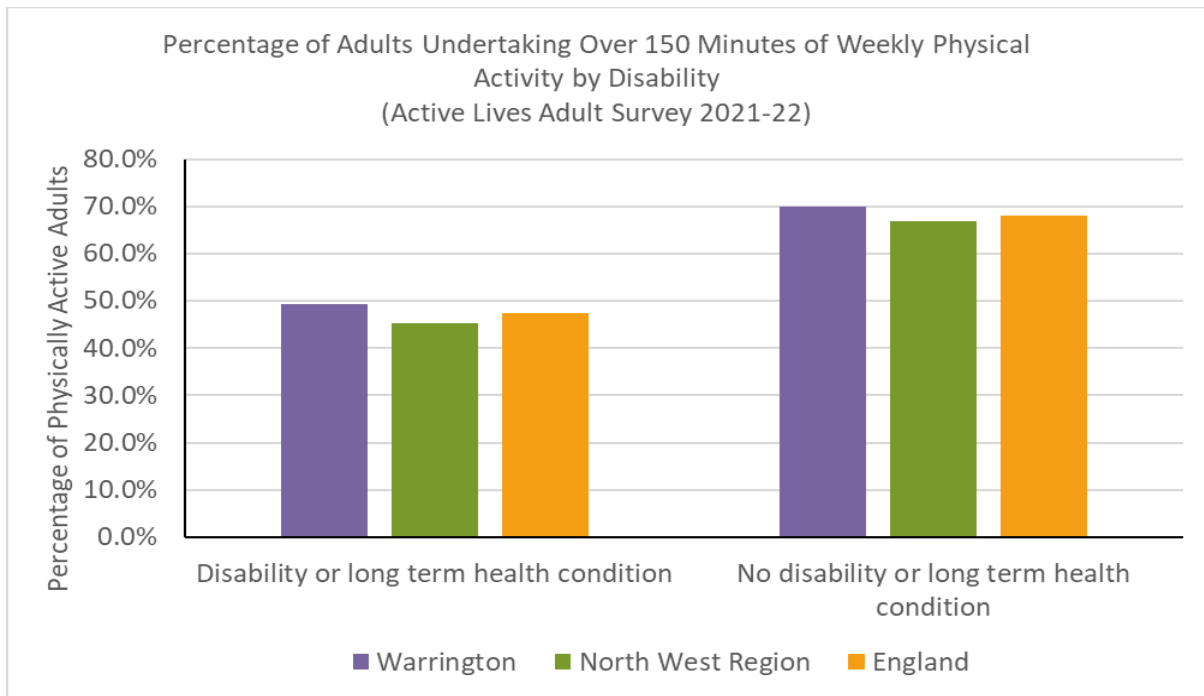
Figure 7 shows that Warrington residents in higher professions (75.5%) are more likely to be physically active than those in intermediate (62.8%) and those in routine/semi-routine occupations or unemployed (52.7%) in 2020-21. The gap in physical activity levels between the higher professions (NS SEC 1-2) and routine professions/unemployed (NS SEC 6-8) is 22.8%. In addition, with the national average for adults meeting CMO physical activity guidelines for higher, intermediate and routine occupations at 71.2%, 60.8% and 52.3%, respectively, Warrington especially outperforms the national average at higher occupational classes.

Figure 8 highlights that the percentage of physically inactive adults is higher in routine occupations at a national and regional level (no local data is available due to small sample size) compared to higher and intermediate occupations. Physical inactivity in Warrington NS SEC1-2 (15.9%) and NS SEC 3-5 (24.2%) respondents was lower than the national average of 17.8% and 26.5%, respectively.

Disability

Figure 9 highlights that residents in Warrington with a disability are less likely to complete 150 minutes of physical activity (49.4%) than those without a disability (70%). This is an absolute difference in physical activity of 20.6%. People with a disability in Warrington are more likely to undertake at least 150 minutes of weekly physical activity than those in the North West (45.4%) or in England (47.5%) for the year 2021-22.

Figure 9: Percentage of adults undertaking over 150 minutes of physical activity by disability status.



Physical Activity Key Findings:

Overall:

1. From 2017-18 to 2021-22, the percentage of physically active adults in Warrington had increased by 9.6% and was higher than the national average in 2021-22. The most up-to-date estimate of the percentage of adults that are physically active comes from the 2023 Warrington Health and Wellbeing Survey and is 69.1%.
2. From 2017-18 to 2020-21, the percentage of physically active children and young people have decreased by 2.8% but remains above the national average.
3. Warrington has had decreasing rates of physical inactivity from 2017-18 to 2021-22 and has lower rates of inactivity compared to the national average. The most up-to-date estimate of the percentage of adults that are physically inactive comes from the 2023 Warrington Health and Wellbeing Survey and is 17.9%.

Gender:

4. In Warrington, men are more likely to meet the UK CMOs' physical activity guidelines than women. This is in line with the national pattern.
5. Men were more likely to complete at least two strength-based activities per week.
6. Women were more likely than men to report doing less than 30 minutes of weekly physical activity than men with the gap between being largest in deprived areas (quintiles 1 and 2)
7. Women were more likely than men to report a worsening of physical activity levels following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Socioeconomic status

8. People who live in the most deprived areas in Warrington (quintile 1) are less likely to be physically active than people from less deprived areas.
9. People in the most deprived areas (quintile 1) are more likely to be physically inactive than those in the less deprived areas.
10. People from more deprived areas were more likely to report a decline in physical activity levels following COVID-19.

Physical Activity Key Findings:

Socioeconomic status

11. People who are unemployed or in routine/semi-routine jobs are less likely to be physically active than those in managerial or professional jobs. The gap in physical activity levels between higher professionals and the routine occupation/unemployed classes is 22.8%.

Age:

12. The percentage of individuals that were physically active declined with increasing age whilst levels of physical inactivity increase with age.

Disability:

13. People with a disability are less likely to meet the UK CMOs' physical activity guidelines than those without a disability. The gap in physical activity levels between those with a disability and those without is 20.6%.

Recommendations:

1. Support a network of physical activity champions across health, care, workplace, and community settings to raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity and who can signpost to local opportunities.
2. Prioritise increasing physical activity offers aimed at groups that are less likely to meet the UK CMOs' physical activity guidelines (women, people from deprived areas, routine workers, those aged 65+). This may include localisation of national campaigns that target messaging to people at higher risk of physical inactivity, including those living with long-term conditions (We Are Undefeatable) and women (This Girl Can).
3. Develop a physical activity programme/charter in collaboration with large employers of routine/semi-routine workers to encourage participation in physical activity both in and outside of work hours.
4. Work with partners, including Warrington Disability Partnership, to provide support to those with disabilities to access a range of physical activity offers that meet their needs.
5. Increase the awareness of, and participation opportunities for, muscle strengthening activities, particularly amongst women.

Barriers to Physical Activity

In total, 4,268 residents gave valid responses when asked ‘What factors prevent you from being more physically active?’ (Table 2). Overall, 37% of respondents said they were as physically active as they would like to be – of those that were happy with their current physical activity levels the majority (86%) were meeting CMOs’ guidelines of at least 150 equivalent minutes of physical activity per week and only 14% did not (Appendix 1).

In general, men were more likely than women, older people more likely than younger people and people living in the least deprived areas more likely than those in more deprived areas to say they were as physically active as they wanted to be. Groups that were statistically significantly less likely to report being as active as they wanted to be included:

- 18-39 year-old women in all deprivation quintiles
- 40-64 year-old women in quintiles 1 and 2

Groups that were statistically significantly more likely to report being as active as they wanted to be included:

- Over-65 men and women in quintiles 4 and 5, and over-65 men in quintile 2
- 18-39 year-old men in quintile 1
- 40-64 year-old men in quintile 4

Table 2: Barriers to Physical Activity in Warrington (Warrington Health and Wellbeing Survey 2023)

Reasons preventing from physical activity	% with Barrier
‘Nothing, I do as many activities as I want to’	37%
Lack of time	26%
Too tired/not enough energy	19%
My health issues	18%
I can't afford to pay for activities	12%
I can't due to childcare responsibilities	9%
I don't have the confidence/I feel embarrassed	9%
I don't have anyone to come with me	7%
I don't know what activities are on offer	6%
Activities are too far away	4%
I can't due to other caring responsibilities	3%
Poor public transport	4%

Nothing, I don't want to do physical activities	3%
No vehicle	3%
I can't afford to travel to activities	3%
Nothing, I'm not interested in the activities on offer	2%
Fear of Covid	1%
Problems with access (e.g., disabled access)	1%

The most common barrier cited for preventing more physical activity from taking place was lack of time (Table 2). Groups that were statistically significantly more likely to cite lack of time include:

- 18-39 year-old women
- 40-64 year-old women in quintiles 4-5
- 18-39 year-old men in quintiles 2, 4 and 5

Over-65s were statistically less likely to cite lack of time as a barrier to doing more physical activity. Whilst it is the most common barrier, those that cite lack of time are the least likely to not complete 150 minutes of weekly equivalent activity, suggesting that lack of time has less of an impact on people's ability to meet the CMOs' physical activity guidelines (Appendix 1).

Lack of energy was cited in 19% of the population (Table 2). Groups that were statistically significantly more likely to cite lack of energy as a barrier include:

- 18-39 year-old women in all deprivation quintiles
- 40-60 year-old women in quintile 1

Those that are statistically less likely to report lack of energy were:

- Over-65 women in quintile 5
- Over-65 men in quintiles 2, 3 and 5
- 40-64 year-old men in quintile 4

Of those that cited lack of energy preventing further physical activity, 47% were not meeting the UK CMOs' guidelines for weekly physical activity, compared to an average of 31% of Warrington residents not meeting CMOs' guidelines.

Health issues were cited as a reason in 18% of Warrington residents (Table 2). The groups that were most likely to cite this factor included:

- Men and women over-65 in almost all deprivation quintiles
- 40-64 year-old women in quintiles 1 and 2

Those that were less statistically less likely to cite health reasons were:

- 18-39 year-old men in quintiles 1, 3, 4 and 5
- 40-64 year-old men in quintile 5
- 18-39 year-old women in quintiles 2, 4 and 5.

Half (52%) of people that cited health reasons prevented them from engaging in more physical activity were not meeting the UK CMOs' recommended guidelines of 150 equivalent minutes per week (Appendix 1).

Affordability was the fourth most common barrier to increasing physical activity levels (Table 2). This was cited as a barrier significantly more in:

- 18-39 year-old women in quintiles 1 to 4
- 40-64 year-old women in quintile 1

Groups that were significantly less likely to cite affordability as a barrier to more physical activity include:

- 40-64 year-old women in quintile 4
- Over-65 women in quintile 5
- 40-64 year-old men in quintile 5
- Over-65 men in quintiles 4 and 5

41% of those that said they couldn't afford to pay for activities were not meeting the UK CMOs' recommended guidelines of 150 equivalent minutes per week (Appendix 1).

Appendix 1 highlights that when citing barriers to increasing physical activity, barriers that have the highest proportion of people not meeting the national physical activity guidelines include problems with access (72%), not wanting to do physical activity (72%) and not being interested in what is on offer (52%); however, each of these reasons were cited by a small proportion of Warrington residents (less than 3%).

Barriers Key Findings:

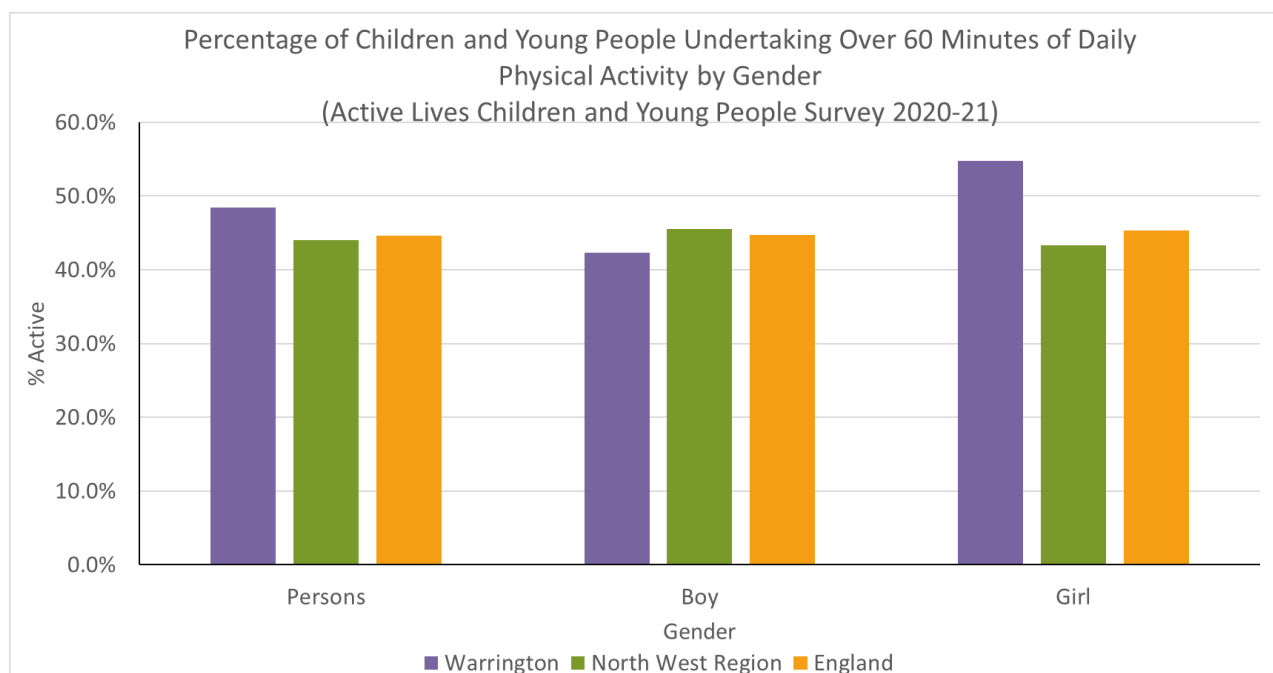
1. Young women (18-34 year-olds) from all deprivation quintiles and middle aged women (40-64 year-olds) from deprived neighbourhoods were significantly less likely to be as active as they wanted to be.
2. Lack of time was the most common barrier cited, however, those that cited it had similar rates of achieving the UK CMOs' guidance for physical activity as the rest of Warrington.
3. Lack of energy was cited in 19% of the population. Half (47%) of those that reported lack of energy did not meet UK CMOs' physical activity guidelines. Young women (18-34 year-olds) from all deprivation quintiles and women aged 40-64 from deprived areas were the most likely to cite this.
4. Health issues were cited in 18% of residents; of which half (52%) of these respondents did not meet UK CMOs' physical activity guidelines. Men and women over-65 in almost all deprivation quintiles and 40-64 year-old women in quintiles 1 and 2 were significantly more likely to report health issues.
5. Lack of affordable offers was cited by 12% of respondents. Two-fifths (41%) of those that cited affordability did not meet UK CMOs' physical activity guidelines. Women living in the most deprived quintiles were significantly more likely to not be able to afford physical activity offers.
6. Of those that cited problems with access (including disabled access) as a barrier, 72% did not meet UK CMOs' physical activity guidance.

Recommendations:

1. Increase provision of more affordable physical activity options by working with sports, leisure, community and VCFSE sectors to help widen the range of sport and physical activity offers that enable all community members to take part, especially women living in the most deprived areas. This could utilise existing green spaces for recreation and exercise to support civic participation in local amenities and social connectivity.
2. Consider how to promote and support those who feel they have lack of time. This may be via targeted messaging or promoting physical activities and opportunities that are time-efficient, such as the NHS Active 10, every step counts, active travel, and home workouts.
3. Work with primary care and secondary care colleagues to understand how health issues can act as barriers to physical activity and address these. Consider how to use health as a reason and enabler for physical activity e.g., Moving Medicine
4. Work with young women and middle-aged women from deprived areas to understand why they are more likely to cite lack of energy and target appropriate physical activity offers to this group.
5. Consider innovative ways to tackle lack of confidence, people being afraid to exercise alone or not knowing what is on offer.
6. Work with inclusive growth and partnership to ensure equity of access to physical activity services run by the council for people of all incomes and disabilities.

Physical Activity (Children and Young People)

Figure 10: Percentage of children and young people undertaking 60 minutes of daily physical activity by gender.

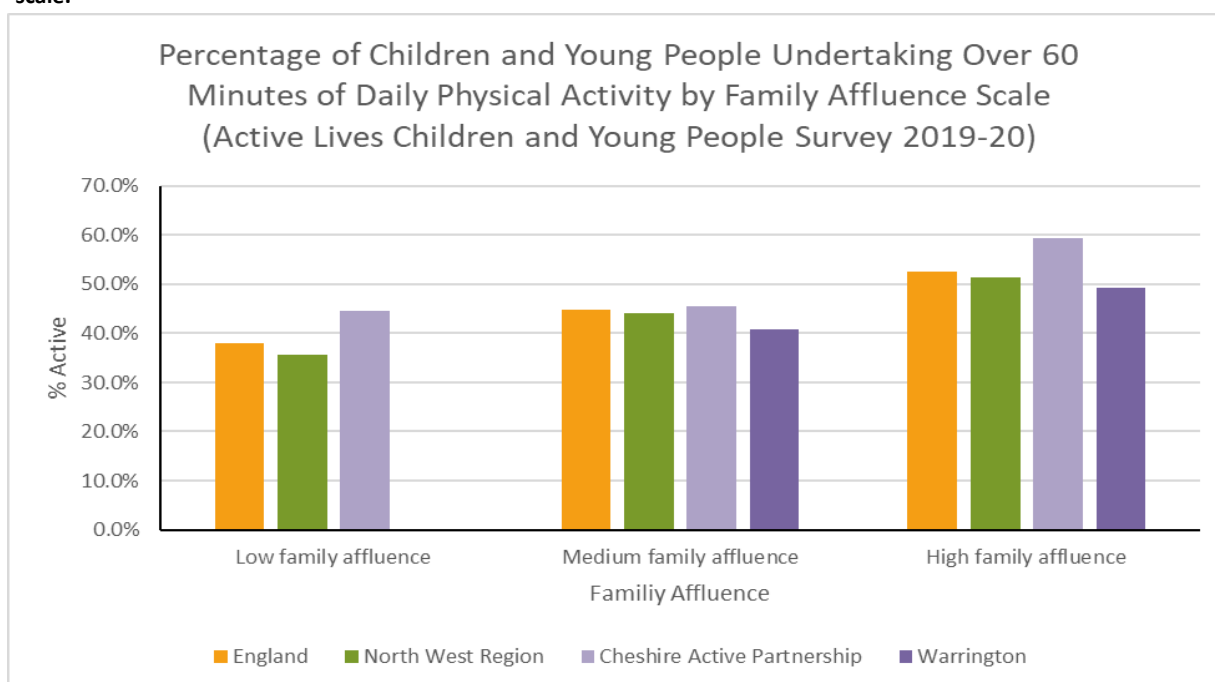


The Active Lives Children and Young People provides national, regional, and local estimates of physical activity levels and participation in sport going back to 2017. Due to sampling schools nationally across all local authorities, the survey is unable to provide a precise breakdown of physical activity levels by demography at a local level, such as index of multiple deprivation quintile, compared to the Warrington HW Survey 2023.

In 2020-2021, 48.4% of children and young people (age 5 to 16) in Warrington undertook at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity, compared with 44% and 44.6% in the North West Region and England, respectively (Figure 10). In 2020-21, unlike national and region trends, Warrington girls (54.8%) are more likely to meet the UK CMOs' physical activity guidelines than boys (42.3%). Whilst this survey is based on a small number of Warrington boys (86) and girls (92) with statistical limitations, the proportion of school-aged girls in Warrington meeting physical activity guidelines (54.8%) is consistently higher than national and regional values.¹² The proportion of school-aged boys meeting the CMO physical activity guidelines (42.3%) is less than the national average (44.7%) and the North-West Region (45.5%), however 2020-21 is the first year this occurred.⁸

¹² Active Lives | Results (sportengland.org)

Figure 11: Percentage of children and young people undertaking over 60 minutes of daily physical activity by family affluence scale.



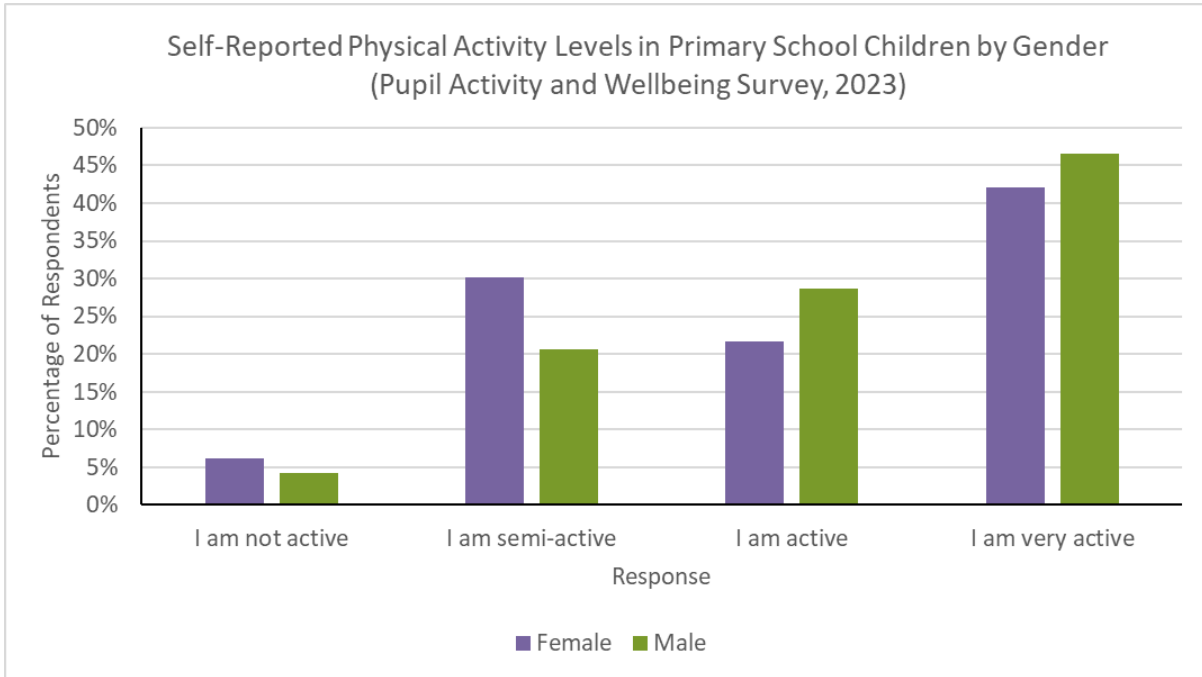
Family Affluent Scale is a measure of socioeconomic status and is derived from a series of questions about a child’s home and family, including foreign holidays and car ownership. Figure 11 shows the most recent data for Family Affluence Scale for Warrington and illustrates that, on average, Warrington children from medium (40.8%) and high family affluence (49.3%) had lower rates of achieving CMO guidelines than the national average (44.7% for medium and 52.5% for high family affluence, respectively). By comparison, the Cheshire Active Partnership (which aggregates physical activity data across both Warrington and Cheshire) recorded higher levels of physical activity amongst children of all family affluence compared to national and regional levels (Figure 11).

Pupil Activity and Wellbeing Survey 2023

Warrington School Sports Partnership undertook a Pupil Activity and Wellbeing Survey with randomly selected children from three secondary schools and seven primary schools in October 2023. This survey collected self-reported data on physical activity levels, sport preferences and other characteristics e.g., wellbeing. Children in the years between reception and year 6 selected the physical activity statement that they most identified with from below:

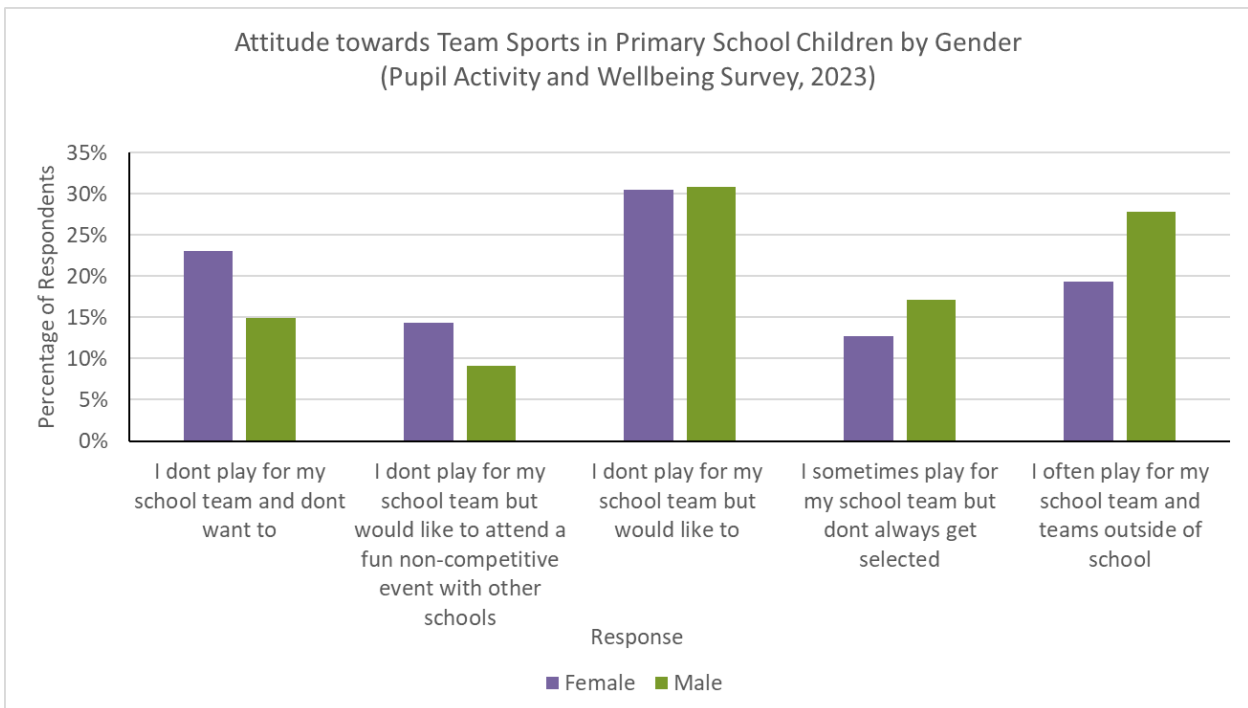
- I am not active. I don't go to any activity clubs in school or outside I don't enjoy PE Lessons
- I am semi-active. I like to spend time with my friends at break and lunch. Sometimes we play games. I engage in PE Lessons. I have been to a club after school or outside of school.
- I am active. I like to play games at break and lunch. I usually go to one club a week, either after school or outside of school.
- I am very active. I spend most of my lunchtimes and breaks running around playing games. I go to after school sports clubs. I attend sports clubs outside of school.

Figure 12: Self-Reported Physical Activity Levels in Primary School Children by Gender



Overall, 507 valid responses were received. Figure 12 highlights the gender gap in physical activity in primary schools with boys more likely to report being very active (47%) and active (29%) compared to girls (42% and 22%, respectively). Female primary school respondents were more likely to describe themselves as semi-active (30%) or not active (6%) than male respondents (21% and 4%, respectively).

Figure 13: Attitude towards team sports in primary school children by gender.



When asking primary school pupils about their attitudes towards team sports (Figure 13), of the 505 valid responses, a greater percentage of boys stated they often play for their school team and teams outside of school (28%) than girls (19%) whilst girls were more likely to respond that they do not play and do not want

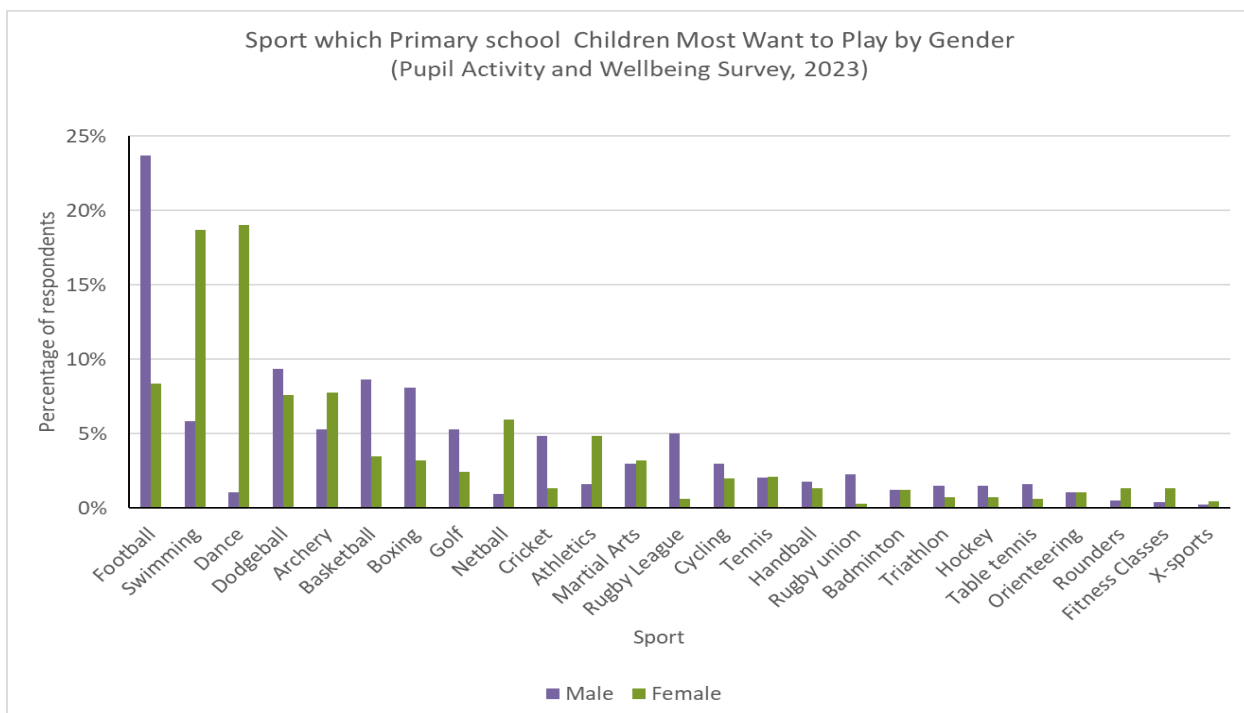
to play for their school team (23%) than boys (15%). Boys were more likely to sometime play for their school team but not always be selected (17%) than girls (13%). Girls are more likely to want to attend a fun non-competitive event with other schools (14%) compared to boys (9%). A similar proportion of both boys (31%) and girls (30%) do not play for their school team but would like to.

Primary school pupils were asked what sport they would most like to take part in, from a wide variety of options and could select multiple sports (Figure 14). The most popular response amongst boys was football (24%), followed by dodgeball (9%), then basketball (9%). For girls, it was dance (19%) followed by swimming (19%) and then football (8%). Of primary school children that reported being semi-active or not active, swimming was the most popular choice of activity they wished to do (17%), followed by dance (12%) and football (10%).

In secondary schools, activity levels were assessed with a similar selection of statements and pupils were asked to select the one they most identify with:

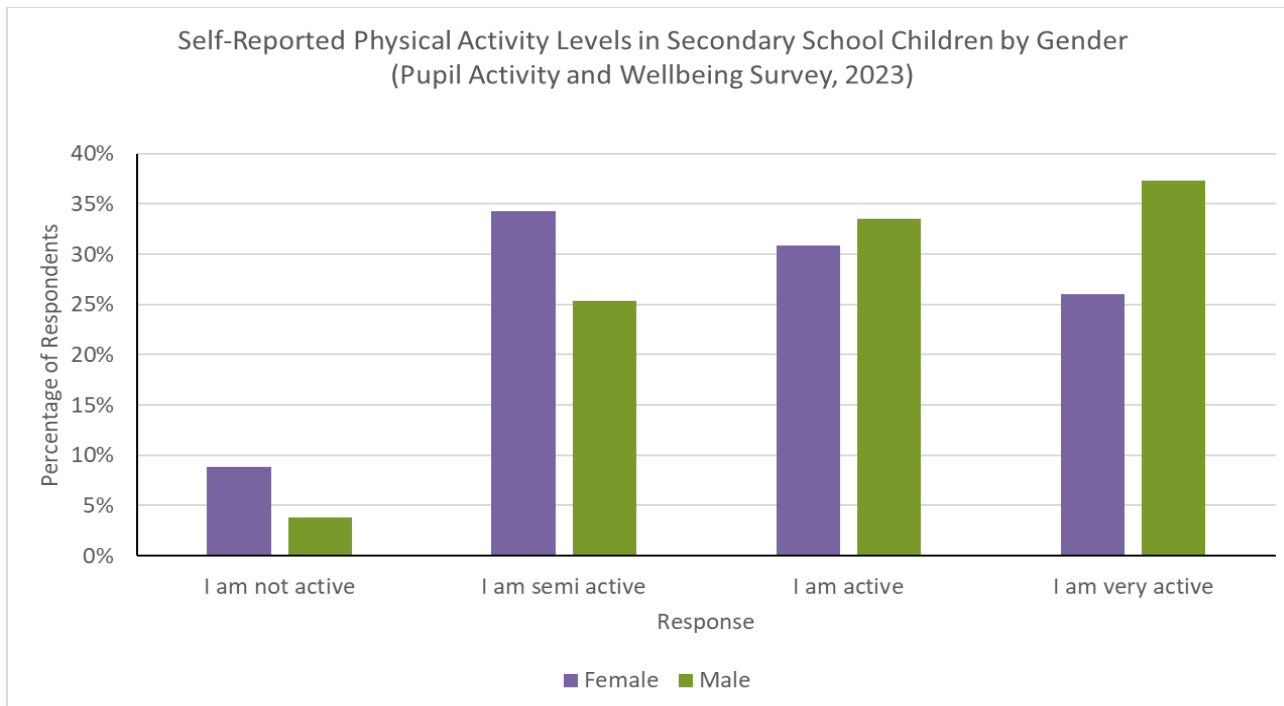
- I am not active. I rarely do physical activity outside of PE.
- I am semi active. I am physically active most weeks but not every day.
- I am active. Most days I do physical activity either at break, lunch or after school I usually go to at least one club per week either after school or outside of school.
- I am very active. I do physical activity at lunchtimes and breaks I enjoy PE and go to clubs after school. I also go to clubs outside of school.

Figure 14: Sport which primary school children most want to play by gender.



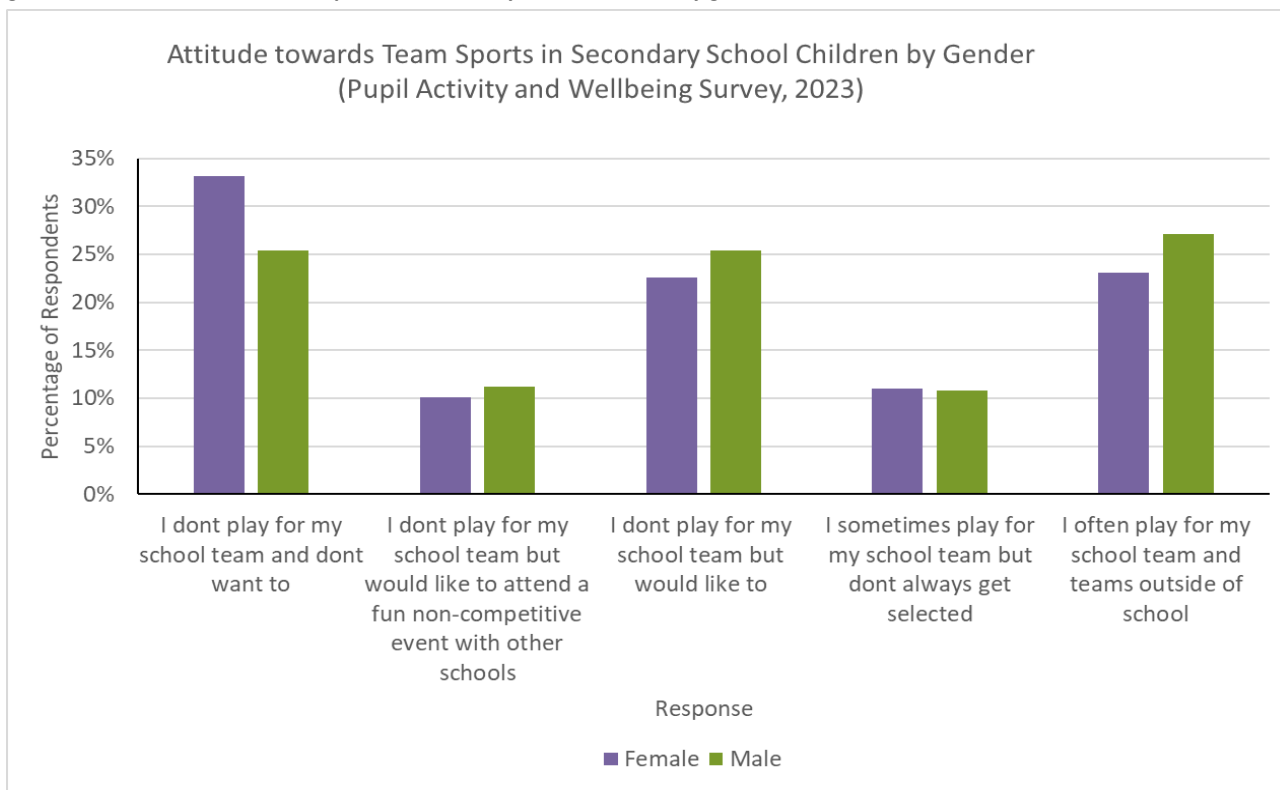
Of the 1,765 valid responses from children in year groups 7-11, 37% of boys reported they were very active compared to 26% of girls (Figure 15) and more girls described themselves as not active (9%) than boys (4%). The gap between male and female self-reported physical activity levels widens for very high and low levels of physical activity between primary (Figure 12) and secondary schools (Figure 15). The percentage of

Figure 15: Self-reported physical activity levels in secondary school children by gender.



primary school girls reporting they are not active is 50% greater than primary school boys, this difference increases to 130% in secondary school. The percentage of primary school girls that report being very active is 10% less than the percentage of primary school boys, this gap widens to 30% less in secondary school.

Figure 16: Attitude towards team sports in secondary school children by gender.



In total, 1,766 secondary school children outlined their attitude towards team sports (Figure 16). Female respondents were more likely to say they did not want to play a team sport for their school (33%) than male

respondents (25%). This attitude was the most prevalent amongst secondary school students whereas amongst primary school pupils it was the third most common attitude (Figure 13), after not playing but wishing they did and playing often.

Figure 17: Sport which most secondary students want to play by gender.

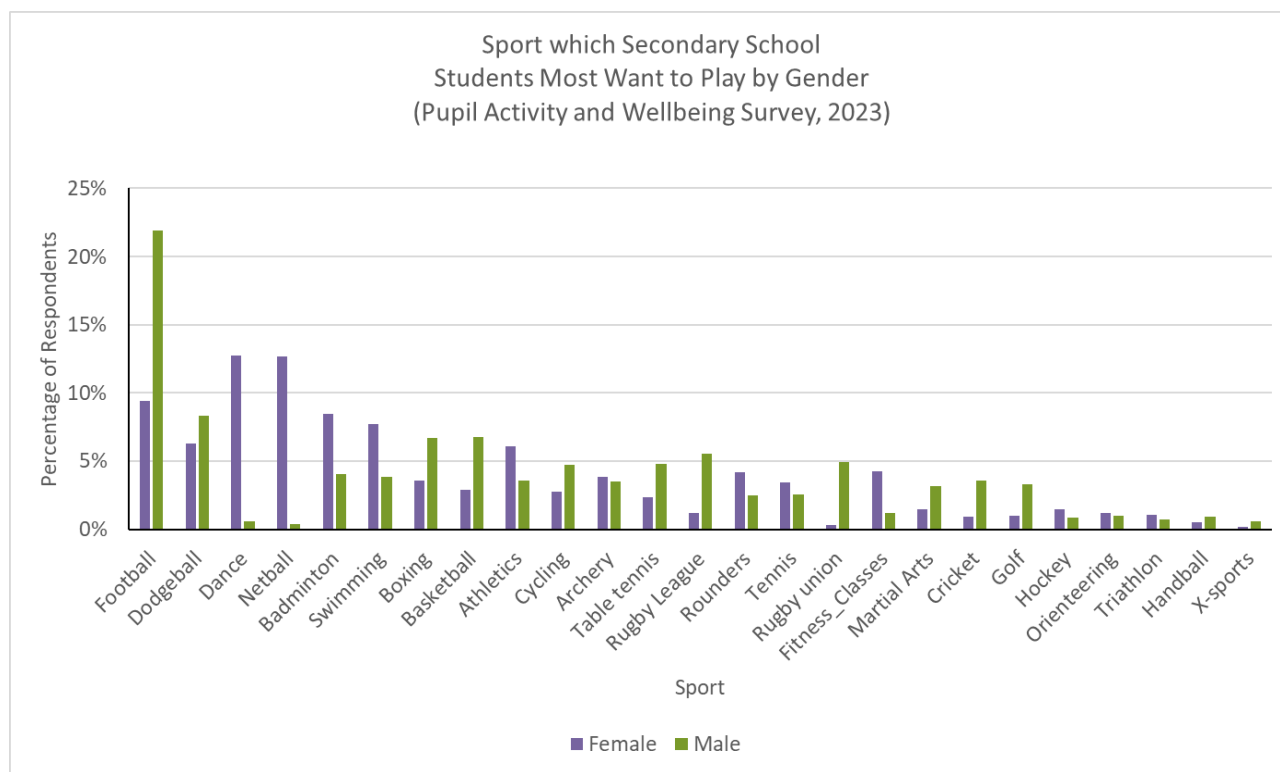


Figure 17 shows that, as in primary school, football is the most popular sport when asked what they want to play amongst male secondary school pupils (22%), followed by dodgeball (8%) and basketball (7%). For female secondary pupils, it was dance and netball (13%), followed by football (9.4%). Amongst secondary school children that reported being semi-active or not being active, badminton (10%) was the sport that they most wanted to take part in, followed by football (9%) and dodgeball (9%).

Warrington has a greater proportion of children that report they can swim (95.1%, n=195) compared to the North West Region (80.3%) and England (78.7%) (Figure 18). Girls (97.7%) are more likely than boys (94.1%) to report being able to swim, which is in keeping with the national picture (78.9% of girls and 77.9% of boys). In addition, compared to the national average, a greater percentage of Warrington children report being able to swim 25m unaided, to tread water and can self-rescue (Table 3)¹³.

Overall, Warrington does have higher rates of swimming than the national average for 2020-21, however fewer pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds can swim. In 2019-20 (the only year that Free School Meal data is available) 78.8% of Warrington year 7-11 children on Free School Meals (FSM) could swim compared with 95.4% of non-FSM children.¹⁰ Whilst this indicates that there could be a considerable gap in swimming capability between FSM and non-FSM children in Warrington, it should be noted that this survey data is

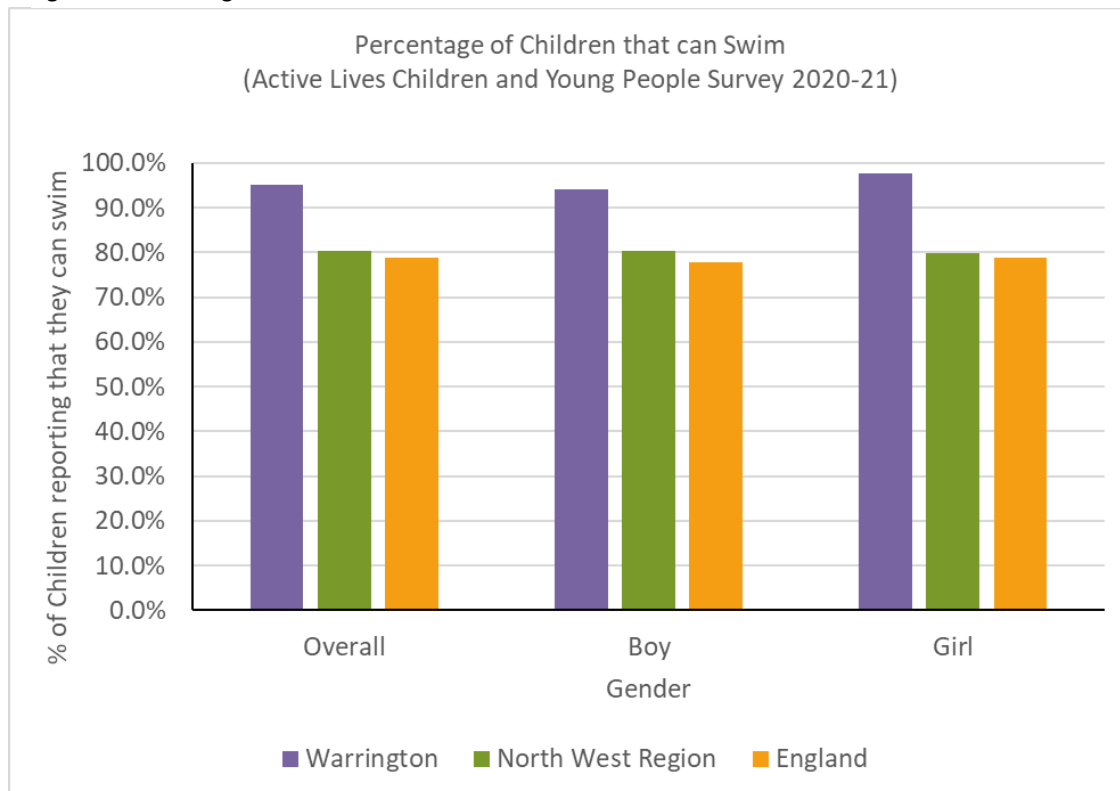
¹³ Active Lives | Results (sportengland.org)

based off a low number of Warrington FSM children (n=43) and so there is considerable uncertainty with these figures and interpretation.

Table 3: Swimming Capability in Warrington Children (Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, 2020-21)

Area	Can Swim 25m	Can tread water	Can self-rescue	Would like to swim more often
Warrington	84.7%	93.4%	87%	76.7%
North West England	61.8%	74.9%	73.9%	76.5%
England	58%	74.6%	73%	77.3%

Figure 18: Percentage of children that can swim.



Children and Young People Key Findings:

1. Nationally, regionally and across the Cheshire Active partnership, lower family affluence is associated with a reduced percentage of children meeting UK CMOs' physical activity guidelines.
2. Male primary and secondary school children self-report being more active than females.
3. A greater percentage of male primary school children report playing for their school team than their female counterparts.
4. Primary school and secondary school girls are more likely not to want to play for their school team.
5. A higher proportion of children can swim in Warrington compared to national and North-West rates. However, there was a considerable gap in swimming ability between those on free school meals and those that were not. Primary school children that were the least active, cited swimming as the activity they would like to do the most.
6. Secondary school children that were the least active, cited badminton, football, and dodgeball as sports they wanted to participate in.

Recommendations:

1. Work with schools to ensure physical activity programmes provide a range of sports, particularly catering to the needs of children that are less likely to be physically active such as girls and those with low family affluence.
2. Ensure access to swimming facilities and lessons is equitable for children across Warrington.
3. Consider whether schools could widen the team sport offer for girls and less active children to increase participation, with a focus on badminton, football, dodgeball.

Service Use

As part of the physical activity needs assessment, various organisational partners have shared local physical activity data to give an overview of Warrington residents access physical activity offers. By analysing service use data, inequalities in access can be identified and actions to reduce them prioritised.

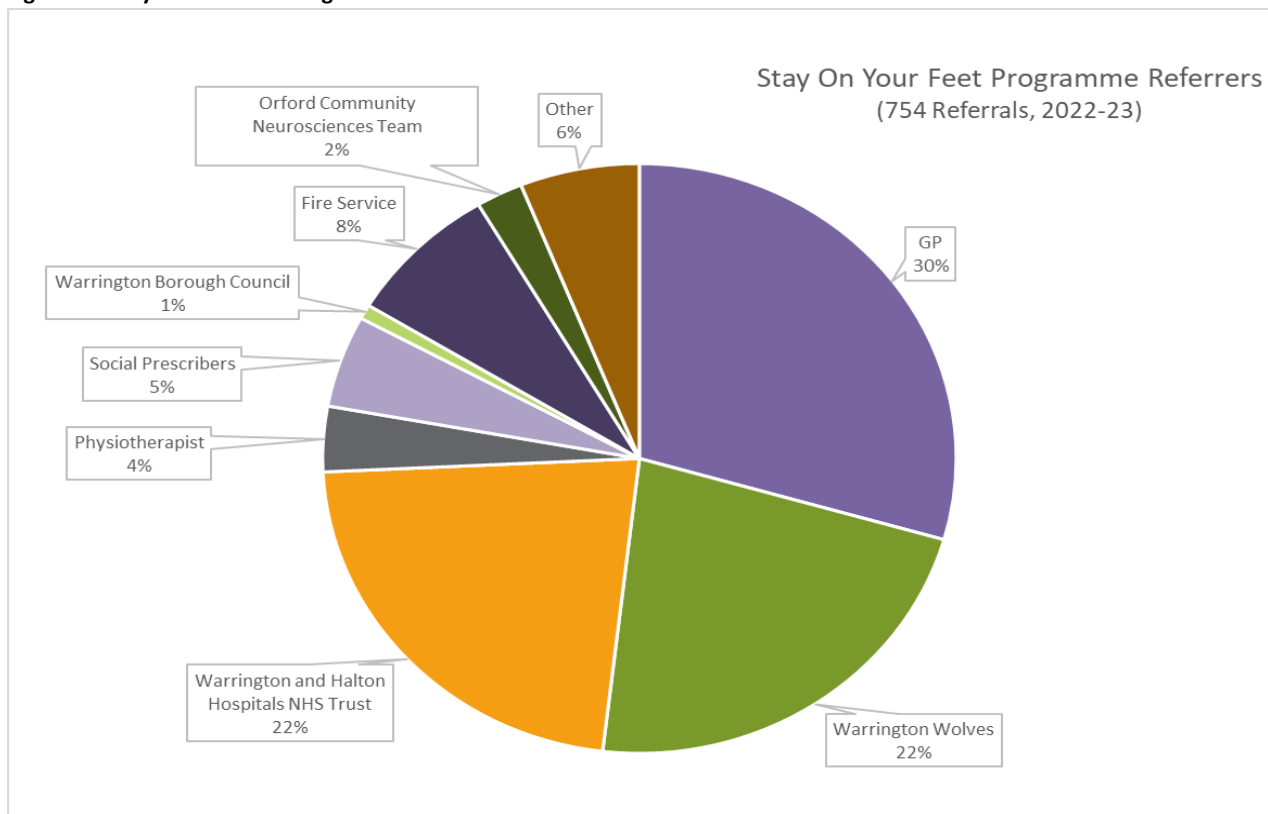
LiveWire Lifestyle

LiveWire is a Community Interest Company (CIC) that is commissioned by Warrington Borough Council to provide leisure, library, and lifestyle services. It is the largest leisure provider in Warrington operating three neighbourhood hubs, two community hubs and one leisure centre.

The LiveWire lifestyle programme provides a variety of physical activity offers to Warrington residents including:

- Stay on Your Feet Falls Prevention
- Health Walks
- Mind Movement Menopause
- Warrington Cancer Wellbeing

Figure 19: Stay on Your Feet Programme Referrals

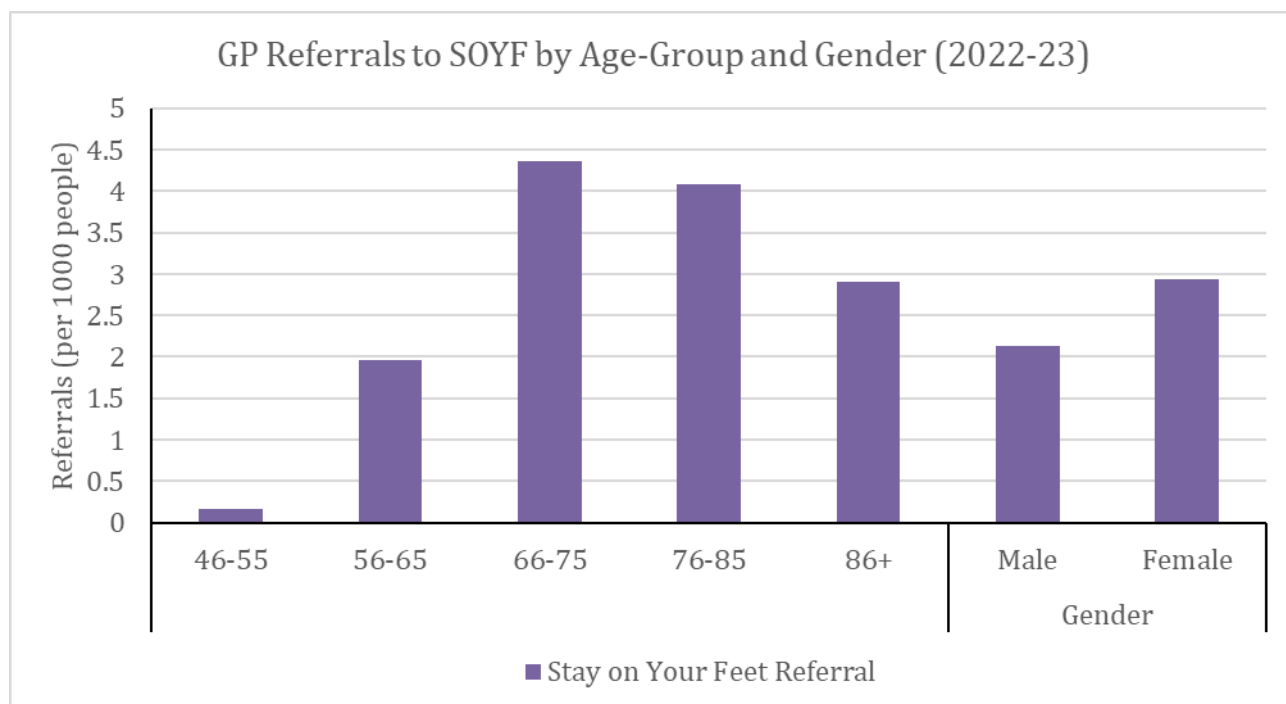


LiveWire lifestyle data was shared for The Stay on Your Feet (SOYF) programme and health walks. The SOYF programme is a free 8-week exercise programme aimed at Warrington residents that are over the age of 50 with a low-moderate risk of having a fall. The weekly session is designed to improve balance, flexibility, and muscle strength to reduce the risk of a fall in the future and support is provided to enable participants to continue these exercises in at home.

Health Walks take place from various locations in Warrington and are organised by a trained Wellbeing Walk leader. They are designed for a range of abilities, may involve walking on various terrains and are for Warrington residents that can walk for at least 30 minutes.

From 2022-23, over 754 referrals were received for the Stay On Your Feet programme (Figure 19). GPs were the largest referring group for SOYF programme, followed by Warrington Wolves (primarily from physiotherapy and cardiac rehabilitation teams), Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust (mainly from physiotherapy and the pulmonary rehabilitation team) and the Frailty Assessment Unit. The fire service was the fourth largest referrer for the SOYF programme (8%), followed by social prescribers (5%) and physiotherapists (4%). Warrington Borough Council services that referred people to SOYF programme include social services, assisted living team and wellbeing mentors - this made up 1% of all referrals.

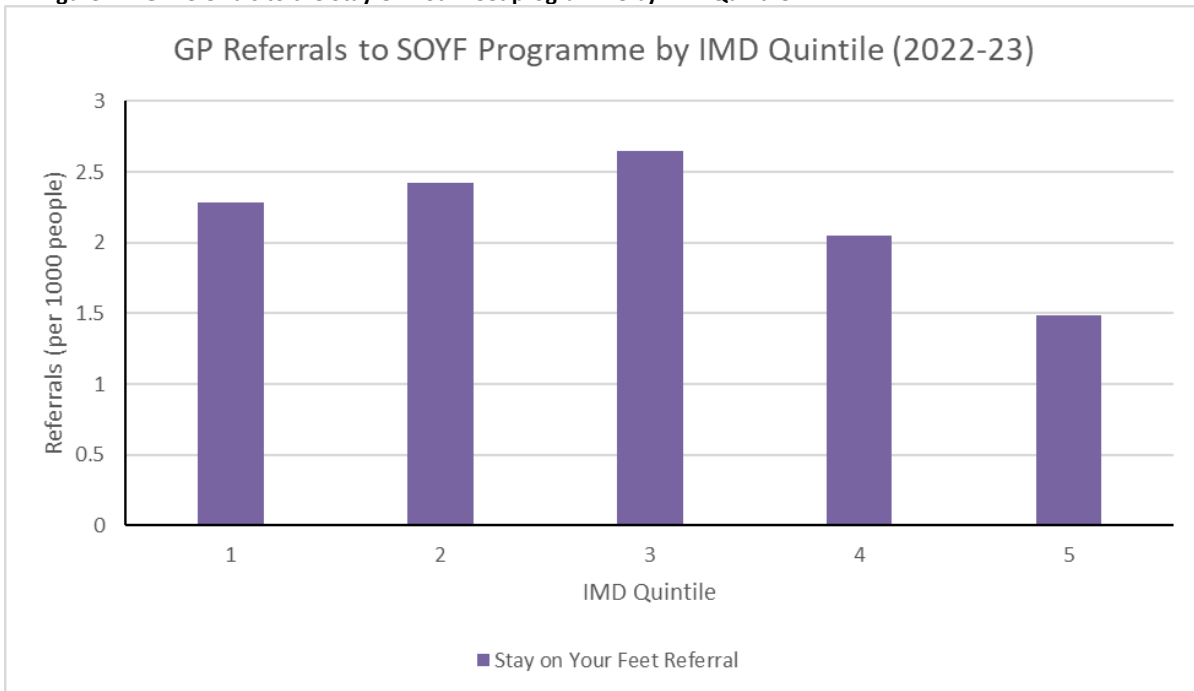
Figure 20: GP referrals to Stay On Your Feet Programme by age-group and gender.



By taking the number of referrals from GPs to SOYF programmes by age-group and dividing them by the 2022 Warrington mid-year population age-group estimates¹⁴, the referral rate per 1000 individuals can be calculated to allow for comparisons between different groups of people. Figure 20 highlights 66-75 year-olds were most likely to be referred to the Stay on Your Feet programme. There were 2.9 referrals per 1000 women and 2.1 referrals per men; women were 38% more likely to be referred by GPs than men.

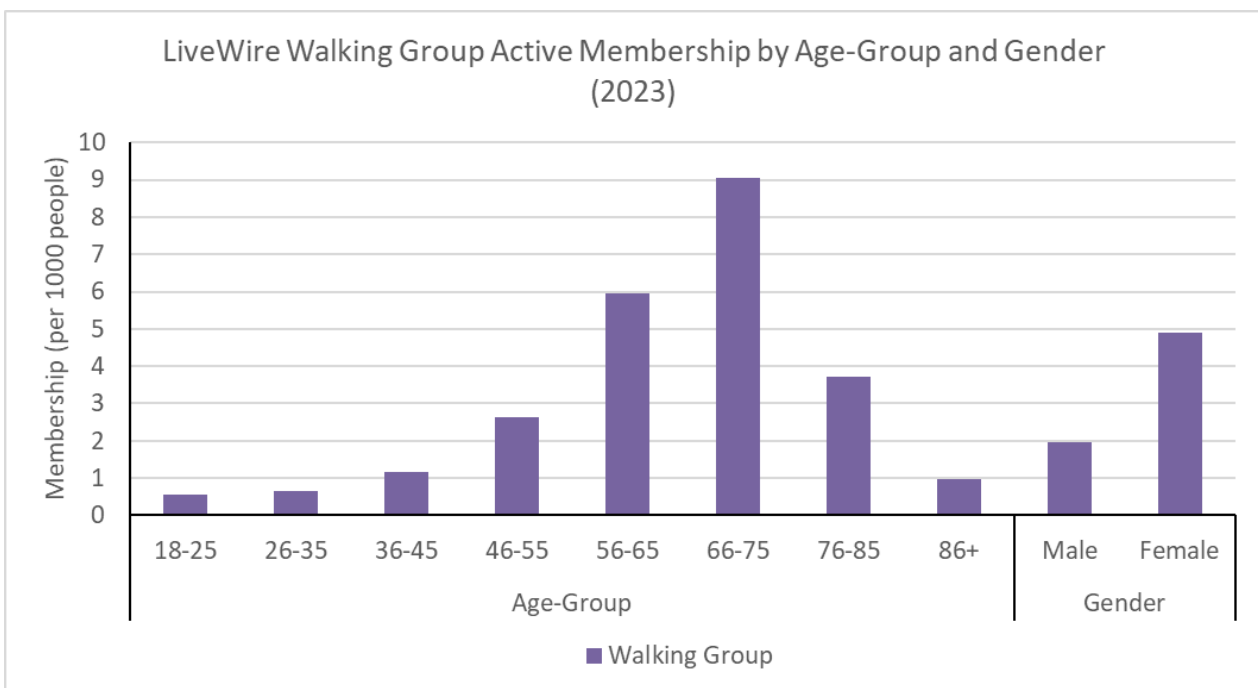
¹⁴ Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Figure 21: GP referrals to the Stay On Your Feet programme by IMD Quintile



The referral rate by IMD 2019 deprivation quintile (using 2021 Census lower super output area population estimates) for the SOYF programme is shown in Figure 21. Individuals from the quintile 3 (2.6 referrals per 1000 people) were most likely to be referred to the SOYF programme, whilst those in the least deprived areas (1.5 referrals per 1000 people) were least likely to be referred.

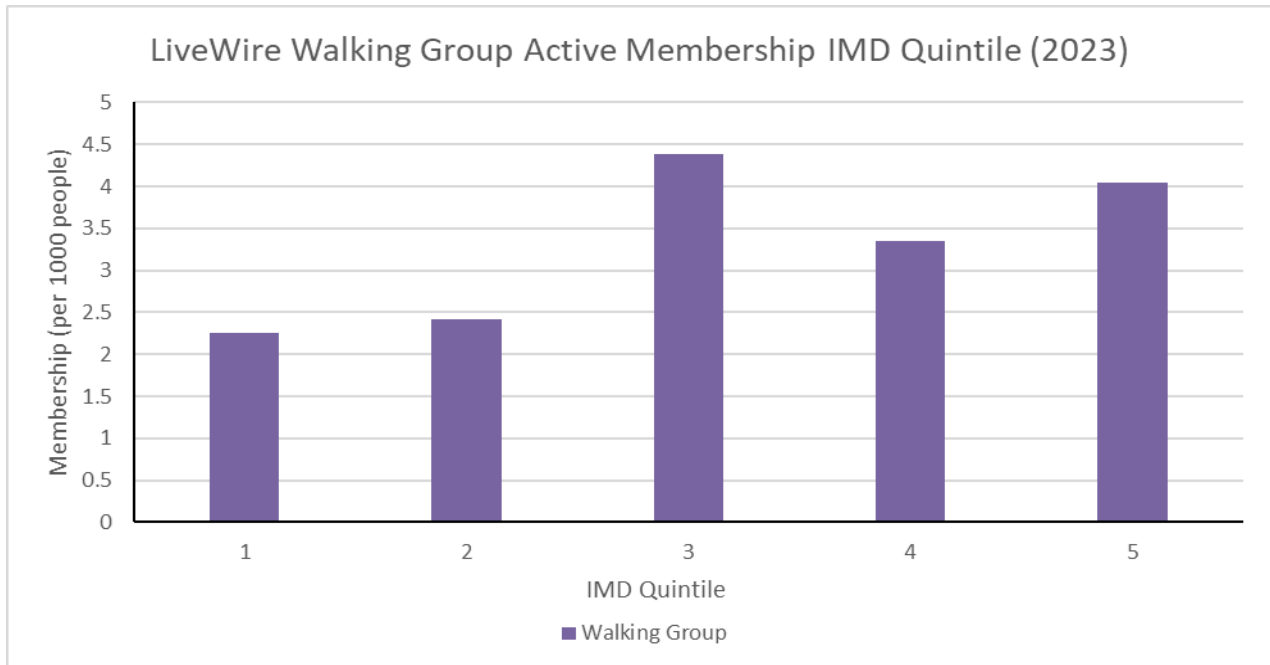
Figure 22: LiveWire walking group active membership by age-group and gender.



There are 572 active members in the LiveWire Walking group. Those aged 66-75 years were most likely to be members of the walking group (9.0 members per 1000 people) whilst membership was higher in women (4.9 members per 1000 people) than men (1.95 members per 1000 people) (Figure 22). People from the

most deprived areas (quintile 1) are least likely to be members of the walking group (2.25 members per 1000 people) whilst individuals from quintile 3 areas are most likely to be members (4.4 members per 1000 people) (Figure 23).

Figure 23: LiveWire walking group active membership IMD quintile.



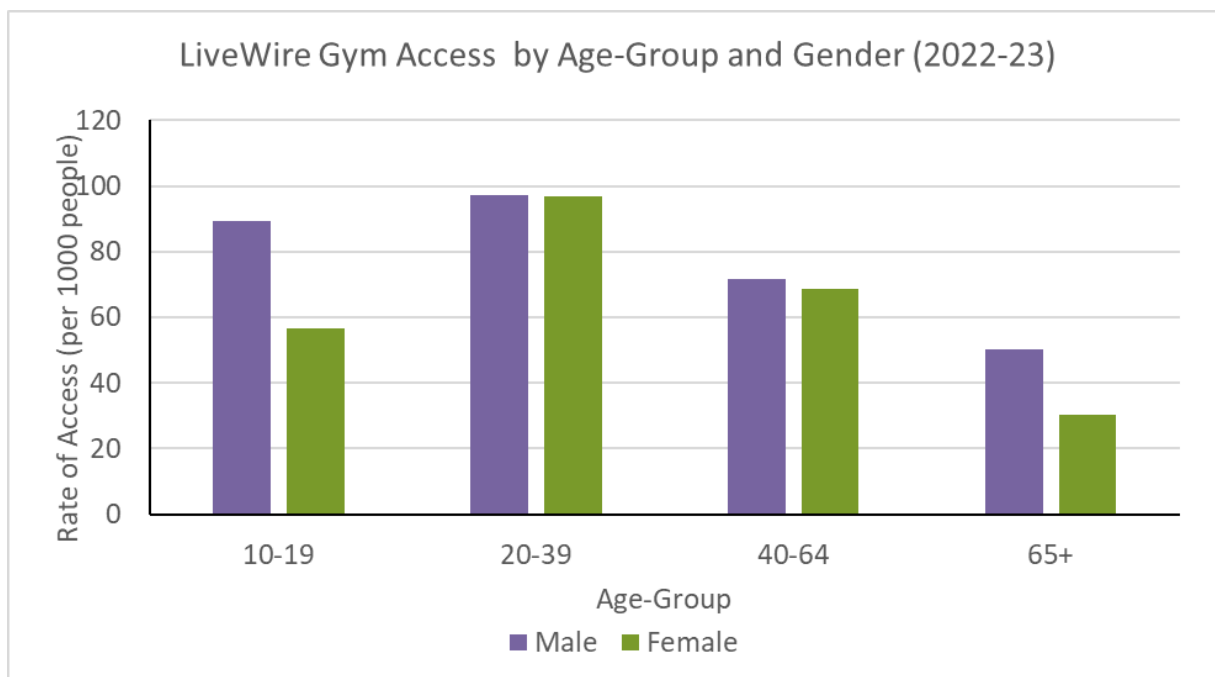
LiveWire Leisure

LiveWire operate six leisure sites (Orford Neighbourhood Hub, Sankey Neighbourhood Hub, Woolston Neighbourhood Hub, Birchwood Community Hub, Bewsey & Dallam Community Hub and Broomfields Leisure Centre). These sites offer a variety of physical activity offers and facilities including:

- Gym / Fitness studios
- Group Exercise Classes
- Swimming Pool
- Swimming Lessons
- Sports Hall
- Outdoor Pitches
- Tennis Courts

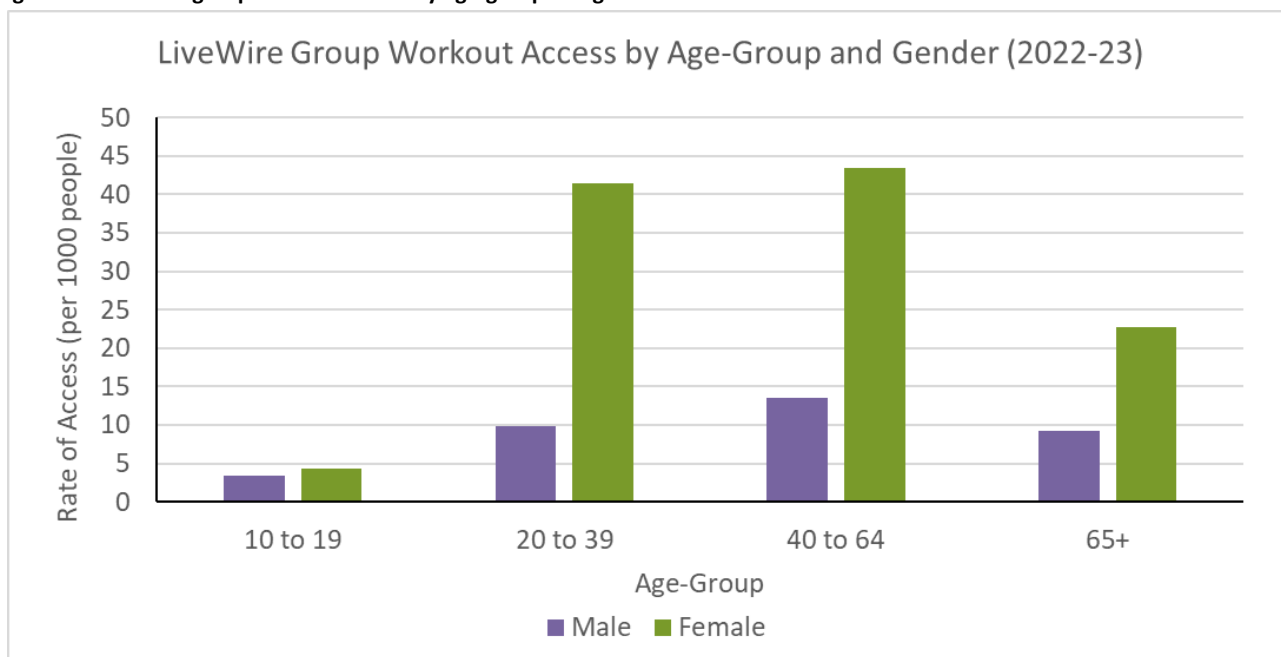
Through reviewing 2022-23 access data, we can identify what groups of individuals tend to engage with certain physical activity offers. By taking the number of unique individuals that have attended the gym in the year 2022-23 and dividing this by the Warrington Census population by age/gender/IMD deprivation quintile the annual rate of access by various groups can be estimated. It should be noted that this only counts the number of individuals accessing the gym over a year and does not take into account the number of visits per individual.

Figure 24: LiveWire gym access rate by age-group and gender.



Overall, 13,406 unique individuals with valid age and gender data recorded used the LiveWire gyms in 2022-23. Figure 24 shows that for the 10-19 and over-65 age groups there are gender gaps in annual gym access with female service users less likely to access gym facilities than males. Of the 10-19 age group, the gym access rate was approximately 57 per 1000 girls compared to 89 per 1000 boys, whilst for over-65s the rate of access was 50 per 1000 men, and 31 per 1000 women.

Figure 25: LiveWire group workout access by age-group and gender.



For group workouts, age, and gender data for 4,145 individuals was available for 2022-23. Women were more likely to access this physical activity offer than men for all age-groups (Figure 25). Group work out was

most popular amongst 40-64 year-old women with an access rate of 43 per 1000 women, however this is still less than the proportion of 40-64 women that used the gym in the same year (69 per 1000) (Figure 24). This does not consider multiple attendances but only estimates the proportion of individuals that attended group workout once over the course of a year.

Figure 26: LiveWire swimming access by age-group and gender.

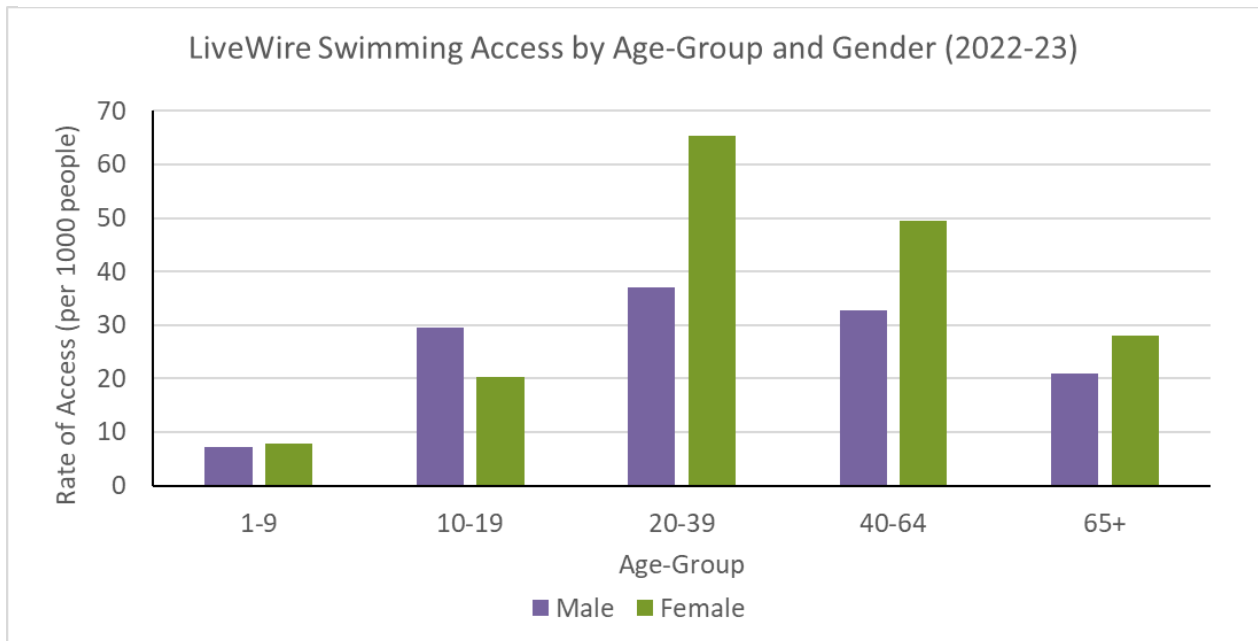


Figure 26 highlights the rate of swimming access per 1000 individuals by age-group and gender. It should be noted that this does not include swimming lessons and that there is a significant proportion of visits (around 40,000 per year) for which demographic data is not recorded as individuals can attend and pay to swim on the day without giving full personal details. As such, this swimming data should be interpreted with caution as it does not give a complete picture of swimming access. Of the 7,383 unique attendees with complete age and gender data, the 20-39 age-group were the most likely cohort to access swimming for both women (65 per 1000 women) and men (37 per 1000 men).

Figure 27: Rate of access for LiveWire leisure activities by IMD quintile.

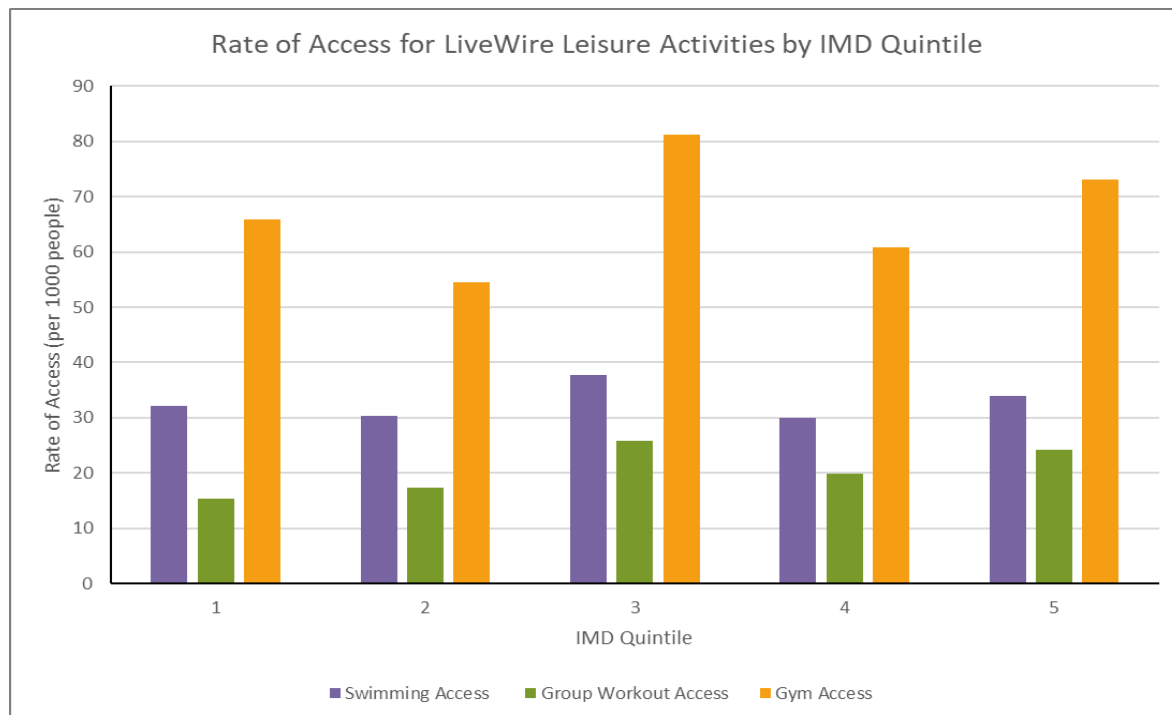


Figure 27 shows the rate of access for three LiveWire leisure offers (swimming, group workout and gym) by IMD quintile for individuals that had complete and valid age, gender, and postcode data. As described before, there was significant missing data for swimming access and these rates do not include swimming lessons. Overall, 6,824, 3,849, 12,464 individuals with valid data for swimming, group workout and gym, respectively, were included. Rates of access were calculated by deprivation quintile using 2021 census data for lower super output areas.¹⁵

There is no obvious trend in gym or swimming access rate by IMD quintile (Figure 27). However, a trend was present for swimming in the 10-19 age-group with quintile 1 residents 44% less likely to access swimming compared to quintile 5. Gym access and swimming access rates are highest in quintile 3 at 81 people per 1000 and 38 people per 1000, respectively. For group workout, individuals from the least deprived areas were more likely to access groupwork (quintile 5 access rate: 24 per 1000 people) than those from the most deprived areas (quintile 1 access rate: 15 per 1000 people).

Liverpool and Cheshire County Football Associations

Warrington falls within the catchment of both Cheshire Football Association (FA) and Liverpool County Football Association; however, some clubs are affiliated with Lancashire FA^{16,17}. These organisations are responsible for development and administration of football competitions and oversee and develop local clubs. Warrington has different county FAs of varying size catchment and population characteristics e.g.,

¹⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/create/filter-outputs/f3cd6838-4815-4052-bd3c-c28b409d50ec#get-data>

¹⁶ 28-areas-of-overlapping-associations.pdf

¹⁷ Warrington-Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Assessment Report.pdf

socioeconomic deprivation. As each county FA will have a different population to pool from, participation data will not be presented in rates but be presented by county FA and in numbers.

Table 4: Liverpool County Football Association: Warrington Player Registration

League	Age	Sex	Number of Players
Warrington Junior League	U7-U18	Male	3,354
Warrington Junior League	U7-U19	Female	116
Warrington Junior Saturday League	U14-16	Male	843
Warrington Junior Saturday League	U14-16	Female	11
Warrington Girls Sunday League	U8-15s	Female	415
Warrington District League	Open	Male	501
Warrington Sunday League	Open	Male	181

Registration data for various leagues in Warrington was kindly provided by Liverpool County FA (Table 4). This illustrates that almost 8 times as many males are registered to play than females across youth leagues. Data shared by Cheshire FA, also shows a large gap in male and female participation, with over 4 times as many male under-19 Warrington football players registered with the Cheshire FA than female (Figure 29).

Figure 29: Number of players registered to Cheshire FA by age-group and sex.

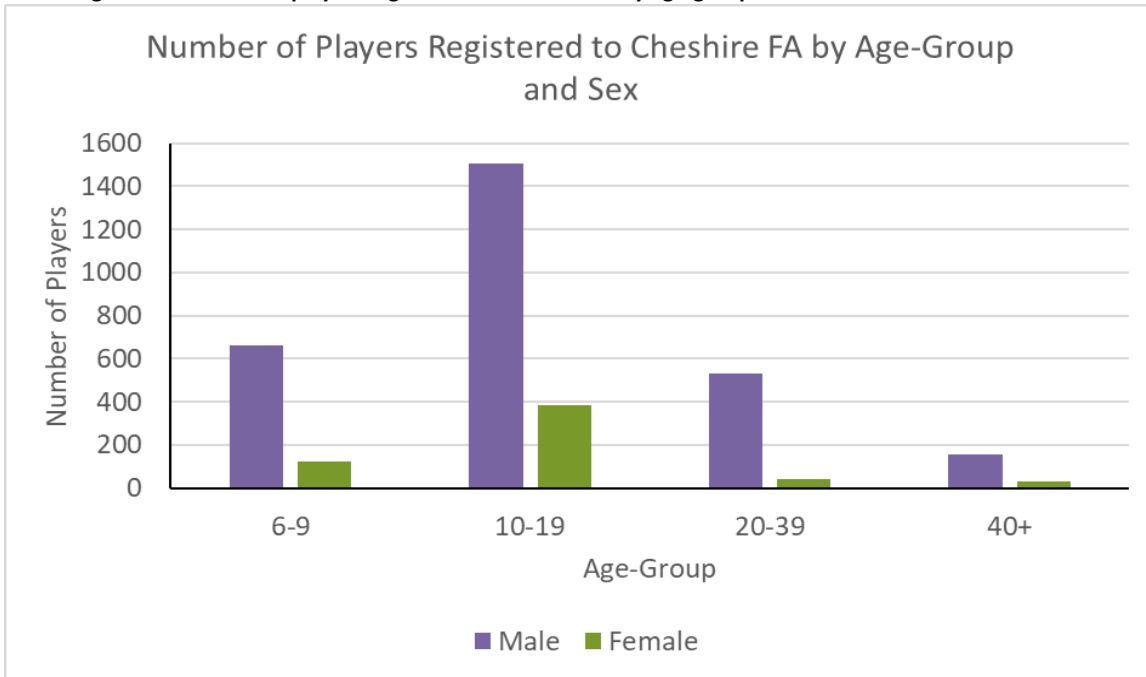


Figure 28: Number of players registered to Cheshire FA by IMD quintile and sex.

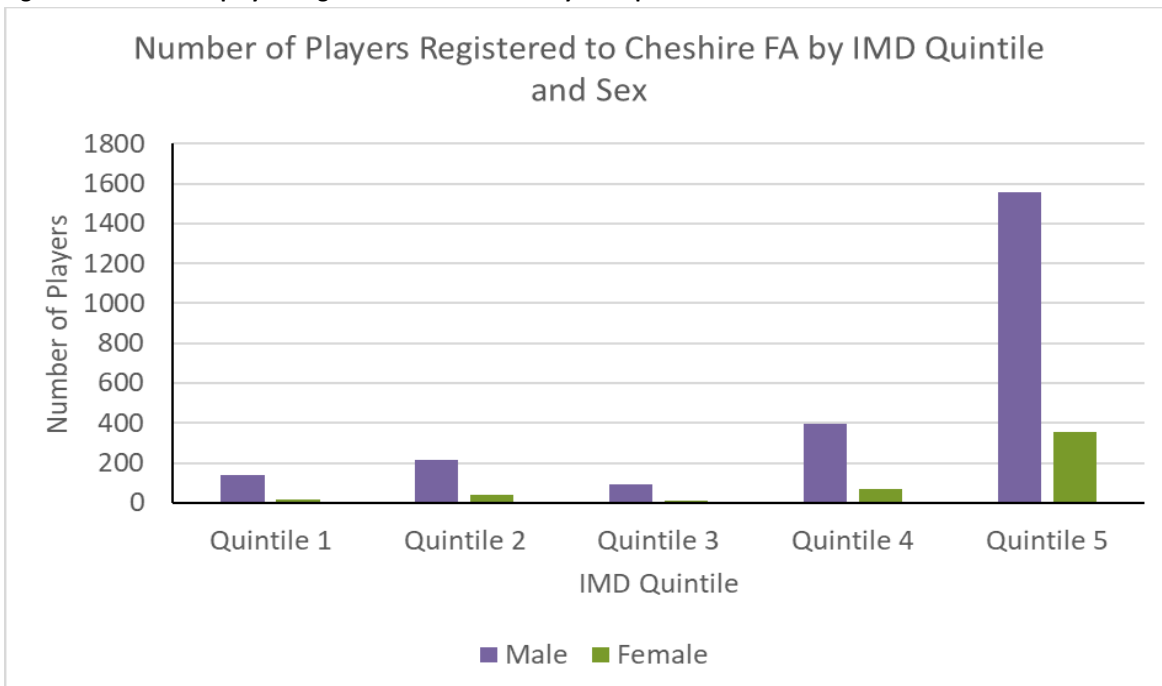


Figure 28 shows the distribution of deprivation quintile of Cheshire FA registered players from Warrington. The least deprived, quintile 5 has the highest number of participants (1557 male and 357 female) whilst quintile 3 has the lowest (96 male and 12 female). Whilst this may indicate that deprivation influences playing for a football club, it should be noted that the Cheshire FA catchment is in the more affluent south

of Warrington¹⁸ and so does not contain the more deprived central 6 wards¹⁹. No deprivation quintile data for players playing for clubs outside of Cheshire FA catchment was available for this analysis.

Warrington Wolves Foundation

Warrington Wolves Foundation is a charitable foundation that provides a range of physical activity and aspirational programmes, primarily aimed at people living with disabilities of all ages. The programmes include:

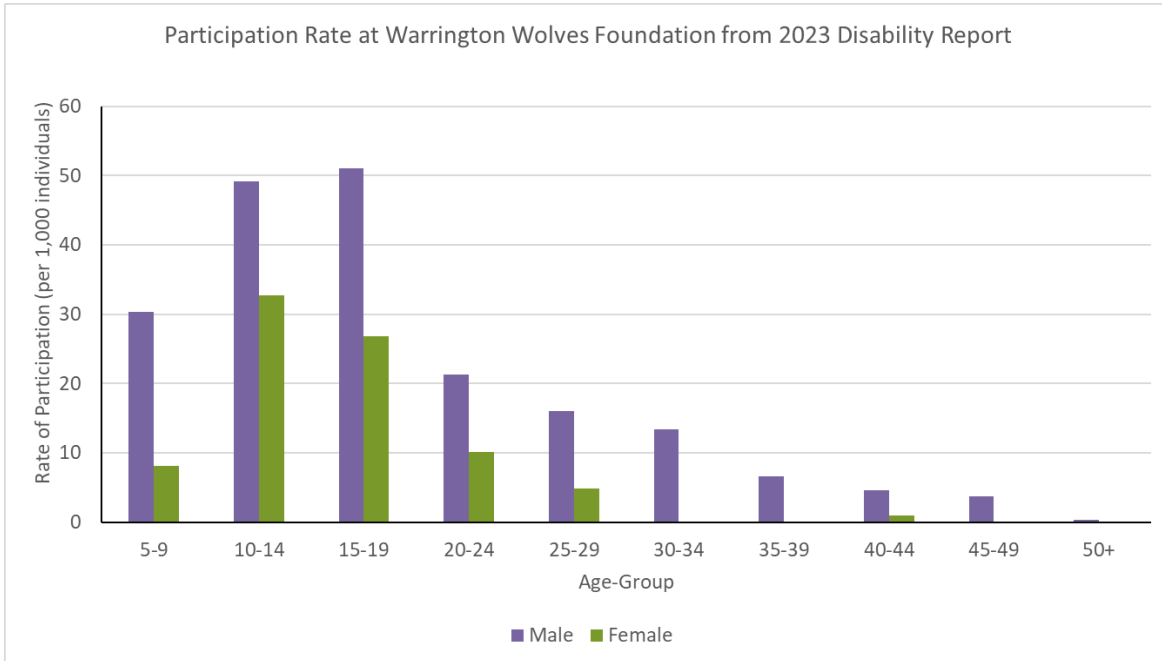
- Physical Disability Rugby Leagues (one for adults and one for children)
- Wheelchair Rugby League
- Learning Disability Rugby League
- Trampolining for individuals with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Wolves in Motion (physical activity for older individuals that experience loneliness and social isolation)
- Multi-Sports (for individuals aged 12 and over with SEND)
- Active Minds (physical activity sessions for adults with mental health conditions to aid transition back into community)
- FitAbility (for adults with learning disabilities, in partnership with LiveWire & MacIntyre)
- Disability Football and Dance (children with SEND)
- Cubs' development session (rugby league coaching for 4-6 year olds)
- Walking Rugby (aimed at older participants)
- RugBees (aimed encouraging physical activity in 6-11 year old girls)
- Wolf Club (aimed at over-5s with SEND, includes disability dance and trampolining)
- Wolf Print (theatre, performance, music, and art for young adults with disabilities)

Warrington Wolves Foundation kindly shared data from January to December 2023 on some of the characteristics of the attendees and parents that participate in programmes that are tailored towards people with disabilities, namely Learning Disability Rugby League (LDRL), Physical Disability Rugby League (PDRL), Total Sport (which includes disability football), Wheelchair Rugby, Wolf Club, Wolf Print.

¹⁸ lp22_-_wbc_playing_pitch_strategy_july_2017.pdf (warrington.gov.uk)

¹⁹ warrington_2019_deprivation_profile_report.pdf

Figure 30: Participation rate at Warrington Wolves Foundation from 2023 Disability Report



By taking the number of participants in each age-group/gender/deprivation quintile and dividing that by the total number of Warrington individuals in each of these groups with a disability (as defined under the Equality Act) according to Census 2021 data^{20,21}, we can estimate the rate of participation in the Warrington Wolves Foundation of various disabled groups.

Of the participants that were included in the 2023 disability report, 125 were male (72%) and 48 (28%) were female. Overall, 92 participants were in the 10-14 and 15-19 age-groups, comprising most of the participant cohort. Male 15-19 year-olds with disabilities were most likely to engage with the range of Warrington Wolves Foundation offers, with a participation rate of 51 per 1000 individuals (Figure 30). The highest participation rate amongst girls with disabilities was in the 10-14 age-group at 32 per 1000 individuals.

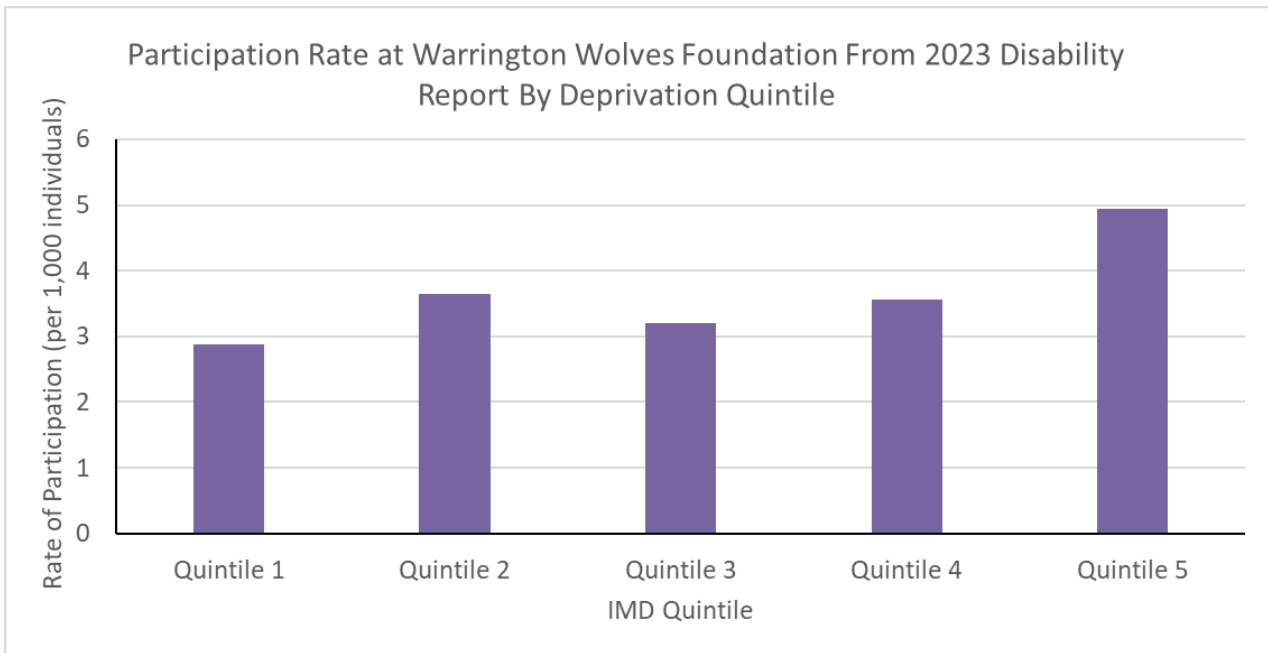
In addition to the extensive offer to people with disabilities, Warrington Wolves Foundation also provide:

- Touch rugby league (for people wishing to socialise and participate in a minimal contact variant of rugby league)
- A player and coach development pathway (to educate attendees on sleep, nutrition, sports psychology)
- Holiday camps (for rugby development, RugBees, and Wolfie’s Holiday Camp)
- Walking Touch Rugby (in partnership with Rugby League Cares organisation and Warrington NHS trust)

²⁰ Age, disability and sex - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

²¹ Disability - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Figure 31: Participation rate at Warrington Wolves Foundation From 2023 Disability Report by deprivation quintile.



Individuals living in the least deprived (quintile 5) areas in Warrington were over 70% more likely to engage with Warrington Wolves Foundation offers than those living in the most deprived areas (quintile 1) (Figure 31). Individuals from quintile 5 with a disability had a participation rate of approximately 5 per 1000, which decreased with increasing deprivation to 2.9 per 1000 in quintile 1.

It should be noted that the rates of participation discussed above are described over the course of a year and therefore do not account for the number of attendances for a given individual. In addition, by dividing the number of participants by the total number of individuals classified as disabled under the Equality Act, the participation rate assumes that all individuals with a disability are eligible to engage in the Wolves offer, regardless of disability type or severity, which may not be the case.

Table 5: Attendances and Contact Hours of Various Warrington Wolves Foundation Physical Activity Programmes

	Attendees	Attendances	Contact hours	Sessions Delivered
Learning Disability Super League	53	793	977	40
Physical Disability Rugby League Team	35	805	851	43
Total Sport: Disability Football	15	133	133	17
Total Sport: Sports Camp	50	277	1208	12
Wheelchair Rugby League	25	302	545	40
Wolf Club: Trampolining	42	407	407	27
Wolf Club	61	730	1440	29

Table 5 illustrates the number of attendees and attendance of various Warrington Wolves Foundation physical activity programmes for people with disabilities from January to December 2023. The total number of participants was highest in Wolf Club (61) followed by the Learning Disability Super League (53). Whilst the Physical Disability Rugby League Team generated the most attendances (805) followed by the Learning Disability Super League (793). Wolf Club had the greatest number of Contact hours (1440) followed by Sports Camp (1208).

Warrington Voluntary Action

Warrington's voluntary sector also provide physical activity opportunities. Warrington Voluntary Action Good Neighbours team organise individual walks where volunteers accompany someone, who may be socially isolated, as a walking buddy²². In addition, they offer a 12-week low-impact, chair-based physical activity program at home for individuals at risk of a fall to improve confidence and mobility so that they can access other social and physical opportunities locally²³.

Parkrun

A weekly, volunteer-led 5Km Parkrun is held in Victoria Park on Saturdays at 9:00²⁴. It is for all abilities and free to attend but registration is required beforehand. Parkrun is a regular community event that participants can walk, jog, or run. In 2023, across 51 Warrington Parkruns over 5,100 different participants took part 20,229 times – the average participant took part in 4 Parkruns (personal communication). However, Warrington residents registered on Parkrun are free to run in other Parkruns in bordering areas (Widnes, Runcorn, St Helens) and so may not be captured in these figures.

Warrington Youth Zone

Warrington Youth Zone is a local youth charity that provides a safe, fun, and inspiring space for young people aged 7-19, and up to 25 for those with additional needs. In addition to providing a range of engaging activities in arts, music, media, drama, cooking and career services, Warrington Youth zone has five different state of the art sport facilities which is open from Monday to Sunday with open and targeted sessions. Facilities consist of a boxing gym, climbing wall, fitness studio, multi-sports hall, and roof top all-weather football pitch.

²² Good Neighbour - Walking Buddy | Warrington Voluntary Action (warringtonva.org.uk)

²³ Good Neighbours | Warrington Voluntary Action (warringtonva.org.uk)

²⁴ home | Warrington parkrun | Warrington parkrun

Service Use Key Findings:

1. Women are more likely than men to be referred to the SOYF programme.
2. Membership of the LiveWire walking group is least likely amongst people living in the deprived areas (quintiles 1 and 2).
3. The proportion of men accessing LiveWire gyms is greater than women, particularly in the 10-19 and over-65 age-groups.
4. The proportion of women accessing LiveWire group workouts is greater than men, particularly in 20-39, 40-64 and over-65 age-groups.
5. In the 10-19 age-group, quintile 1 residents are over 40% less likely to access LiveWire swimming pools than those in quintile 5. However, this doesn't include swimming lessons, pay-as-you-go swimming and there is considerable incomplete swimming data.
6. Group work out access is lower in more deprived neighbourhoods (quintiles 1 and 2) than those in the least deprived neighbourhoods (quintiles 4 and 5).
7. Male participation is higher than female participation in football and the Warrington Wolves Foundation's programme of sport for individuals with disabilities.
8. Participation in Warrington Wolves Foundation programme of activities for individuals with disabilities is lowest amongst quintile 1 residents and 70% higher amongst quintile 5 residents.

Recommendations:

1. Work with partners to promote awareness of physical activity offers and referral routes across the health and social care system through the development of a physical activity service directory.
2. Consider outreach work to encourage swimming amongst children and young people from more deprived backgrounds and identify factors contributing to the gap in swimming access.
3. Look to reduce gender gaps in service uptake by providing male-orientated group classes and reviewing the gym offer and promotion to encourage female access.
4. Consider factors affecting lower uptake of group workouts, walking groups and disability physical activity sessions amongst residents living in more deprived areas and address through targeted promotional campaigns, and ensuring programmes are accessible and affordable.

Active Travel

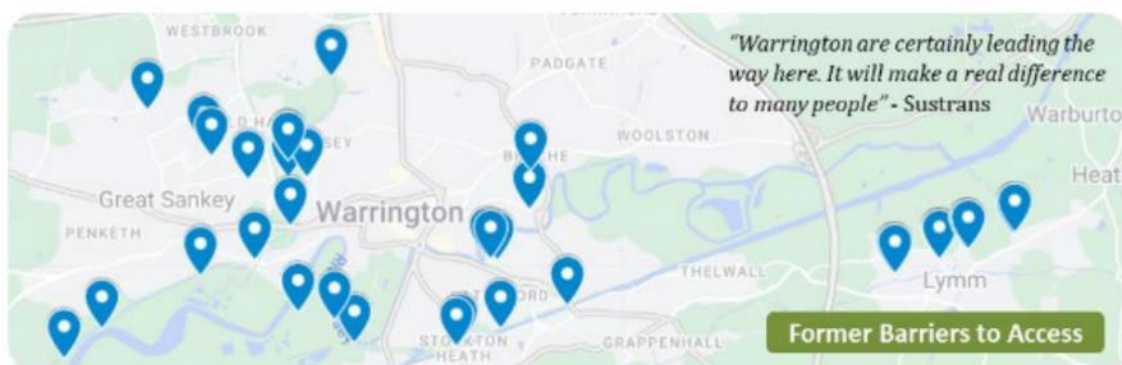
Active travel involves using physical activity, such as walking, running, cycling, or wheeling, to undergo day-to-day business. In order to achieve greater rates of active travel, residents must feel enabled to walk or cycle and wish to do this. The 2019 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan²⁵ gave an overview of the current state of transport in Warrington, described the active travel network and the change in infrastructure required to encourage participation. The plan described a programme of work that will be undertaken and identifies an approach to deliver this modal shift by:

- Providing a network of primary, neighbourhood and strategic greenway cycle corridors to act as a core route for the highest volume of journeys.
- Improving the 'last mile' of journeys into the Town Centre for pedestrians and cyclists
- Creating a network of quieter streets where children can play, neighbours catch up, air pollution is lower, and walking and cycling are the natural choices.

Since 2019, £5 million of new funding has been provided for active travel projects with themes of revitalising the greenway network, enabling access for all, and enabling active travel in communities²⁶. The 2023 Enabling Active Travel in Warrington: Annual Delivery Report describes active travel rates locally, outlines various engagement schemes and infrastructure projects including:

- New cycle routes in Great Sankey
- Improvements to the Trans Pennine Trail
- Removal of over 30 barriers that restrict access to those with mobility issues (working with Sustrans and Warrington Disability Partnership) (Figure 32)
- improvements and widening of paths in multiple green spaces (Sankey Valley, Woolston Park, Victoria Park)
- A new Cyclops junction in Bewsey

Figure 32: Former Barriers to Access



(Taken from Enabling Active travel in Warrington: Annual Delivery Report 2023)

²⁵ Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (warrington.gov.uk)

²⁶ Enabling Active Travel in Warrington Annual Delivery Update December 2023

Warrington Health & Wellbeing Survey 2023

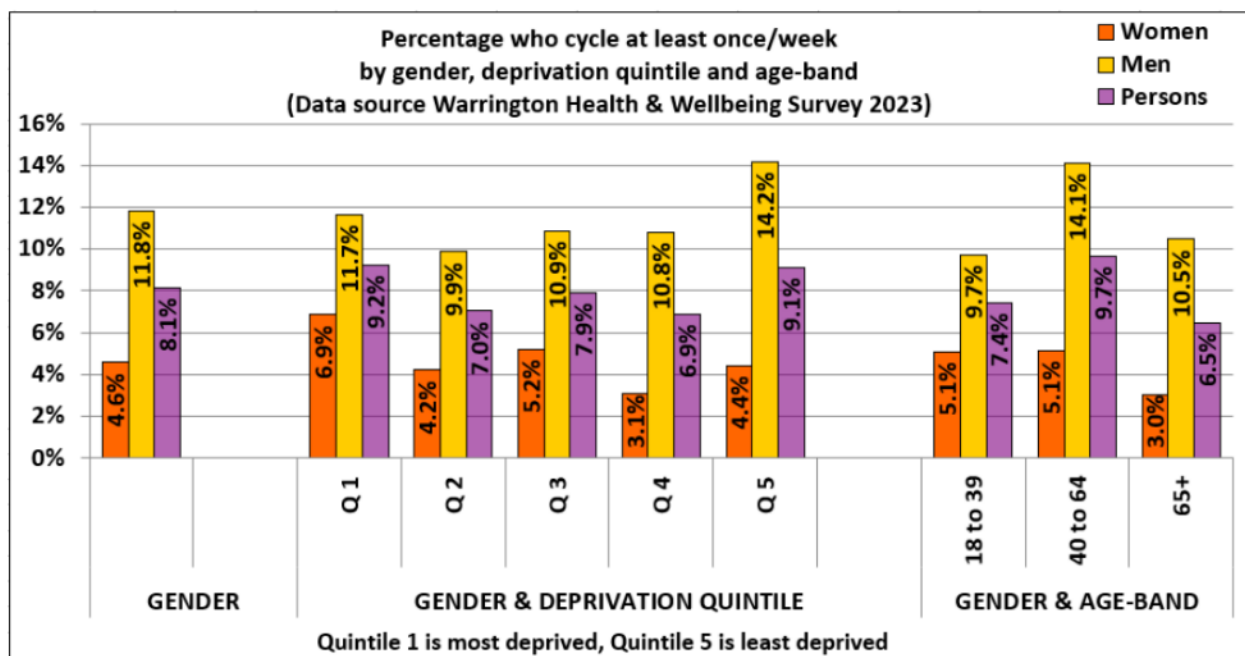
The Warrington Health & Wellbeing Survey collected recent data on the proportion and frequency of cycling amongst adult respondents, in addition to attitudes towards cycling. Respondents were asked, which category best describes them (Table 6).

Table 6: Cycling Frequency

Response	%
I cycle at least once a week	8%
I cycle more than once a month (but less than once a week)	6%
I cycle less than once a month	12%
I do not cycle but would like to	23%
I don't cycle because of health issues	13%
I do not cycle and do not want to	38%

Of the 4,289 valid responses, the vast majority of respondents (74%) do not cycle, and the largest group of respondents do not wish to cycle (38%). Of the 26% of respondents that do cycle, 1 in 5 were new or recently returned to cycling.

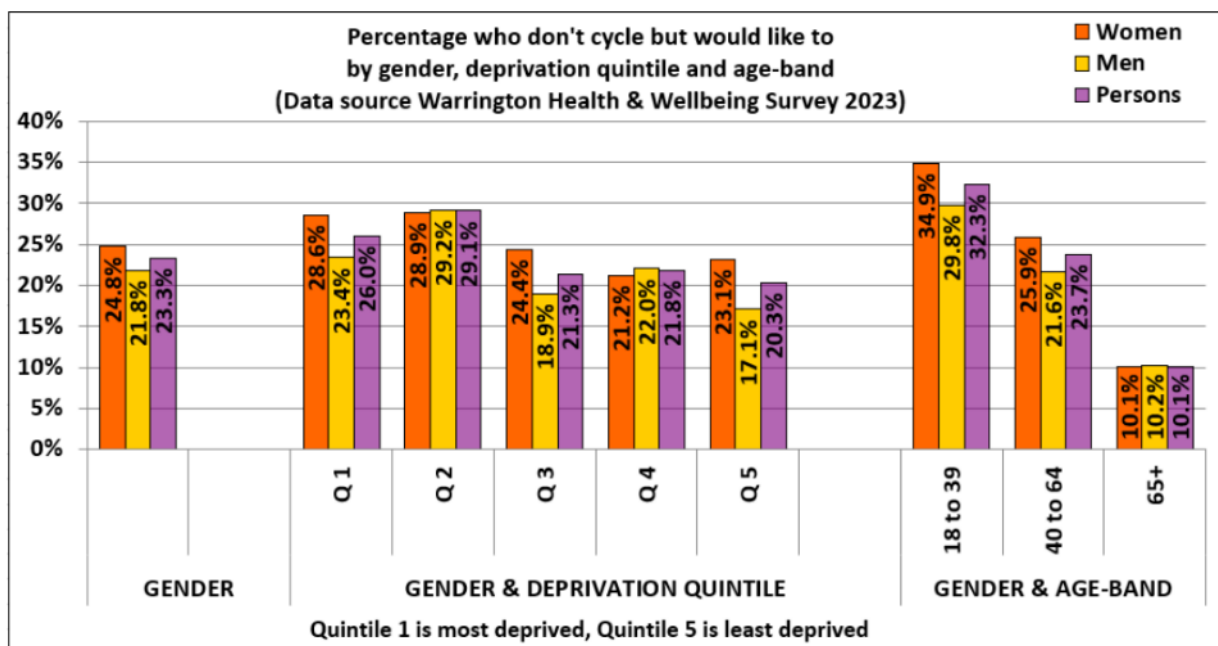
Figure 33: Percentage who cycle at least once/week by gender, deprivation quintile and age-band.



Of the 1 in 12 (8%) that cycle at least once/week, a higher proportion were men (11.8%) than women (4.6%) (Figure 33). In women, there was little difference by age-band whilst for men there was a higher proportion amongst 40-64 year olds (14%) compared to the 18-39 and over-65s (approximately 10%). The proportion cycling at least once a week was highest in deprivation quintile 1 (9.2%) and quintile 5 (9.1%).

Women were significantly less likely to cycle compared to the Warrington average (across all age-bands) and 40-64 year-old men were significantly more likely.

Figure 34: Percentage who don't cycle but would like to by gender, deprivation quintile and age-band.



A quarter (25%) of women and 22% of men said they do not cycle but would like to (Figure 34). When looking by age-band, 18-39 year-olds (32%) were more likely to say they do not cycle but want to than 40-64 year-olds (24%) and over-65s (10%). The proportion was highest amongst individuals from deprived quintiles 1 and 2 (26% and 29%) than quintiles 3, 4 and 5 (20-22%).

Bikeability

Smarter Travel Choices is a Warrington Borough Council-led programme which seeks to support people transitioning away from car dependence and towards more sustainable transport options. The range of approaches are described in the Warrington Local Transport Plan 4 and include supporting businesses, schools, and residential developments to develop travel plans, encouraging bike hire schemes, promoting walking, cycling groups, and providing cycle training.²⁷

An example of the Smarter Travel Choices offers is the government funded Bikeability scheme, which has been delivered in Warrington since 2007.²⁸ This is a cycle training scheme in which school children are taught how to ride a bike safely and confidently on off-road/on school premises (Level 1) and on a road with an instructor (Level 2).

²⁷ Warrington 4th Local Transport Plan Executive Summary: [1 \(warrington.gov.uk\)](http://1.warrington.gov.uk)

²⁸ Enabling Active Travel in Warrington Annual Delivery Update December 2023

Table 7 shows the total number of children that attended Bikeability sessions in 2022-23. A total of 55 primary schools delivered Bikeability sessions. Over 2100 students were taught at Level 1-2, 436 attended Bikeability balance (pre-level 1) and 151 attended level 3 training (for riding on more complex roads and cycling with other riders).

Table 7: Bikeability Training Attendances 2022-23

	Level 1/2	Balance	Plus:Learn	Level 3
Primary School	2161	436	166	58
Secondary School	-	-	-	93
Special Educational Needs School	9	-	6	-
Total	2170	436	172	151

WOW – Walk to School Challenge

Figure 35: Percentage of Children Travelling to School by Mode of Transport (WOW, 2023)



WOW is the national walk to school challenge lead by Living Streets.²⁹ In the campaign, children self-report how they travel to school, with badges to collect over the school year. In Warrington, 23 schools were involved in the WOW challenge from January 2023 to March 2023. The schools found a 22% reduction in the number of car journeys and a 6% increase in the number of children walking to school. This is equivalent to avoiding over 50,000 car journeys avoided and averting 8,400 kilos of CO2 emissions. Figure 35 shows the percentage of children that use each mode of transport in Warrington WOW schools and

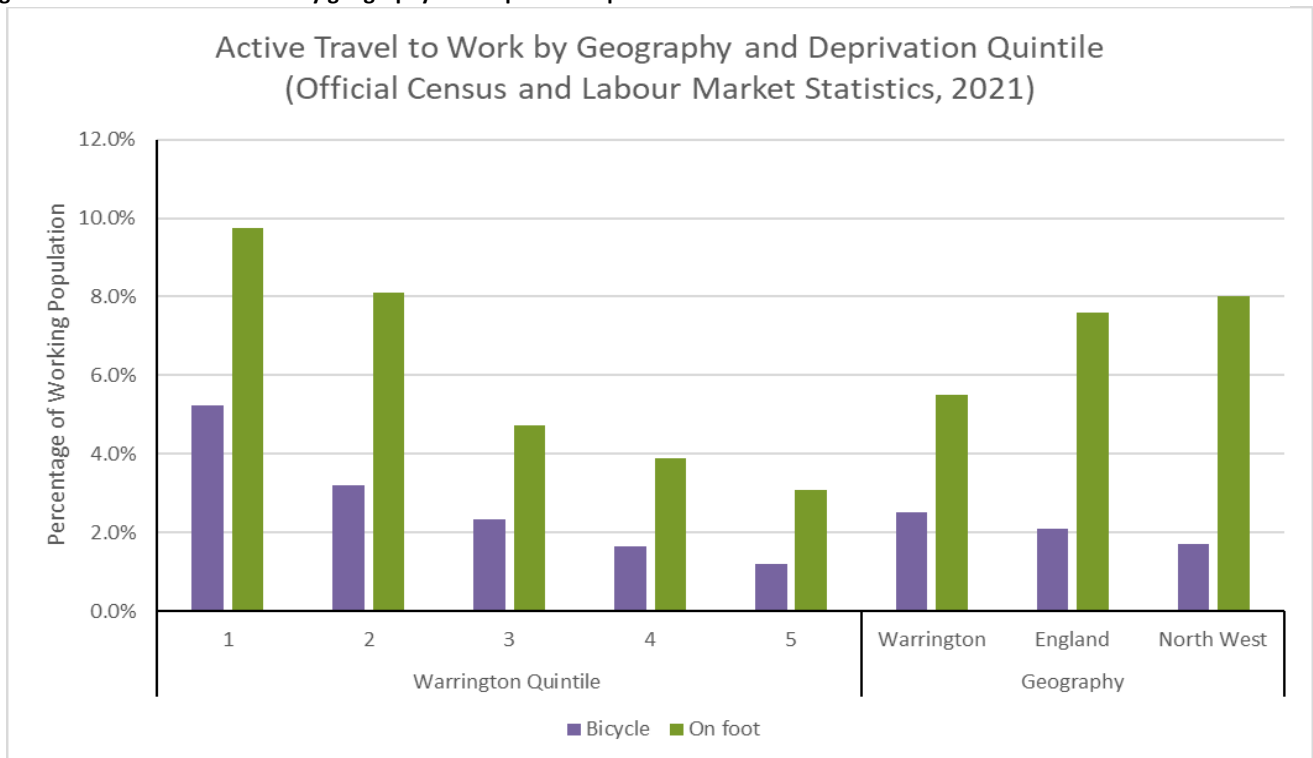
²⁹ WOW - the walk to school challenge (livingstreets.org.uk)

outlines the significant drop in driven journeys in compared to baseline, with a 16% increase in Park and Stride (where families that live far away can park a ten minute walk away from school and complete the journey on foot).

Travel to Work

Figure 36 shows the percentage of workers that commuted by active travel. In the 2021 Census, individuals in employment were asked to state their mode of transport to their workplace.³⁰ The percentage of workers cycling to work in Warrington (2.5%) was greater than in England (2.1%) and the North West of England (1.7%). Rates of walking were lower in Warrington (5.5%) compared to England (7.6%) and the North West region (8%). When looking at active travel pattern across Warrington, those in the most deprived areas (quintile 1) were more likely to travel by bike (5.2%) or foot (9.7%) compared to those in the least deprived areas (quintile 5). It should be noted that the 2021 Census took place when a national lockdown was still in place due to COVID-19, with government guidance requesting people to work from home wherever possible. It therefore may be the case that those from least deprived areas were more likely to work from home and this could influence the trend in Figure 36. In addition, people who were furloughed were asked to answer the transport to work question based on their previous travel patterns and so this would not reflect their transport in the time leading up to Census day.

Figure 36: Active travel to work by geography and deprivation quintile.

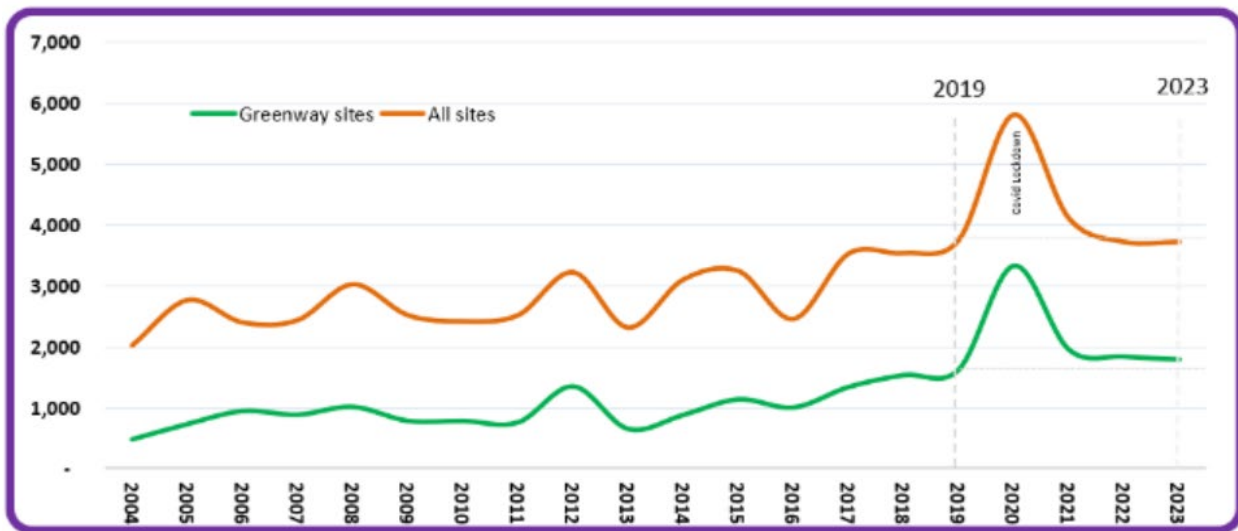


³⁰ Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics - [Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

Annual Cycle Survey 2023

In 2021, Warrington became one of the first local authorities to install LiDAR counters to collect data on both cycling and walking. As part of regular evaluation for active travel plans, cycling and walking trends are monitored annually via surveys that are undertaken at locations across Warrington. Forty 'Greenway' and 'Radial' locations were sampled in July 2023, with Figure 37: Cycling Journeys Across Warrington (2023 July Cycle Survey) showing that data from past surveys that illustrates a steady increase in cycling journeys since 2004.

Figure 37: Cycling Journeys Across Warrington (2023 July Cycle Survey)
(Taken from Enabling Active travel in Warrington: Annual Delivery Report 2023)



Active Travel Key Findings:

1. There has been an increase in cycle journeys since 2004 (excluding the peak during the COVID-19 pandemic).
2. Women are significantly less likely to cycle weekly - 1 in 8 (12%) men and 1 in 20 (5%) women cycle once a week.
3. Cycling once a week was most prevalent in both quintile 1 and 5, suggesting that regular cycling is equitable across groups experiencing different levels of deprivation.
4. A quarter (23%) of residents do not cycle but wish to; this rose to 35% amongst young women (18-39 year-old) and 26-29% for those living in more deprived areas (Quintile 1 and 2).
5. Over 2,500 school students engaged with a cycle training scheme (Bikeability) over 2022-23.
6. Twenty-three schools in Warrington engaged in the WOW walk to school challenge which had an impact on student transport preference with 16% increase in Park and Stride and 6% increase in students walking to school.
7. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of the working population cycling to work was greatest in those from deprived areas (quintile 1) compared to the least deprived (quintile 5).

Recommendations:

1. Continue to provide support to businesses, schools, health facilities and residents that wish to increase active travel engagement through schemes that widen access to bicycles and increase bike use (e.g., Bikeability, Cycle-to-work-scheme, bike rental, bike repair programmes, active travel plans).
2. Local planning and transport infrastructure should continue to prioritise active design features that promote a supportive environment for all residents to be physically active.³¹ This includes extending pedestrianised areas and green corridor routes of walking trails and cycle lanes to connect people to public transport nodes and networks.
3. Consider engaging with young women and communities in deprived areas to understand current local barriers to cycling.
4. Work with partners and stakeholders in Child Services and Education to embed active travel promoting behaviour at all schools across Warrington and increase the number of primary schools who take part in active travel challenges, such as The Daily Mile and WOW walk to school.

³¹ Active Design (sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

Green Space and Sports Facilities Assessment

Access to green space can encourage physical activity and improve both physical and mental health.³² High-quality and well-maintained green space can encourage residents to walk or cycle either to or through the green space. Green space can encourage residents to be active in their functions and the facilities they provide, be that a children's play area, an allotment for gardening or playing field for football. Warrington has a number of parks, playing fields and play areas for public access and community use.³³ Warrington meets the minimum standard of green space of 2.4 hectares of local parks or green space in close proximity for every 1000 people, however 6,197 Warrington residents (2.8%) are not within a ten-minute walk of a park³⁴.

Given the importance of accessing green space for our health and wellbeing, an assessment of open space sites was performed in Warrington as part of the Warrington Borough Council Open Space Report, March 2023.³⁵ The quality, quantity, and accessibility of sites larger than 0.2 hectares and classified as the following typologies were assessed:

1. Parks and gardens
2. Natural and semi-natural greenspace
3. Amenity greenspace
4. Provision for children and young people
5. Allotments
6. Cemeteries
7. Green corridors

³² Access to green and open spaces and the role of leisure services | The King's Fund ([kingsfund.org.uk](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk))

³³ Parks, Recreation Grounds and Play Areas | [warrington.gov.uk](https://www.warrington.gov.uk)

³⁴ Green Space Index 2023 ([arcgis.com](https://www.arcgis.com))

³⁵ [Warrington-Open Space Report.pdf](#)

Table 8: Quality Criteria for Open Space Visit

Adopted from Warrington Borough Council Open Space Report 2023

Quality criteria for open space site visit (score)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical access e.g. public transport links, directional signposts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal security e.g. site is overlooked, natural surveillance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access-social e.g. appropriate minimum entrance widths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parking e.g. availability, specific, disabled parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information signage e.g. presence of up-to-date site information, notice boards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equipment and facilities e.g. assessment of both adequacy and maintenance of provision such as seats, benches, bins and toilets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location value e.g. proximity of housing, other greenspace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site problems e.g. presence of vandalism, graffiti
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy, safe and secure e.g. fencing, gates, staff on site
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance and cleanliness e.g. condition of general landscape & features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups that the site meets the needs of, e.g. elderly, young people

Table 9: Value Criteria for Open Space Site Visit

Adopted from Warrington Borough Council Open Space Report 2023

Value criteria for open space site visit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of use (observations only) e.g. evidence of different user types (e.g. dog walkers, joggers, children), throughout the day, located near school and/or community facility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • context of site in relation to other open spaces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structural and landscape benefits e.g. well located, high quality defining the identity / area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ecological benefits e.g. supports/promotes biodiversity and wildlife habitats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educational benefits e.g. provides learning opportunities on nature/historic landscapes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social inclusion and health benefits e.g. historic elements/links (e.g. listed building, statues) and high profile symbols of local area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amenity benefits and a sense of place e.g. attractive places that are safe and well maintained, helping to create specific neighbourhoods and landmarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic benefits e.g. enhances property value, promotes economic activity, attracts people from near and far

Table 8 highlights the quality criteria of the open spaces assessed in Warrington, whilst the value of the site (in relation to the community it serves) is assessed using criteria outlined in Table 9. Sites may be of low quality but high value, and vice versa; a high value site is considered to be one that is safe, well used, well maintained, is balanced for conservation, and has features of interest, for example, good quality play equipment and landscaping. Sites with multiple uses would be considered more valuable than those with limited functions.

Overall, 799 sites were included in the audit as provision with natural/semi-natural greenspace (1077 hectares) accounting for 61% of total size of open space (Table 10). Of the amenity greenspace, natural and semi-natural greenspace, parks and gardens and provision for children and young people that were assessed, 68% were deemed high quality and 92% were designated high value. All parks were assessed as high value whilst children and young people open spaces had the greatest proportion of high-quality sites. Due to the difficulties in assessing and the function of the open space, quality and value assessments were not done for allotments, cemeteries, and green corridors, although allotments were recognised as high value open spaces.

Table 10: Assessment of Warrington Open Spaces by Size, Quality and Value.

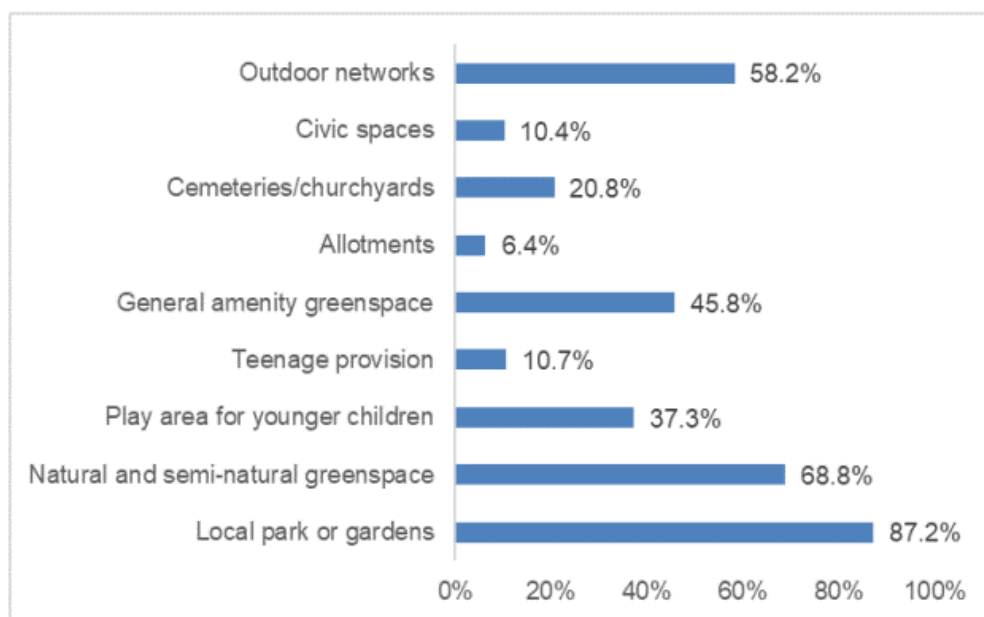
Data adapted from Warrington Borough Council Open Space Report 2023

	Number of sites	Size (hectares)	% High Quality (sites)	% High Value (sites)
Amenity Greenspace	200	179	62%	89%
Natural & Semi-natural greenspace	182	1077	64%	92%
Park and Gardens	54	285	66%	100%
Provision for Children and Young People	189	12	74%	91%
Allotments	16	17	-	-
Cemeteries	29	30	-	-
Green Corridors	129	152	-	-

Open Spaces Survey

Figure 38: Types of Open Spaces to Visit (Online Council Questionnaire)

Taken from Warrington Borough Council Open Space Report 2023



As part of the Open Space Report, Warrington residents were asked a range of questions on the council website. 625 responses were received. The most popular open spaces visited were local parks (87%) and natural/semi-natural greenspace (69%) (Figure 38). 88% of open space users cited walking as a reason for visiting whilst 52% cited exercise or sport. When examining the mode of transport to open spaces the majority of respondents walked to local parks/public gardens (77.2%) and children play areas (84%). Cycling was most often used to access outdoor networks (26%) and teenage provision (17%).

Respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with the availability and quality of open space provision. Over half of respondents were quite or very satisfied with the availability (58.7%) and quality (50.4%) of open space, whilst 8.5% were very unsatisfied by accessibility and quality and 14.8% and 19.5% were quite unsatisfied with the availability and quality, respectively.

When asked 'What would improve open space provision for you?', the majority said better maintenance and care of features (66.5%) whilst an improved range of facilities (47%), more wildlife/habitat promotion (46%) and greater attractiveness (45.2%) were the next most popular requests (Table 11).

The Warrington Borough Council Open Space Report identified specific open spaces for prioritising investment. These should be prioritised under the core, overall recommendations of:

- 1) Sites helping or with the potential to help serve areas identified as having gaps in catchment mapping should be prioritised as opportunities for enhancement.
- 2) Ensure low quality/value sites helping to serve potential gaps in accessibility catchments are prioritised for enhancement.
- 3) Recognise areas with sufficient provision in open space and how they may be able to meet other areas of need.

Warrington Borough Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports:

Table 11: Public Opinion on Improving Open Space Provision

Adapted from Warrington Borough Council Open Space Report 2023

Answer Option	Percentage of Respondents
Better maintenance and care of features	66.5%
Better and wider range of facilities (i.e. play equipment, seating, refreshments)	47%
More wildlife/habitat promotion	46%
Greater attractiveness (e.g. flowers, trees)	45.2%
Improved access to and within sites	25.4%
Greater community involvement	18.4%
More public events	17.7%
Greater information on sites	13.3%
Other	11.7%

The Warrington Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) involved a comprehensive assessment of the current and future supply and demand of infrastructure and pitches to support outdoor sport development in Warrington.³⁶ The assessment provided evidence of the current state of Warrington outdoor sport facilities and pitches in 2022, auditing the quantity, accessibility, quality of facilities, engaging with local teams to identify potential changes to the supply and demand of facilities and forecasting future demand based on population growth and participation growth by consulting teams.

The pitches and outdoor sports included in the analysis were:

- Football pitches
- Third generation artificial turf pitches
- Cricket pitches
- Rugby union pitches
- Rugby league pitches
- Hockey pitches
- Athletics track
- Outdoor tennis courts
- Outdoor bowling greens
- Cycling
- Golf Courses
- Other grass pitches (Gaelic football, American football, lacrosse, polo).

³⁶ Warrington-PPS---Assessment-Report--Final-.pdf ([wla.int](#))

The report provides detailed analysis of the number and quality of available pitches, demand (unmet, latent, imported, exported and future) for pitches, overplaying on pitches and spare capacity. This analysis has been used to provide both site-specific recommendations to improve quality and/or capacity of pitches and overall recommendations for sport/pitch type across Warrington in the PPOSS³⁷. In addition, the PPOSS outlines 9 strategic recommendations for Warrington, which are aligned to the three themes from Sport England's Planning For Sport Guidance that make up the PPOSS's objectives³⁸:

- Objective 1: To protect the existing supply of outdoor sport provision and ancillary facilities where it is needed for meeting current and future needs.
 - Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that playing pitches and outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.
 - Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
 - Maximise community use of education facilities where needed.

- Objective 2: To enhance outdoor sport provision and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.
 - Improve quality.
 - Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites.
 - Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding.
 - Secure developer contributions.

- Objective 3: To provide new outdoor sport provision and ancillary facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.
 - Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current facility stock.
 - Identify opportunities to increase to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

Warrington Borough Council Indoor & Built Sports Facilities

In 2022, an audit of indoor and built sports facilities was conducted.³⁹ The methodology of the audit was similar to the PPOSS with the assessment of supply (quantity, quality, accessibility, and availability) and demand (participation, unmet demand, latent demand, dispersed demand, future demand) for built sports facilities.

The assessment included examining the provision of and demand for:

- Sports halls
- Swimming pools
- Health and fitness suites
- Squash courts

³⁷ [Warrington-PPS---Strategy---Action-Plan--Final2-.pdf \(wla.int\)](#)

³⁸ [planning-for-sport-guidance.pdf \(sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#)

³⁹ [3-028-2122-Warrington-Indoor built facilities---Needs-Assessment--Final-report.pdf \(wla.int\)](#)

- Gymnastics facilities
- Indoor bowls
- Indoor tennis
- Other facilities

The detailed assessment informed the Warrington Borough Council Indoor & Built Sport Facilities: Final Strategy which provided recommendations by sport, indoor site and at the strategic level (for management and programming) in the short- (1-2 years), medium- (3-5 years) and long-term (5-10 years).⁴⁰ The action plan priorities were considered as either protect, enhance or provide, in keeping with Sport England planning objective themes.

Key recommendations were aligned to strategic objectives for management and programming:

- Objective: Ensure that sports facilities remain attractive and fit for purpose.
 - Action site by site recommendations and ensure ongoing review of facility condition takes place.
- Objective: Environmental sustainability and climate crisis.
 - In line with WBC carbon reduction targets, ensure that existing facilities are made as energy efficient as possible and that any new developments consider energy efficiency as a high priority.
- Objective: Maintain/increase community use of education facilities (sport halls)
 - Increase the number of school sports halls available to the community. Reinforce this with Community Use Agreements (CUAs). Market and promote the availability of the current stock of sports halls to more sections of the community.
- Objective: Planning
 - Ensure that Strategy recommendations are acted upon.

⁴⁰ 3-028-2122-Warrington-indoor_built_sport_facilities_Strategy---Final.pdf ([wla.int](#))

Green Space and Sport's Facilities Travel Key Findings:

1. Two-thirds (68%) of parks, amenity greenspace, natural/semi-natural greenspace and spaces for children and young people are high quality and 92% are high value.
2. Most residents are satisfied with the availability and quality of open space; however, some residents were very unsatisfied with quality and availability (8.5%).
3. The majority of residents identified that maintenance and care of features would improve open space provision, along with a greater range of facilities, wildlife promotion and greater aesthetics.
4. The recently developed Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and Indoor and Built Sport Facilities Strategy provide a comprehensive assessment of future supply and demand for sports facilities, with recommendations at operational and strategic levels.

Recommendations:

1. Engage with local communities and support the maintenance, re-purposing, or enhancement of green space in communities with reduced access and increased need.
2. Support local clubs, schools, leisure providers and the council with improving and increasing the quality and number of sports facilities and ensure equitable access to facilities for all community members via the promotion of Community Use Agreements.
3. Develop a support network that helps small sports and leisure clubs to flourish and develop plans to improve their facilities, with the aim of increasing the range of participation opportunities for women, those living in the most deprived areas or people aged over 65 years.

Conclusion

This physical activity needs assessment has used data from local and national surveys, physical activity partners and providers and council reports to outline the current level of physical activity need in Warrington. Overall, Warrington has higher rates of physical activity and lower rates of physical inactivity than the national and North-West average, however, these rates do not differ significantly from the national average. In addition, significant inequalities in physical activity levels exist within Warrington.

Women are less likely to meet the UK CMOs' physical activity guidance of 150 equivalent minutes of weekly physical activity, in keeping with the national trend. Women from more deprived areas and older age-bands are the least likely to be active and are least likely to undertake strength-based activities twice weekly. COVID-19 has had a significantly worse impact on the activity levels of women from more deprived areas than the Warrington average. Women, particularly those from the most deprived areas, were more likely to describe lack of energy, affordability, and health issues as a barrier to physical activity.

These gender inequalities in physical activity develop early on in life, with primary school girls reporting that they are less likely to be active or very active compared to boys and are less likely to play for their school team. The gender gap in physical activity appears to widen in secondary school with a greater proportion of girls reporting they are not active and a smaller proportion reporting they are very active. Despite higher rates of female access to various physical activity programmes and services, including group-work outs, walking groups, swimming access and the Stay On Your Feet Programme, women are less active than men in Warrington. Women are significantly less likely to ride a bike at least once per week, but young women are the single largest group that report not cycling but wanting to.

Socioeconomic factors play an important role in affecting Warrington residents' ability to be active. Living in a more deprived area was found to increase the risk of physical inactivity, reduce the chance of meeting UK CMO's guidelines for physical activity and were more likely to have worse activity levels following COVID-19. Other socioeconomic measures, including occupation type, family affluence and free school meal eligibility also illustrate that negative effect higher levels of socioeconomic hardship have on physical activity levels in adults and children. Affordability was more likely to act as a barrier to physical activity in those from more deprived neighbourhoods. The uptake of various services was lower amongst residents from more deprived areas including walking groups, group workout, physical activity sessions for people with disabilities and swimming for 10-19. The relationship between deprivation and active travel is mixed picture, with higher rates of active travel to work during the COVID-19 pandemic amongst individuals living in the more deprived areas, however a recent survey shows weekly cycling is most common amongst residents in the most and least deprived areas. Those from the two most deprived quintile areas are more likely to report not cycling but wishing to.

Physical activity levels decline with age in Warrington, whilst physical inactivity levels increase considerably with age. Health problems are one of the most common reasons given as a barrier to increasing physical activity levels and most likely stated by over-65s. Various physical activity programmes have higher uptake in the middle-age and older age-groups (40-64 and over-65s) including walking clubs, group workouts and LiveWire's Stay On Your Feet programme. The proportion of residents that do not cycle but would like to decline with age.

People living with a disability in Warrington are less likely to be active than those without. Work in Warrington continues to try and increase physical activity levels in this population from youth sport programmes for children and young people with physical or learning disabilities to improving disabled access to green spaces. Whilst problems with access was the least common physical activity barrier for

Warrington residents, those that cite issues with access (including disabled access) were the least likely to meet UK CMO's physical activity guidance highlighting more work is required to widen participation to those with unmet accessibility needs.

These findings highlight local groups of people for which unmet physical activity needs exist. The findings and recommendations from this needs assessment will inform local strategy development to reduce unmet needs and inequalities in physical activity rates.

Appendix 1:

Appendix 1: Barriers to Physical Activity by Prevalence and Strength

