





Healthy Lifestyle Champions

Final Report



August 2021

About spear

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (*spear*) is located within the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Social Sciences at Canterbury Christ Church University. *spear* undertakes a range of evidence-led analyses, from critical commentaries and reflections on current policy and practice, to commissioned research, evaluation and consultancy.

The Centre's research is funded by a range of national and international funders such as the International Olympic Committee, World Health Organisation, Terre des Hommes, Department of Health, Department for Education, Mencap, Chane to Shine, Parkrun, Youth Sport Trust, UK Sport, UK Coaching and Sport England. Recent work has focused on sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing in schools and communities.

Research conducted by *spear* helps guide and inform public policy by contributing to the wider evidence base used by policymakers, providing a rationale for government and commercial investment, and steering programme improvements that enhance the experience of practitioners and participants.

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Healthy Lifestyle Champions evaluation undertaken by *spear* and commissioned by the Youth Sport Trust. Report produced by *spear*.

August 2021

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Context

About Healthy Lifestyle Champions

Healthy Lifestyle Champions is funded by Sport England and delivered by the Youth Sport Trust (YST). Building on Hub Schools, Active in Health and Healthy Active Lifestyle Champions, the programme aims to increase the activity engagement of young people in low socioeconomic groups by ensuring the right activity offer is available in schools. It also aims to drive the confidence and leadership skills of Healthy Lifestyle Champions to empower them to lead change for their peers.

The YST is working with 46 lead schools to support delivery of Healthy Lifestyle Champions. Delivery comprises five main activities: conference training, peer consultation, Athlete Mentor support, festival delivery, and non-traditional, sustainable, peer-led activity sessions.

About spear's Evaluation

spear has been commissioned from October 2020 to August 2021 to conduct an independent evaluation of Healthy Lifestyle Champions.

The evaluation is designed to gather insight around the engagement of young people, capture evidence of outcomes achieved and draw out key lessons learnt. The evaluation also explores the impact of Covid-19, the role of parents, and the impact of sustained engagement on young people, practitioners and schools.

Data informing this report comprises 436 Champion, 721 Activity Participant and 45 Lead Practitioner survey responses; 45 Lead Practitioner, 2 Athlete Mentor and 10 parent interviews; 15 Champion-led focus groups with Activity Participants and; multimedia content provided by schools.

The report is divided into four substantive sections: Engagement, Activities, Insight, and Impact. Key Messages 'Engaging Parents in School Activity Initiatives' and two case studies are also presented.

Table 1 summarises the evaluation approach for Healthy Lifestyle Champions.

Healthy Lifestyle Champions outcomes

...for Healthy Lifestyle Champions

- 1. Increased volunteering through PE, physical activity and sport
- 2. Increased leadership and promotion of healthy lifestyles
- 3. Increased leadership skills
- ... for Activity Participants
- 4. Increased participation in, and enjoyment of, physical activity
- 5. Increased health and wellbeing (physical, mental and social)
- 6. Increased skills
- 7. Increased achievement
- ...for Lead Practitioners
- Increased competence, confidence and motivation to effectively identify and respond to the needs of young people to encourage them to take part in physical activity
- 9. Improvements to physical activity delivery

Research questions

- 1. Has HLC impacted on the wellbeing, development and activity levels of Champions and Activity Participants in and out of school?
- 2. Has HLC helped schools identify need, meet latent demand, and increase wellbeing, development and activity levels through innovative peer-led sports and activities?
- 3. What have we learnt from HLC about identifying need and supporting the wellbeing and development of young people through sport and physical activity?

Table 1. Healthy Lifestyle Champions evaluation

	Research	Sample (& MME ^a)
School Support Pack	Evaluation Support Pack developed by <i>spear</i> and distributed to all participating schools	
Student Survey ^b	Cross sectional online survey completed by Activity Participants and Champions on joining the programme and 8 activity sessions later Survey captures impact on wellbeing, development, attitudes and engagement in sport and physical activity. Additional questions around leadership and volunteering completed by Champions	Activity Participants: 721 survey returns from 526 Activity Participants in 29 schools (Start n=478, MME+/-3.4%; End n=243, MME+/-5.6%) Healthy Lifestyle Champions: 436 survey returns from 320 Champions in 43 schools (Start n=247, MME+/-2.4%; End n=189, MME+/-4.2%)
Practitioner Survey	Online survey of Lead Practitioners developed by <i>spear</i> and included in YST monitoring survey. Survey captures Lead Practitioners' perceptions of delivery and impact	Lead Practitioners: 45 survey completions from Lead Practitioners (MME+/-2.2%)
Practitioner Interviews	Video/telephone interviews with Lead Practitioners to capture experiences and perceptions of delivery and impact	45 interviews with Lead Practitioners from 26 participating schools
Parent Interviews	Video/telephone interviews with parents to explore perceptions and engagement	10 telephone interviews with parents of Healthy Lifestyle Champions from 7 schools
Athlete Mentor Interviews	Video/telephone interviews with Athlete Mentors to explore experiences and perceptions of delivery and impact	2 interviews with Athlete Mentors
Champion Chats	Focus group proforma developed by <i>spear</i> for Champions (with Athlete Mentor support) to explore peers' attitudes, motivations and barriers to participation, impacts of Covid-19 and parental engagement	15 focus groups conducted by Champions with Activity Participants from 15 schools
Case Studies [°]	Case studies informed by desk research, survey and interview data. Case studies capture perceptions and experiences of parent and sustained engagement	2 case studies: – Parent Engagement – Sustained Engagement
Key Messages	Infographic developed from communication with stakeholders and desk research to provide a guide to engaging parents in school activity initiatives	
Secondary Analysis	Analysis of YST monitoring data to generate participation figures and upscale primary impact data	45 monitoring returns from Healthy Lifestyle Champions Lead Practitioners

^a MME = Maximum Margin of Error (see methodological note at appendix A for further details)

^b Student Survey data shown at appendix B

^c Case Studies presented at appendix C (separate document)

spear, Canterbury Christ Church University

Engagement

2020/21 output targets for Healthy Lifestyle Champions are to:

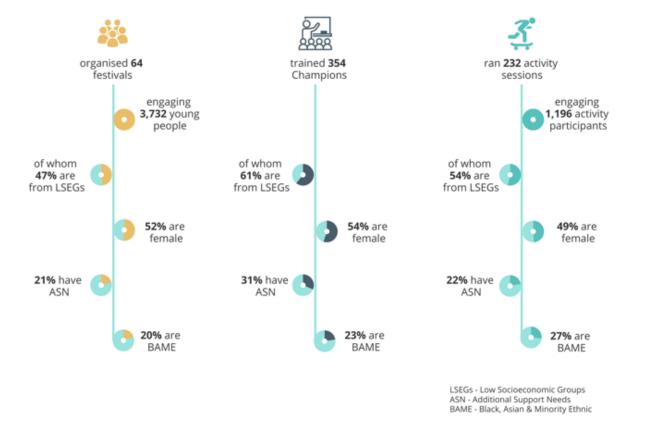
- train and support 48 Lead Practitioners and 288 Healthy Lifestyle Champions from 48 schools to...
- consult with and engage 2,880 less active students aged 11-13 (Key Stage 3) in a festival showcasing non-traditional sport, and...
- engage 1,152 students in 8-10 subsequent peer-led or peersupported activity sessions.

Across 2020/21 Healthy Lifestyle Champions involved 46 schools and trained 46 Lead Practitioners. Output figures for the engagement of Healthy Lifestyle Champions and Activity Participants are presented below.

//

This is the most successful health intervention that we run in the school. The staff member delivering is competent and engaged and this rubs off on students. Students enjoy it and gain all the benefits. We look forward to running the programme again next year (without Covid-19 restrictions) and will tweak to ensure it is even more successful next year.

Practitioner Survey



In 2020/21, Healthy Lifestyle Champions...

Data derived from Practitioner Survey/YST Monitoring Survey (n=45)

Activities

Healthy Lifestyle Champions comprises conference training, peer consultation, Athlete Mentor support, festival delivery, and follow-up activity sessions. 'Activities' provides an overview of programme delivery across 2020/21 in the context of Covid-19 and associated challenges of reduced staff capacity, remote learning, testing, bubbles, social distancing and isolation.

Covid-19 challenges affected Healthy Lifestyle Champions in all schools, necessitating programme delivery be stopped, postponed or adapted. However, data suggest most schools were able to navigate these challenges and continue to run. Interviews with teachers and responses to the Practitioner Survey suggest Healthy Lifestyle Champions was seen by schools to help address pandemic-related declines in students' physical, mental, social and emotional health.

Conference training

Healthy Lifestyle Champions training conferences were held virtually across England in December 2020, engaging and training 354 Champions and 46 Lead Practitioners. Reactions to the virtual conference were mixed, with some schools noting their students struggled to engage and subsequently emerged without the requisite skills and knowledge to progress the programme. Others appreciated the chance for students to engage from a 'safe space', whether that be the school hall or at home, and this was seen to increase engagement, confidence and motivation. The Athlete Mentors were unanimously praised for being engaging and inspirational: "The Athlete Mentor had my students transfixed to the screen" (Teacher Interview).

Practitioners did suggest splitting sessions into 'bite sized chunks' on the day or across several days to enhance engagement and impact. They would also like more time allocated for students to plan and discuss, time for practitioners to share plans and 'bounce ideas' about, and more specific advice about festival and activity delivery.

Peer Consultation

Healthy Lifestyle Champions activities are informed, driven and delivered by young people, for young people. Peer consultation and support is therefore fundamental to programme delivery and impact. Most schools began their consultation process discussing with Champions what they would like the programme to look like and how to consult with and engage others.

Conference training

//

The training was fantastic and students really benefited, momentum was important... Our Athlete Mentor was fantastic...he really helped engage the students and staff. It gave it extra oomph.

//

The training was brilliant and inspiring. Our young people increased their confidence at this day and it was a real life changing opportunity for them.

Peer consultation

//

The consultation process has supported the activities to meet the needs of the students and ensure they do not lose interest in the programme.

//

During the festival, leaders ran an activity which was student voice - this enabled them to ask questions about what participants enjoyed and helped shape what they delivered at their club.

11

The sporting mentor coming into school to work with our Champions set a fantastic tone and inspired our students to thoroughly engage with the programme.

Practitioner Survey

Peer consultation activities included questionnaires, speaking with festival participants, and the Champion Chats, where Champions led Athlete-Mentor-supported focus groups with their peers. Experienced Champions also mentored new Champions, expanding the developmental opportunities afforded by the role and increasing the student workforce equipped to support programme delivery.

Festivals

Champions delivered 64 festivals across the programme engaging almost 4,000 young people. Festival delivery varied dependent upon the Covid-19 situation within the school, with most delivered in school (88%) and around a tenth delivered virtually (12%). To comply with Covid-19 guidelines, schools often used a "carousel" system with participants rotating around activities in bubbles. A range of nontraditional activities were offered including zorb football, parkour, boxing, cheerleading, judo, circus skills and paddle-boarding.

Athlete Mentors were widely seen as the 'star' of the festivals, inspiring students with their stories and running team building sessions. Despite delivery challenges, Practitioner Survey responses and Teacher Interviews suggest the festivals were valued highly for engaging less active students, facilitating participation in follow-up activity sessions and giving students who have experienced a difficult year, a much needed boost: "Considering the year we have had the festival was amazing and really lifted the students' spirits" (Practitioner Survey).

Activity sessions

Covid-19 presented challenges to activity delivery, with the need to maintain social distancing and bubbles. Sessions had to be cancelled at short notice, challenging Champions' planning and adaptability skills. Space was at a premium, and restrictions on outside agencies entering schools meant they could not always deliver chosen activities.

In many schools, Champions were challenged by the bubble-driven requirement to deliver to peers, rather than younger students. While Practitioner Survey responses suggest this was seen to be more challenging, it was also seen to deliver unexpected, positive results.

Follow-up sessions comprised a range of fun, alternative activities informed by participants and planned, led or supported by Champions. Activities included Tchoukball and Waveboarding, and other activities trialled at the festivals and chosen by participants. Schools also incorporated lifestyle and wellbeing sessions to complement activities.

The impact of the conference training, peer consultation, festivals and activities is detailed in 'Impact' on pages 9-17. However, the positive impact of Healthy Lifestyle Champions is reflected in the commitment expressed by practitioners to embed the programme ethos and activities as an integral, sustainable part of their school sport and activity offer.

Athlete Mentor

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Working with the Athlete Mentor was amazing. Students were inspired by Mel's story which motivated the students to make a difference. Students wanted to focus on the mental side of students due to being in the Pandemics. Having fortnightly meetings allowed students to discuss issues and ideas which then create sessions for form time, dinner time and afterschool.

Festivals

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With Covid-19, it was impossible to create a live festival. Students did this virtually... Within this, they created several Wellbeing Wednesdays... Students also created physical activity sessions such as Yoga, circuit training and fitness sessions.

//

The festivals worked well to help break down barriers and change mindsets to attending a club.

//

Positivity of staff, parents, SLT and the students enabled the festival to be such as success. Everybody got onboard!

Activity sessions

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We ran 5-weeks of double sessions to fit in our 10 and I think that worked better as it made it more focussed and allowed me to get the message across stronger.

Practitioner Survey

Insight

This section explores practitioners' perceptions of the engagement and wellbeing of young people targeted for Heathy Lifestyle Champions, and the perspectives of young people themselves. These insights derive from the Student and Practitioner Surveys and interviews with teachers and are summarised in the infographic on page 8.

Covid-19 has added a new dimension to decisions around targeting for Healthy Lifestyle Champions. Practitioners made reference to the pandemic emphasising the importance of "who needs this support *right now*" (Teacher Interview), subsequently targeting young people most keenly affected by the pandemic and most in need of the physical, social and emotional boost offered by the programme.

Schools also prioritised young people in low socioeconomic groups and those typically less active or engaged. Practitioners saw the programme's potential to enhance physical, social and emotional health and provide the 'bridge' into physical activity needed by these young people. Some students chosen as Champions already showed sporting or leadership potential and others had been Champions before. Thus the perceptions and experiences of young programme participants varied widely on joining the programme.

Data from Champion Chats show lockdown restrictions impacted young people's participation in, and appreciation of, physical activity. Physical activity engagement and attitudes were also influenced by parental engagement and attitudes. Some young people reported having active parents who encouraged and facilitated their activity; others said they didn't do any activity as their parents weren't 'sporty', 'prefered to do other things' or had 'work commitments' (Champion Chats). Limited outside space and the accessibility and safety of community facilities were also cited as barriers to engagement.

Beyond the pandemic, key barriers to being active reported by young participants include lack of motivation "can't be bothered", "don't like the things we do in school"; confidence "don't like to do it with people I don't know"; and time "too busy with schoolwork". Key motivators centre around feeling good "makes me feel happy about myself", "takes my mind off worries"; being healthy "makes you less out of breath"; being outside "getting fresh air" and being social "best way to meet new people", "fun to do with family members" (Student Survey).

Young programme participants were asked to pinpoint '3 things you do that make you feel good'. Their responses highlight the pivotal role of family and friends, being active, creative and social, and having their opinions valued and their achievements 'seen'.

2020/21 targeting

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Whilst Covid-19 has been horrible it has also allowed me the opportunity to ringfence our 70 participants and think who needs this support right now because it's probably different to when we were back in normal school time.

//

...before lockdown some of the students we chose probably wouldn't have been high up the list.

Practitioner Survey

Covid-19

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I like being outside more after Covid-19 now I don't feel as anxious.

11

Doing sport and stuff during Covid-19 helped it to feel normal.

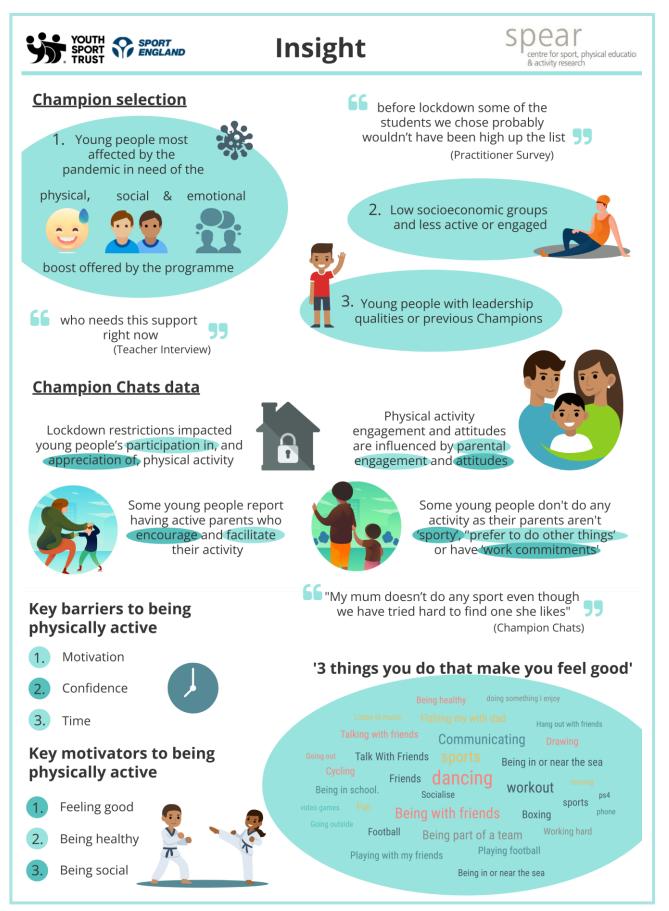
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My mum doesn't do any sport even though we have tried hard to find one she likes.

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It's hard for us to do stuff as a family as we don't have a garden.

Champion Chats



Data derived from the Student Survey, Practitioner Survey, Teacher Interviews and Champion Chats

Impact

Healthy Lifestyle Champions

Leadership & volunteering

Increased peer leadership, volunteering and advocacy are key outputs for Healthy Lifestyle Champions and central to accessing and engaging young people in low socioeconomic groups. Development of leadership skills and attributes are supported through conference training for Champions and follow-up activities, including consultation with peers, planning and delivering a festival, and leading or helping with activities.

Responses to the Student Survey show no change in Champions' perceptions of their leadership skills and attributes over the course of engagement in Healthy Lifestyle Champions. However, the amount of volunteering hours accrued by Champions in the past three months has almost doubled from 1,171 to 1,905. Significant increases are also evident in the percentage of Champions reporting to have a say about sports about activities in schools and leading or helping with activities.

The impact of increased opportunities to inform, support and lead activity provision is particularly evident on Champions in low socioeconomic groups. At the start of the programme, around a third of these young people said they had a say about sports and activities in school and led or helped with activities. Since taking part in Healthy Lifestyle Champions, the gap in engagement in leadership activities has closed, with almost two thirds of Champions in low socioeconomic groups saying they have a voice in their school sport provision, and almost three quarters saying they lead or help with activities 'a lot' (figure 1). Since taking part in Healthy Lifestyle Champions...

68%

of Champions say they've led or helped with activities 'a lot'

92%

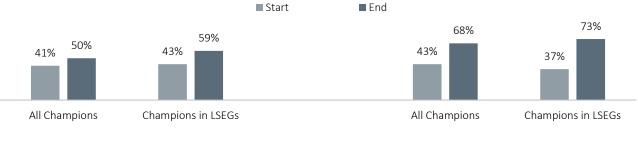
say they've had a volunteering role

Student Survey

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The fact she is coming home and talking to me about being a Healthy Lifestyle Champion tells me all I need to know because she doesn't talk to me about any other element of school really.

Parent Interview





I have led or helped with activities in school

Figure 1. Champions' leadership opportunities 'a lot' (Student Survey: All Champions Start n=247, End n=189, Champions in LSEGs Start n=153, End n=112)

Physical activity participation & attitudes

Healthy Lifestyle Champions joined the programme with significantly higher levels of engagement and more positive attitudes to sport and physical activity than their peers (Activity Participants). Champions' engagement and attitudes have remained relatively high and stable across the programme: around two thirds think they are good at sports (~62%); three quarters like to try new activities (~72%); and over four fifths think being healthy and active is important (~82%) and enjoy playing sports and being active (~81%) 'a lot'. However, less than half say they do sports and activities with their parents, family, or other people they live with (~45%).

No change is evident in the activity levels of *all* Champions, with around two thirds achieving 60 active minutes on most or every day of the week (4-7 days, ~68%). However, sub-analysis suggests significant impacts on the activity levels of Champions in low socioeconomic groups. While less than half of these young people said they did 60 active minutes most or every day on joining the programme (42%), almost two thirds report doing so after leading or helping with activities (59%).

Wellbeing, skills & achievement

Champions report significantly higher levels of wellbeing and achievement than Activity Participants, and these perceptions remain high and stable. Around three quarters rate their self-belief (~77%) and aspirations (~76%) as 'good' or 'very good' while over four fifths rate their leadership (~89%), communication (~82%), resilience (~86%), empathy (~83%) progress at school (~83%) and happiness with friends and family (~88%) as 'good' or 'very good'.

Praise for Champions' enthusiasm, commitment and resilience features strongly across teacher and parent interviews. Teachers note how the pandemic posed numerous challenges, but that Champions rose to these challenges with creative solutions to disruptions in programme planning, delivery and engagement. The programme is seen to have given Champions "something to really focus on in difficult times" (Teacher Interview), with gains noted in Champions' confidence, empathy, motivation, work ethic, time management and engagement in wider school life. Champions are seen to have a new appreciation of the value of activity opportunities since the pandemic, proactively developing and delivering new afterschool clubs and using their voice more frequently and confidently to engage less active peers. Experienced Champions have also supported new Champions, relishing the chance to mentor and advocate for others.

Responses from the Practitioner Survey suggest Healthy Lifestyle Champions is widely perceived to provide 'meaningful' leadership opportunities for young people. The programme is seen to help 'raise the bar' in terms of Champions' expectations of themselves and others, regardless of their starting point. 11

The bit they look forward to most is mentoring of students and helping them through activities which surprised me, I thought they would enjoy leading sessions more.

11

Our current head girl was a Champion three years ago and I believe this programme gave her the skill sets to be able to thrive in that role.

Teacher Interviews

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Champions carry on the work with great enthusiasm and are fully supported in school. They use their voice to develop the programme and have been very successful in delivering the aims of the programme.

//

The takeover worked well and students felt really empowered. We planned for Champions to be in the same year group as targeted students - which we weren't expecting to be as successful as previous years. Actually,this worked better and is something we will continue.

11

The logistics of delivery in bubbles was very difficult but the Champions managed it themselves! They delivered across a range of groups to ensure they hit targeted children without them knowing. We now feel the next cohort should engage more with parents as we move back to a more normal school life!!

Practitioner Survey

Activity Participants

Physical activity participation & attitudes

Healthy Lifestyle Champions aims to enhance the physical activity engagement, wellbeing and development of young people in low socioeconomic groups. Of the 1,196 students taking part in the Champion-led activity sessions, over half are reported by schools to be from this target population (54%).¹

Activity Participants joined the programme with lower activity levels and less positive perceptions of engagement and opportunities than Champions. While participants' activity levels remain low, the percentage achieving 60 active minutes most or every day of the week (4-7 days) has risen from 45% to 51%: a small, but significant increase.

Perceptions of activity remain stable across the programme, with no differences evident between Activity Participants in different socioeconomic groups. Around half of all Activity Participants say they enjoy playing sports and being active (~54%), like to try new activities (~45%) and know about sports and activities they can do outside school (~49%) 'a lot'. Around a third say they take part in sports and activities outside school (~35%) and think they are good at sports (~32%).

A significant increase is evident in participants' perceptions of their influence on school sport and activity provision, with the percentage stating they have a say in sports and activities in school rising from less than a fifth (19%) to almost a third (30%). A small, but significant increase (27% to 32%) is also evident in the percentage of participants reporting to do sports and activities with their family.

Wellbeing, skills & achievement

Young people targeted to participate in the peer-led activities joined the programme with significantly lower perceived levels of wellbeing and achievement than the Champions delivering these activities. However, data from the Student Survey suggest Healthy Lifestyle Champions has impacted significantly, and positively, on Activity Participants' empathy, self-belief and aspirations (figure 2). Since taking part in Healthy Lifestyle Champions...

51%

of Activity Participants achieve 60 active minutes most or every day

30%

feel they have a say about sports and activities in school

32%

say they do sports and activities with their family

Student Survey

//

The kids have just missed out on so much due to Covid-19 so just giving them the opportunity to do something, and something which is a little bit different I hope is something that they enjoy and remember.

//

There has been a huge improvement in engagement and effort in PE lessons. These 'PE phobics' now attend extracurricular (in bubbles). Student voice has dictated we offer non-traditional activities which all students now take part in during core PE.

Practitioner Survey

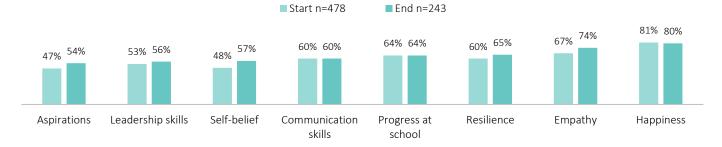


Figure 2. Activity Participants' perceptions of wellbeing and development (Student Survey)

¹ This figure is consistent with the 55% of Activity Participants reporting eligibility for Free School Meals on the Student Survey (n=526).

Activity Participants' perceptions of programme impact on their wellbeing and development are reiterated by practitioners: while around half report positive impacts on participants' attainment (56%), over 90% believe Healthy Lifestyle Champions has had a 'positive' or 'very positive' impact on participants' overall health and wellbeing (92%). The majority of practitioners also believe the programme has impacted positively on participants' activity levels (90%), and around three quarters feel the programme has increased volunteering (73%) and participants' ability to achieve their potential (78%).

Key to achieving the impacts described above is that programme activities are informed, driven and delivered by young people, for young people. Having a say in their school sport and activity provision and subsequently engage in preferred activities is seen by practitioners to have "opened their eyes to the opportunities available to them in their school and community" (Teacher Interview).

Healthy Lifestyle Champions Festivals are seen as key in showcasing the opportunities available to less active or engaged young people. Providing a 'carousel' of non-traditional activities in a celebratory atmosphere is reported by practitioners to have helped them reach targeted students, "change their mindset" and "see PE as more of a recreational thing...rather than something they are forced to do" (Practitioner Survey).

Sustained engagement is supported through continued provision of peer-led, non-traditional activity opportunities in schools engaging with similar programmes in previous years (e.g. Healthy Active Lifestyle Champions, Hub Schools, Active in Mind). In some cases, it has not been possible to sustain preferred activities due to the pandemic. However, Practitioner Survey responses show that while Covid-19 halted delivery in a small number of schools, the majority have adapted by targeting the programme at a specific year group or bubble, offering different activities, or signposting to community activities.

Covid-19 restrictions have impacted practitioners' ability to reach all young people believed to benefit from participation in the programme. However, interviews with teachers suggest that while challenging, programme delivery in 'bubbles' has elicited some unexpected, and positive outcomes. Activity Participants are reported to have bonded better and gained a sense of belonging, community and continuity that may not have been achieved with a more diverse cohort of targeted students. This is seen to support engagement and outcomes within and beyond the programme, enhancing participation in curricular and extracurricular school sport and physical activity opportunities.

Practitioners are cognisant of the need for steppingstones into more challenging activity opportunities to sustain the interest, engagement and development of targeted students. Plans include continued provision of a range of alternative curricular activities, peer-led afterschool clubs and signposting to community sports clubs. Impact on Participants

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Socially they have come on leaps and bounds and are now communicating working together as a team excellently.

//

This programme has opened their eyes to the opportunities available to them in their local communities and the Judo coach has already volunteered to invite them to his club.

Teacher Interviews

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The students at my school are not very active and many are from low socioeconomic groups so I felt it was important to work together to open up opportunities for them.

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They see PE as more of a recreational thing now rather than something they are forced to do during school and this programme helped change their mindset.

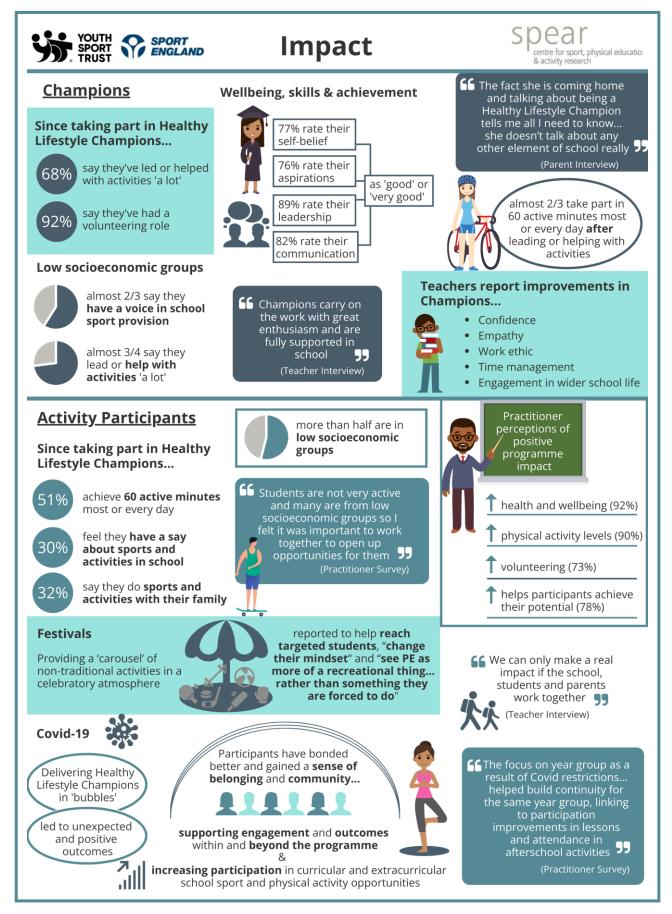
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The focus of year group as a result of Covid-19 restrictions... helped build continuity for the same year group, linking to participation improvements in lessons and attendance in afterschool activities.

//

Integrating alternative sports into our PE curriculum has massively increased participation in our less active students because they don't like competitive sports.

Practitioner Survey



Data derived from the Student and Practitioner Surveys and Teacher Interviews.

Parents

Parent engagement is a focus of Healthy Lifestyle Champions this year. Insight around parent engagement has been gathered through interviews with parents and teachers, responses to the Practitioner Survey and desk research. This insight is presented below, in the 'Key Messages for Engaging Parents in Activity Initiatives' on page 18, and in the case study at appendix C 'Parent Engagement'.

It is clear Healthy Lifestyle Champions presents both challenges and opportunities for engagement. The innovative nature of the programme and its potential to support holistic development has been broadly welcomed by parents, particularly in the context of Covid-19 and the impact on young people's physical, social and emotional health. However, successful parental engagement is also seen by schools as contingent on the value placed by parents on active, healthy lifestyles.

Teachers expressed difficulties overcoming parental concerns about children missing core lessons for "just another PE lesson" (Teacher Interview). Some also struggled to find a means of communication to suit all parents, and maintain the communication necessary to share participants' experiences, progress and outcomes. These challenges were exacerbated due to Covid-19, associated remote learning and reduced staff capacity.

The YST developed a bespoke resource to help schools engage with parents and communicate the value of Heathy Lifestyle Champions. "Supporting families to be active and healthy together" helps parents understand why their health behaviours and attitudes are so important and provides information and ideas to help families lead happier and healthier lives.

In addition to the YST resource, schools used social media and emails, letters and

phone calls to parents to support engagement and understanding. Interviews with parents show this communication has been key to raising awareness of Healthy Lifestyle Champions and overcoming concerns or misconceptions. It has also prompted conversations between parents and children, with young people previously reticient about their school day reported to be keen to share their Healthy Lifestyle Champions experiences. Parents also note these conversations have challenged them to think how they can integrate more activity into their own lives to ensure they are 'good role models' for their children.

Parents suggested tangible ways to share their child's experiences and enhance parent engagement and these are incorporated into the 'Key Messages for Engaging Parents in School Activity Initiatives' on page 18.

Supporting families to be active & healthy together

Parent engagement

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We can only make a real impact if the school, students and parents work together.

//

If I am ringing parents about a behavioural problem there isn't that much support but if I am ringing offering opportunities they haven't heard of, they are really involved and supportive.

Teacher Interviews

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Because they are taken away from their lessons you want to see them develop other skills which are important for her to succeed in everyday life when she leaves school.

//

Maybe if there was an interactive blog or something so parents can see what is going on... I mean I can't think of anything I can see at the moment to keep track of the programme in [child's] school.

//

Whilst she talks to me I haven't as a parent seen what she has done so perhaps some kind of video would be great... as I can see her in action and see tangibly what she is doing.

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I prefer something short, sharp and concise with suggestions about anything you can do at home to help them succeed in their role better.

Parent Interviews

Practitioners

Competence, confidence & motivation

Since taking part in Healthy Lifestyle Champions, the majority of respondents to the Practitioner Survey say the programme has helped them feel more motivated and equipped to identify and respond to young people's needs. Over three quarters believe the programme has helped them feel more confident and competent in their role (figure 3).

Teachers interviewed said the programme gave them the rare opportunity to take a step back, reappraise and refresh their activity offer. They also gained a newfound awareness of the benefits of insight driven, peer-led activity and the value of 'playful' activities that allow less active students to engage without fear of competition.

Youth Sport Trust funding and support are valued highly by practitioners, with around four fifths rating the support provided by these programme aspects as 'good' or 'very good'. Around three quarters rated the Athlete Mentor and conference, and just over half the parent resource as 'good' or 'very good'.

Schools

Physical activity delivery

Covid-19 placed unprecedented demands on schools, with remote learning, testing, social distancing, bubbles and isolation challenging all aspects of learning and teaching. These pressures proved too much for some schools who chose to halt or postpone delivery. However, for others, the pandemic and its effect on young people's physical, mental, social and emotional health made engaging, and persevering with Healthy Lifestyle Champions in 2020/21 even more important.

Practitioner Survey responses suggest Healthy Lifestyle Champions has lifted the profile of physical activity and healthy living in schools. It has raised awareness among Senior Lead Teachers of low activity levels, the implications of inactivity, and the potential for an appealing, accesible and relevant physical activity offer to benefit students and support whole school agenda. Impact on practitioners

11

It's just opened my eyes to the fact that those guys would much rather play little games as opposed to having to go out and play football.

//

This programme is really nice for me because I get the chance to work with kids that I haven't had the opportunity to work that closely with before.

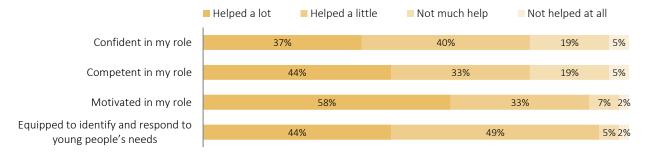
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I think it made some of the other staff realise the importance of PE and fun days like this in school for students physical and mental wellbeing.

//

Covid-19 limitations especially with the bubbles/lockdowns and isolating periods had a huge impact and definitely delayed the process this year, ultimately limiting what we could achieve. It did make us think more out of the box and challenged our creativity!

Practitioner Survey



How much Healthy Lifestyle Champions has helped me feel more...

Figure 3. Practitioners' perceptions of pedagogic support (Practitioner Survey, n=45)

Counterfactual

Lead Practitioners were asked to surmise what would have happened in their schools if Healthy Lifestyle Champions not taken place in 2020/21. In previous years, counterfactual analysis has shown that without a YST programme like Healthy Lifestyle Champions, the majority of schools would have continued with their standard, traditional sport, physical activity and PE provision. This year, Practitioner Survey responses suggest less than half of schools would have sustained their usual school sport offer (42%). Practitioners explained how the pandemic and associated challenges had restricted standard activity provision, with around a third indicating opportunities for students to be active and engage in wellbeing and development activities would be less than in previous years (31%).

Among respondents who indicate they would have continued with their existing provision, around two thirds say this provision would not have been targeted at young people in low socioeconomic groups (64%) and around half say it would not have been shaped by students (47%). Practitioners say they wanted to provide insight-driven, peer-led activity for less active and engaged students, but without Healthy Lifestyle Champions, this would not have been possible. They explained the focus on young people in low socioeconomic groups provided validation for targeting this specific cohort while guidance around student consultation helped them identify and respond to their needs. Programme funding enabled them to provide a range of innovative activities, while training for Champions enabled these activities to be effectively peer-led.

A consistent theme across Practitioner Survey responses is that Healthy Lifestyle Champions gives schools the means and impetus to offer the quality and breadth of provision they know is needed, but without support and particularly in the context of Covid-19, struggle to provide.

Embedding & sustaining

Teachers interviewed were asked to share their experiences of successive engagement in Healthy Lifestyle Champions. They explained they have taken lessons learnt from one year into the next, building on successes and learning from mistakes, resulting in smoother delivery and better outcomes. Previous year's Champions are using their leadership skills beyond the programme, becoming Girls Active Leaders or representing the School Council. They are also mentoring new Champions, helping to expand the student sports workforce. As a result, peer-led extracurricular activity provison has increased, alongside the engagement of previously less active and engaged students.

Practitioners report they will sustain the programme ethos and activities next year, looking to further embed programme insight into the curriculum, expand their extracurricular provision and engage more parents. Almost all practitioners say they are 'very likely' to recommend Healthy Lifestyle Champions to other schools (87%).

Impact on schools

11

If HLC had not happened this year, we would have done nothing in its place and less activities would have happened due to Covid-19.

//

This year it would have been easy with the pandemic to not run a similar programme internally. Also, if we did, I don't think the students would have had the same buzz about it. Having the Athlete Mentor really inspired the students... That is not to say we wouldn't offer leadership opportunities but Healthy Lifestyle Champions offers a different dynamic and focus that is difficult to replicate internally.

//

...we are already planning the next cohort of Champions. We intend to get up and running much earlier to allow expansion of the programme and develop peer mentors.

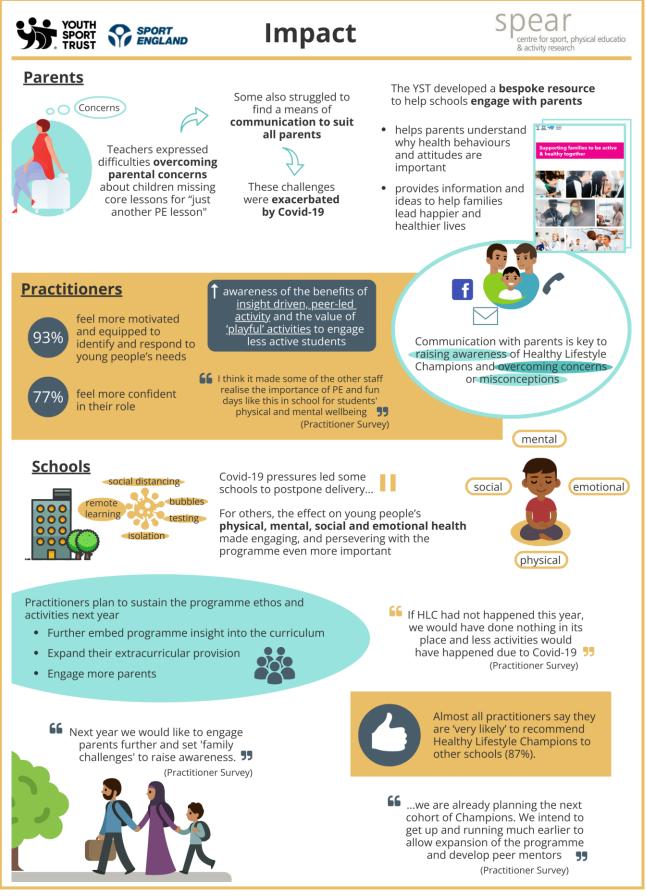
11

Next year we would like to engage parents further and set 'family challenges' to raise awareness.

//

Provision of afterschool clubs run by/assisted by Champions has been a much-needed boost at the end of a difficult year. The yr 7s have missed out on so much this year and Healthy Lifestyle Champions has been the catalyst to ensure students got the opportunity and that low activity level students were targeted.

Practitioner Survey



Data derived from the Student and Practitioner Surveys and Teacher Interviews



Key Messages for Engaging Parents SDear in School Activity Initiatives

centre for sport, physical educatio & activity resea



Identify the barriers

Do you know what's stopping parents supporting school activity initiatives? Parents may be reluctant to engage because they lack motivation, self-efficacy or understanding. Maybe they feel they're not active enough themselves or had bad experiences of PE. Understanding barriers to engagement helps inform an approach that overcomes barriers, shift perceptions, and garners enthusiasm and support.

To actively support initiatives, parents need to feel confident in their ability to support their child's participation. They need to understand why their child is taking part, be motivated by the benefits, and know their input is both valued and efficacious. Parents knowing their child is taking part in a school activity initiative, while essential, won't drive outcomes. Parents actively supporting their child and working in effective partnership with the school, will.





What opportunities exist in your school for parents to be involved in activity initiatives? How many of these opportunities are the ideas of parents and how many are school driven? Most strategies to engage parents are created and driven by the school. To truly engage parents in an effective partnership to support activity initiatives, the drivers for how this is done must come from them.

Tailor communications

Have you asked parents how they want to be communicated to? What do they want to know, see, or be able to do? Fragmented communications leave parents overwhelmed. Using fewer tools and keeping communications short, specific and frequent ensures parents are more receptive, helps schools gain buy-in and helps children get the parental support they need.





Don't give up!

It may take commitment and persistence to engage parents in school activity initiatives. If parents resist, don't give up: keep trying to canvas opinion and keep inviting them, even if they turn you down. The key is to plan ahead and involve all staff, so everyone is delivering the same message: that parent engagement in school activity initiatives is highly valued.

Appendix A

Methodological note

Healthy Lifestyle Champions Student Survey design

Student Surveys were designed to assess key process and outcome indicators for Healthy Lifestyle Champions. Student Surveys comprised YST core questions mapped to Sport England's reporting framework alongside bespoke quantitative and qualitative questions devised by *spear*. To increase accessibility and the validity and reliability of responses, survey questions were written in plain language (measured against the Flesch Reading Ease for readability). Surveys and all research approaches were scrutinised by *spear's* quality assurance lead Professor Mike Weed and *spear's* inclusion expert, Professor Jan Burns.

Schools were given a *spear* Support Pack containing guidance for survey completion alongside informed consent and data protection forms and a designated *spear* contact.

Student Survey Sample & MME

A 165 target sample for Champion and 289 for Activity Participant survey returns was identified to achieve a MME <+/-5% based on the 288 Champion and 1,152 Activity Participant output targets for Healthy Lifestyle Champions. The sample of survey returns from Champions exceed the target samples on joining the programme (Start) and eight activity sessions later (End). While the sample of survey returns from Activity Participants exceeds the target sample at the Start, the sample of survey returns at the End is lower than the target sample, subsequently increasing the MME to +/-5.6%.

Practitioner Survey

While no target sample was identified or guaranteed for this survey, the Practitioner Survey was completed by 45 of 46 Healthy Lifestyle Champions Lead Practitioners and has a MME of +/-2.2%.

Data analyses

Throughout this report, data presented from the Student Surveys are broken down by Champions and Activity Participants. Data presented from the Practitioner Survey represents the responses of all practitioners. For Student Surveys, sub-analysis by socioeconomic group was conducted. Where significant differences were identified, these are presented in this report. Upscaled participation figures are derived from the YST's monitoring returns from 45 Healthy Lifestyle Champions Lead Practitioners and *spear's* cross-sectional surveys of Champions and Activity Participants.

Maximum Margin of Error (MME)

The MME shows the level of accuracy the participant sample has; the smaller the MME, the greater the accuracy. It is calculated at the standard 95% confidence level so we can be 95% confident that the sample results reflect the population results to within the MME. For example, if the survey sample has a MME of +/-5% and 50% of participants say they 'enjoy being active', if the survey were conducted 100 times, the percentage who state they 'enjoy being active' would range between 45% and 55% most (95%) of the time.

Statistical significance

Throughout this report, where changes in participants' responses are reported, they are statistically significant at p<.05. This means there is a less than a 5% chance that changes reported are not real changes that might be expected in the wider population beyond the sample.

Appendix B

Student Survey data: Activity Participants

About You...

I am completing this survey...

for the first time,	
for the second time, after taking part in about 8 activity sessions	

Age (Start n=478, End n=243)

	Start	End
11-12	61%	51%
13-14	38%	47%
15 and over	1%	2%

Are you a... (Start n=478, End n=243)

	Start	End
Воу	43%	43%
Girl	50%	49%
Other	3%	5%
Prefer not to say	4%	3%

Which one of these best describes your background or ethnicity? (Start n=478, End n=243)

	Start	End
White (British or English)	71%	71%
White (not British or English)	3%	7%
Mixed	4%	5%
Asian or Asian British	10%	9%
Black or Black British	4%	5%
Other	2%	2%
Prefer not to say	3%	2%
Don't know	3%	0%

Do you have a disability, or a special educational need, which means you need extra help to do things? (Start n=478, End n=243)

	Start	End
Yes	8%	9%
No	78%	77%
Prefer not to say	3%	5%
Don't know	11%	10%

Do your parents have to pay if you have school meals? (Start n=478, End n=243)

	Start	End
Yes	58%	49%
No	27%	33%
Prefer not to say	2%	3%
Don't know	13%	15%

478 243

A bit more About You...

How would you rate the following? (Start n=478, End n=243)

In a typical week		Very good		Good		Average		Poor		Very poor		t say
	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
My resilience: if I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it	19%	19%	41%	46%	31%	27%	31%	6%	2%	3%	2%	0%
My empathy: I am able to understand how other people are feeling	24%	26%	43%	48%	25%	22%	25%	4%	2%	0%	2%	0%
My self-belief: I feel confident in my own abilities	18%	22%	30%	35%	32%	27%	32%	10%	7%	5%	2%	0%
My aspirations: I feel I can achieve anything I want	18%	17%	29%	37%	35%	30%	35%	12%	4%	3%	1%	0%
My happiness with the relationships I have with my friends and family	49%	42%	32%	38%	16%	13%	16%	4%	1%	2%	1%	2%
My leadership skills	16%	16%	37%	40%	29%	29%	29%	11%	5%	3%	4%	1%
My communication skills	24%	19%	36%	41%	27%	30%	27%	9%	2%	2%	2%	0%
My progress at school	21%	22%	43%	42%	29%	30%	29%	4%	2%	1%	2%	1%

Being Healthy & Active... (Start n=478, End n=243)

	A lot		A little		Not much		Not at all	
	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
I like to try new activities	44%	45%	45%	46%	9%	8%	2%	1%
I have a say about sports and activities in school	19%	30%	40%	44%	30%	23%	11%	3%
I think I am good at sports	32%	32%	45%	47%	17%	15%	6%	7%
I take part in sports and activities in a club outside school	33%	37%	25%	29%	17%	16%	25%	19%
I enjoy playing sports and being active	58%	54%	33%	35%	6%	7%	3%	9%
I think being healthy and active is important	75%	63%	23%	33%	2%	3%	1%	0%
I know about sports and activities I can do outside school	49%	49%	35%	39%	11%	10%	5%	2%
I do sports and activities with my parents, family, or other people that I live with	27%	32%	39%	40%	21%	19%	13%	9%

In the past week, how many days have you done sport or physical activity for an hour or more? (Start n=478, End n=243)

No	days	10	day	2 d	ays	3 days		4 days		5 days		6 days		7 days	
Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
78%	1%	12%	11%	16%	17%	19%	20%	15%	20%	15%	12%	7%	10%	8%	9%

Student Survey data: Healthy Lifestyle Champions

About You...

I am completing this survey...

for the first time, during the Healthy Lifestyle Champions conference	247
for the second time, after leading or helping with about 8 activity sessions	189

Age (Start n=247, End n=189)

	Start	End
11-12	20%	14%
13-14	76%	62%
15 and over	13%	24%

Are you a... (Start n=247, End n=189)

	Start	End
Воу	43%	46%
Girl	52%	50%
Other	3%	1%
Prefer not to say	2%	3%

Which one of these best describes your background or ethnicity? (Start n=247, End n=189)

	Start	End
White (British or English)	71%	70%
White (not British or English)	3%	3%
Mixed	4%	9%
Asian or Asian British	13%	9%
Black or Black British	5%	4%
Other	2%	2%
Prefer not to say	0%	1%
Don't know	2%	2%

Do you have a disability, or a special educational need, which means you need extra help to do things? (Start n=247, End n=189)

	Start	End
Yes	7%	6%
No	87%	82%
Prefer not to say	3%	4%
Don't know	2%	9%

Do your parents have to pay if you have school meals? (Start n=247, End n=189)

	Start	End
Yes	62%	59%
No	25%	29%
Prefer not to say	2%	3%
Don't know	11%	9%

A bit more About You...

How would you rate the following? (Start n=247, End n=189)

In a typical week	Very	good	Go	od	Ave	rage	Po	or	Very	poor	Can'	t say
	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
My resilience: if I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it	39%	42%	46%	43%	14%	12%	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	0%
My empathy: I am able to understand how other people are feeling	40%	39%	43%	43%	17%	18%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
My self-belief: I feel confident in my own abilities	37%	30%	39%	47%	16%	19%	5%	3%	2%	2%	0%	0%
My aspirations: I feel I can achieve anything I want	33%	31%	43%	44%	20%	21%	3%	3%	1%	1%	0%	0%
My happiness with the relationships I have with my friends and family	63%	48%	27%	38%	7%	11%	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%
My leadership skills	45%	37%	44%	51%	9%	11%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
My communication skills	41%	41%	42%	40%	16%	17%	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	0%
My progress at school	39%	34%	44%	46%	13%	17%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%

Being Healthy & Active... (Start n=247, End n=189)

	A lot		A little		Not much		Not at all	
	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
I like to try new activities	76%	68%	24%	29%	1%	3%	0%	0%
I have a say about sports and activities in school	41%	50%	42%	38%	15%	9%	2%	3%
I think I am good at sports	68%	56%	30%	38%	2%	6%	0%	0%
I take part in sports and activities in a club outside school	62%	58%	22%	32%	7%	6%	8%	4%
I enjoy playing sports and being active	85%	77%	13%	20%	2%	3%	0%	0%
I think being healthy and active is important	88%	75%	10%	22%	1%	3%	0%	0%
I know about sports and activities I can do outside school	75%	59%	20%	32%	4%	9%	1%	0%
I do sports and activities with my parents, family, or other people that I live with	47%	43%	34%	39%	15%	15%	5%	4%

In the past week, how many days have you done sport or physical activity for an hour or more? (Start n=247, End n=189)

No	days	1 c	lay	2 d	ays	3 d	ays	4 d	ays	5 d	ays	6 d	ays	7 d	ays
Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
2%	1%	7%	7%	10%	8%	16%	15%	17%	15%	17%	23%	11%	18%	21%	14%

Being a Healthy Lifestyle Champion... (Start n=247, End n=189)

	A	A lot		A little		Not much		Not at all		t say
	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
I have led or helped with activities in school	43%	68%	40%	29%	12%	1%	4%	1%	1%	0%
I think being a leader helps me learn	74%	72%	23%	25%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%
I work well in a team	74%	60%	23%	38%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%
I feel happy leading or helping with activities	78%	59%	20%	35%	2%	5%	0%	1%	0%	1%
I share my ideas with others	61%	58%	35%	35%	4%	6%	0%	1%	0%	0%
I encourage others to join in activities	69%	64%	26%	32%	4%	3%	0%	1%	0%	1%
I like listening to others	60%	56%	34%	39%	4%	5%	2%	1%	0%	0%
I feel confident leading or helping with activities	63%	58%	30%	38%	7%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%
I respond positively to feedback	64%	63%	30%	31%	4%	5%	0%	1%	1%	0%
I have led or helped with activities outside school	41%	43%	36%	36%	16%	18%	4%	4%	3%	0%

Around how many hours of volunteering have you done in the last 3 months? (Start n=247, End n=189)

	Start	End
Frequency	87%	92%
Mean	5hrs	11hrs
Total	1,171 hrs	1,905 hrs