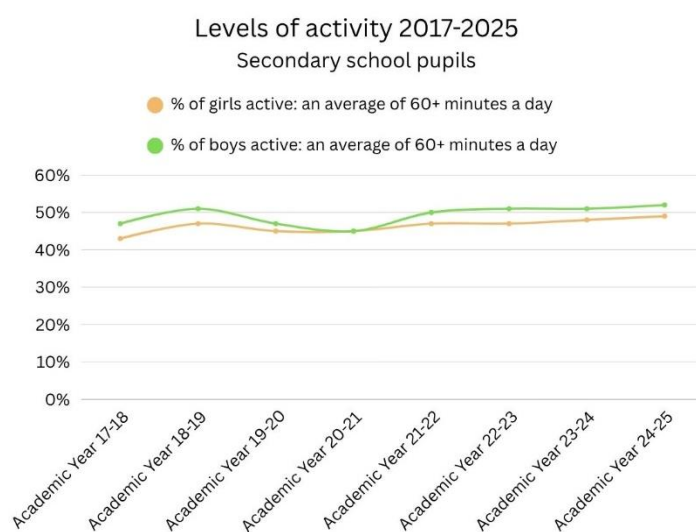


The gender sport gap: Girls remain less active than boys

A gender gap in sports participation persists, with girls still less likely to be active than boys, according to new data.

Data published by Sport England showed that in 2024/25, more than half (53.3%) of boys were active compared to just under half (46.4%) of girls.

Being active is defined as at least 60 minutes of moderate activity a day, measured by asking children whether an activity made them breathe faster than sitting down reading.



Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Academic Year 24/25

Whilst overall activity levels have increased and both boys and girls are now the most active since 2020, the level of increase is not the same.

The number of active girls increased from 45.3% in 2020/21 to 46.4% in 2024/25 – a rise of 1.1 percentage points

By contrast, the proportion of active boys increased by 8.6 percentage points, from 44.7% to 53.3% in the same time frame.

Experts have put the persistent gap down to stereotypes and lack of grassroots opportunities and abuse faced by women and girls in sport.

In a government press release published in September to announce the Women's Sport Taskforce, Chair of Sport England, Chris Boardman, said: "From safety fears to disempowering kit to online abuse – the issues faced by girls and women seeking to take part in sport and physical activity are major, which means that the stubborn gender activity gap persists."

In recent years, England's women's rugby team, the Red Roses, and women's football team, the Lionesses, have made women's sports more mainstream.

Stephanie Hilborne OBE, CEO of Women in Sport, said in January that 2026 should be a turning point for girls' participation in sport.

She said: "The new visibility of women's elite team sport is real progress, and the Red Roses were smashing stereotypes on the pitch, but girls are also seeing the abuse and inequality these great sportswomen suffer."

"Every girl should be able to dream of reaching the top of sport just as boys do and we must act now, or those dreams will slip further out of reach," she added.

A number of initiatives have been launched to help break down barriers and create more opportunities for women and girls.

The government's first Women's Sport Taskforce, announced in September 2025, aims to deliver equal access, better facilities and protect female athletes from online abuse.

At the time the Taskforce was announced, Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said the UK is perfectly positioned to become the world leader in women's sport.

She said: "This Taskforce will work to make sure that from the grassroots to sold out stadiums at major events, we are creating an environment where every woman and young girl can be involved in sport in an inclusive and welcoming environment as part of our Plan for Change."

The initiative involves an investment of £400 million for grassroots facilities and £500 million for elite sporting events.