

**MEASURING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT A PROJECT LEVEL  
SPORT ENGLAND RECOMMENDATION  
JANUARY 2018**

**Background**

In 2017 Sport England commissioned a project to identify a short physical activity self-report tool which is appropriate for use in project evaluation. A project team from the University of Oxford, the University of East Anglia and Wavehill Social and Economic Research carried out the research. Colleagues from Sport England and Public Health England sat on the project steering group.

The research involved testing a range of established and new tools including the IPAQ, the Short Active Lives Survey, the Single Item Measure and two adapted versions of the Single Item Measure. These tools were compared with the full Active Lives Survey in phase one of the research and with an objective measure of physical activity in phase two of the research.

The results of this research informed this recommendation.

This recommendation only applies to adult respondents (aged 16+) as the research did not include children and young people.

**Recommendation: Short Active Lives Survey**

Sport England recommends that funded organisations use the **Short Active Lives Survey** questions (see Annex 1) to measure adult physical activity levels.

**Explanation:**

Agreement with the full Active Lives Survey:

- The Short Active Live Survey demonstrated a fair correlation with the full Active Lives Survey.
- It demonstrated reasonable agreement with the full Active Lives Survey in terms of the classification of participants as 'inactive', 'fairly active' and 'active' (whereas the IPAQ demonstrated a significant level of over-reporting).

Agreement with an objective measure of physical activity:

- The Short Active Live Survey recorded similar mean minutes to the objective measure.
- It demonstrated a correlation with the objective data which is similar to that observed for other self-report tools (Milton et al., 2011).
- It demonstrated a fair level of agreement in the classification of respondents as 'inactive', 'fairly active' and 'active'.

Policy relevance:

- The Short Active Live Survey has the capability of identifying those who do less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week and those who achieve 150 minutes per week or more (unlike the Single Item Measure, which assesses days of activity as opposed to minutes).
- It generates data which is directly comparable to Sport England's national population survey.

Ease of administration

- It takes just one minute to complete (compared with more than two minutes for the IPAQ).

### **Analysis of data from the Short Active Lives Survey:**

For each activity that respondents indicate was sufficient to raise their breathing rate, the total number of days is multiplied by the usual minutes spent undertaking the activity to give a measure of total minutes over the 7-day period for that activity.

The respondent's final score is calculated by summing all activities which were sufficient to raise breathing rate, as follows:

(Days of walking \* usual minutes of walking IF sufficient to raise breathing rate) + (Days of cycling \* usual minutes of cycling IF sufficient to raise breathing rate) + (days of sport, fitness or dance \* usual minutes of sport, fitness or dance IF sufficient to raise breathing rate).

Any activities which were not identified as sufficient to increase breathing rate by the respondent are excluded from the calculation.

Anyone completing a total of less than 30 minutes activity sufficient to increase breathing rate is classified as 'inactive', anyone completing between 30 minutes and 149 minutes is classified as 'fairly active' and anyone completing 150+ minutes is classified as 'active'.

### **Changing the wording of the Short Active Lives Survey**

The default should be to use the exact wording of the tool shown in Annex 1 as this is the wording that was used in the research. Please contact Sport England if you wish to discuss potential adaptations to meet the needs of your project respondents e.g. translated versions of the tool.

### **Alternative measures of physical activity**

There are several other well-established self-report tools and identifying the best tool to use is challenging. We recognise that there may be specific circumstances in which it makes sense to use one of the alternative tools such as IPAQ or the Single Item Measure. Please contact Sport England if you wish to discuss use of an alternative tool to meet the needs of your project.

**ANNEX 1: SHORT ACTIVE LIVES QUESTIONNAIRE (NON WEB-BASED ADMINISTRATION)**

**1) In the past 7 days, have you done a continuous walk lasting at least 10 minutes? Yes/ No**

If yes:

a) In the past 7 days, on how many days did you do a walk lasting at least ten minutes? *Please circle*

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7

b) How much time did you usually spend walking on each day that you did the activity?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours and \_\_\_\_\_ minutes per day

c) Was the effort you put into walking usually enough to raise your breathing rate? *Please circle*

Yes      No

**2) In the past 7 days, have you done a cycle ride? Yes/ No**

If yes:

a) In the past 7 days, on how many days did you do a cycle ride? *Please circle*

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7

b) How much time did you usually spend cycling on each day that you did the activity?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours and \_\_\_\_\_ minutes per day

c) Was the effort you put into cycling usually enough to raise your breathing rate? *Please circle*

Yes      No

**3) In the past 7 days, have you done sport, fitness activity (such as gym or fitness classes), or dance? Yes/ No**

If yes:

a) In the past 7 days, on how many days did you do a sport, fitness activity (such as gym or fitness classes), or dance? *Please circle*

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7

b) How much time did you usually spend doing sport, fitness activities, or dance on each day that you did the activity?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours and \_\_\_\_\_ minutes per day

c) Was the effort you put into doing sport, fitness activities, or dance usually enough to raise your breathing rate? *Please circle*

Yes      No

## **SHORT ACTIVE LIVES QUESTIONNAIRE (WEB-BASED ADMINISTRATION)**

1) In the past 7 days, have you done any of these activities?

- A continuous walk lasting at least 10 minutes
- A cycle ride
- A sport, fitness activity (such as gym or fitness classes), or dance
- None of these

**Ask if ticked yes to walking at Q1:**

2) In the past 7 days, on how many days did you do a walk lasting at least ten minutes?

3) How much time did you usually spend walking on each day that you did the activity?

4) Was the effort you put into walking usually enough to raise your breathing rate? Yes/No

**Ask if ticked yes to a cycle ride at Q1:**

5) In the past 7 days, on how many days did you do a cycle ride?

6) How much time did you usually spend cycling on each day that you did the activity?

7) Was the effort you put into cycling usually enough to raise your breathing rate? Yes/No

**Ask if ticked yes to sport or fitness activity at Q1:**

8) In the past 7 days, on how many days did you do a sport, fitness activity (such as gym or fitness classes), or dance?

9) How much time did you usually spend doing sport, fitness activities, or dance on each day that you did the activity?

10) Was the effort you put into doing sport, fitness activities, or dance usually enough to raise your breathing rate? Yes/No