



# Impact Report

2025-26



# Introduction

Two years into our strategy '2024 and beyond', this impact report reflects on the progress we have made against our five goals. Whilst we await the new PE and School Sport Network, our strategy has provided us with direction and intent, based on the needs of the community we serve. We have packed this report with impact and young people's voices, both of which are central to the work we do.

Stride Active exists for all young people across Herefordshire and it remains our objective to provide physical activity opportunities for everyone. However, we recognise that young people with inequalities face greater barriers to physical activity; our work this year has therefore focused more intently on engaging these groups of young people.

The uncertainty over long term funding continues to challenge us, but in the last year we have received increased financial support from a wide range of commissioning partners, grant funders and local businesses which has helped to stabilise Stride Active. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all funders for their support.

We hope you enjoy reading the stories and highlights from the 2025-26 academic year. We are particularly pleased to share longer-term impact within this year's report, which shows the sustained differences our work is having on children and young people's lives.

**INSPIRING ACTIVE FUTURES**



# Goal One

**Raise the profile of physical activity and advocate the benefits for young people.**

**“When the sessions ended I felt more confidence in myself and I believe in myself a lot more than I have ever done.”**

We are committed to developing and sharing insight and impact to demonstrate how physical activity can be used to improve health, wellbeing and behaviour outcomes. The whole impact report serves as a platform for this, but on this page we have selected a few examples that have helped to raise the profile of physical activity and our work locally and nationally.

## School Games Mark Award

The School Games Mark Award celebrates schools' commitment to PE, school sport and physical activity. The School Games and wider opportunities that we deliver provide schools with the evidence they need to apply for this award.

**53**  
**SCHOOLS**

Achieved their School Games Mark Award in 2025/26.

**21%** Improved their Mark Award from the previous year.

**18** schools achieved the Platinum award – our highest number to date!

## Active Families ‘Highly Commended’

We were proud to be shortlisted in the Hereford Times Community Awards for ‘Best Community Project’. Our latest findings show that Active Families support resulted in:

**70%** of children Increasing their levels of physical activity.

**79%** of adults Increasing their levels of physical activity.

**This programme also supports mental health outcomes.**

**60%** of children were perceived to have improved wellbeing compared to the start of their involvement with Active Families.

## Here Girls Can article published in ‘Physical Education Matters’

Written in collaboration with Girls' Champions, our article showcased the work of Here Girls Can through the voices of girls who had supported this. The Girls' Champions discussed the role they played, the importance of the programme and the impact it has had in their own school. This helped us to raise the profile of the programme to a national audience, whilst providing pupils with an invaluable opportunity to have their voices heard and their work published.



# Impact Story

"I've been to the event Here girls Can twice now and I had so much fun! I think it's such an impactful event which every young girl should experience. The event personally impacted me in many ways, like in my: friendships, attitudes towards PE, participation and body image. And a massive factor the event has impacted me and others on confidence especially my first time at the event in year 5.

In year 5 many people would have described me as a shy unactive girl. That day I played and did things you'd never normally see me do and I even made a friend! I really enjoyed myself and from then on grew and grew in confidence. It really impacted me mentally and physically and I've grown so much since then as a person.

My second opportunity was in year eight, high school, I had a really good group of friends but really struggled with my mental health. No one really knew how much I needed that and I know other people had the same experiences. But just being around groups of people at the event really helped me. I did lots of fun activities like netball, rollerskating and aerial hoop. My teacher even got involved showing me that I need to trust my body and believe in how amazing it is.

I really love what you do and what here girls can is for and think its really important for every young girl to experience something like that as it supported me so much."

GILLY

This programme was part funded by Mumford Memorial Trust.



# Goal Two

Work together to achieve better outcomes for young people.

# 24

partners have supported the delivery of our events and activities.

**“We could not deliver and accomplish what we do in School without their [Stride Active] support.”**

**WE HAVE SUPPORTED**

# 97

**SCHOOLS**

**That's equivalent to**

# 92%

**of Herefordshire schools**

***An increase of 6%  
from last year***

This area of our work focuses on reaching new schools, educational settings and partners, working collaboratively to support more young people.

Through Active Families, Healthy Schools and CPD opportunities we have reached 33 new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings.

Our Active Families programme\* works alongside parents to increase physical activity levels in children or the whole family.

# 87

Families supported

# 14

Partnership settings supported through Active Families.

**“It was nice that [the coordinator] kept in contact and gave us a call every couple of months to see if there was anything else she could do.”**

This year we have dedicated

# 143

hours to support schools and EYFS settings work towards or achieve their Healthy Schools or Tots award.\*

\*Funded by Herefordshire Council (Public Health)



# Impact Story

L is a Mum of 2 children, aged 4 and 8. She approached our Active Families Co-ordinator as she wanted help to give her children choices on what they could do after school. At the initial point of engagement, L and her children were living in a flat, with no garden and a park 10 minutes away. Their physical activity consisted of a 30 minute walk to school each day.

During the first meeting in November, we gave the family an Active Families bag that consisted of equipment which could be used inside, alongside a range of game ideas for limited space inside the flat and for outside at the park.

Regular contact with L revealed that the bag was well received by her children and was the centre of their activity which started at 7 times a week for 30 minutes in December and then averaged out to 60 minutes twice a week by the end of January. This progressed to the children playing with friends at park as well. Their favourite items include the ball and bean bags and Mum enjoyed getting involved too, showing the children the games she used to play using the bean bag. L commented that they had “more ideas for play and it’s more exciting for kids,” they were more active and she was looking forward to the better weather to play with the bag outside.

When we spoke with L again in July, the bag usage had increased to 2 hours, four times a week, they had moved and now had a garden and a puppy! The children were spending all of their time outside playing and have friends to play with thanks to the bag. L commented that there are “new children in new area, the bag helped the children to make new friends, playing together until 9pm when weather is good.” She said that the changes since engaging with Active Families were “having more fun and making new friends!”

## L AND HER FAMILY

This programme was funded by Herefordshire Council, Public Health.

# Goal Three

## Commit to creating a sustainable future.

Diversifying our income is a vital part of ensuring a sustainable future for our organisation.

This year we have successfully applied for and secured

**£106,668**

of additional contracts and grants in addition to our School Sport Partnership funding.

This has enabled us to deliver free interventions and programmes for families and schools:

**HERE GIRLS CAN, WALK TO SCHOOL, CLIMBING FOR CONFIDENCE, ACTIVE FAMILIES, GIRLS FOOTBALL IN SCHOOLS AND THE SUMMER SCHOOL GAMES FESTIVAL.**

For the first time we have received sponsorship from

**5 LOCAL BUSINESSES**

to also support the Summer School Games festival.

## Walk to School

Now in our fifth year of delivering Herefordshire Council's Walk to School programme, we are able to encourage more environmentally friendly choices, whilst retaining our focus on physical activity, helping to create a more sustainable future.

### 16 SCHOOLS ENGAGED, RESULTING IN:

**2783**

**PUPILS TOOK PART IN WALK TO SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES, GAINING NEW KNOWLEDGE.**

**681**

**PUPILS TOOK PART IN WALK TO SCHOOL WORKSHOPS, DEVELOPING PRACTICAL SKILLS.**

**"One particularly positive example is a child who was previously quite reluctant to come to school and often arrived feeling disengaged. Since taking part in the challenge and walking to school regularly, they have become much more enthusiastic in the mornings. This child likes to have a good routine and the WOW challenge being embedded has had a profound impact on their wellbeing. They arrive happier, more settled, and ready to learn."**

# Impact Story

"L is aged 10 and struggles with her size, often avoids doing physical activity as finds it difficult because of her size and being a bad asthmatic. She finds sports that involve running etc are triggers for her asthma. She is a PP child from a large family of children who struggle to access sports outside of school because of costs.

She has really enjoyed the Active Stars events this year - especially the introduction to sports that she had not experienced before and that didn't trigger her asthma. She particularly enjoyed the golf and martial arts. Her teachers commented that she was 'beaming' during this event and have not seen her as enthusiastic about a sporting event as she was doing this. It was a delight to watch her.

The martial arts event had such an impact on her that with the support of her parents we are trying to help her find a local club that she could access. We are also looking into trying to get a martial arts coach to come to school in the Autumn term as we feel other children would also benefit from this. Parents have also commented that she has been watching videos online and trying to replicate at home as well as teaching her younger siblings."

## L'S TEACHER

This programme was funded by Active Herefordshire & Worcestershire.



# Goal Four

## Provide meaningful opportunities and positive experiences of physical activity for all young people.

This goal is the primary focus of our work. By providing positive experiences of physical activity, we can inspire young people to be active for life.

### School Games

Values-driven and targeted: English as and Additional Language (EAL), SEND and children living in either rural or economically deprived areas.

**2783** Attendance across all School Games events.\*

**83%** Identified positive emotions after participating.

### Our Girls Can

A girls-only intervention delivered across rural schools each term with a focus on health and wellbeing education and improving access to non-traditional physical activities.

**46%** of participants reported an improvement in being aware of how they feel and knowing what they can do to help themselves.

**61%** reported an increase in confidence in at least one area (trying new activities, working in a group, speaking up / sharing ideas, being active, believing in myself).

### Children's Mental Health Week Interventions

During Children's Mental Health week, in partnership with local organisations we delivered Climbing for Confidence, Kick with Confidence and Yoga for Inner Strength.

**107** young people took part across all activities.

**73%** of children said they felt **brave** during the session.

**88%** Said they felt more **confident** after taking part.

**80%** wanted to take part in the session again, demonstrating a positive experience.

**130** Events, activities and training sessions delivered

Ranging from teacher CPD, to competitions, interventions and conferences.

**3761** Engagements from young people in competitions, festivals and interventions.

**139** School staff took place in bowls, netball and croquet Workplace Challenge events.



**"Our SGO keeps us well informed about different sporting opportunities, thus leading to an increased level of participation amongst pupils of all abilities. As a school, we have always taken up the opportunity to take part in these events where possible, enhancing pupils' confidence, enjoyment of physical activity, and sense of teamwork and competition across a range of sports."**

# Impact Story

"B often found PE challenging and would usually hold back rather than fully engage, lacking confidence in his abilities and worrying about making mistakes in front of others. However, during a recent one-off rock climbing session, B's attitude and performance showed a remarkable shift.

From the outset, B approached the activity with curiosity and determination. As he began climbing, he quickly demonstrated a natural aptitude, showing strong coordination, focus, and problem-solving skills. With minimal encouragement, he tackled increasingly difficult routes, displaying resilience and confidence that had not previously been evident in PE lessons. Staff noted how he remained engaged throughout, encouraging peers and celebrating both his own and others' achievements.

This experience proved to be a significant moment for B. Excelling in a new and challenging activity helped him recognise his own capabilities, boosting his self-belief. Following the session, there has been a noticeable increase in his willingness to participate in PE, and he now approaches activities with a more positive mindset. The rock climbing session provided B with a valuable opportunity to succeed, helping to build confidence that is beginning to transfer across a wider range of sports."

## B'S TEACHER

This programme was funded by Herefordshire Community Foundation, Small Sparks.



# Goal Five

**Use physical activity to help young people develop the skills to thrive in life.**

Whether it's helping young people develop confidence and resilience to tackle other parts of their lives, or gaining transferable skills such as teamwork and communication, our work uses physical activity as the tool to achieve this.

**"...this provides a valuable opportunity for children to succeed and be recognised in an environment they enjoy, rather than one where they may struggle or disengage. They are vital for building confidence, improving social skills, and supporting positive behaviour, and we-as a school, strongly feel they should continue."**

## 57 WALKING CHAMPIONS TRAINED

Walk to School Champions are identified pupils who promote active travel to other pupils within the school. We provide training in their own school to help young people learn about the role and identify what they want to do.

**"The walking ambassadors did such a great job! They came back up during Worship to introduce the week and remind children of the benefits to walking to school. We had an increased number of children cycling to/from school. "**

## 193 YOUNG LEADERS TRAINED

Through our Playground Leaders project and Young Leaders Conference, we have trained young people to become sports leaders in their school.

**98%** felt more confidence to be a young leader

**69%** said they were going to use what they had learnt in their school.

**"Some of the children have created posters and visited classes to make people aware of their club. "**

## 53 GIRLS' CHAMPIONS TRAINED

We delivered our first Here Girls Can Student Conference. Girls took part in three workshops: 'Gear Up!' - sports bras, 'Period Peers' - menstrual cycle education and 'Girls To The Front' - zine making to find your voice. As well as making changes in their own school, some supported the Here Girls Can festivals later in the year.

**"The girls are going to have a meeting with the Head to explain what they would want in school and they are also prepared to do an assembly to the girls in school which is fantastic!"**

# Impact Story

"K (10 years old) is a confident, knowledgeable and approachable young man with a mature outlook. He enjoys being active and is enthusiastic about school and taking part in physical activity. K thrives when given responsibility and enjoys supporting and teaching others. Although generally confident, K can occasionally experience periods of low mood and reduced self-confidence, which can be reflected in his body language and willingness to engage fully. During these times, he may become quieter and less positive. He benefits from having a clear purpose and opportunities to take responsibility, as these help maintain his motivation and wellbeing.

Becoming a Young Leader had an immediate positive impact on K. Having a meaningful responsibility increased his confidence and self-esteem, and he took pride in helping others and organising activities. He became even more engaged with school life and developed stronger relationships with younger pupils and his peers. His enthusiasm and maturity allowed him to act as a positive role model, and leading games gave him a sense of achievement and purpose. Over time, this responsibility has supported his emotional wellbeing and strengthened his confidence, with staff observing increased resilience and a consistently positive attitude towards contributing to the school community.

The Young Leader programme suited K particularly well, as it built upon his natural strengths and interests. One particularly positive outcome was the pride and enjoyment he gained from teaching and encouraging others. He embraced the role enthusiastically and demonstrated excellent communication and leadership skills. Going forward, providing further opportunities for leadership and mentoring would help him continue to develop these strengths and maintain the positive impact the programme has had on his confidence and wellbeing."

## K'S TEACHER





# Thank You

For more impact, visit [www.strideactive.org](http://www.strideactive.org)

**Stride Activity is a not for profit Community Interest Company. Company number: 12556873**