

## Healthy Lifestyle Champions Infographic Summary



August 2021

# Context

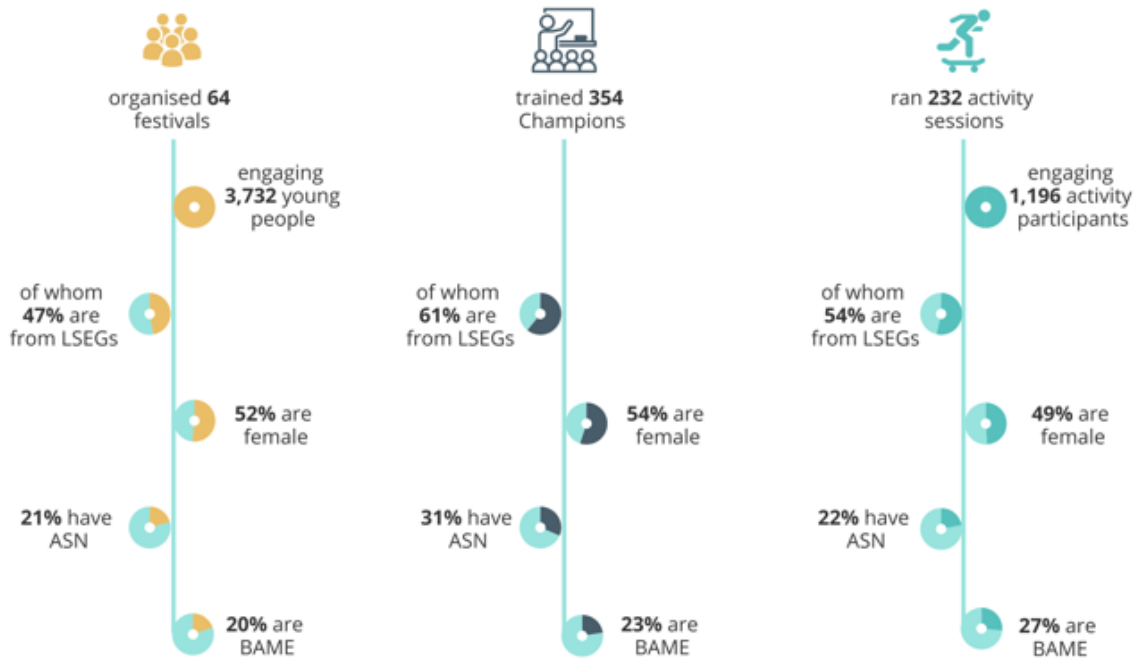
## About Healthy Lifestyle Champions

Healthy Lifestyle Champions is funded by Sport England and delivered by the Youth Sport Trust (YST). The programme aims to increase the activity engagement of young people in low socioeconomic groups and drive the confidence and leadership skills of Champions. Delivery comprises conference training, peer consultation, Athlete Mentor support, festival delivery and 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 gathers insight around the engagement of young people, captures evidence of outcomes achieved and draws out key lessons learnt. The evaluation also explores the impact of Covid-19, the role of parents, and the impact of sustained engagement. Data informing the report comprises 436 Champion, 721 Activity Participant and 45 Lead Practitioner survey responses; 45 Lead Practitioner, 2 Athlete Mentor and 10 parent interviews and; 15 Champion Chats. This Infographic Summary illustrates key findings from the Final Report including Insight, Impact and Key Messages.

### In 2020/21, Healthy Lifestyle Champions...



LSEGs - Low Socioeconomic Groups  
ASN - Additional Support Needs  
BAME - Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic

## Champion selection

1. Young people most affected by the pandemic in need of the

physical, social & emotional



boost offered by the programme

“ who needs this support right now ”  
(Teacher Interview)

“ before lockdown some of the students we chose probably wouldn't have been high up the list ”  
(Practitioner Survey)

2. Low socioeconomic groups and less active or engaged



3. Young people with leadership qualities or previous Champions

## Champion Chats data

Lockdown restrictions impacted young people's participation in, and appreciation of, physical activity



Physical activity engagement and attitudes are influenced by parental engagement and attitudes



Some young people report having active parents who encourage and facilitate their activity



Some young people don't do any activity as their parents aren't 'sporty', 'prefer to do other things' or have 'work commitments'

## Key barriers to being physically active

1. Motivation
2. Confidence
3. Time



## Key motivators to being physically active

1. Feeling good
2. Being healthy
3. Being social



“ "My mum doesn't do any sport even though we have tried hard to find one she likes" ”  
(Champion Chats)

## '3 things you do that make you feel good'



## Champions

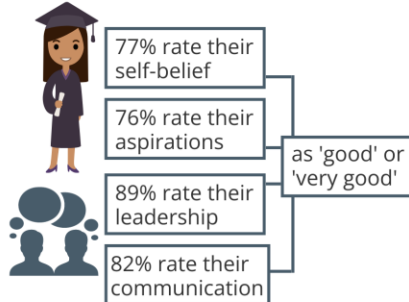
### Since taking part in Healthy Lifestyle Champions...

- 68% say they've led or helped with activities 'a lot'
- 92% say they've had a volunteering role

### Low socioeconomic groups

- almost 2/3 say they have a voice in school sport provision
- almost 3/4 say they lead or help with activities 'a lot'

## Wellbeing, skills & achievement



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

almost 2/3 take part in 60 active minutes most or every day **after** leading or helping with activities

“ Champions carry on the work with great enthusiasm and are fully supported in school ”  
(Teacher Interview)

### Teachers report improvements in Champions...

- Confidence
- Empathy
- Work ethic
- Time management
- Engagement in wider school life

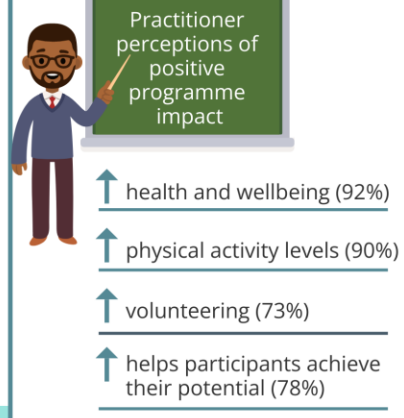
## Activity Participants

### Since taking part in Healthy Lifestyle Champions...

- 51% 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

more than half are in low socioeconomic groups

“ Students 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 ”  
(Practitioner Survey)



## Festivals

Providing a 'carousel' of non-traditional activities in a celebratory atmosphere



reported to help reach targeted students, “change their mindset” and “see PE as more of a recreational thing... rather than something they are forced to do”

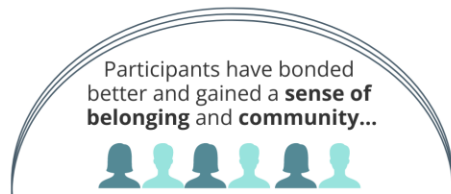
“ We can only make a real impact if the school, students and parents work together ”  
(Teacher Interview)

## Covid-19



Delivering Healthy Lifestyle Champions in 'bubbles'

led to unexpected and positive outcomes



Participants have bonded better and gained a sense of belonging and community...

supporting engagement and outcomes within and beyond the programme &



increasing participation in curricular and extracurricular school sport and physical activity opportunities



“ The focus on year group as a result of Covid restrictions... helped build continuity for the same year group, linking to participation improvements in lessons and attendance in afterschool activities ”  
(Practitioner Survey)

## Parents



Teachers expressed difficulties **overcoming parental concerns** about children missing core lessons for "just another PE lesson"

Some also struggled to find a means of **communication to suit all parents**

These challenges were **exacerbated by Covid-19**

The YST developed a **bespoke resource** to help schools **engage with parents**

- helps parents understand why health behaviours and attitudes are important
- provides information and ideas to help families lead happier and healthier lives



## Practitioners

93% feel more motivated and equipped to identify and respond to young people's needs

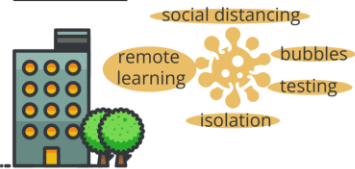
77% feel more confident in their role

↑ awareness of the benefits of insight driven, peer-led activity and the value of 'playful' activities to engage less active students

“ 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 ”  
(Practitioner Survey)



## Schools



Covid-19 pressures led some schools to postpone delivery...

For others, the effect on young people's **physical, mental, social and emotional health** made engaging, and persevering with the programme even more important



Practitioners plan to sustain the programme ethos and activities next year

- Further embed programme insight into the curriculum
- Expand their extracurricular provision
- Engage more parents



“ 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 ”  
(Practitioner Survey)

“ Next year we would like to engage parents further and set 'family challenges' to raise awareness. ”  
(Practitioner Survey)



Almost all practitioners say they are 'very likely' to recommend Healthy Lifestyle Champions to other schools (87%).

“ ...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 ”  
(Practitioner Survey)



## 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.

## Empower parents

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.



## Canvas opinion

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.

## 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.

The Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (*spear*)  
Canterbury Christ Church University  
North Holmes Road  
Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1QU  
Tel: 01227 922680  
email: [spear@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:spear@canterbury.ac.uk)  
[www.canterbury.ac.uk/spear](http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/spear)  
Twitter: [@spear\\_news](https://twitter.com/spear_news)

Report Author: Dr Abby Foad  
Project Team: Dr Abby Foad, Dr Adam Runacres, Dr Katrina Taylor,  
Annabel Carter, Stacey Draper & Professor Mike Weed

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

August 2021