A cross-government strategy, Sporting Future [1], was published in 2015 and set out a new government vision for success in sport. The strategy focuses on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, and economic development. Its main aim is to encourage people to be more active, a key part of which is to end the distinction between traditional ‘sport’ and broader physical activities, such as walking, dance and fitness classes.

There is a strong emphasis on attracting under-represented groups such as women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people into sport and physical activity. Progress on the strategy is reported through an annual report to Parliament [2].

The strategy covers all ages, but there is a section on children and young people. Actions that concerned children and young people include:

- extending the age range for which Sport England [3] is responsible downward from 14 to 5 in order to have a greater impact across the whole of a person’s sporting life and across the transitions and disruptions that young people face
- extending the Active Lives survey to measure children’s engagement in sport and physical activity
- seeking to better understand the barriers and issues around the drop-off in engagement from primary to secondary as well as identify good practice, particularly for those groups who are most affected, such as girls
continuing to support the School Games, a national programme which offers opportunities for all children to engage in competitive sports

establishing a [working group to advise](#) on how to ensure no child leaves school unable to meet a minimum standard of capability and confidence in swimming

provision by the [Department for Transport](#) to support [Bikeability](#) training for school children. The government has said that expected spend between 2016 and 2021 on active travel has doubled to £2.4 billion. The government [announced in February 2020](#) that it will significantly expand the Bikeability programme and invest £22 million in a range of national schemes over the next year:

£20 million will go to extend the Access Fund which helps local authorities support more people to cycle and walk

£1 million will go towards the Big Bike Revival – a grass roots project encouraging more than 40,000 people to take up cycling who wouldn’t normally consider it

£1 million will be invested in the Walk to School outreach programmes offered by the government’s partners Cycling UK and Living Streets

Sport England has developed its [delivery strategy](#) (Towards an Active Nation) to support Sporting Future.

[Please note that sport in the UK is a devolved matter. The grassroots/participation aspects of the sport strategy apply to England and are delivered by Sport England on behalf of DCMS. Participation in sport in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of those administrations].

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

School Sports and Activity Action Plan

The School Sports and Activity Action Plan (SSAAP) was [announced in October 2018](#) [9], by the Secretary of State for Education and [published in July 2019](#) [10].

This action plan is a statement of intent, setting out a joint commitment from DfE, DCMS and DHSC, to ongoing collaboration at national level to ensure that sport and physical activity are an integral part of both the school day and after-school activities, so that all children have the opportunity to take part in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

It sets out how schools, parents, sporting organisations and communities can work together to ensure that young people have access to the sporting opportunities that are right for them, inside and outside the school gates.

The Actions committed to in the plan include:

- Empowering young people to ensure pupils have the opportunity to be active throughout the school day, in a way that engages and interests them.
- Raising awareness of the importance of physical activity for children and young people.
- Immediate action to support sport in schools, through improving the coordination of PE training for teachers, reviewing current training and providing schools with a toolkit to support effective use of a PE and Sports Premium.
- To work towards ensuring all children leave primary school with swimming and water safety skills.
- A scheme to help schools rate their health and wellbeing provision.
To increase the provision of after-school sport opportunities.

Set up a clear pathway of competition and strengthen the School Games - a national programme which offers opportunities for children to take part in competitive sport at all levels; within their own school or local area as well as county and regional events.

Further details on these commitments will be published in an update to this action plan.

In 2011, the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland issued guidelines [11] for recommended levels of physical activity for different age groups. These guidelines were last updated in September 2019 to better reflect the increased compelling evidence base for the positive correlations between regular physical activity and young people. For children and young people aged 5 to 18 years these are as follows:

1. Children and young people should engage in moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week. This can include all forms of activity such as physical education, active travel, after-school activities, play and sports.
2. Children and young people should engage in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscular fitness, and bone strength.
3. Children and young people should aim to minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary, and when physically possible should break up long periods of not moving with at least light physical activity.

**Sport England investment**

Sport England funds a range of programmes to promote sport and physical activity amongst children and young people.

Current investment priorities include:

- Offer specialist training to at least two teachers in every secondary school in England by 2020. The aim of this will be to better meet the needs of all children, irrespective of their level of sporting ability, and to involve them in shaping the sporting opportunities that are provided.
- Improve the experience that children get in school through the recently doubled Primary PE and Sport Premium funding and investment into the [School Games](#) - a national programme which offers opportunities for children to take part in competitive sport at all levels; within their own school or local area as well as county and regional events. Over 21,000 schools compete in levels 1-3 and over 1m children have participated.
- Help to ensure there is a good sports and activity offer before and after the school day through supporting satellite clubs - outposts of local sport or physical activity clubs based around the needs of young people - and exploring the new Government investment into extending the school day and breakfast clubs.
- Recognise the importance of transitions between both primary and secondary and then to further and higher education, with an increased focus on supporting inactive children and students [13] to take up sport and exercise

Sport England have committed to a [£210 million package of funding](#), a combination of National Lottery and government funding, to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. This includes a £35m Community Emergency Fund and £55m Sector Stimulation which includes £20m Tackling Inequalities Fund designed to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on people from underrepresented groups.

**Physical education in schools**

Under the reformed National Curriculum, which local authority [maintained schools](#) have been
required to teach since September 2014, physical education (PE) remains a compulsory subject until the end of compulsory full-time education at age 16. National Curriculum programmes of study [16] outline what should be taught at each key stage.

Academie [17]s and free schools [18] do not have to follow the National Curriculum but are required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes, among other things, the physical development of pupils.

Schools decide how much time to spend teaching physical education (PE), taking into account the needs and circumstances of their pupils.

As part of the autonomy of schools, they or individual teachers are free to select the pedagogical tools which they use. The Association for Physical Education (afPE [19]), the UK PE subject association, provides some free resources and tools on its website.

Individual Awarding Organisations [20] may offer teaching resources to schools entering students for their examinations in PE qualifications, e.g. AQA’s resources [21] for its Physical Education GCSE.

Since October 2012, new regulations (the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 [22]) have applied to the provision of outdoor space by schools. These require that suitable outdoor space must be provided to enable ‘pupils to play outside’ and ‘physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum’.

Local authorities and schools must seek the consent of the Secretary of State when seeking to dispose of publicly funded school land, including playing fields. Advice [23] from the Department for Education, refers (p.6) to the ‘very strong policy presumption against the disposal of school playing field land’.

The Department for Education established a Healthy Pupils Capital Programme [24] (HPCF) in 2018/19, funded through the Soft Drinks Industry Levy [25]. £100m of revenue generated from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy was provided in 2018-19 for the HPCF. This fund is intended to improve children’s and young people’s physical and mental health by improving and increasing availability to facilities for physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and wellbeing and medical conditions. Funding will be available to primary and secondary schools and sixth-form colleges.

Collaboration and partnerships

County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) are networks [26] of local agencies committed to working together to increase the number of people taking part in sport and physical activity. CSPs cover all age groups, but do specific work with schools and the further/higher education sectors, including coordinating Sport England programmes at a local level.