



Centre for Applied  
Education Research



UNIVERSITY of  
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# Physical literacy consensus for England: insights from children and young people

Preliminary findings

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# About the Physical Literacy Consensus for England project

Liverpool John Moores University's Research Institute for Sport and Exercise Sciences is collaborating with academics from Coventry University, the University of Gloucestershire, the University of Bradford and Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust in a Sport England funded year-long project that aims to develop [a physical literacy consensus statement for England](#).

The term 'physical literacy' will, and can, mean different things to different people and organisations. This project aims to create a universal definition of physical literacy in England to hopefully catalyse efforts to adopt, support and promote physical literacy in practice. The year-long project commenced in March 2022 and is structured into three phases of work and five work packages:

1. Review of the existing evidence surrounding physical literacy
2. First national consultation on physical literacy
3. Insight with children and young people
4. Consensus methodologies and co-development with an expert panel
5. Second national consultation on physical literacy and dissemination

This report outlines the findings from work package 3, qualitative work to capture children and young people's perspectives on physical literacy. This is a preliminary version of the findings. The final report will be published in due course.

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# Executive summary

This work package aimed to understand what physical literacy means to children and young people through some qualitative research. This report presents the preliminary findings.

Seven schools across the North (Bradford/Wirral) and Southeast of England (Greater London) and 53 children and young people (age,  $M=13.1\pm 1.8$  years; sex,  $n=31$  boys; active/sporty,  $n=31$  special educational needs and disabilities,  $n=8$ ) consented to take part. Participants took part in a school-based focus group which included three tasks to direct the discussion. The tasks were to draw/write and talk about: (i) meaningful movement-based activities, (ii) important *things* to help you move your body now and for the rest of your life, and (iii) to rank the Australian Physical Literacy Framework's 30 elements from most and least important.

The first task around meaningful activity-based activities resulted in an array of different activities, including team sports, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, surfing, tree climbing, walking, and fishing. Four themes were identified: (i) emotional responses to movement, (ii) relationships, (iii) psychological well-being, and (iv) physical health.

When asked what might be important to move your body now and for the rest of your life (Task 2), seven themes were identified: (i) knowledge of physical and mental health benefits, (ii) motivation, (iii) enjoyment, (iv) capability, (v) relationships, (vi) health and safety, and (vii) opportunities.

Task three involved ranking the Australian Physical Literacy Framework's 30 elements from most and least important for KS3/4 children ( $n=27$ ). The most common elements deemed meaningful to be active for the rest of your life were motivation and confidence. The physical elements were not considered as important when compared to the other elements belonging to the social and psychological, and cognitive domains.

Novel insights from children and young people included the pertinence of social relationships – whether it was to share experiences, support and encourage friends, or learn from your family. Participants discussed how physical activity positively affects their emotions, moving on to discuss the importance of enjoyment to continue to engage in the movement for the rest of their lives. These conversations alluded to the importance of motivation. In addition, there was an awareness of the benefits for your mental and physical health, which alluded to the prominence of knowing these before benefits to engage. The findings offer some important contributions from children and young people to further unpicking what physical literacy means in England.

# Research aims and questions

Aim: To understand what physical literacy means to children and young people (CYP).

## Research questions

1. What do CYP value about participating in movement and physical activity?
2. What capabilities do CYP identify as being important for participation in physical activity for life?

# Methodology

## Recruitment and participants

A convenient purposive sampling approach was employed to recruit schools, with recruitment driven through schools and relevant partner networks/organisations with existing relationships with the research team.

We sought to recruit schools in the North (Bradford/Wirral) and Southeast of England (Greater London), intending to recruit a diverse sample considering ethnicity, deprivation, and children at special schools with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. Ethical approval was provided by the University of Bradford (reference: E989).

Following school consent and year group identification, class teachers were asked to identify suitable participants based on pupils with a mix of activity levels (active/sporty versus inactive/non-sporty) and sex. This was to ensure we can capture the opinions and voices of some CYP who regularly participate in movement-based activities and physical activity compared to CYP who have little or no interest or engagement with physical activity and sport.

## Focus groups

To encourage divergent perspectives from CYP around meaningful movement-based activities, we decided to conduct focus groups. Focus groups were conducted in a quiet school space, lasting on average 46.5 minutes, ranging from 30 to 58 minutes. Focus group sizes ranged from 3 to 9 CYP. CYP were asked to complete three tasks that encompassed an activity and a series of questions around meaningful activities involving moving your body.

## Task one

Task one included asking all CYP to draw/write an activity or activities they find meaningful that involve moving their bodies. CYP were then asked to explain a bit more about the activity; what they were doing, how they felt during and after, and what helps them do the activity.

## Task two

Physical literacy is fostered through purposeful, meaningful activities and positive experiences. Therefore, task two was critical to provide gain insights from CYP about what matters in relation to physical activity experiences. This involved CYP down things they think are important to move their bodies now and for the rest of their life, consciously thinking beyond themselves but about other CYP as well. When CYP struggled, prompts were provided to get them to think about their bodies, mind, environment, and other people. CYP were then asked to share their thoughts with prompts throughout to help expand ideas.

## Task three

Physical literacy definitions proposed by researchers include elements or capabilities considered important for physical literacy and engaging in physical activity for life (Martins et al., 2021). To capture the importance of such elements/concepts from CYP perspectives, we drew upon the Australian Physical Literacy Framework (APLF; Sport Australia, 2019) during task three. The APLF includes 30 elements that are housed within four constructs: (i) physical, (ii) psychological, (iii) social and (iv) cognitive. Each element included a short explanation and example. Examples tailored to Australia were tweaked to provide an example more culturally relevant to England.

Task three was completed with KS3 and KS4 (aged 7 to 16 years old) CYP, excluding those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). CYP were asked to order 30 elements that might be important for CYP to do activities that involve moving their bodies now but also for the rest of their lives. They were told to rank them from most important to least important/not important at all. During this activity any elements that were not understandable to children were discussed and explained to them.



Figure 1: The Australian Physical Literacy Framework.

## Analyses

The focus groups were voice recorded and transcribed verbatim to aid the analysis. Analyses for task one and two was undertaken using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis methodology. One author conducting the inductive coding removed restrictions on coding in line with a prior framework (Thomas and Harden, 2008). Reviewing and redefining the themes was conducted with two authors. This process helped ensure clear definitions and names were produced for each theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

# Results

Participants were between 10 and 15 years old ( $M=13.1\pm 1.8$  years). Table 1 demonstrates a fairly even split of sexes, key stages, and active/inactive CYP that took part in the present study. There was relatively good diversity for ethnic groups and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

**Table 1** Participant Characteristics

	N	%
Gender		
Boys	31	58.5
Girls	22	41.5
School Key Stage		
Key Stage 2	13	24.5
Key Stage 3	23	43.4
Key Stage 4	17	32.1
Ethnicity		
White British	35	66.0
Pakistani	9	17.0
Indian	3	5.7
Chinese	2	3.8
Other White	2	3.8
Black	1	1.9
Black & White Mixed	1	1.9
Activity Category		
Sport/Active	31	58.5
Non-Sport/Inactive	22	41.5
Special educational needs and disabilities		
Autistic spectrum disorder	8	15.1
Learning difficulties	1	1.9
Autistic spectrum disorder and learning difficulties	1	1.9
No special educational needs and disabilities	43	81.1

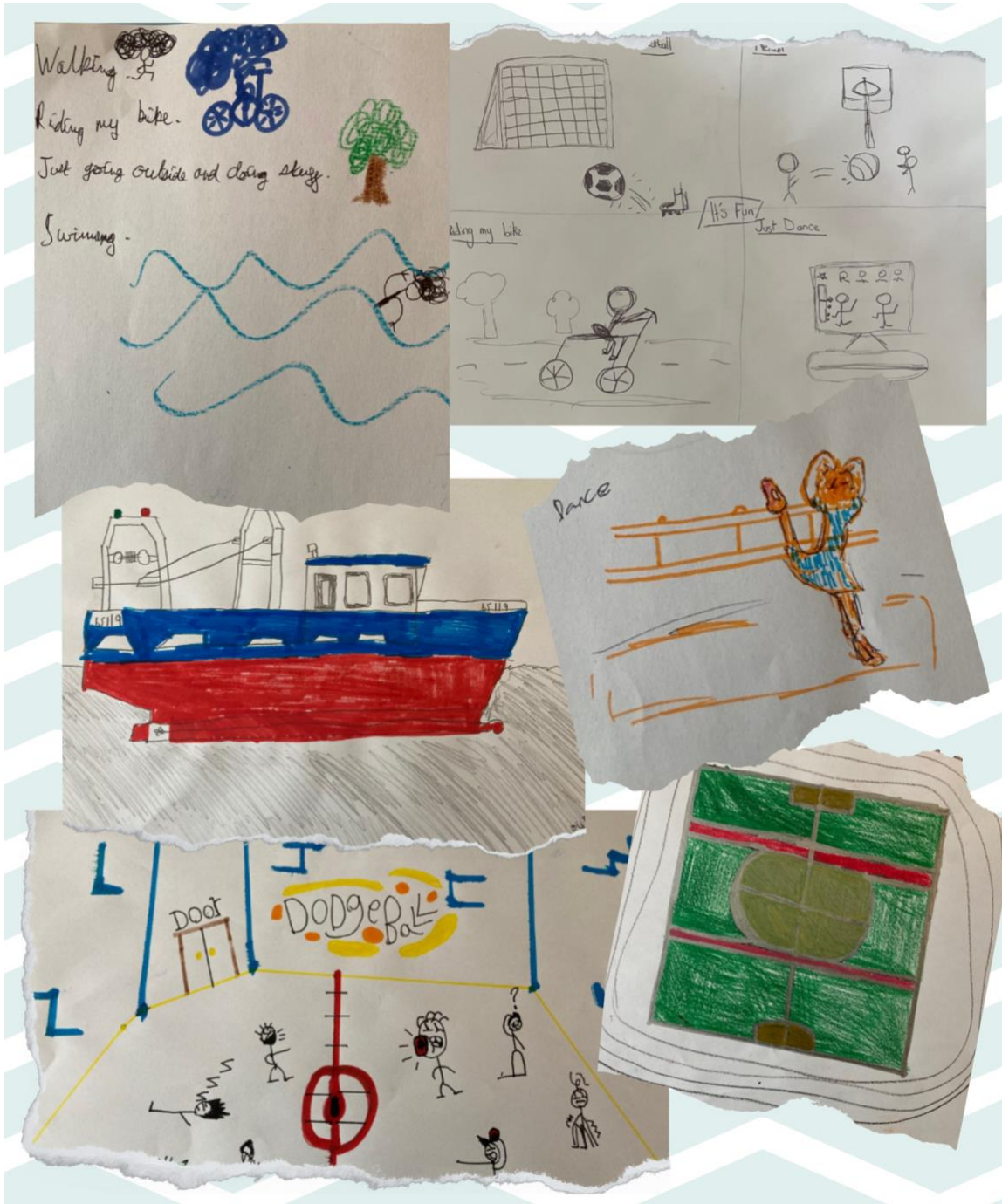
*Note.* Key Stage 2 includes years 3 to 6 for pupils aged between 8 and 11 years old. Key Stage 3 includes years 7 to 9 for pupils aged between 11 and 14 years old. Key Stage 4 includes years 10 to 11 for pupils ages between 14 and 16.



## Meaningful activities to children and young people (Task 1)

### Activities involving moving your body

When CYP were asked about an activity or activities they find meaningful that involve moving their bodies, they described a range of activities. From engaging in team sports, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, surfing and skiing to tree climbing, walking, fishing, and cooking with Mum.



**Figure 2** Example drawings from participants drawing meaningful activities involving moving your body.

To understand the reasons that make these activities meaningful for CYP, four themes were identified from these drawings: (i) emotional responses to movement, (ii) relationships, (iii) psychological well-being, and (iv) physical health.

### Theme 1: Emotional responses to movement

Irrespective of the activity, CYP consistently described the activities they had drawn as emotionally rewarding. Feeling “happy” (P14, P29) and describing the activity/activities as “fun” (P4, P7, P13). These emotional responses were found across all participating CYP. One participant described feelings of sadness then they have to stop playing football: *“I kind of feel a little bit sad because I want it to keep going on and on. Because “I liked it so much.”* (P2). Other CYP described positive emotions that raised after taking part.

*“Well I feel happy after doing all those. I just feel really happy and positive”. (P14)*  
*“After walking, being out, see some trees, nature, I feel happy after that too”. (P14)*

Others described this as *“feeling excited”* (P1) with rushes of adrenaline. For example, P2 said: *“Yeah, usually with like cricket and football, you get quite a rush of energy.”* For activities that require dedicated to developing the relevant physical capabilities, CYP described a sense of accomplishment and reward from taking part:

*“Dance requires a lot of time, skill and it makes you feel rewarded after you’ve finished dancing.” (P8)*  
*“Like if you get a new personal best. It’s good like you’ve accomplished.” (P36)*

There was a sub-theme identified around winning and competition. CYP that were categorised as active/sporty and played team sports or athletics, described competition interwoven with positive emotional responses. Winning a game or getting a personal best results in more feelings of happiness and joy. Yet losing results in feelings of sadness. Highlighting the importance of emotional self-regulation.

*“Not if you lose if you’re losing its sad but if you win, you’re like happy.” (P34)*  
*“Well, you feel quite upset. Like, if you’ve done well in the game, then you know you’ve tried you’re best so.” (P29)*

### Theme 2: Relationships

The importance of relationships with friends and family was apparent across all participants. When CYP touched on the movement-based activity they find meaningful, more often than not, they mentioned their friends or family were involved.

*“I like it because I do it with my grandad.” (P34)*  
*“Sometimes I play with my stepdad. And sometimes, like, get my football and play with my friends sometimes.” (P4)*  
*“Playing with my sister, playing with my cat, and going out with friends to walk, like walk.” (P13)*

These associations with friends and family were often discussed with feelings of happiness, enjoyment, and engagement. For example, P18 said, *“it makes me feel really happy because I’m playing with my friends”*. One participant mentioned the importance of doing the activity with someone you like for enjoyment purposes:

*“Because I wouldn’t want to do it with someone that I didn’t like because it would just suck the fun out of it. Take all the fun out of it I think. I don’t know but, yeah it would get rid of all the fun.” (P15)*

Furthermore, taking part in different types of activities was a prime opportunity to meet new friends:

*“Yeah, because when you go to a squad you meet like, loads of new friends, not quite a lot of people get into the academy so you know, you like to speak to people know, that you might normally speak to.” (P29)*

CYP talked about how friends and family can help you learn how to get involved in certain activities and provide words of encouragement for one another:

*“It’s nice to be with other people. So like you can sort of, like learn from like the people who’ve been doing it for like basically their whole lives.” (P32)*  
*“What helps me ride my bike? My Dad. He like encourages me to do it, because when I first did it, I was like, I had to like have stabilisers but now I can ride without it because my dad encouraged me to go more.” (P31)*

In some instances, CYP talked about their enjoyment from an activity because of a deeper meaning associated with their family. For example, P45 talking about the fishing being meaningful to themselves *“Because my father’s a fisherman, and I’ve always grown up all my life around always going round fixing nets on a Sunday, that sort of thing”*.

CYP described looking up to their parents in some instances and getting involved in a new activity because their family also played the sport. For example, P30 played rugby because her dad and brother did. These different activities then became more meaningful to the participants:

*“I’ve drawn me and my Mum cooking together because obviously that involves moving around the kitchen, getting all the stuff... and it’s very important to me and means a lot to me. (P42)*

### Theme 3: Psychological well-being

CYP repeatedly talked about the psychological well-being benefits of taking part in meaningful movement-based activities. These eudaimonia feelings during and after physical activity included feeling *“free”* (P26, P53), *“energetic”* (P53), calming, clearing your mind, and letting go of any anger.

*“Riding your bike is, it is fun same as just dance, but I guess you can feel the wind in your in your hair and like you could say you're free from whatever, like school.” (P23)*

*“I put rugby because it just makes me feel happy. Because if I'm ever angry, then I can just take my anger out.” (P29)*

*“Because it clears your head.” (P48)*

In addition, there participants reporting their flow state, in terms of getting lost in the moment through focus was also reported by several participants.

*“When I do [football and boxing], I just get lost. I just get lost in it and I concentrate so much. I just lose everything around me” (P2)*

*“You just like forget about everything else, so like when you're in the game, you're focusing on the game.” (P27)*

These moments of concentration were linked to letting go of any worries or stresses and just focusing on the activity at hand. For example, P32 spoke about surfing as an activity that can help let “all your issues go away so you don't have to worry”. Some CYP specifically mentioned the benefits to their mental health:

*“I feel a bit happier because it's quite good for mental health and physical health, so if you're feeling a bit stressed before, it can sometimes help you like, feel a bit better.” (P22)*

There were some specific mentions of being outside having a positive impact on their mental health. P14 nicely explained saying “see some trees, nature, I feel happy after that too”. In addition to happiness, there was a sense of serenity and appreciation for CYP talking about going for walks outside without any distractions.

*“I really enjoy walking, well alone because when you go on a walk with multiple people, you've got to have a conversation going with them. And you don't appreciate the scenery as much... But when you're on your own, you appreciate the scenery around you a lot more. And I just really enjoy like just seeing things like my local area in a different way than I would with other people.” (P31)*

#### Theme 4: Physical health

A smaller number of CYP mentioned taking part in physical activity and sports because of the health benefits. For example, P323 talked about feeling happy, knowing the physical activity was good for you: “happy for your body? I guess because like you're exercising and it's good for your heart and lungs and stuff”. Akin to this, P4 mentioned liking football “because it's good exercise” and P39 similarly spoke about boxing being meaningful because “it keeps you fit and you're working hard”. These insights alluded more closely to the motives behind taking part in the movement-based activities.

## Moving your body for life, what's important? (Task 2)

When CYP were asked about what might be important to move their bodies now and for the rest of their life, seven themes were identified: (i) knowledge of physical and mental health benefits, (ii) motivation, (iii) enjoyment, (iv) capability, (v) relationships, (vi) health and safety, and (vii) opportunity.

### Theme 1: Knowledge of physical and mental health benefits

CYP reported a lot of physical and mental health benefits of being active during the life course, wanting to make sure you “*stay healthy*” (P2/P52) and “*keep your health and wellbeing in the future*” (P13). Many of the opinions were around the physical health benefits of being active:

*“It’s for your strength when you’re older and safe. Like, you can like you be stronger and healthy when you’re old.” (P4)*

*“This is more on your physical health. That if you move more, when you’re older, you will be less injury prone and, you’ll be like, more athletic, you won’t be like slow” (P18)*

Similarly, there were many descriptions around movement-based activities helping you “feel happy in life” (P19). Commonly, participants discussed the various benefits of being active on your mental health benefits especially as you get older and/or experience stressful events during your life:

*“When you get older, your life gets a lot busier. So you need to do sport so you can relax your mind. And she said, you can be happy and don’t have to worry about anything else.” (P20)*

*“While doing it a lot of help here, it can improve mental health when stress, like in stressful situations.” (P31)*

Most of the discussions with CYP indicated a sense that they know the importance of being active and the encompassing benefits of being physically active. While not explicitly stated from the children, there was a sense they felt the knowledge and understanding of the benefits was important to continue to stay active.

### Theme 2: Motivation and physical self-regulation

Individual motivation was commonly reported by participants of all ages and activity levels as essential to be active and stay involved in their specific activities.

*“I think that you need like to have lots of motivation.” (P15)*

*“Exercise can make you happier and improve your mental health, but if you’re already struggling with your mental health and you can’t find the motivation for exercise. Disabilities and injuries can prevent people from exercising.... The area in which you live and your access to sports facilities can also make you struggle to find the physical activity that you enjoy so you won’t have the motivation to exercise more.” (P8)*



Those less inclined to be active mentioned the importance of having an incentive to get involved, stating *“a lot of sports... requires incentive, motivation”* (P49). One participant said buying *“a new gym outfit, give me motivation”* to go to them which helped them feel *“empowered”* (P35).

Motivation was in some instances, associated with physical self-regulation and being goal-driven. For example, P38 said: *“Yeah so, it’s the motivation... Like you could say you don’t like the way you look so the motivation to get in better shape. Just stick to it and grind the gym.”* (P38). With further examples of carrying on with certain activities with the knowledge of the effort required and reasons to continue:

*“You need, kind of the mindset to put effort into doing that as well because sometimes it takes a lot of effort to do some kind of sports.”*(P53)

There was a small sub-theme around the importance of establishing a healthy routine – with both diet and movement. For example, *“I put down that you could do daily routines every single day”* (P19) and *“the amount of exercise you do every week, food that you may eat, just like have a routine”* (P54). Another CYP went on to talk about the difficulties of breaking an unhealthy habit:

*“I wrote that kids they should have actually be able to move and not just sit there. Because if you’re lazy, and.... some people find it hard to move and it’ll be hard for them to come out of that habit.”* (P11)

### Theme 3: Enjoyment

Enjoyment during movement-based activities was seen as critical to ensuring consistency in engagement and almost motivation. For example, P34 mentioned *“if you don’t enjoy it, then there’s not point doing it”*. Finding an activity that they find enjoyable and engaging was important for all CYP, especially when considering doing these activities for the rest of their lives:

*“I think in terms of physical activity, and doing it for the rest of your life, it’s important that you find enjoyment and you find the time and what works well for you.”* (P27)  
*“I think enjoyment is important. Like if you enjoy what you’re doing, you’re going to do it for a long time and sometimes you can do it forever. So if you’re not enjoying something, you’re not going to do it.”* (P14)

### Theme 4: Relationships

There was an emphasis on the importance of having friends and how they help increase your enjoyment levels. For example, P34 said: *“I think it’s important to do it with friends or with family. Because if you do it with people you don’t know or people you don’t like, you don’t enjoy it as much.”* There were also comments about the importance of friends in supporting

you (even from afar), giving you confidence, making you strong and encouraging you to be active, which helps enable you to get involved.

*"If your friends encourage you to go more than if you go on your own."* (P36)

*"Well, we have, you would have people to support you if things are not going well in sport. And it's good to have like friends around you and support you that you're doing as well, even if it's by yourself because you might not have that many friends. Because some might go away to different countries."* (P53)

Following on the support of friends and family for encouragement, some of the KS3 active boys talked about having role models that helped them get involved in different activities and provide encouragement.

*"I wrote football and I put next to it; I took over from my Dad because he got a serious injury."* (P1)

*"Yeah. Because like for example, at first, like before I knew what football was, if I was with my dad, he can tell me how to play it. He like told me how to play it and what to do. And how, like the best way to get like goals."* (P3)

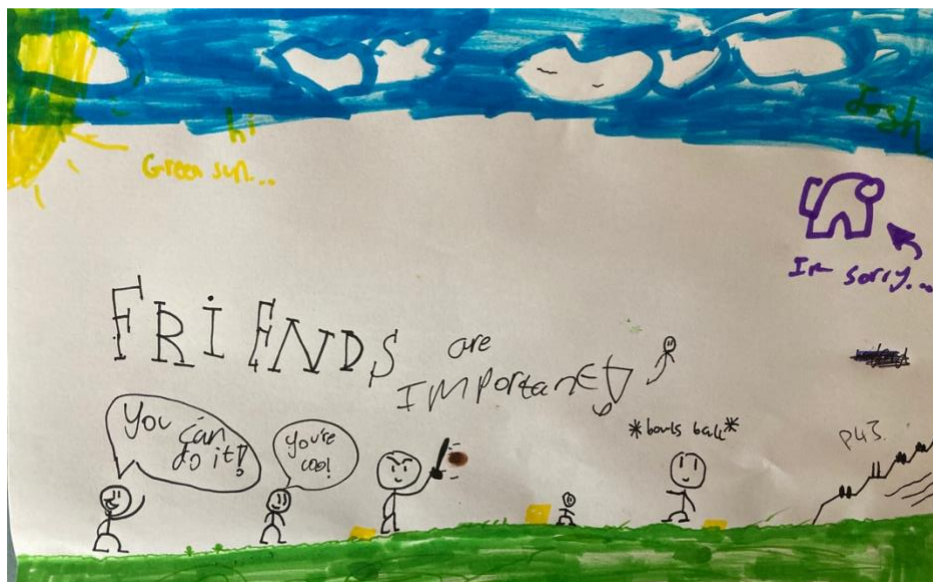


Figure 3: P43's drawing of the importance of friends

## Theme 5: Capability

Several CYP discussed needing to have capability. P10 described this nicely stating you need *"capability and opportunity... not everyone can do exercise. So being there to do it. Having the opportunity and the chance."* (P10). This included physical capability such as the "skills" of the activity and developing these over time. For example, P52 mentioned *"just practicing the sport you want to do every day"* can you help *"improve your skills"*. There was also a sense of the importance of a broader set of skills needed to take part:

*"Like if you play sport you're going to have social skills and stuff... being able to work in a team and things like that."* (P13)

*“You need to know about the sport as well. Because if the rules change or things change, then you’d be confused about it”. (P34)*

In one instance, P8 talking about enjoying netball because of the low effort needed because they *“knew all the rules but it’s still fun to play”*. Suggesting that having knowledge of the rules and the understanding of how to play coincided with developing competence in the sport or physical activity.

Finally, some of the CYP mentioned that capability and specifically skill competence was seen as something *“you can learn”* (P38) and not something predisposed, leaning toward the notion that anyone is capable to engage in movement-based activities.

## Theme 6: Health and Safety

CYP discussed the relevance of health and safety. This included looking after your health and trying to *“reduce the risk of injury”* (P52) by not overdoing it:

*“I wouldn’t say to exercise or do sports every single day because you might get tired, and then you might get like on muscle pain or something... So exercise like three times a week, maybe two.” (P53)*

There were also discussions around considering the physical environment around you and ensuring you have *“a safe environment to do the sport you want to do.”* (P17). These discusses began to talk about the safety and risks of sporting equipment, suggesting while some equipment could be deemed dangerous, learning safety would alleviate these concerns:

*“As long as you learn the safety, like hockey sticks are dangerous.” (P8)*

## Theme 7: Opportunity

Building on P10’s comments around the importance of *“capability and opportunity”*, there were other subtleties around the importance of having access and availability to different opportunities. For example, P35 mentioned they stopped dancing because of a lack of time and the cost of attending. Other participants mentioned the importance of having equipment, such as *“having a bike”* (P15) or having *“toys”* (P13). Some equipment related needs can be alleviated:

*“Schools can provide equipment... to get [you] involved in different things” (P36).*

P36 went on to state when you leave school and lose the access and availability of the school-based opportunities you might *“have nowhere to go [yet] others join teams and clubs to carry on”*. These discussions highlighted the importance of needing to identify potential opportunities that could encourage engagement in the relevant physical activities. One participant talked about country differences, stating when they moved to England the physical



space and equipment to play hockey was significantly different compared to Zimbabwe. Stating “I had access to the equipment... I played an actual match. But in England I didn't have access to that” (P8). P8 went on to state they stopped playing hockey soon after.

## Physical Literacy Elements (Task 3)

The final task involved asking KS3 and KS4 children (n=27) to order 30 elements defined by Barnett et al. (2022) and the Australian Physical Literacy Framework (APLF) that underpin physical literacy. The 30 elements structured within the four constructs are listed below. (refer back to figure 1 an overview of the APLF):

### Physical

1. *Movement Skills (e.g., hopping, jumping)*
2. *Moving with Equipment (e.g., riding a bike, scooting)*
3. *Object Manipulation (e.g., overarm throwing, kicking a ball)*
4. *Cardiovascular Endurance (e.g., long-distance run)*
5. *Muscular Endurance (e.g., holding on to monkey bars for a long time or doing pull-ups)*
6. *Coordination (e.g., skipping)*
7. *Stability/Balance (e.g., balancing on a rock)*
8. *Flexibility (e.g., touching toes and stretching)*
9. *Agility (e.g., dodging in a game)*
10. *Strength (e.g., lifting something heavy)*
11. *Reaction Time (e.g., running at the start of a race)*
12. *Speed (e.g., running fast)*

### Mental/Psychological

13. *Motivation (e.g., wanting to do something)*
14. *Self-regulation (emotions) (e.g., dealing with being upset when you have made a mistake)*
15. *Self-regulation (physical) (e.g., doing something you know will be hard, like running up hill)*
16. *Self-perception (e.g., before aware of your own abilities)*
17. *Confidence (e.g., being brave to do something a bit scary, like a zip-line)*
18. *Taking part in lots of different activities because of enjoyment and engagement*
19. *Connection to place (favourite places to be active)*

### Social

20. *Ethics/fair-play (e.g., shaking hands after a game)*
21. *Relationships (including others)*
22. *Collaboration (work together to build a den)*
23. *Society and Culture (learning/trying different activities (dances/sports) from different cultures)*

### Thinking/Cognitive

24. *Perceptual Awareness (when riding a bike, noticing obstacles and surroundings)*
25. *Content Knowledge (thinking of benefits of moving your body)*
26. *Rules (e.g., not bombing in the pool)*
27. *Reasoning (e.g., if it's raining outside, find another activity to do instead)*
28. *Strategy and Planning (e.g., finding the best route when rock climbing or riding a bike)*
29. *Tactics (e.g., being in the right spot for ball in team sports)*
30. *Safety and Risk (e.g., wearing a helmet when riding a bike or knowing places that are unsafe)*

## Important elements related to physical literacy for CYP in England

Of the 27 CYP that took part in this activity, the most common elements deemed meaningful and important were motivation and confidence (see figure 4 for an example). Almost synonymously, these two elements (in collaboration) were seen as critical to engaging in movement-based activity for the rest of your life.

*“Because if you don't enjoy it, and if you're not confident to do it or motivated, then you won't do it.” (P34)*

*“At the top, we put confidence because it's not just something that comes naturally, it's always like something that you got to build yourself. And there are always those people that tend to constantly think it's their fault that they lost again because they don't have too much confidence in themselves... Basically, confidence is like everything in everything. If you don't have confidence in yourself, you can't do it well.” (P31)*

Additional common elements included perceptual awareness; being aware of your surroundings and *“what's happening in the game”* (P30). P37 felt awareness was importance *“Because, for example, if you're in the gym, and you're on the weight section, you've just got to be aware of.”* (P37). Similarly, risks and safety were often reported as relatively important in most groups.

*“You've got to put safety first. Not in everything. But if you're riding a bike, or doing something that maybe not like classes, the safest, you've got to know that there is that possibility or chance that you will get hurt. You've got to know that...” (P28)*

For some groups connection to place was deemed relatively important, for example P36 touched on motivation: *“Connection to play. If you're somewhere you like, you'll be more motivated.”* Conversely, some of the sporty/active participants felt this wasn't seen as critical.

*“Connection to place like when you're playing or where to go to like a difficult time you are connected to like you and pitch or different court or whatever sport you're doing. So you're connected to your home pitch it's not really a big deal to play different teams.” (P29)*

Society and culture were deemed important by most CYP stating, *“it's good to know about different cultures”* (P17). At the end of the session, when CYP reflected on the session and specifically task three, there seemed to be a better understanding of the range of potential elements that are important to support moving your body for the rest of your life, P53 concluded by summing up its importance as *“being socially active and being aware of your mental health as well.”*

Almost consistently, CYP felt the physical elements were not as important when compared to the other elements belonging to the social and psychological, and cognitive domains; some groups completely disregarded whereas others felt particular attributes may be important. This

was often subjective to the activities they mentioned earlier on. For example, P30 and P29 felt object manipulation was important and they both reported playing rugby. During discussions there was a clear theme of CYP reflecting that most of the physical elements were dependent on the activity and in most cases, not that important to help you engage in movement-based activities for the rest of your life.

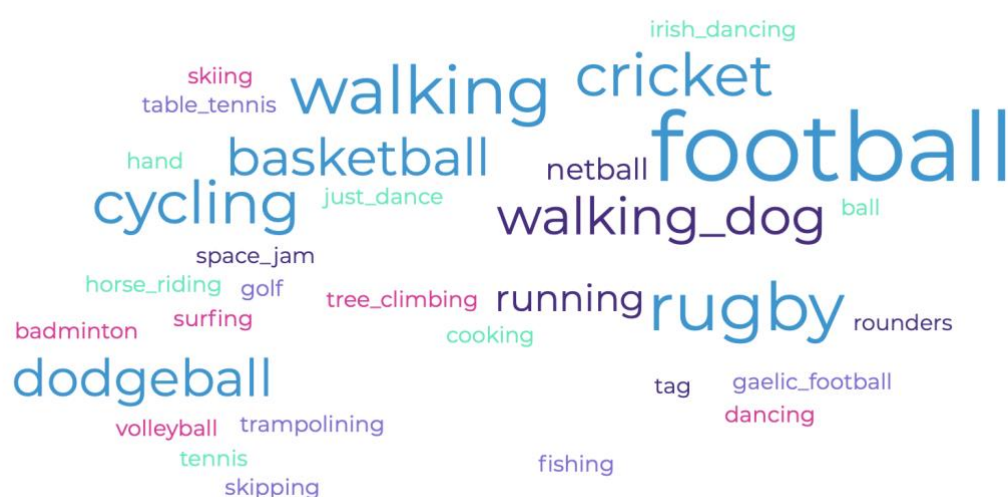
*“They don’t all like, apart from a few of them which you, like movement you need to be able to move to do all of them, but you know like not some of them it just depends on which sport you’re doing.” (P15)*



**Figure 4** Example of CYP ordering the 30 physical literacy elements

# Brief discussion

Collective, all CYP reported a broad range of activities were reported. As seen in figure 5, these activities commonly included sports like football and rugby, and also frequently included less traditional activities such as walking and cycling. In particular, there were some intriguing non-traditional activities mentioned by children with learning difficulties and/or on the autistic spectrum disorder. These included fishing, cooking, and horse riding. Thus, there is a need to challenge existing opinions on what we deem as physical activity. For all CYP, was synonymity in these activities being meaningful because of the perceived enjoyment.



**Figure 5** Word cloud on the different movement-based activities CYP reported

The tendency to talk about the benefits of physical activity and the knock-on feelings of excitement and enjoyment aligns with motivation by demonstrating some links to the Theoretical Domain Framework (TDF) domain *belief about consequences* (Atkins et al., 2017). Beliefs about consequences include your beliefs and outcome expectancies and sit within motivation in the COM-B model (Michie et al., 2011).

More explicitly, motivation was deemed significant when considering activity as you get older during task two and three. Many CYP talked about the importance of enjoyment to drive motivation and engagement in physical activities throughout the life course. During the final task, CYP reflected on the importance of confidence which almost always went hand-in-hand with motivation. CYP often felt if they are not motivated or confident in the specific activity,

they would simply not engage in the activity. This demonstrates the links to TDF domain *beliefs about capabilities* (Atkins et al., 2017).

Physical capabilities during the final task were commonly seen as not as important and were subjective to the physical activity or sport that participants took part in. Interesting, where confidence was seen as important, the physical capability which often coincides with confidence was not highlighted.

The importance of relationships to help you engage in meaningful movement-based activities now and for the rest of your life was continuously discussed during all three tasks. Taking part in a broad range of activities was often reported as enjoyable and encouraging when collaborating with others during these activities or having them there to support you and help you learn. These findings demonstrated some links to the TDF domain social influences (Atkins et al., 2017) housed with social opportunities (Michie, et al., 2011). The comments around supporting and learning from each other demonstrate how relationships can strengthen your physical capability to be active. In some instances, C7YP mentioned enjoying activities on their own, for example, going for a walk alone offers different mental health benefits. However, more commonly, there was a direct association between social relationships supporting CYP motivation.

Consistently, CYP felt their psychological well-being and mental health were part of what makes movement-based activities meaningful. These reflections – of clearing your mind and releasing tension – were followed through with CYP being aware of the benefits of being active for your physical and mental health. These discussions demonstrated the relevant knowledge and understanding of why moving your body is important.

The findings of this research are similar to that of Emm-Collison et al (2022), who conducted a qualitative review and synthesis of UK perspectives of physical activity. Similarities include young people's knowledge of the health benefits of being physically active, particularly mental health and the vital importance of peer relationships for young people to be physically active. These findings strengthen the wider literature due to our having the inclusion of more CYP from low socio-economical and ethnic minority backgrounds, which was a recommendation for future research. Our research however expanded beyond reasons for being physically active and explored what are the important elements for young people to be physically active now and for the rest of their lives.

Dissimilar to Emm-Collison et al. (2022), throughout the three tasks, there ended up being a clear sense of the importance of learning knowledge. Knowledge includes the skills needed to take part in the activity, knowledge about playing safely and being aware of risks, knowledge of the benefits to your physical and mental health, and knowledge of the expected outcomes. These findings suggest that the focus on teaching CYP understanding of the benefits of physical activity seems to be demonstrating some success in more recent years. Instead, the focus seems to be more focused on actually finding an activity that you enjoy and can engage in to form healthy active habits later in life.



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