

Sport England reveals sports participation is increasing, with the over 55s leading the charge.

The number of adults* across England who regularly participate in sport and active recreation has increased, with the 55s and over showing the biggest growth spurt, a Sport England survey reveals.

Early results of Sport England's second year of The Active People Survey show that the number of adults, aged 16 plus, participating in 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport or active recreation three times a week, has increased by **359,423**.

This is a 0.7 per cent increase from 19.0% in the period mid September 2005 to mid December 2005 to 19.7% in the period mid September 2007 to mid December 2007.

It was the 55s and over who contributed the biggest leap in participation in sport and active recreation, with a 1.3 per cent increase, from 10.9% to 12.2%.

During the same period, men's participation in sport and active recreation increased by 1.1 per cent, from 21.5% to 22.6%. There was no significant change in women's sport participation.

Across England 34 sports have seen a significant growth in the proportion of people who have participated in their sport**. The biggest increases were in people going to the gym followed by playing football (outdoor) and road running***.

- Going to the gym increased by 0.7 per cent, from 9.9% to 10.6% of the adult population in England
- The number of adults participating in football (outdoor) increased by 0.6 per cent from 4.8% to 5.4%
- And the figure for adults participating in road running increased by 0.5%, from 2.2% to 2.7%.

[For top 10 sports participation results see table in Notes to Editor.]

Jennie Price, Chief Executive of Sport England, said:

"I am delighted that the latest results show participation in sport is moving in the right direction. It is a tribute to the innovative thinking and hard work of the sports sector that more and more people are motivated to take part.

"With such a wide variety of sports available to people varying from taekwondo to rock climbing we believe we will encourage more women and girls to take part. Sport England has recently invested £1million into The FA to help increase the numbers of women and girls taking part in football."

Minister for Sport, Gerry Sutcliffe MP said:

"It is encouraging that sports participation is on the rise across a whole range of sports. The over 55s are showing that you're never too old to take up sport and get active. It is testament to the hard work of sport providers in encouraging people to do just that. Of course there is still more that can be done and I would like to see more women getting out there and finding the sport for them."