

Dumfries and Galloway Physical Activity Survey

Overall Levels of Movement – Are we on track?

Findings from the Dumfries and Galloway Schools Physical Activity Survey (DGSPAS) 2026



Prepared by: Lynne Mann and Lee Seton
Dumfries and Galloway Physical Activity
Strategy Leads

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Why this briefing matters

These briefings use local evidence from the Dumfries and Galloway Schools Physical Activity Survey (2026) to support delivery of the Physical Activity Strategy 2025–2030.

They are designed to:

- provide clear evidence to support decision-making
- highlight where change is needed
- guide action across schools, health and communities

The findings show:

- activity levels are not improving in line with targets
- some groups are less active than others

About this briefing

- Based on DGSPAS 2026 (P4–S6 pupils)
- Provides local evidence on activity levels and trends
- Includes comparison with 2025 data

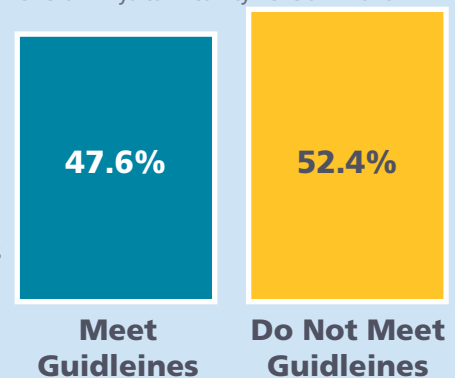
1. Why this matters

- Strategy target: **65% meeting guidelines by 2030**
- Focus on reducing very low activity
- Reduce the proportion of children in **very low activity**
 - groups
 - system-wide delivery

2. What the data shows

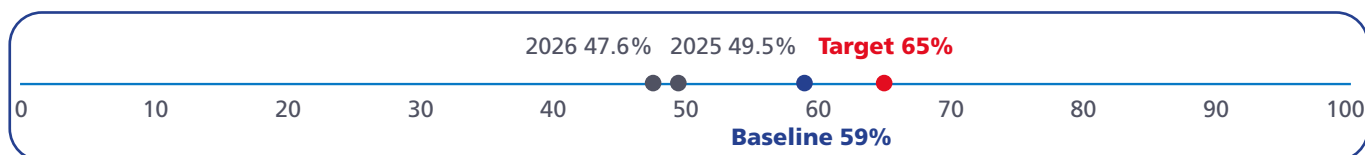
- 47.6% met physical activity guidelines in 2026, significantly lower than in 2025 (49.5%).
- 23.5% were in the very low activity group in 2026, significantly higher than in 2025 (23.0%).
- Activity declines through the school years.
- Girls and pupils with disabilities are less active.
- Activity levels vary across the school years, with the lowest levels observed in S6.
- Almost one in four pupils are now in the very low activity group, highlighting the scale of inactivity across the region.

Figure 2.1:
Overall Physical Activity Levels in 2026



47.6% met guidelines in 2026.

This was significantly lower than the 2025 result (49.5%). Activity levels also remain below the ambitions set out in the Physical Activity Strategy.



3. What this means for Dumfries and Galloway

- Activity levels have declined significantly since 2025 and remain below both the 2018 baseline and the 2030 target
- Physical activity levels vary across the school years and decline through the senior secondary phase
- Physical activity is strongly influenced by opportunities embedded within daily life, including PE, school-day activity and active travel.
- Inequalities remain across groups

4. Alignment with local policy and practice

Dumfries and Galloway Physical Activity Strategy 2025–2030

Outcome: Increase the proportion of children and young people meeting physical activity guidelines to **65% by 2030**

Action: Reduce the proportion of pupils in the **very low activity group**

Evidence from DGSPAS 2026:

- 47.6% meet guidelines (significantly lower than 2025)
- 23.5% are very low active (significantly higher than 2025)



Compared with both the 2018 baseline and the 2030 target, current trends indicate **Dumfries and Galloway is not on track to achieve the Strategy ambition** without additional action.

Dumfries and Galloway Best Investments (2025)

Findings directly support locally agreed priorities to:

- focus on **prevention and early intervention**
- **target least active populations**, particularly the very low activity group
- deliver **system-wide change**, reducing reliance on school-only provision

5. Implications for policy and practice

- Prioritise very low activity group
- Focus on sustaining participation through secondary school and increasing opportunities for everyday movement across the school day.
- Expand activity beyond schools
- Target inequalities
- Align action across schools, health and communities

6. Key messages

- 47.6% of pupils met physical activity guidelines in 2026, significantly lower than in 2025.
- This is lower than both the 2025 result (49.5%) and the 2018 baseline (59.0%)
- 23.5% of pupils are in the very low activity group, significantly higher than in 2025.
- Current trends are not on track to meet the 2030 targets
- activity declines through the school years
- Activity levels vary across age, gender and disability, highlighting the need for both universal and targeted approaches.

References

Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership (2026) *Physical Activity Strategy 2025–2030*.

Scottish Government (2024) *Physical Activity for Health Framework*.

Scottish Government (2023) *Active Scotland Outcomes Framework*.

World Health Organization (2018) *Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030: More active people for a healthier world*.