

Pen portraits of children and young people's physical activity levels



This briefing summarises the stories from 12 parents who talked to us about their children's physical activity levels. All names have been changed to protect anonymity. All views presented are of the parents; therefore, perceptions of activities which are available in their area, up-keep of local facilities and knowledge of who can attend certain activities may not be accurate.

Karen

'Karen' has four children; three boys and a girl. 'Thomas' is 7, 'Ellie' is 11, 'Aaron' is 14 and 'Nick' is 18. Karen is very keen on physical activity and encourages her children to 'get their heart racing' for 30 minutes every day. She helps run the local football club which has rubbed off on Thomas and Aaron, who play football for various groups in the club. Karen thinks of them as *"quite active compared to some of the kids around here"*.

Aaron and Nick both study Physical Education (GCSE and A-Level, respectively) and are very keen on activity of all sorts. Thomas and Aaron go to football training twice a week and play in a match at the weekend. However, Aaron went from being very active to becoming quite solitary during lockdown and stayed indoors gaming all day. This led to him putting on weight and losing stamina on the football field. Karen says she has noticed this with all the boys at the football club, especially the lack of stamina. Now Aaron has gone back to football he is trying to lose the weight he gained during lockdown and get back to match fitness. Getting back to training twice a week, and swimming lessons for Thomas, has cheered them all up and got them back on track. During lockdown the family did go on walks together, which they all enjoyed, though Karen found it difficult to 'drag them off the X-Box'. Being less active during the pandemic definitely affected the boys' happiness.

Ellie helps at football sometimes but her main form of exercise is playing in the park. She has been through quite a change since lockdown. Previously she was an avid dancer – she did ballet, tap, street dance, and trained five days a week at a local dance studio – but lockdown meant that the classes moved online. She tried the Zoom classes but found them uninspiring and even when the dance studio re-opened she found she couldn't connect with it any more. This is upsetting for Karen as Ellie danced since she was four and it was a major part of her life. Now she goes on the occasional walk and plays on the trampoline, but is much less active than she was.

Karen would like to see a swimming pool more locally as she knows that in hot weather the children swim in dangerous places like rivers and the aqueduct. She believes this would help them be more active in a safe environment.

Jenny

'Jenny' has two children who are primary school age – 'Rachael' is the youngest and 'John' the oldest. Jenny doesn't exercise often or take part in any structured physical activity but walks her two dogs every day.

John and Rachael are both home-schooled and will walk the dogs with their mum most days, play on the trampoline in their garden and take part in 'Movers and Groovers' (a video with exercises). There are sufficient open spaces near where they live to go for long walks, and they enjoy going up and down the Craggs with the dogs. John and Rachael also go to the local skatepark and ride their scooters. This is part of the park local to Jenny and her family, where John and Rachael also play on the swings and exercise machines. Their local park in Denaby needs some maintenance and additional activities for children. There are also some woods between Denaby and Conisbrough but these can be strewn with rubbish. The family still find the woods pleasant to walk through and there are floodlights and security cameras in some areas, making them feel safer.

Jenny believes John has a learning disability (Asperges syndrome) and is waiting to be tested. His learning disability means that he doesn't particularly like mixing with other children, including playing sports and other games involving exercise. Jenny has encouraged John to try out different sports clubs, like football and cricket, but he isn't interested in team sports as they involve interacting with others. John has been to swimming lessons and these have continued during the pandemic although he hasn't attended. Outside of swimming, most of the physical activity John gets involved in is incidental; Jenny thinks that John gets enough exercise so doesn't want to pressure him to take part in anything he won't enjoy. Instead, Jenny tends to find things to do which involve walking or some exertion without it being the main driver, such as strawberry picking. The local GP hasn't signposted Jenny to any activities that John could take part in, but Jenny believes this is likely because he isn't overweight and isn't obviously in need of more exercise than he currently gets.

Rachael is slightly more active than John and tends to enjoy physical activity more. She has also had swimming lessons but hasn't shown an interest in joining any sports clubs. If there were more after-school clubs available for children her age, she might be more interested in joining one of them although the school is almost an hour away by foot and this distance would be inconvenient. Though Jenny plans to enrol her children back in school in the near future, she believes that there should be more physical activity sessions and clubs available for those who are home-schooled. Like her brother, Rachael likes to play video games which involve physical movement, such as sports games on the Wii. Jenny has found that video games, and a bit of healthy competition, helps to encourage both Rachael and John to be a bit more active.

Moving forwards Jenny hopes that both Rachael and John return to school and they participate in after-school clubs. For now, Jenny doesn't feel it is safe for them to return to swimming due to proximity of other people in the pool. Having recently been to a trampoline park nearby during quieter hours, returning to any activities indoors will be gradual but the family hope to be back to normal as soon as they feel comfortable.

Rupal

'Rupal' is a mother to two children who are both of primary school age. 'Aisha' is the eldest and 'Ali' the youngest, having only just started school. Though they are both fit and healthy, Rupal would like both her children to be more active and encourages them to exercise. She believes an active lifestyle is important to instil in her children.

Every weekend Rupal takes Aisha and Ali out, often to a play park or similar, where they will get exercise through play. There are plenty of good quality parks in the surrounding area which they frequent as a family, although Rupal finds that they must leave their immediate local area to find the best ones. For example, the park their house backs onto isn't quite as pleasant as others in the borough, and drug use and other anti-social behaviour has put Rupal off using it with her children. Crime and anti-social behaviour is relatively high in the local area and this makes Rupal slightly apprehensive about going out, especially in the evenings.

Aisha isn't a huge fan of sport per se but does go to after-school football sessions with one of her friends. Rupal thinks that her friend going to the sessions is a big influence on her wanting to participate and without this social aspect would prefer to be using social media or playing games on her smartphone or games console. Once her mum has managed to encourage her outside, Aisha does enjoy the exercise she takes part in. For example, she had swimming lessons at The Dome every weekend before the pandemic which she enjoyed and will go cycling on her bike most days.

Ali seems to enjoy exercise more than his older sister and is described as "*a ball of energy*", constantly running around at any opportunity. He loves being outside and is keen on playing football, although isn't currently participating in organised football sessions. Now he's at school he spends time playing with friends during break and lunch times, and four days a week takes part in the PE activities which the school offers all children as part of their commitment to the Daily Mile.

Aisha and Ali's swimming lessons have been cancelled since the pandemic began and they haven't been able to take part in other activities, such as bowling. Rupal thinks that because of the restrictions they haven't been as active and the lack of fun activities to do has dulled their enthusiasm for physical activity. Aisha and Ali were unable to spend much time outside, especially during the first lockdown due to the restrictions on leaving the house, and they were unable to play with their friends due to home-schooling. Aisha's football sessions have been suspended. The buses to town are more infrequent because of the pandemic and it takes much longer to travel there to reach the leisure centre.

Whilst Rupal is anxious about the possibility of her and her children catching COVID-19, she is intent on encouraging Aisha and Ali to be as active as possible now that restrictions are easing. She'd like to see greater policing of the parks to dissuade people from gathering there at night and more investment in parks in her local area. Local youth clubs will also provide an alternative hang-out for those gathering in the parks.

Joanna

'Joanna' is mum to two girls, 'Amelia' who is 7 and 'Josie' who is 13 years old. Joanna and her daughters are aware of the positive impacts physical activity can have on their mental and physical wellbeing; they all enjoy exercising and it has always been part of the children's lives.

Joanna goes to a boot camp nearby, which Amelia and Josie both sometimes go along to, and runs regularly. It's important to Joanna that they can exercise together; this is currently mostly walking, but Joanna would like to see more opportunities for structured sessions that they can do as a family. For example, the local swimming pool doesn't have enough convenient times for Joanna to

go with her children. The swimming centre facilities are also quite dated and could do with being renovated.

Josie takes part in some form of sport or exercise during PE lessons at secondary school twice a week. Outside of PE lessons, Joanna believes that the school doesn't afford sufficient importance to physical activity instead prioritising grades over physical or mental wellbeing. She would like to see more opportunities for pupils to take part in a wider variety of activities after school or in the school holidays. Outside of school, Josie goes swimming once or twice a week. She also used to go to dance classes but hasn't gone as often recently – her mum thinks she's grown out of it. Despite this, Josie has shown some interest in joining the sea cadets. Josie is keen on socialising with her friends and this often involves physical activity, although this is typically incidental rather than a specific choice. For example, Josie has gone ice skating with friends for enjoyment rather than for exercise. The only issue with activities like ice skating is that they can be expensive; whilst occasional trips are affordable, frequent outings would prove too costly.

Amelia, like her sister, goes swimming once or twice a week. Her mum thinks she has more energy and enjoys going to the park and riding her bike. Her primary school participates in the Daily Mile and offers yoga after school, and Joanna feels more confident that she gets the exercise she needs at school. Since she is still young Amelia has to be supervised during exercise and Joanna's main concern about her doing physical activity alone is being safe around roads. Occasionally there is broken glass or anti-social behaviour near the parks so they move on to another park.

As a family they go for walks locally on most days and particularly enjoy exploring new places. They live in a rural area where they have access to woods, a lake and a nature reserve and can easily find new walks without travelling by car. There are also plenty of parks within walking distance. During the pandemic family walks were daily, and when Government advice was to exercise for no longer than an hour they would use the whole hour every day. Although Amelia and Josie were unable to take part in structured exercise sessions at the swimming pool during the pandemic, Joanna believes the daily walks were enough to satisfy their appetite for exercise. They also have a trampoline and garden which they used almost every day during the lockdowns. Whilst they have been able to stay active during the pandemic, Amelia and Josie are looking forward to returning to some of the exercise sessions they were attending regularly before and trying out new activities.

Lindsey

'Lindsey' is a single mother of three teenage children - 'Sophie', 'Hayley', and 'Pete'. All three children recognise the importance of being active and have been given exercises by physios to undertake, but levels of physical activity are relatively low. 'Sophie' is more interested in sports and physical activity than her siblings.

In the past Sophie did attend the gym but since lockdown has found it difficult to remain active and could not attend regular physio appointments. This has meant that her mobility has gone from okay to hardly anything and has been in a wheelchair since November. Lindsey has sought out opportunities for activities that would be suitable for Sophie, unsuccessfully asking a range of health care professionals for advice and been told to 'google it'. Lindsey would welcome receiving advice and guidance from professionals as activities that she has identified are too far away or impractical. As lockdown has eased Sophie has tried to return to the gym but feels self-conscious due to being in a wheelchair and would welcome some support to address these feelings.

When at school Hayley used to walk to school every day and was a member of the netball team and army cadets. Since leaving school Hayley has maintained an active lifestyle by meeting up with friends for long walks. The easing of lockdown restrictions has allowed Hayley to meet with her

friends more often. For Hayley the draw is being able to socialise with her friends; she does not consider this to be physical activity but rather a by-product of it. Without the draw of socialising she is less likely to go out for walks. Hayley does recognise the benefits of undertaking this activity and found it great to be told by her friend's Mum that she looked like she had lost weight.

Pete does little physical activity and is more likely to take the bus than walk which has led to weight gain during lockdown. He did cycle but unfortunately his bike was stolen. His friendship group do not participate in sport and consequently he does not see sport as a priority. He does use the gym facility at school and would be interested in joining a private gym, but the cost is prohibitive for the family.

The impact of COVID-19 on the family has been considerable. Opportunities to go out for exercise have been limited as the family have felt nervous about being outside and initially remained in the garden. The family has gone out for walks occasionally though Lindsey finds that local surroundings are sometimes challenging to negotiate with a wheelchair.

As COVID-19 restrictions ease Lindsey thinks that the children will become a bit more active, though Lindsey has expressed concern about the lack of local opportunities for girls to participate in appropriate activities. Hayley has expressed an interest in going swimming at the local leisure centre with her friends.

Rosie

'Rosie' has one daughter: 'Amy', aged 2. Like most 2-year olds, Amy loves playing and trips to the park. Rosie has a very busy job but when she is off work she makes sure to take Amy to the park, on walks and to try new things like strawberry picking. They both love going to the woods to see wildlife and *"feel the leaves"*. Amy swaps between the pushchair and walking, which she does more if there is something nice to see – like on a recent trip to Yorkshire wildlife park. She loves being active and having fun; Rosie says Amy's favourite thing is running off so her mum will chase her.

When Rosie is working, Amy goes to a nursery where they try very hard to keep the children active. Rosie said: *"It's really good. They have an hour outside in the morning and in the afternoon. They encourage them to do all sorts of activities like playing with instruments, drawing, colouring, painting, all the usual kind of kiddies stuff."*

Lockdown presented some challenges for them both, especially the restrictions on being outdoors. They tried to do exercise indoors but found it quite difficult mainly because Amy is so young. Her favourite thing was trying to copy the squats and press-ups her mum was doing. They do have lots of outdoor equipment in the garden – trampoline, slide and swings so Amy could play outside. And they often dance together for fun. But they did find it difficult when the only real outdoor option was one walk a day.

In the future they are definitely planning to step up the activity. Rosie keeps her eye on the local Facebook community groups for activities and events, like *"Pirates and Princesses and stuff like that where you get her dressed up, you go out to the park, feed the ducks and play on the swings and stuff"*. Rosie is also determined to help her daughter do any activity she wants to do: *"Anything sports-wise. Football or gymnastics, dancing, whatever, anything. I'm up for letting her give it a go."*

Jane

'Jane' has three children: 'Billy' aged 17, 'Doris' aged 15 and 'Erin' aged 4. She has a good understanding of physical activity and the physical and mental health benefits of keeping active.

All three children are active at least 5 times a week but for very different reasons. Billy is considered the sporty one amongst them; he is studying sport at sixth form college and loves team sport, playing football and going to the gym. His mum says he is *"often buzzing about how he's got on at football and just generally happy that he's been moving. He's not really a person for being very still for very long."*

Doris suffers from severe anxiety and poor co-ordination and will not engage in organised sport, even at school. *"Doris has got very poor co-ordination and this results in injuries if it's a ball sport so she tends just to be an umpire or a score keeper at school PE. When she did try joining in they did basketball for five weeks and she had two broken fingers, two dislocated fingers and a sprained wrist."* Doris does stay active though, mainly through walking. Doris needs regular encouragement from Mum to get out and exercise. Jane says that for Doris *"walking is the best of a bad job because she knows we won't let her just not do anything."* However, her anxiety is a major barrier and this is not helped by living in a neighbourhood with high levels of anti-social behaviour which impedes participation in physical activity: *"It's built up, it's meant to be a 20mph zone but the amount of people that don't pay any attention to that doesn't make it feel the safest for cycling. There's been muggings, rapes, police incidents, so it doesn't feel that safe for walking. For running it's the same, it's just on pavements and stuff, but you do have to be careful because of how cars park and drive."*

For the youngest child, COVID-19 had very little impact on her physical activity levels despite nursery closing. Jane says she is fortunate to have a garden with trampoline, swings and a slide which were heavily used by Erin during lockdown. *"She runs around like a typical four year old. She's got a trampoline, she spends quite a lot of time on there. She's got balance bikes and scooters, so she scoots around the garden on them as well."*

For Jane and the children cost is a major barrier to doing more formal exercise: *"It's just so expensive especially now, the price for the gym has doubled since COVID-19. The council one used to be £10 a month for teenagers and I looked a couple of weeks ago and it's now £20 a month."* COVID-19 restrictions had a significant impact on the activity levels of the children, in particular the teenagers. For Billy, the closure of gyms and the stopping of team sport meant that he went from being very active to doing nothing at all. Whilst Doris used to do horse-riding as part of her counselling and therapy sessions, lessons stopped at the start of the pandemic. *"With COVID-19 everything got stopped. The therapist had to shield and she said she's not taking it back up because it's been so long now and nobody knows what's going to happen... So it's been better for her to close down the business and concentrate on other things."*

As society moves out of the lockdown, Jane is feeling much more positive about her children's activity levels, especially Billy whose activity levels are now back to normal. As restrictions ease, Jane is enjoying taking her youngest to the local park at Sandle Beat Woods and their experience is clearly enhanced by the walking trails and activities put on here during the school holiday periods which Jane learns of via Facebook.

Jane would really welcome more support from other agencies, in particular primary care, to help Doris with her anxiety: *"With my daughter's anxiety, that has actually been picked up by the GP and Paediatrician, and all they say basically is, 'Well, you've got to get used to it.' Maybe if there was some way that they could support her with overcoming it and exercise as well."*

Christine

'Christine' has two children: 'Jack', 12, and 'Leanne', 15. While each of them enjoy physical activity in their own ways, they are clearly very different.

Jack is described as 'not a sporty person at all'. Christine says that he is not like 'typical' boys and largely disinterested in sports such as football so they try and engage him in other ways to support his physical wellbeing. He does not enjoy competitive sports and dislikes things at school like sports day, although Jack does like walking and swimming and so his parents try to encourage that. Recently they took him to 'Go Ape' which he loved so they are trying to find more adventurous opportunities for him. They recognise that traditional sporting opportunities are of no interest to him but encourage physical activity more broadly.

Leanne is quite the opposite: she is 'always kicking a ball around' and on and off the trampoline. She is not particularly bothered about sport as such, but says she just finds being active enjoyable and fun. The main thing that motivates her is being with her friends and so often goes on long walks with them, especially around the local lake which is 2-3 miles long. Until recently she loved cycling but this has dropped off as her friends don't really ride bikes.

Christine and her husband often try to find active hobbies and days out for the two of them – perhaps taking a family walk to Pitwood, or going to visit adventure parks or a local water park that has slides and activities.

Like many families, they started lockdown with lots of good intentions including doing Joe Wickes everyday but 'it didn't last long'. They did go on more walks than usual but overall their activity levels dropped off. This affected Jack especially, who found it 'a struggle' to find things to do away from his computer and put on weight. One big challenge for him was not being able to swim which is one of his favourite things. For Leanne the issue was missing out on walks with her friends although she started that again as soon as the rules allowed. Christine described how their motivation levels were adversely affected during lockdown and whilst Leanne attempted some online activities via YouTube she did not do this routinely. *"She has been doing some online stuff via YouTube, some physical exercise, some aerobics and yoga work as well, but that's not been consistent. It's just been ad hoc really"*.

Post lockdown the family are making deliberate plans to do more. Christine has a 'secret mission' to get Jack to learn how to ride a bike during the summer holidays. They are also going to restart swimming and even try lane swimming. They are planning to make more trips to local parks and trampoline centres. Christine would like more activities put on for children or even just better promotion of the activities and facilities that already exist.

Helen

'Helen' has one daughter, 'Hattie', aged 5. Both of them love being active and make sure they do something every day. For Helen, physical activity simply means 'being out and about' and typically translates into spending hours in the park with Hattie. After a busy day at school, Hattie typically gets home, changes her clothes and then asks to go to the park. There they play on the swings, roundabouts and a large 8m tower the children can climb and slide down. Sometimes they go straight after school and don't get home until gone 7pm. Helen says she spends so much time outside that *"I don't know why I rent a house. I just might as well buy a tent and pop it up in a field somewhere."*

At the weekends they try to do some different activities or go further afield; Hattie participates in a children's exercise class on Fridays called Flying Futures based around boxing. Then they might walk

to the old pit in Stainforth or have a day out visiting castles or old halls. This is all on top of activity done at school. Helen says the school is very active and Hattie often talks about having been dancing.

Helen's motivation for physical activity comes from her upbringing; she was very active as a child, going on walks with her mum every day or being with her 'outdoorsy' dad. Even today her 66-year old dad and 65-year old mother will say *"we're bored let's go for a walk"*.

Lockdown was hard for Helen and Hattie but they made sure they made the most of the one hour of daily exercise time they thought they were allowed. They walked every day and explored all the local back alleys by turning them into an adventure although this probably added up to less exercise for them both than usual. Indoors they tried doing Joe Wickes and Hattie even asked her mum to find her some videos of exercises she could try. Almost in desperation Helen says she bought a trampoline, swings and slide to 'make an actual park in the back garden' for Hattie.

Now that restrictions are ending, they are both planning to get back to being more active and have made lots of plans: *"She'll be out every day of the week. We've got things planned with friends, we've got things planned with family and everything. I don't think she's actually got a day free yet."*

Korina

'Korina' is a mum to five children. The eldest two, 'Bethany' aged 17 and 'Anna' aged 15, do very little exercise according to Korina, who says they have been largely inactive since the first lockdown: *"they never leave their bedrooms."* However, Bethany recently hiked 26 miles for charity as a one-off and Anna goes to 'Explorers', an outdoor activity group, where she takes part in various activities, such as canoeing.

For Bethany, health was a barrier to activity which disrupted her habit. She used to regularly attend Taekwondo and even competed at an international level, but after she had appendicitis she has not returned to. Korina works long hours so is often not around to encourage Bethany and, although she wants to, she struggles to think of ways to motivate her to be more active *"I don't know what could motivate her... I hope it's just a moody phase where she doesn't want to do anything."* Anna is a very social child and Korina thinks that her boyfriend and her peer group will be big motivators to get her moving. Bethany is similarly motivated by social aspects of activity.

12-year-old 'John' has autism. Korina says he's 'hit and miss' when it comes to physical activity. John will spend lots of time on his games console but will also spend long periods of time riding his BMX. He tends not to want to spend much time playing with his siblings but will happily go for walks with his mum.

'Lilly' is six, and very active, she loves riding her bike to and from school, taking part in the daily mile and learning to swim at Armthorpe Leisure Centre. Korina thinks the primary school really encourage physical activity every day, but the secondary school, she feels, is the opposite and should do far more. *"At primary school, whoever's on duty at playtime, they play football with the kids, or they get them playing a game, there's no body doing that at secondary school. They do PE once a week and when it rains they don't even do that."*

The youngest child 'Brian' is just one year old and goes to Sandall park daily with Lilly and Korina. Mum thinks it's a great environment for them, it's well maintained with good facilities including a walking trail around the duck pond, that the little ones love. There are also other local parks but there are occasionally teenagers hanging around and this puts Korina off going sometimes. For her own teenage children, she also believes there aren't enough places to 'hang out' and mum worries about their safety. For example, sometimes they go swimming in the canal despite Korina not

wanting them to. Korina is also concerned about how residents portray groups of teenagers hanging around as their own fault as they are not necessarily doing anything wrong. She feels that if there was more available for them to do they wouldn't have to do this.

COVID-19 had a significant negative impact on the children's activity levels. The clubs they were members of temporarily closed and since they reopened the children have no intention of going back because they've been away from them for so long. John has also been reluctant to go back to football sessions for fear of catching COVID-19.

Korina worries that this inactivity is now having an impact on her children's health: *"My eldest piled on a bit of weight, which then made her depressed. Now she is in quite a vicious cycle with being moody and eating and not exercising and putting on weight and then feeling fat and she's going round in circles."* Korina has reached out to her local GP for help but feels that the GPs just don't want to know.

Lena

'Lena' has a 13-year-old son, 'Aleksander'. He has type 1 diabetes which Lena explains is a reason he is focused on keeping active: *"he's aware that he needs to exercise to keep his blood sugar levels good"*. He doesn't just exercise because he has to as he really enjoys being active. He loves Jiu-Jitsu, and before the lockdowns he would train at a local club once or twice a week. He also swims in the local swimming pool once a week, plays football with his friends, and chooses to walk or cycle to school every day.

Aleksander spends time indoors on his computer, especially when it's raining, but most days he is 'out and about'. He always tries to meet up with friends, playing football or badminton. He also goes to the skatepark with friends to ride on his scooter. Whilst the social aspect of physical activity is important to Aleksander, it's not the deciding factor as the exercise itself is important. When he is at home he plays table tennis with family or friends.

Aleksander was much less active during lockdown, especially without the active travel to school and exercise he would normally get there. He really missed going out with his friends and wasn't able to go swimming or do Jiu-Jitsu. He got quite fed up and was experiencing low mood, especially at the beginning when he and his parents stayed in for two weeks. To help with this they vowed to go for a walk every day in the local park and woods – Aleksander enjoyed the time to chat and walk, and Lena found it helped to lift his mood.

As the lockdown eases, Aleksander is really looking forward to getting back to Jiu-Jitsu and swimming, though neither is fully open yet. He's back out with his friends though so is spending less time indoors. He also recently tried archery and really enjoyed that, so he may take that up as a new sport.

There are plenty of parks in their area and there are opportunities for Aleksander to be active with his friends and family. Lena would like to see more sport clubs in the area, and feels like many of the Council run activities are exclusionary and are only available for children eligible for free school meals. Although Aleksander plays football with his friends he doesn't go to any organised sessions – if they were available to children who aren't eligible for free school meals, then he would mostly likely want to go. This would help him to be more active and help him progress with his football.

Chloe

'Chloe' has two children, 'William' aged 18 is just leaving sixth form college, whilst 'Sky' is 12 and attends the local high school. Chloe works long hours, which has a big impact on the family's leisure time. William and Sky aren't particularly 'sporty' and with Chloe at work they lack the motivation to get out and be active.

William and Sky spend a lot of their spare time in their bedrooms chatting with friends on social media and this has increased during lockdown. Chloe thinks that her children picked up a lot of bad habits during lockdown. Her children don't think about fun, physical or mental health benefits as motivators to be active, they just go out to socialise. With lockdown *"forcing children to connect on-line"* they have *"lost the need to meet up in person, they have lost the need to go out."* As a result, Chloe says lockdown has *"made them lazy."*

For William all his physical activity comes from either active travel or gardening. William likes to walk rather than get the bus and he helps the neighbours with their gardens which helps keep him active. Sky on the other hand loves organised group activities and is always happy to give anything a go if encouraged. Chloe is frustrated that the local neighbourhood does not really support Sky to be more active though. She says that there is very little organised physical activity in the local community and no information about what might be available. The activities Sky takes part in, such as football training, tend to be outside the local area and Chloe has to drive her to them at least once a week. Chloe is also concerned about road safety. Sky enjoys riding her bike but her mum is very reluctant to let her go out on her bike due to the speed of traffic and unsafe driving in the area. Despite this, Sky and her brother both exercise in some way around three days a week.

Another big barrier to exercise for Chloe is cost. Chloe thinks that there are great free opportunities for children on Free School Meals, but for those who earn even slightly above the threshold they are expected to pay full price. For some sessions, it can be as much as £3 per child, for two sessions a week which can quickly add up.

Chloe is disappointed with how little value the school gives to physical activity and believes PE should be given a higher priority within the curriculum. Whilst Chloe knows the school put on quite a lot of after school activities, she reflects that these are all traditional sport and dance classes – a greater selection of activities would encourage more children to take part.