

Briefing Note: Explanation of the different sport participation indicators

Background

There are currently a number of key Government sport participation indicators which exist in the sporting landscape, and which are being measured by Sport England's Active People Survey. This note seeks to explain the rationale for these indicators, and the definitions of each.

Sport England's [Active People Survey](#) is a national sport participation survey of adults (age 16 and over) in England carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Sport England. The first year of the survey (Active People Survey 1) was completed between mid October 2005 and mid October 2006 and Active People Survey 2 was undertaken between mid October 2007 and mid October 2008. Ipsos MORI are contracted to collect data until October 2010 (completing Active People Survey 3 and 4).

The indicators

1) KPI 1: '3x30' Sport and active recreation participation indicator

The Framework for Sport in England, published by Sport England in 2004, outlined the national strategy for sport in England. The aim of the strategy was to change the culture of sport and physical activity in England in order to increase participation across all social groups.

As a result of widespread consultation, the Framework for Sport in England defined sport's "larger contribution" to the overall five days a week physical activity target as **30 minutes of moderate intensity sport and active recreation on at least three days a week (12 days out of the previous 28 days), including recreational walking and recreational cycling.**

This interpretation was endorsed by the DCMS and supported by the Treasury through the Public Service Agreement (DCMS PSA 3) for 2005-08. It formed the basis of discussions with the Audit Commission on the sporting key indicator within the CPA Culture Service Block, where 3 x 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport and active recreation on three days each week was adopted as the "participation KPI" for single tier authorities in 2006. The last year this indicator will be reported for CPA is 2008/9.

The definition of the 3x30 participation indicator is: *The percentage of the adult population participating in at least 30 minutes of sport and active recreation (including recreational walking and cycling) of at least moderate intensity on at least 3 days a week.*

This indicator does *not* include 'active travel' or the wider spectrum of physical activity such as gardening, DIY, housework etc. The 3x30 indicator measures *sport and active recreations* contribution to the overall 5x30 aspiration. There are other exclusions such as bird watching, watching sport and board games, as these are not considered to be sport and active recreation. For a full list of exclusions, contact research@sportengland.org.

Throughout Active People Surveys 2, 3 and 4, Sport England will be maintaining measurement and key reporting of the 3x30 participation indicator. It remains an important overall indicator of sport and active recreation at national, regional and sub-regional level, and the ability to track this indicator over time and to benchmark geographically is both useful and important.

2) The National Indicator Set: NI8

The national indicator set has been derived from Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and the Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs) of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2008-11, providing a statement of the Government's priorities for delivery by local government and its partners over the next three years.

They will be the only indicators on which central government will be able to set targets for local government. They will be the only measures against which Government can agree improvement targets with a local authority or partnership through the LAA, and the only trigger for performance management by central government.

The national indicator set for local authorities was announced in October 2007. National Indicators are the only means of measuring national priorities that have been agreed by Government. National Indicator 8 (**NI8**) is the indicator for sport and active recreation and it is being measured by Sport England's Active People Survey. It supports PSA21 – cohesive, active and empowered communities.

The definition for NI8 is: *the percentage of the adult population in a local area who participated in sport and active recreation, at moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes on at least 12 days out of the last 4 weeks (equivalent to 30 minutes on 3 or more days a week).*

Measurement of NI8 is largely based on the same range of sport and active recreational activities as included in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) indicator for the previous 2 years and as is currently measured in the 3x30 participation indicator described above. NI8 measures participation in at least moderate intensity sport and active recreation for adults aged 16 and over.

The only change from the CPA indicator and from Sport England's 3x30 participation indicator, is that NI8 includes five **light intensity sports for those aged 65 and over**. These sports are: yoga, pilates, indoor and outdoor bowls, archery and croquet. These have been included in NI8 on the basis that these light intensity sports place a degree of physical demand on older participants in recognition of the health benefits for that age group.

As with the 3x30 participation indicator, any activity included in NI8 has to be undertaken for at least 30 minutes and at least moderate intensity. The five sports listed above are considered 'moderate intensity' for people age 65 and over.

In summary, the only key difference between NI8 and 3x30 indicator, is that NI8 includes the above five light intensity activities for people aged over 65. NI8 therefore encompasses the widest definition of the three indicators referenced in this briefing note. Also, NI8 is a local indicator, so will be reported on only at local authority level – single tier, county and district.

For further information on NI8, visit the [Sport England website](#) and the [Communities & Local Government website](#).

3) The 'One Million' Indicator: Sport England's strategic target and The Olympic Legacy Action Plan.

Sport England launched its new [2008-2011 strategy](#) in June 2008. The overarching aim is the creation of a world class community sport system in England, underpinned by the three strategic outcomes of 'grow', 'sustain' and 'excel'.

Within the 'grow' outcome, Sport England is committed to delivering **one million people doing more sport by 2012/13**. Sport England's one million target, 'The One Million Indicator' will be measured by Sport England's Active People Survey. It has a **narrower focus of activities (than specified for KPI 1 (3x30 minutes) and NI8), which reflects Sport England's sport-focused strategy**.

Overall the 'one million' indicator measures *the percentage of the adult population participating in at least 30 minutes of sport, at least moderate intensity at least 3 times a week*.

The 'one million' indicator **does not include recreational walking or recreational cycling** (as KPI 1 and the NI8 indicators do). In recognition that there will be elements of cycling and walking that should be counted as 'sport', this indicator does include cycling if done at least once a week, moderate intensity for 30 minutes. It also includes the following more organised and intense/strenuous walking activities: Backpacking, Hill trekking, Cliff Walking, Gorge Walking, Hill walking, Rambling, Power walking and sport 'walking'.

As with NI8, the 'one million' indicator does include adults aged 65 and over, who have participated in yoga, pilates, indoor and outdoor bowls, archery and croquet.

The overall Government target, as set out in the DCMS [The Legacy Action Plan](#) is to increase by two million the number of people doing more sport and being more physically active by 2012-13. Of this two million, one million will be via people doing more sport. This means that Sport England is responsible for getting one million people doing more sport by 2012-13. Many departments including the Department of Health (DH), the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Communities and Local Government (CLG), the Department for Transport (DfT), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), have a role to play in getting the nation more active, and they are working together to coordinate and drive action to achieve the wider target of two million people being more active.

Pivotal to Sport England's 2008-11 strategy is the commissioning of National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) by Sport England. NGBs will contribute to this narrower sport indicator with targets in their 2009-2013 Plans, based on growing the participation in their sport. Each NGB will be setting growth targets to increase the 'once a week' participation rates in their sport. The growth targets across sports will contribute to the overall target of sport three times a week as set out in the 'One Million' Indicator.

Summary

The above sport participation indicators have been established to support performance frameworks aligned to the prevailing Government policy and strategic direction. They all require different definitions of participation in terms of what is included within the indicator, as highlighted above.

These indicators have been defined to be relevant to current policy frameworks and strategies. Sport England's Active People Survey is in place to service these key frameworks and will report on all three indicators as appropriate.

The table summarises what is included and excluded from each of the three indicators described in this paper and the full list of activities is included within appendix A

For more information, contact research@sportengland.org

Sport England Research & Policy Teams, November 2008.

Activities from Active People Survey included within KPI 1, National Indicator 8 (NI8) and the 'One Million' Indicator.

	Summary	Sport and Active Recreation ¹	Walking	Cycling	Activities included only for people aged 65 and over ²
KPI 1 Participation	3 days a week, 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking and recreational cycling)	✓	✓ recreational walking ³ ✓ 'sport' walking ⁴	✓ recreational cycling ⁵ ✓ 'sport' cycling ⁶	✗
National Indicator 8 (NI8)	3 days a week, 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking and recreational cycling) and five activities for people aged 65 and over	✓	✓ recreational walking ✓ 'sport' walking	✓ recreational cycling ✓ 'sport' cycling	Bowls (indoor and outdoor) Archery Yoga Pilates Croquet
'One million' indicator	3 times a week, 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation ⁷ (including specific 'sport' elements of walking and cycling) and five activities for people aged 65 and over.	✓	✓ 'sport' walking ✗ Excludes: recreational walking	✓ Includes: all cycling undertaken for at least once a week, 30 minutes moderate intensity ⁸ . ✗ Excludes: all cycling NOT undertaken for at least once a week, 30 minutes moderate intensity.	Bowls (indoor and outdoor) Archery Yoga Pilates Croquet

¹ Includes activities listed in appendix A for people aged 16 and over (excludes active transport and wider physical activity e.g. gardening, DIY). Activity must be undertaken for 30 minutes moderate intensity to be included within KPI 1, NI8 and 'One Million' indicators.

² These activities are considered 'moderate intensity' for people aged 65 and over.

³ Recreational walking is defined as 'walking for the purpose of health or recreation not just to get from place to place'.

⁴ 'Sport' walking includes the following walking activities: Hill Walking, Hill Trekking, Gorge Walking, Power Walking, Sport 'walking', Rambling, and Backpacking.

⁵ Recreational cycling is defined as 'cycling for the purpose of health, recreation, training or competition, not just to get from place to place'.

⁶ 'Sport' cycling includes the following activities: BMX, Cyclo-Cross, Mountain Biking, Sport 'cycling'.

⁷ Different sports are included if undertaken on the same day; however an individual sport can only count once per day. For example, jogging and swimming on the same day each for 30 minutes moderate intensity would contribute two sessions towards 3x30. However two sessions of jogging on the same day (both for 30 minutes moderate intensity) are counted as once towards 3x30. 12 or more sessions (30 minutes moderate intensity) within the last 28 days are needed to participate for 3x30, an average of 3 times a week.

⁸ Once a week participation is defined as participation on four or more days out of the previous 28 days.