

What impacts on physical activity levels amongst young people?

The Bailiwick of Guernsey is no different to other communities in that factors affecting physical activity are complex and multi-dimensional. Those influences are present at individual, social, family and environmental levels.

Factors that are recognised as affecting participation

From Evidence Briefing on Physical activity for children and young people by the National Centre for Sport and Exercise medicine

Age: Children are more active than young people. The decline in activity appears most markedly in late childhood (around ten years of age) and early adolescence, particularly for girls.

Gender: In almost all countries for which records exist, boys are more active than girls

Socio-economic status: Adolescents from higher socio-economic groups tend to be more physically active than those from lower socio-economic groups, with around a 10% difference between low and high affluence households

Ethnicity: White adolescents are more likely to be active than those from other ethnic groups
Education: Lower levels of educational attainment are associated with lower levels of physical activity participation in school-aged children and a greater decline in participation through adolescence

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Psychological factors: The psychological factors that positively affect participation in physical activity include:

- being involved in the selection and planning of physical activity
- an interest and belief in the values of physical activity
- feelings of competence, success and achievement for adolescents
- a positive attitude towards physical activity and enjoyment of physical activity, particularly for girls
- belief in one's ability to be physically active (self-efficacy)
- Motivation based on enjoyment, developmentally appropriate activities and are those that are consistent with identity and values
- opportunities to challenge oneself, set goals and to improve

Social factors: Physical activity participation is affected (positively and negatively) by the social support and role models provided by significant others. For children and adolescents these significant others include family and care givers; peers; friends; teachers; health and exercise professionals

Environmental factors: The environmental factors that can positively affect participation in physical activity include:

- access to programmes and facilities such as playgrounds, parks and green areas
- Facilities, equipment and provisions at school
- the provision of safe walking/cycling routes to school
- the time spent outdoors.