5. HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

5.4 Physical Activity

This section considers the impact and benefits of physical activity, and the risks of physical inactivity, on health and wellbeing throughout the life-course, and presents information on physical activity in the Buckinghamshire population.

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has issued guidelines on recommended levels of physical activity which deliver benefits to health at different life stages[1], as follows:

Box 1 Chief Medical Officer Recommendations on Physical Activity

In the early years (ages 0-5 years)

1. Physical activity should be encouraged from birth, particularly through floor-based play and water-based activities in safe environments
2. Children of pre-school age who are capable of walking unaided should be physically active daily for at least 180 minutes, spread throughout the day
3. All under 5s should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary for extended periods (except time spent sleeping)

For children and young people aged 5-18 years

1. Engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day
2. Activities that strengthen muscle and bone should be incorporated at least three days a week
3. Minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary for extended periods

For adults aged 19-64 years

1. Aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more. Comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or a combination of moderate and vigorous intensity activity
2. Undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week
3. Minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary for extended periods

For older adults aged 65+

As for adults aged 19-64, but in addition:

1. Those aged 65+ at risk of falls should also incorporate physical activity to improve balance and co-ordination on at least two days a week.

5.4.1. The impact of physical activity and physical inactivity on health

There is compelling evidence that regular physical activity can reduce the risk of ill-health, and also improve mental wellbeing and community cohesion. While activity which meets the CMO's guidelines will significantly benefit individuals' health, the greatest health gains will be made by supporting inactive people to do some physical activity. Latest research indicates that sedentary lifestyles damage health, and that even individuals who currently meet recommended levels of physical activity may be susceptible to the adverse effects of prolonged episodes of sedentary behaviour[2].

In the early years, regular physical activity helps develop motor skills, promote healthy weight, and enhance bone and muscular development and the learning of social skills[1]. Young children who play or are more physically active are more likely to achieve higher academic success, less likely to develop mental health problems, and less likely to start smoking than children who are more sedentary at this age[3].

In childhood, physical activity improves cardio-metabolic health, muscular strength, bone health and cardiorespiratory fitness, as well as psychological outcomes including improved self-esteem, reduced anxiety and stress, and improved cognitive functioning and academic achievement. There are also associations between physical activity and confidence and peer acceptance[4], and with greater levels of physical activity, health and happiness in adulthood[3].

Undertaking any amount of physical activity during adulthood is beneficial to health, but achieving the CMO's physical activity guidelines has been shown to prevent and manage over 20 chronic health conditions[5], with significant reductions in the risk of conditions including Type 2 diabetes (-40%), cardiovascular disease (-35%), falls, depression and dementia (-30%), joint and back pain (-25%) and colon and breast cancer (-20%)[1]. Increasing levels of physical activity in mid-life, irrespective of previous activity levels, has been shown to help delay or prevent the onset of dementia, disability and frailty in later life[6].

The Health Impact of Physical Inactivity tool estimates how many cases of certain diseases could be prevented in each local authority in England, if the population aged 40 to 79 were to engage in recommended amounts of physical activity (table 1)[7]. In Buckinghamshire, it is estimated that over 100 deaths and almost 1000 cases of diabetes could be prevented each year if 50% of 40 to 79 year-olds achieved recommended guidelines.

Undertaking regular physical activity has also been shown to improve cognitive function and mental wellbeing in older people with and without existing impairment[8], improve sleep, maintain a healthy weight, manage stress and generally improve quality of life.

Table 1 Estimates of conditions preventable annually for 40 to 79-year-olds in Buckinghamshire through achieving recommended levels of physical activity

	Latest Annual Figure	Preventable if 100% active	Preventable if 75% active	Preventable if 50% active	Preventable if 25% active
Total Deaths	1,618	295	202	109	17
Coronary Heart Disease (emergency hospital admissions)	762	86	59	32	5
Breast Cancer (new cases)	348	72	50	27	4
Colorectal Cancer (new cases)	220	45	31	17	3
Diabetes (prevalence)	19,541	2,682	1,839	996	153

Source: Health Impact of Physical Inactivity (HIPI) Tool, 2013

5.4.2. Information on physical activity in Buckinghamshire

The following sections draw on local data where these are available, and otherwise on regional or national data.

5.4.2.1 Early years

According to data from the Health Survey for England (HSE) 2012, 91% of children aged two to four years do not meet the CMO's recommendation to be physically active for three hours a day, and 84% of children aged two to four years engaged in low levels of physical activity, defined as less than one hour per day[9]. Applying these figures to the same age group in Buckinghamshire, it is estimated that around 9,100 children aged two to four do not achieve three hours of physical activity a day, and around 8,400 have less than one hour a day. National data also show that on weekdays around 7% of both boys and girls aged two to four were sedentary for more than six hours each day, and this increased at weekends to 10% for boys and 9% for girls.

Trends

There was little change between 2008 and 2012 in the average amount of time spent by two to four year olds in active travel, but there was a decrease in the total time they spent on other physical activity (table 2)[10].

Table 2 Time spent on physical activity (minutes per week), children aged 2 to 15 years, England 2008 and 2012

	2008			2012		
Age group (years)	**2-4**	**5-10**	**11-15**	**2-4**	**5-10**	**11-15**
BOYS						
Time spent on active travel to/from school	28	49	67	32	51	72
Time spent on any other physical activity	759	670	743	726	560	562
Total time spent on physical activity, Boys	787	719	810	748	615	635
GIRLS						
Time spent on active travel to/from school	33	45	64	31	52	67
Time spent on any other physical activity	686	634	480	645	499	403
Total time spent on physical activity, Girls	719	680	544	675	555	468

Source: Health Survey for England 2012

5.4.2.2 Children and young people

The HSE (2012) showed that nationally, 21% of boys and 16% of girls aged 5-15 years achieved recommended levels of physical activity. In the South East, levels were slightly higher than national figures for boys (26%), but the same for girls (16%)[10]. Levels of inactivity were lower for boys in the South East (32%) compared to national levels (39%), but slightly higher for girls (48% vs 45%). When applying these regional proportions to the Buckinghamshire 5-15 year old population, this suggests that for boys, 9,703 meet activity guidelines but 11,942 are inactive. For girls, this suggests that 5,678 meet the recommendations but 17,034 are inactive.

The What About YOUth? Survey[11] is a newly established national survey which aims to provide an up-to-date picture of the health and wellbeing of 15 year olds across England and at local authority level. It was carried out for the first time in 2014 and included around 1000 15 year olds from Buckinghamshire. Only 14.1% of the respondents in Buckinghamshire achieved recommended levels of 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each day, similar to the national average and slightly below the regional average (table 3). While 15 year olds in Buckinghamshire spent less time each week being sedentary than national and regional averages, there were still 60.8% of the age group who were sedentary for at least seven hours each day on average. On weekdays, 31.4% stated they were, on average, sedentary for 10+ hours a day; whereas at weekends this rose to 60.4%.

Table 3 Findings from the What About YOUth? survey on physical activity and sedentary behaviour of 15 year olds, 2014.

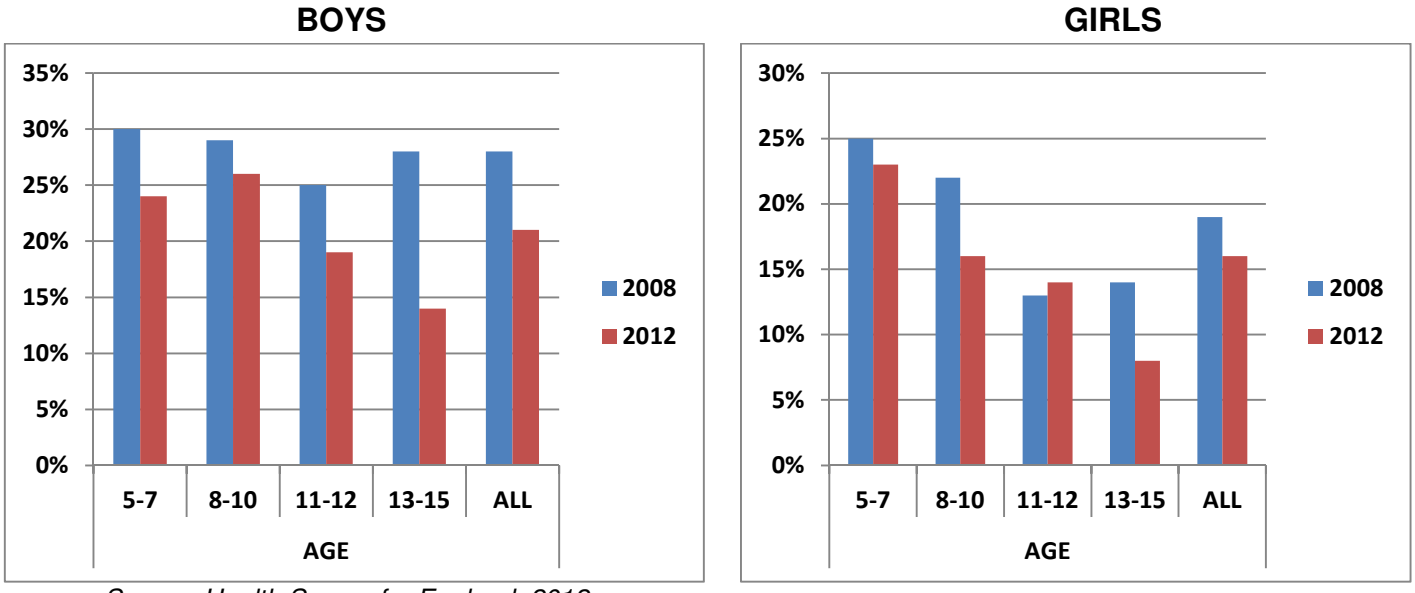
Area	Physically active for ≥1 hour per day 7 days a week	Mean daily sedentary time in the last week >7 hours per day
Buckinghamshire	14.1%	60.8%
South East	14.8%	67.8%
England	13.9%	70.1%

Source: What About YOUth? Survey, 2014

Trends

Table 3 above shows that, nationally, for both 5-10 and 11-15 year olds, there were slight increases in active travel between 2008 and 2012, but larger decreases in other forms of physical activity, with the result that the average overall time spent on physical activity decreased over this time. The decline in activity was most marked among boys aged 11-15 years. National data also shows that the proportions of boys and girls aged 5-15 meeting physical activity recommendations fell between 2008-2012, particularly among 13 to 15 year olds (figure 1)[10].

Figure 1 The proportion of five to 15 year olds in England meeting physical activity recommendations, 2008 and 2012, by age and gender



Source: Health Survey for England, 2012

5.4.2.3 Adults and older people

According to the latest Active People Survey carried out between January 2014 and January 2015, 61.8% of Buckinghamshire adults aged 16+ are 'active' (>150 minutes physical activity per week) and 20.9% of Buckinghamshire adults are classified as 'inactive' (<30 minutes per week) (table 4). Using these proportions in

the Buckinghamshire population, this suggests that around 257,300 adults in the county achieve recommended levels of activity, but around 87,000 adults do not achieve even minimum levels of activity. Young adults up to the age of 25 are the most active, and those aged 65 and over the least active. Among this older age group around 37% (equating to around 35,000 in Buckinghamshire) were 'inactive'.

Table 4 Physical activity levels among adults in Buckinghamshire, by age

Age	% active (>150 mins per week)	Equivalent number of active people in Bucks	% inactive (<30 mins per week)	Equivalent number of inactive people in Bucks
16+ (all ages)	61.8	257,300	20.9	87,000
16-25	75.6	43,404	Data not available	N/A
26-34	58.4	34,458	Data not available	N/A
35-44	62.3	44,232	19.5	13,845
45-54	68.9	54,932	12.6	10,046
55-64	61.3	37,627	20.7	12,706
65+	47.9	45,169	37.3	35,173

Source: Active People Survey 2014-15

In terms of sedentary behaviour, men are more likely than women to average six or more hours of total sedentary time per weekday (31% and 29%, respectively) and weekend day (40% and 35%, respectively). More than 40% of women and 35% of men in this country spend more than six hours a day desk-bound or sitting still[12].

Active travel can be a key means for adults and older adults to achieve physical activity guidelines. Data from the 2011 Census[13] show that, for adults aged 16 to 74 years in Buckinghamshire, the proportion choosing to actively commute to work by bicycle or walking is still very low with only 1% choosing to cycle to work and 6.1% walking to work (table 11 below). Information from the Active People Survey shows that adults in England are more likely to regularly walk and cycle for recreational purposes in rural areas, and for utility purposes in urban settings.

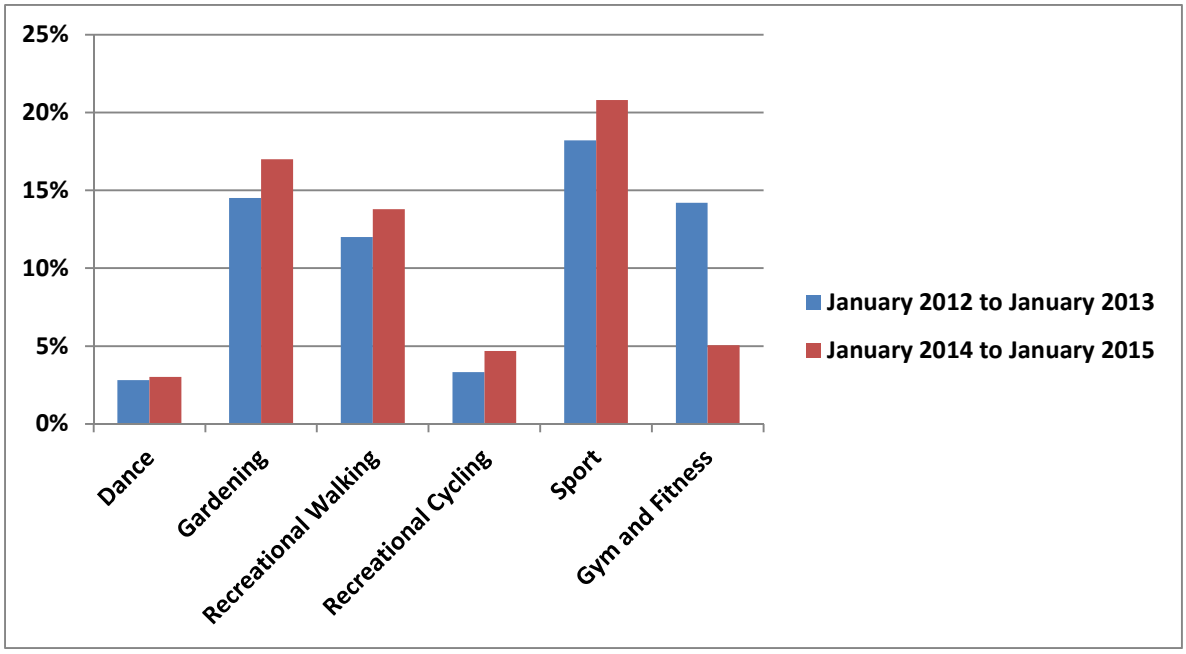
Trends

Data from the Active People Survey[14] show that since 2012, there has been a slight upward trend in the proportion of adults in Buckinghamshire who are active for more than 150 minutes a week, from 57% in 2012 to 61.8% in 2014, and a decline in the proportion of inactive adults, from 25.8% in 2012 to 20.9% in 2014. This is a positive

picture locally compared with the national trend which remained stable over this time at around 56-57% achieving recommended levels of activity and 28% inactive.

The Active People survey findings also suggest increases in participation in many forms of physical activity in Buckinghamshire between 2012 and 2015, with the exception of gym and fitness activity (figure 2).

Figure 2 Participation in different types of physical activity by adults aged 16+, Buckinghamshire 2012-2015



Source: Active People Survey 2012-2015

5.4.3 Information on physical activity in different population groups

5.4.3.1 Gender

Girls are less active than boys at all ages, as shown in table 2 and figure 1 above. Data on physical activity levels of 15 year old boys and girls in Buckinghamshire[11] (table 10) show that more girls than boys do no physical activity each week (4.7% compared to 2.2%), whereas boys are much more likely to meet the CMO guidelines of 60 minutes each day throughout the week (18.1% compared to 9.9%).

Table 5 Proportion of 15 year old boys and girls in Buckinghamshire undertaking recommended amounts of physical activity throughout the week

	No. of days per week met CMO physical activity guidelines (60 mins/day)							
	None	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Boys	2.2%	4%	14.1%	11.4%	19.2%	20.8%	10.2%	18.1%
Girls	4.7%	7.5%	19%	18.4%	15.3%	16.2%	9%	9.9%

Source: What About YOUth? Survey, 2014

However, national data from the Health Survey for England (2012) show that boys also tend to spend more time in sedentary activities than girls, with the gap widening as age increases. In addition, levels of sedentary behaviour tend to be much higher at weekends than on weekdays (table 6).

Table 6 Proportion of children who were sedentary for six or more hours per day on weekdays and weekend days, by age and sex, England 2012

	Weekdays		**Weekend days**	
Age (years)	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**
2-4	7%	7%	10%	9%
5-7	4%	4%	15%	16%
8-10	7%	3%	22%	21%
11-12	11%	6%	27%	17%
13-15	24%	16%	43%	37%

Source: Health Survey for England, 2012

This pattern was also seen in 15 year olds in Buckinghamshire[11], with significantly more young people of both genders spending time on sedentary activities at weekends than on weekdays (table 7). On weekdays 59% of boys and 64% of girls spent at least seven hours of their non-sleeping time in sedentary activities; at weekends this rose to 83% of boys and 84% of girls.

Table 7 Average sedentary behaviour on each weekday and weekend day in last week, 15 year olds in Buckinghamshire, 2014

	Weekdays					Weekend days				
	Up to 1 hour	**2-3 hours**	**4-6 hours**	**7-9 hours**	**10+ hours**	**Up to 1 hour**	**2-3 hours**	**4-6 hours**	**7-9 hours**	**10+ hours**
Boys – Bucks	0.7%	7.2%	34.3%	28.5%	29.3%	0.4%	2.6%	13.6%	22.7%	60.7%
Boys - England	0.5%	5.6%	26%	29.2%	38.7%	0.3%	1.9%	10%	20.7%	67%
Girls - Bucks	0.5%	6.3%	29.0%	30.5%	33.7%	0.2%	2.1%	14.0%	23.7%	60.0%
Girls - England	0.3%	4.8%	22.7%	27.9%	44.3%	0.2%	1.6%	9.5%	20.2%	68.5%

Source: What About YOUth? Survey, 2014

There are also differences in levels of physical activity participation between men and women in Buckinghamshire. Data from the Active People Survey in 2014/15 on levels of physical activity among 16+ year olds in Buckinghamshire show that 22% of women (around 47,200), and 19.7% of men (around 39,700) were inactive, while 57.5% of women (around 123,400) and 66.4% of men (around 134,000) achieved guidelines of more than 150 minutes of physical activity per week. The Active People Survey also highlights this gender imbalance for activity levels at a national level whereby 23.8% of men and 31.5% of women are physically inactive.

5.4.3.2 Ethnicity

There is no local data on physical activity by children and young people in different ethnic groups. For 15 year olds in England, the proportion undertaking no physical activity at all was similar across all ethnicities, although slightly lower for young white people. However, the proportion achieving recommended guidelines of 60 minutes each day was five percentage points lower for Asian young people than young people of white or mixed ethnicity (table 8). However, the same survey found that both on weekdays and at weekends, compared with other ethnic groups, 15 year olds from Asian communities spent less time being sedentary, and Black 15 year olds spent more time being sedentary[11].

Table 8 Proportion of 15 year olds in England who met physical activity guidelines on zero to seven days in the last week, by ethnicity, 2014

No. of days met guidelines in the last week	Ethnicity						
	White (%)	All BME (%)	Mixed (%)	Asian (%)	Black (%)	Other (%)	Total (all) (%)
None	4	6	5	5	6	5	5
1	9	13	11	14	14	14	10
2	16	19	15	21	18	20	16
3	17	17	15	18	16	17	17
4	15	14	16	13	13	14	15
5	15	14	15	13	15	13	15
6	9	6	8	5	7	8	8
7	14	11	14	9	12	10	14

Source: What About YOUth? Survey, 2014

Among Buckinghamshire adults aged 16 and over, data from the Active People Survey 2013-14, looking at physical activity in people from different broad ethnic groups, found that 23% of adults from the White British group and 30% of those from the Black group were inactive. Data were not available for the Asian and White–Other groups as the samples were too small. In the Active People Survey 2014-15, the proportion of adults who were active (achieving at least 150 minutes per week) was highest in the White-British group (64.3%), 57.1% among the White-Other group, and 43.6% among the Asian group. Sample sizes were too small for accurate data on other ethnic groups.

Data at a national level highlights that South Asian communities are more likely to lead less active lifestyles than other ethnic groups. For the Bangladeshi community, only 11% of women and 26% of men are active enough for good health compared with 25% and 37% respectively of the general population[12].

5.4.3.3 Socio-economic differences

National data from the Health Survey for England (2012)[10] found that there was no significant difference between socioeconomic groups in the proportions of children aged five to 15 years who met physical activity recommendations. However, comparing levels of inactivity, 47% of boys and 49% of girls in the most deprived group were 'inactive' compared to 26% and 35% in the least deprived group. Data from the What About YOUth? Survey[11] shows that 15 year olds in England were more likely to be completely inactive when living in more deprived areas, and those

living in the least deprived areas were more likely to achieve recommended activity guidelines (table 9). The same survey also found that 49% of young people living in the most deprived areas were sedentary for 10+ hours a day on weekdays and 73% for 10+ hours a day at weekends, compared with 34% and 63% respectively of young people living in the least deprived areas. These findings are supported by data from the Health Survey for England (2012)[10] which found that, for both boys and girls, the average number of hours spent daily watching TV increased as equivalised household income decreased.

Table 9 Proportion of 15-year-olds in England who met physical activity guidelines on between 0 - 7 days in the last week, by deprivation quintile, 2014

No. of days met guidelines in the last week	IMD Quintiles					
	1 Most deprived	2	3	4	5 Least deprived	Total
None	6	5	5	4	3	5
1	12	11	10	8	8	10
2	18	17	16	16	15	16
3	17	17	17	17	16	17
4	13	14	15	16	16	15
5	14	14	14	16	17	15
6	6	7	9	9	11	8
7	13	13	14	15	15	14

Source: What About YOUth? Survey, 2014

There are also differences between socioeconomic groups in Buckinghamshire in the levels of physical activity participation by adults. The Active People Survey 2014-15 found that among people in more disadvantaged socioeconomic groups (National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (SEC) 5–8), 32.5% were inactive and 50.5% were active, while among those in SEC 1-4 (the more advantaged groups) 18.4% were inactive and 62.7% were active.

The Health Survey for England (2012) found that the proportion of participants aged 16 to 74 meeting the aerobic activity guidelines increased as household income increased. In the highest quintile of equivalised household income, 76% of men and 63% of women met the guidelines, falling to 55% of men and 47% of women in the lowest income quintile. Both men and women from lower income households were more likely to be classed as inactive: 29% of men and 34% of women in the lowest

income quintile were inactive compared with 11% and 18% respectively in the highest income quintile[8].

5.4.4 Information on geographical variations in physical activity

The What About YOUth? survey shows the proportions of 15 year olds in Buckinghamshire that achieved recommended activity levels compared to Buckinghamshire's CIPFA comparator group of Local Authorities (table 10)[11]. The total proportion in Buckinghamshire meeting the CMO recommendations (14.1%) was lower than 10 out of the 15 comparator areas, but slightly higher than the national average. However, the proportion of completely inactive 15 year olds in Buckinghamshire (3.3%) was lower (i.e. better) than in any other area in the group.

Table 10 Proportion of 15 year olds meeting physical activity guidelines, Buckinghamshire and CIPFA comparator groups of Local Authorities, 2014

County	% meeting guidelines - Total	% meeting guidelines - Boys	% meeting guidelines - Girls	% not meeting guidelines on any days - Total	% not meeting guidelines on any days - Boys	% not meeting guidelines on any days - Girls
England	**13.9**	**18.2**	**9.3**	**4.6**	**3.5**	**5.8**
Somerset	16.7	21.5	11.6	4.1	2.6	5.7
Gloucestershire	15.9	22.0	10.0	3.7	2.2	5.3
Oxfordshire	15.9	20.3	11.1	3.6	3.3	3.9
Worcestershire	15.7	21.2	9.9	4.0	4.1	4.0
Northamptonshire	15.1	19.0	10.9	4.0	3.3	4.7
West Sussex	15.1	20.3	9.0	4.2	3.1	4.9
Leicestershire	14.9	20.8	8.9	3.8	1.6	6.2
Hampshire	14.8	16.7	12.4	3.7	2.3	5.3
Essex	14.5	18.0	11.2	4.6	2.9	6.5
Warwickshire	14.4	19.9	8.9	3.5	2.7	4.3
Buckinghamshire	**14.1**	**18.1**	**9.9**	**3.3**	**2.2**	**4.7**
Staffordshire	13.2	16.1	9.3	3.6	2.9	4.1
North Yorkshire	13.1	17.5	8.6	4.0	2.9	5.0
Suffolk	13.0	17.3	8.3	4.0	3.1	4.8
Cambridgeshire	11.9	15.5	7.5	4.4	3.2	5.6
Hertfordshire	11.7	14.5	8.6	4.5	4.2	4.8

Source: What About YOUth? Survey, 2014

Table 11 shows data from the 2011 Census[13] comparing methods of travel to work across Buckinghamshire, in the South East and nationally. In Buckinghamshire as a whole, active commuting (by bicycle or on foot) is less common and driving to work more common than in England or the South East. Within Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury Vale has slightly higher rates of active commuting, but also the highest rates of driving to work.

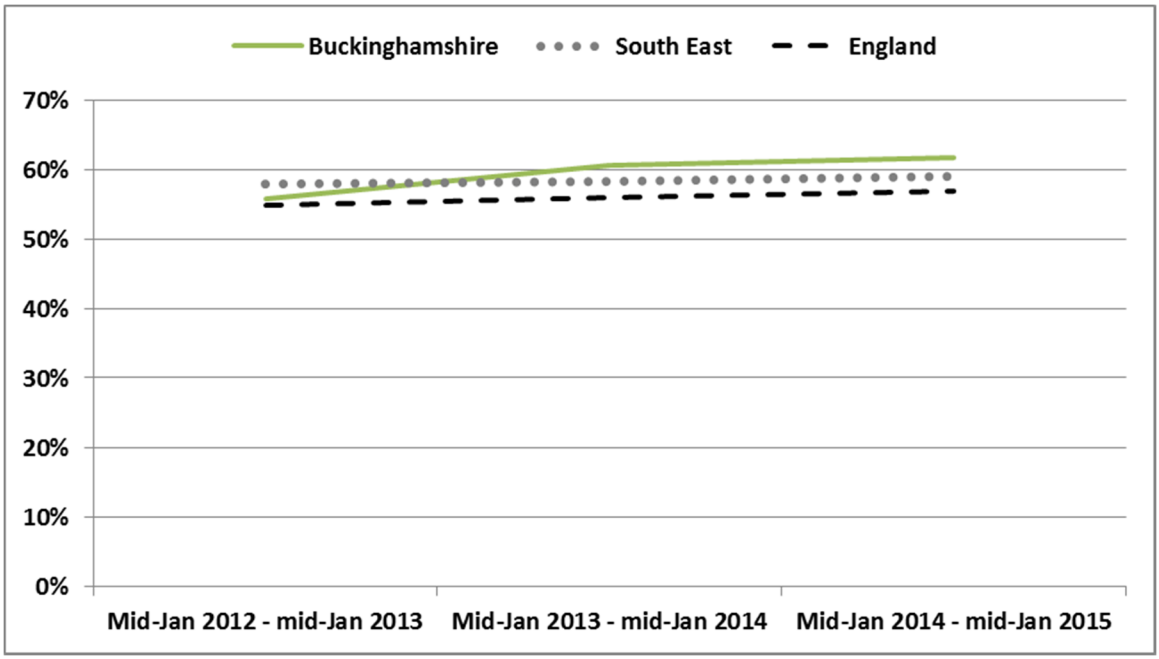
Table 11 Active commuting, Buckinghamshire and Districts, South East and England, 2011

	Bicycle	On foot	Drive
England	1.9%	6.9%	36.9%
South East	2.0%	7.4%	41.3%
Buckinghamshire	1%	6.1%	45.7%
Aylesbury Vale	1.2%	7%	47.7%
Chiltern	0.6%	5%	41.9%
South Bucks	0.9%	4.4%	45.3%
Wycombe	0.9%	6.4%	45.9%

Source: 2011 Census

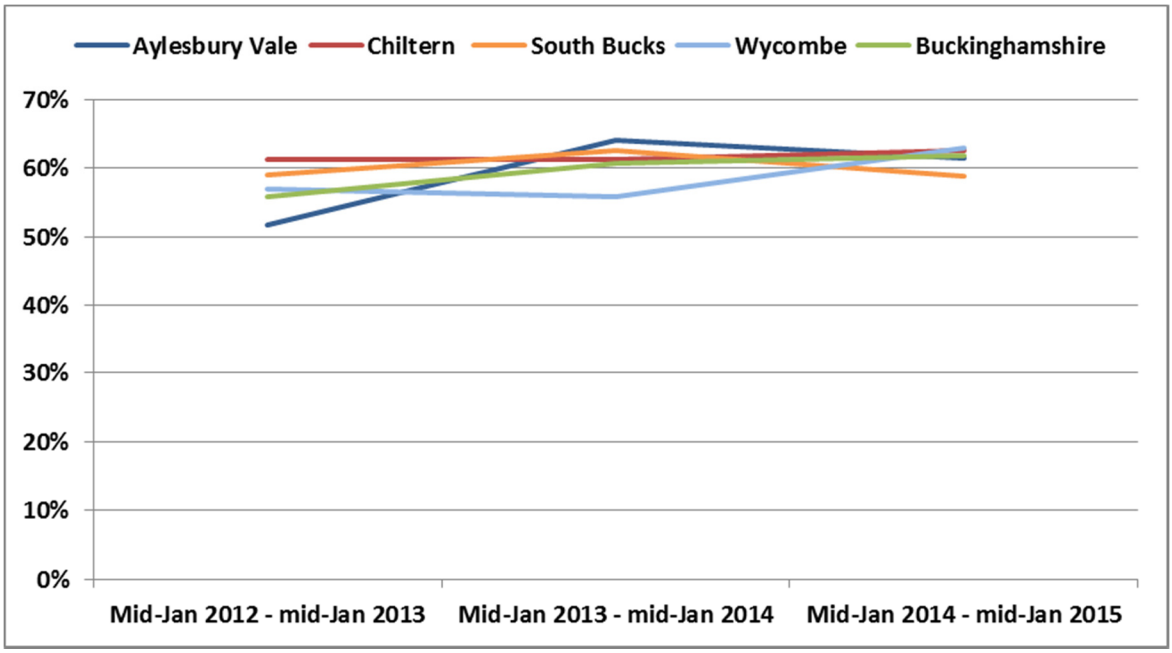
Figure 3 shows data from the Active People Survey on adult physical activity levels across Buckinghamshire, the South East and England, and changes between 2012 and 2015. More adults in Buckinghamshire (61.8%) were physically active in 2014-15 than in the South East (59.0%) or England (57.0%), and there was a greater increase over the period in the proportions of active adults in Buckinghamshire than in the South East or England. Figure 4 shows that within Buckinghamshire, the increase was greatest in Aylesbury Vale (from 51.7% to 61.5%). Figures 5 and 6 show that levels of inactivity were also lower in Buckinghamshire, and declined more in Buckinghamshire as a whole (from 26.8% to 20.9%) and in all the District Authority areas, compared to regionally and nationally. Within Buckinghamshire, the decrease in inactivity levels was greatest in Aylesbury Vale (from 28.0% to 21.7%).

Figure 3 Proportions of active adults, Buckinghamshire, South East and England, 2012-15



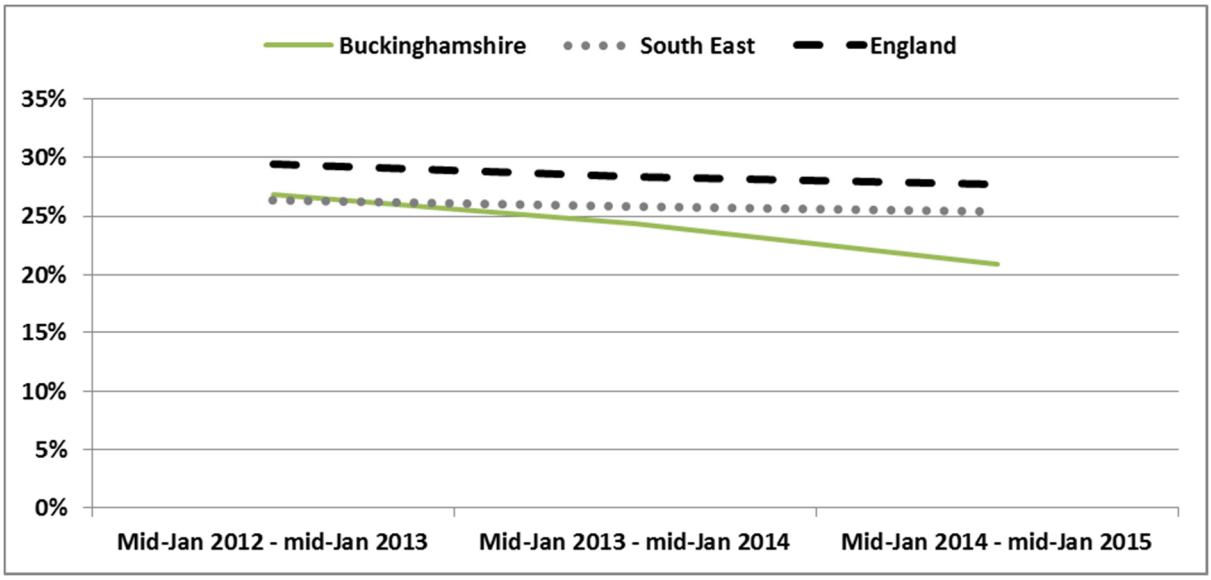
Source: Active People Survey 2012-15

Figure 4 Proportions of active adults, District Council areas and Buckinghamshire, 2012-15



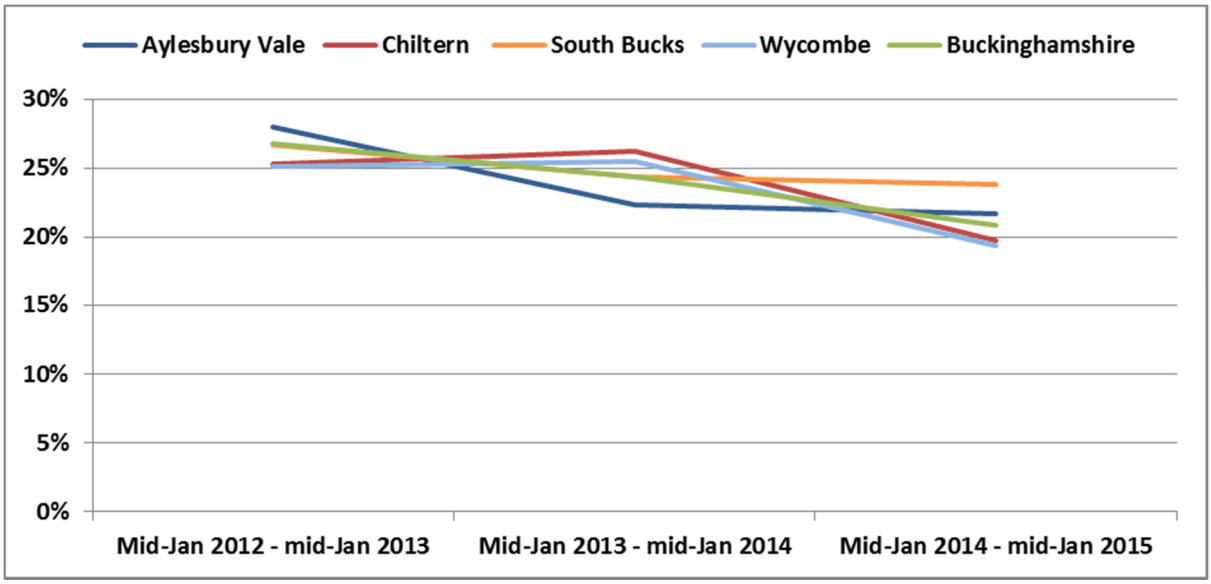
Source: Active People Survey 2012-15

Figure 5 Proportions of inactive adults, Buckinghamshire, South East and England, 2012-15



Source: Active People Survey 2012-15

Figure 6 Proportions of inactive adults, District Council areas and Buckinghamshire, 2012-15



Source: Active People Survey 2012-15

5.4.5 Horizon scanning

There are discussions at a national level about the introduction of a regular, systematic measurement of children and young people's levels of physical activity participation. This would provide a more robust understanding of local levels of physical activity, and greater intelligence as to where to focus resource locally.

Sport England, in collaboration with Public Health England, will continue to be the driving force behind increasing levels of physical activity participation at a population level. Sport England recently published its plan – *Towards an Active Nation 2016-2021* - to deliver the Governments vision to get more people regularly active, focusing on engaging the least active and better evidencing the impact of sport and physical activity on wider social outcomes. This plan will have significant implications for future commissioning and practice around physical activity in Buckinghamshire.

A new Childhood Obesity Strategy is also expected to be published imminently (summer 2016) which should identify regular physical activity as a key contributor to reducing levels of overweight/obese children, alongside maintaining a healthy weight amongst this cohort.

Population projections suggest that there will be a 24.1% increase in the proportion of residents aged 65 and over between 2012-2021 (around 21,000 people)[15]. In order to ensure this group remain independent, happy and healthy; appropriate activity and associated promotion should be considered.

5.4.6 Public Views

As part of the Active Bucks project, between May-August 2015, 124 young people were engaged, through focus groups held at various local educational establishments, to better understand what would support them to become more active. Of those engaged, 14% were aged 10 and under, 57% were 11-14 and 26% were 15 and over; 59% were boys and 9% reported having a long-term condition or disability; 79% were White British, 10% of mixed ethnicity, 8% Asian or Asian British, and 3% other ethnic groups.

Barriers which young people considered prevent them from being more regularly active included time (54%), cost (52%) and access (52%). They identified the top 3 reasons for taking part in physical activity as enjoyment/fun, to get healthier, and an opportunity to meet others. The top 5 activities identified by young people that they would like to take part in were team sports, activities in the parks, swimming, martial arts/self-defence, and running/jogging.

Through the same project, over 2000 adult residents provided their views on what would encourage them to become more regularly active. The following quotes highlight some issues raised by residents who self-reported themselves as currently inactive (<30 minutes physical activity each week):

- Fun things I can do with kids that we can do together or where they can stay whilst I exercise (Female, 26-35).
- I struggle to motivate myself whilst tired with family and work etc (Male, 26-35).

- I am single parent to a toddler - therefore childcare is more of an issue than time, but time is still difficult. I wish we could exercise together but activities like this are £10 a session, not available at public, but only private places (Female, 36-45).
- No exercise classes nearby, and at a convenient time, and the cost as well (Female, 46-55).
- I work 5 days 7.30 to 6.45pm so after that (Female, 56-64).
- I need activities that I as a disabled person can participate in (Female, 65+).

5.4.7 Conclusions

Physical activity has clear benefits for physical and mental health at all stages of life, and physical inactivity increases the risk of a wide range of health problems. Inactive children are more likely to become inactive adults. There are limited data on levels of physical activity among children and young people in Buckinghamshire, but nationally the vast majority of children in the early years do not achieve recommended levels of physical activity. Among 5-15 year olds less than a quarter meet activity guidelines and two-fifths are inactive, with high levels of sedentary behaviour (which is a separate health risk) particularly at weekends. Girls are less active than boys at all ages and there is some evidence of a decline in activity among children and young people of all ages.

Over 60% of adults in Buckinghamshire meet activity guidelines, higher than the national and regional levels, but over 20% are inactive and there are still large numbers who do not undertake enough physical activity to benefit their health and wellbeing. Levels of activity are highest among young adults and among men, and lowest among the over 65s. There is some evidence of increases in physical activity among adults in Buckinghamshire, which is a positive finding compared with national trends.

There are inequalities in physical activity among both children and adults with higher levels of inactivity and of sedentary behaviour among the most deprived groups of the population.

There is evidence that the greatest health gains will be made by focusing on encouraging the inactive to start some activity, and this includes addressing high levels of sedentary behaviour among both adults and children. Buckinghamshire residents, particularly those most likely lead less active lifestyles, should have the information about and opportunities for physical activity that will benefit their health.

Tom Burton
Advanced Public Health Practitioner
June 2016

References

[1] Department of Health (2011) Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers
[2] British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity & Health (2012). Evidence Briefing: Sedentary Behaviour www.**bhf**active.org.**uk**/files/525/**sedentary_evidence_briefing**.pdf (accessed 9/2/2016)
[3] UKactive (2013) Start Young, Stay Active: Childhood physical literacy report
[4] PHE (2015) Change4Life Evidence Review: Rapid evidence review on the effect of physical activity participation among children aged 5-11 years
[5] NHS (2012) Let's Get Moving – A physical activity care pathway. Commissioning Guidance
[6] NICE (2015) Dementia, disability and frailty in later life – mid-life approaches to delay or prevent onset (NG 16) (October 2015)
[7] Health Impact of Physical Activity tool http://www.apho.org.uk/addons/ 122359/atlas.html (accessed 9/2/2016)
[8] HSCIC (2013) Physical activity in adults. http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB13218/HSE2012-Ch2-Phys-act-adults.pdf (accessed 9/2/2016)
[9] BHFNC (2015) Evidence Briefing: Physical activity in the early years
[10] HSCIC (2013) Physical activity in children http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB13218/HSE2012-Ch3-Phys-act-child.pdf (accessed 9/2/2016)
[11] http://www.whataboutyouth.com/ (accessed 9/2/2016)
[12] PHE (2014) Everybody active, every day: An evidence-based approach to physical activity
[13] ONS http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/MetadataDownloadPDF.do?downloadId=32249 (accessed 9/2/2016)
[14] www.phoutcomes.info (accessed 9/2/2016)
[15] http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/2424367/sub-national-population-projections-2012.pdf