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PASSPORT trial and evaluation of a flexible physical activity intervention in UK Primary schools

Submission date
23/10/2025

Recruitment status
Recruiting

Registration date
24/10/2025

Overall study status
Ongoing

Last Edited
15/10/2026

Condition category
Other

[X] Prospectively registered
[X] Protocol
[X] Statistical analysis plan
[_] Results
[_] Individual participant data
[X] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Most UK children are not meeting the physical activity levels recommended by the UK Chief Medical Officer and the World Health Organization. We know that if children are physically active it can improve their mental health and wellbeing, as well as their physical health, and that this can have longer-term effects by creating habits that last into adulthood.

Children's physical activity levels tend to reduce as they go through Primary and Secondary school, so supporting children to be active from Primary school is a great opportunity to build healthy habits. There are also inequalities in children's physical activity. Girls, children from more disadvantaged communities, and particular ethnic groups, tend to have lower activity levels. Schools are an ideal place to promote physical activity as they can reach a wider range of children. However, most physical activity interventions in schools to date have had limited success. We believe this is because they haven't been flexible enough to adapt to individual schools and their unique characteristics. We urgently need to find new approaches to physical activity interventions, to support Primary schools to build an environment for pupils to be active.

PASSPORT is a research study looking at how to make school-based physical activity programmes that are tailored to individual Primary schools. We have developed a flexible intervention, or programme, where each school chooses a bespoke physical activity programme to suit their school. In this trial we are delivering our programme in Primary schools and measuring pupil physical activity. We want to see if physical activity levels change, and understand if, how, and why the programme worked.

Who can participate?
State Primary schools in the Bristol area of the UK are able to take part. Within participating schools, pupils who are in Year 4 (aged 8-9) when we start the study, and Year 5 (aged 9-10) throughout the year we deliver the programme, can take part.

What does the study involve?
We are running a 'stepped-wedge' cluster randomised controlled trial. This means that every

school in the trial will receive the programme at different times. While this programme is delivered, we will be measuring pupil physical activity levels with a device called an accelerometer. We will also ask them about how they travel to school, the activities they do after school and their well-being. We'll collect this data from pupils once before the programme begins, and then three more times across the next school year while it is being delivered.

To understand how the programme is working we will also collect information on other aspects of school life that the programme might influence, such as pupil attendance. We'll also ask staff their thoughts on the programme, and collect information on the programme they deliver.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Schools will receive money from the study to deliver their programme, so their school should benefit from additional activities that year. Pupils will also receive gifts to thank them for taking part. We do not anticipate any risks from taking part.

Where is the study run from?
The study is based in the Centre for Public Health, Bristol Medical School, at the University of Bristol.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
We will begin recruiting schools to the study in early 2026. We will recruit pupils to the study in Spring 2026. The study will run until February 2028.

Who is funding the study?
PASSPORT is funded by UK Research and Innovation.

Who is the main contact?
Professor Russ Jago, russ.jago@bristol.ac.uk

Contact information

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
UKRI REF EP/X023508/1

Study information

Scientific Title
Physical Activity via a School Specific PORTfolio stepped-wedge trial and evaluation

Acronym
PASSPORT

Study objectives
The main hypothesis is that the PASSPORT intervention will result in higher weekday accelerometer measured moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity among primary school aged pupils.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 13/10/2025, University of Bristol Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Division of Research, Enterprise and Innovation 2nd Floor, Augustine's Courtyard, Orchard Lane, Bristol, BS1 5DS, United Kingdom; +44 117 928 9000; research-ethics@bristol.ac.uk), ref: Ref: 27492

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
The PASSPORT trial is an open cohort stepped wedge randomised control trial of Year 5 children in 18 primary schools in the UK, where all schools receive the intervention.

Study type(s)
Prevention

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Physical activity

Interventions
Schools will receive a context-specific portfolio physical activity intervention, tailored to each school. Due to the stepped wedge design, schools will be randomised to one of five sequences, each of which will move from control to intervention status at a different time across the school year, with all schools eventually receiving the intervention. Measurements on pupils will take place at baseline and on three occasions throughout the school year, with timings specific to the sequence to which the school is allocated. Schools will be randomised to sequences by an independent statistician via an R script.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Average minutes of weekday moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity measured using an Axivity AX3/AX6 accelerometer at baseline (Term 5/6 of Year 4) and on three follow-up occasions from Terms 1-6 in Year 5, determined by the stepped wedge design.

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Pupil average total volume of weekday physical activity measured using an Axivity AX3/AX6 accelerometer at baseline (Term 5/6 of Year 4) and on three follow-up occasions from Terms 1-6 in Year 5, determined by the stepped wedge design

2. Pupil average minutes of weekday sedentary time measured using an Axivity AX3/AX6 accelerometer at baseline (Term 5/6 of Year 4) and on three follow-up occasions from Terms 1-6 in Year 5, determined by the stepped wedge design
3. Pupil average minutes of weekday light physical activity measured using an Axivity AX3/AX6 accelerometer at baseline (Term 5/6 of Year 4) and on three follow-up occasions from Terms 1-6 in Year 5, determined by the stepped wedge design
4. Pupil average minutes of weekend moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity measured using an Axivity AX3/AX6 accelerometer at baseline (Term 5/6 of Year 4) and on three follow-up occasions from Terms 1-6 in Year 5, determined by the stepped wedge design
5. Pupil wellbeing measured using the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale at baseline, midpoint (Terms 1-3) and final measurement (Terms 5-6), determined by the stepped wedge design
6. School-level termly attendance rates for the Year 4/5 cohort, from school records measured every term from baseline (Year 4, Term 4) to end of study (Year 5, Term 6)

Completion date
31/10/2027

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Pupils in recruited state primary schools in the wider-Bristol area, who are in Year 4 (aged 8-9) at baseline, and Year 5 (aged 9-10) throughout the intervention year.

Participant type(s)
Learner/student

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Child

Lower age limit
8 Years

Upper age limit
10 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
0

Key exclusion criteria
1. Pupils in schools not recruited to the study
2. Pupils not in Year 4 at baseline or Year 5 during intervention year in schools recruited to the study

Date of first enrolment

01/02/2026

Date of final enrolment
31/07/2027

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Population Health Sciences
Bristol Medical School
University of Bristol
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Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Bristol

ROR
https://ror.org/0524sp257

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
UK Research and Innovation

Alternative Name(s)
UKRI

Funding Body Type

Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be stored in a publicly available repository. At the end of the project, data will be published as a restricted access dataset on the University of Bristol's data repository (https://data.bris.ac.uk/data/) and will be available for 10 years. This will include processed accelerometer and self-report data. All data will be anonymised and deidentified. Participants provided consent for this data sharing. Access will be granted to approved researchers on request.

IPD sharing plan summary
Stored in publicly available repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol (other)	version 1.1	11/02/2026	20/02/2026	No	No
Statistical Analysis Plan		02/10/2026	15/10/2026	No	No
Study website		11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes