



Beat the Street Burnley Post Game Report 2025





Contents

- 4 Executive Summary
- 6 Headlines
- 7 The Local Picture
- 8 Partner Collaboration
& Local Engagement
- 12 Digital Engagement
- 15 Who Took Part?
- 16 Findings
- 36 Conclusion

Foreward

As we continue to shape our identity as an OutdoorTown, Beat the Street has proven to be far more than a game. It's a catalyst for change, and a powerful tool in our vision to make Burnley a borough where being active is easy, attractive, and enjoyable.

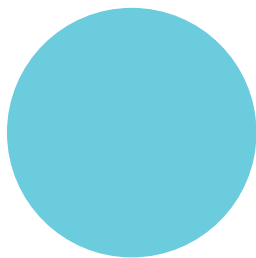
This year's Beat the Street game has continued to focus on wider climate action challenges in our communities: physical inactivity, which often goes hand in hand with carbon-intensive lifestyles, and a growing disconnect from nature. However, in Burnley, we're redefining what "nature" means. It's not just hills and mountains, it's our streets, parks, canal, and community spaces. It's the outdoors, our OutdoorTown.

Importantly, the game also provides us with rich data and insights that shape our learning and future work. We're able to understand how people move, where they engage, and what motivates them, allowing us to design more inclusive, responsive, and impactful outdoor initiatives across the borough.

By encouraging thousands of residents to explore their local area, Beat the Street has helped build stronger bonds between people and place. It's also aligned perfectly with Burnley's Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030.

"Beat the Street is a fun and practical way in helping us deliver on Burnley's long-term ambitions and is powerful expression of Burnley's commitment to People, Place, and Prosperity. By encouraging active lifestyles and deeper connections to our local outdoor spaces, we're investing in the health and wellbeing of our people, enhancing the quality, accessibility, and identity of our places, and supporting prosperity through inclusive growth, increased footfall, and stronger community engagement with local assets."

Clare Jackson, Head of Policy and Engagement – Burnley Borough Council.



Looking ahead, we aim to bring Beat the Street back in 2027, as part of Burnley's Year of Culture. This will be a celebration of movement, creativity, community, and an opportunity to once again harness the reach of the game to connect people with place and deepen our collective pride in Burnley's culture.

"At Burnley Leisure and Culture, we have a longstanding vision for healthier, happier communities. Our role is to deliver high-quality leisure and cultural services and facilities that inspire and support our communities to make physical and cultural activity a lifelong habit. Beat the Street plays a vital role in this.

Thank you to everyone who played and supported. I look forward to working together to further embed the identity of Burnley in Beat the Street 2027, and Burnley's Year of Culture."

Paul Foster, Chief Executive – Burnley Leisure and Culture.

Executive Summary

Beat the Street Burnley 2025 has once again demonstrated the power of gamified engagement to motivate residents to move more, connect with their environment, and build stronger community bonds. The third delivery of the programme attracted 13,036 participants, representing around 15% of the borough's population, with 10,899 registered players. The game reached a broad cross-section of the community: 55% were children, 58% female, 20% from culturally diverse backgrounds, and 19% living with long-term conditions or disabilities. Players from areas of high deprivation were overrepresented, highlighting the programme's reach to communities most in need of physical activity support.

The game also successfully engaged returning players, who made up 65% of participants, with retention strongest among children and adolescents. Data shows lower return rates among younger adults (19–29 years), pointing to opportunities to increase engagement with this demographic in future games. Peak activity occurred during school and commute periods (8–9am, 3–4pm), illustrating the game's effectiveness in encouraging active travel.

Behavioural outcomes indicate early signs of positive change: car use among adults fell by 3%-points, while walking and wheeling rose by 4%-points, equating to over 2,200 additional active trips per week. Daily leisure walking increased by 5%-points overall, with returning players showing even higher increases. Cycling rose modestly, reflecting small but meaningful shifts in active transport behaviours. Adults with disabilities and long-term conditions reduced their sedentary time, with significant weekend and weekday decreases.

Over 2,200 additional active trips per week were made!

Among children, particularly those new to the game, daily activity levels increased by 12%-points, showing strong impact for less active participants. Wellbeing improvements were recorded across all groups, with the greatest gains among previously inactive adults and returning players. Social connection and resilience also improved, notably among greenspace users and those engaged across multiple game touchpoints.

Engagement with local green and blue spaces deepened, with notable increases in canal towpath use and stronger emotional connections to nature. Participants reported enhanced perceptions of their local area as distinct, historic, and attractive, reinforcing community pride and place identity.

The delivery in Burnley benefitted from strong local leadership and partnership networks, including the Active Burnley Forum, which continues to embed Beat the Street within the wider #OutdoorTown vision.

The vision to make Burnley a place where the choice to be active is easy, attractive and enjoyable. Schools, community groups, and strategic partners all contributed to sustaining the programme's reach, with Alexis Turner providing consistent leadership and coordination across all three years of delivery.

Beat the Street Burnley continues to be a catalyst for inclusive, sustainable behaviour change, fostering activity, wellbeing, and connection to place for residents of all ages.



Headline results



Participation

- 13,036 participants took part in Beat the Street Burnley (15% of the local population)
- 10,899 registered players
- 5,028 completed health surveys

Physical activity

- Adult commuting: 3%-point reduction in car use, 4%-point increase in walking/wheeling
- Leisure walking: +5%-points overall; +13%-points among returning players
- Cycling 4+ days/week increased from 6% to 9%
- Children: new child players saw a 12%-point increase in achieving 60+ minutes of daily activity
- Adults with long-term conditions or disabilities: weekend sitting reduced by 84 mins, weekday by 75 mins

Tackling inequalities

- 56% of new players from IMD 1–2 areas; 52% among returning players
- 58% of participants were female
- Inactive adults more prevalent among new players (25%), showing greater reach to under-represented groups

Mental wellbeing

- Adult life satisfaction had bigger gains for previously inactive participants (+0.12) and returning players (+0.21)
- Child WHO-5 scores increased most among first-time players, those from deprived areas, and less active children

Cost-effectiveness

- WELLBY social value: £18 per adult participant overall; £212 for previously inactive adults; £371 for returning players

The Local Picture

Burnley faces some of the most significant challenges around physical activity in England. Nationally, 61.4% of adults and 44.9% of children achieve the Chief Medical Officers' recommended levels of activity. In Burnley, these figures are lower, with only 59.5% of adults and 38.2% of children meeting the guidelines. In the most disadvantaged areas of the borough, inactivity is even more prevalent, with almost 1 in 3 adults doing less than 30 minutes of activity per week. These inequalities highlight the pressing need for inclusive, accessible opportunities to be active across the borough.

It is against this backdrop that Burnley has shaped its OutdoorTown vision, a ten year vision to create a borough where being active is easy, attractive, and enjoyable for everyone. The strategy seeks to tackle inactivity and climate challenges together by reframing how residents view the outdoors, recognising that “outdoors” isn't only the hills and countryside, but also its urban streets, parks, canal, and community spaces.

Beat the Street has played a pivotal role in this journey. Since the first Burnley game in 2021, and again in 2023, the programme has been a catalyst for behaviour change, sparking new habits and inspiring residents to get moving. By 2025, more than 32,000 people had taken part, collectively travelling over 325,461 miles on foot, bike, and scooter. Beyond the numbers, the games have generated rich insight into how people move, where they engage, and what motivates them – evidence that is now being used to shape Burnley's wider outdoor offer.

The OutdoorTown vision builds on this foundation, combining the reach and energy of Beat the Street with long-term investment in greener, more active neighbourhoods. Initiatives such as community tree planting, inclusive cycling, guided walks, and family learning programmes are already embedding the legacy of the games into everyday life. Together, these approaches are tackling inactivity, reducing inequalities, and helping to deliver Burnley Borough Council's Strategic Plan 2025–2030 commitment to People, Place, and Prosperity.



Partner Collaboration

Beat the Street Burnley 2025 was brought to the town by Burnley Leisure & Culture in partnership with Burnley Borough Council, Canal & River Trust, with funding support from Community Lottery - Climate Action Fund, Sport England and Together an Active Future (TaAF). These partners are also the driving force behind Burnley's OutdoorTown Vision, ensuring that the game is not a stand-alone initiative but a catalyst embedded in a much wider, long-term vision for the borough.

A multi-agency network of stakeholders under the OutdoorTown umbrella (including the Active Burnley Forum, British Cycling, local health networks, community organisations, and infrastructure bodies) have been instrumental in shaping strategic aims and helping to build the foundations needed to support activity well beyond each game.

During the game's six-week period, partner organisations helped with promotion, awareness raising, and highlighting local assets such as parks, canal routes, trails, and community organisations. While much of the strategic collaboration takes place between games, through planning, designing events, improving infrastructure, and aligning with health, environment, and culture goals. The role of these partners ensures that the benefits of Beat the Street are sustained.

The steering and strategy groups facilitate sharing of good practice, inform what residents need, and help bring community-led outdoor initiatives forward (green space improvements, inclusive cycling, walking/wheeling-friendly routes). Together, these efforts reinforce the values of Burnley's Strategic Plan 2025-2030: People, Place, and Prosperity.

Local Engagement

Local engagement in Burnley continues to be led by Alexis Turner, who has been at the heart of the game for all three games. Alexis has built deep, trusted relationships across schools, community groups, and local networks, ensuring that Beat the Street is not just a game but a sustainable tool for fostering physical activity and community connection.

Schools

Ahead of the 2025 game phase, Alexis delivered assemblies in 16 primary schools, while also providing presentation slides and resources for schools that preferred to deliver their own sessions independently. Team leadership within schools was primarily taken on by sport leads with whom Alexis has longstanding relationships. In a few schools where engagement was particularly strong, these leads also held wider leadership roles, demonstrating the positive impact of influential staff in driving participation. New faith and SEN schools were also added to the leaderboard, reflecting a continued commitment to inclusivity.

During the game, communication with schools was maintained via email updates, including leaderboard instructions, event reminders, and resource packs. Schools were encouraged to integrate Beat the Street into PE lessons, internal walks, or active travel initiatives like 'walk to school buses.' A new internal year group leaderboard gave schools insight into engagement within their year groups, spreading responsibility and fostering motivation, while promoting inclusivity. Rather than hosting traditional prize-giving assemblies, Alexis focused on supporting schools to celebrate participation as part of the wider community, promoting sustainability and ownership, and reducing reliance on direct coordinator-led events.



Events and Celebrations

The programme launched at Padiham Town Hall alongside the unveiling of Burnley's ten-year OutdoorTown vision. Partners from across the Active Burnley Forum attended, including ParkPlay, TaAF's Let Me Move team, local authority colleagues and Intelligent Health. The event included speeches, the release of the OutdoorTown strategy video and a shared walk from the Town Hall to The Hive, reflecting the collective focus on movement, community and place. BBC Radio Lancashire covered the event, helping raise early awareness.

In addition to the main launch, partners promoted the Big Burnley Walk and a range of community-facing activities to build momentum. Weekly videos featuring the puppets Hodman and Sally encouraged families to explore parks and local cultural points of interest. These videos supported participation while also linking Beat the Street to Burnley's growing cultural identity and the Year of Culture.

A large end-of-game celebration planned as part of the HAF Family Fun Day could not go ahead due to severe weather. A smaller event was quickly organised at Prairie Sports Village and brought together more than 60 attendees, including representatives from almost all winning schools and community teams. Partners such as the LCC Active Travel Team (with Go Velo's Bubble Bike), BPRCVS, Burnley Leisure & Culture and PCSOs took part. Prize-giving, activities and informal conversations created a positive community atmosphere, and photographs and stories captured on the day are now contributing to ongoing OutdoorTown communications.



Sustainability and Legacy

This year saw further progress in embedding distributed leadership across schools, partners and community organisations. With Beat the Street now well established in Burnley, the focus shifted towards strengthening local ownership rather than providing intensive direct support. Schools increasingly adapted the game to their own routines, using internal year-group leaderboards, integrating walks into lessons and trialling walk-to-school initiatives. This demonstrates a growing confidence in delivering the programme independently.



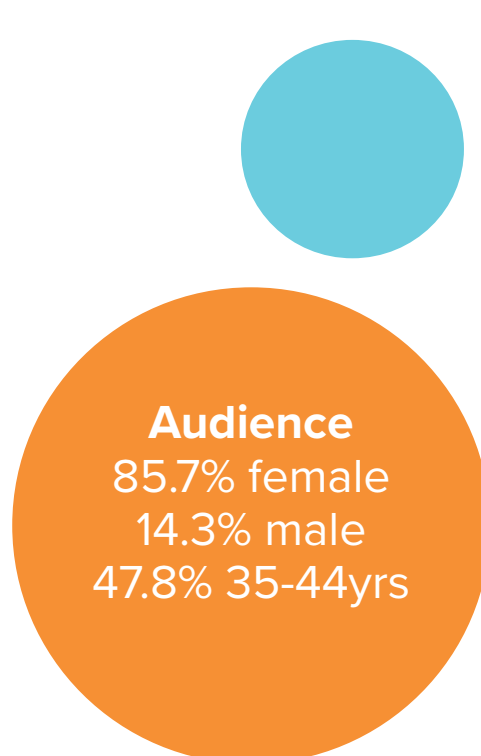
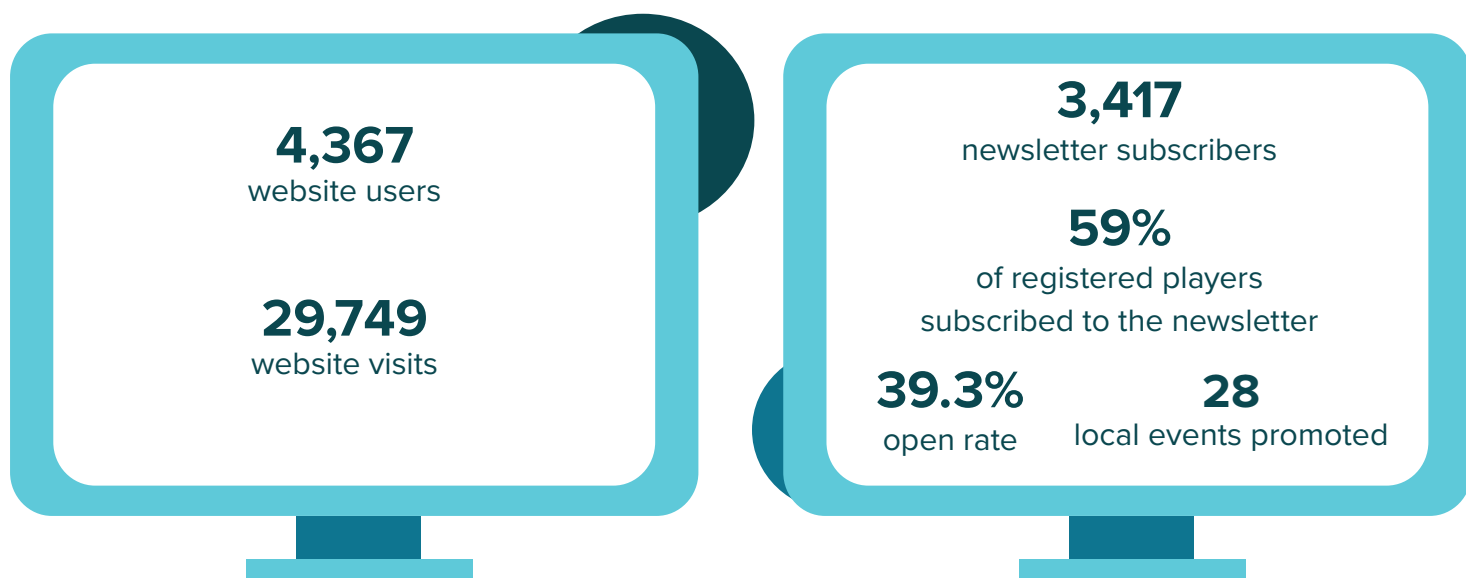
The Active Burnley Forum continued to coordinate activity and link Beat the Street with wider health, wellbeing and OutdoorTown priorities. Members shared information through their own networks, extending reach and reducing dependency on a single coordinator. This partnership-led approach supports long-term sustainability and keeps Beat the Street aligned with Burnley's broader place-based ambitions.

A key development this year was the use of the player survey to gather insight specifically for Burnley's Year of Culture. Additional questions were included to understand what residents want to see in future cultural programming, outdoor activities and local spaces. These findings are now helping shape planning for culture, events and outdoor engagement across the borough.

Regular social content during the game, including the Hodman and Sally exploration videos, strengthened people's connection with green spaces, outdoor routes and Burnley's cultural identity. Together, these elements mean Beat the Street now contributes not only to immediate participation but also to longer-term behaviour change, system collaboration and the ongoing development of Burnley as a borough where movement and culture are visible in everyday life.

Digital engagement

Content is shared across multiple channels to help support players to feel part of the game and to help them explore and enjoy their local area.



Media

Burnley Express

Beat the Street launched at Padiham Town Hall

BBC Radio Lancs

Beat the Street interview with Katherine Knight

Lancashire Evening Post

Go even wilder for Beat the Street Burnley!

Lancashire Evening Telegraph

12,000 enter 'Beat the Street' to discover heritage gems

Burnley Express

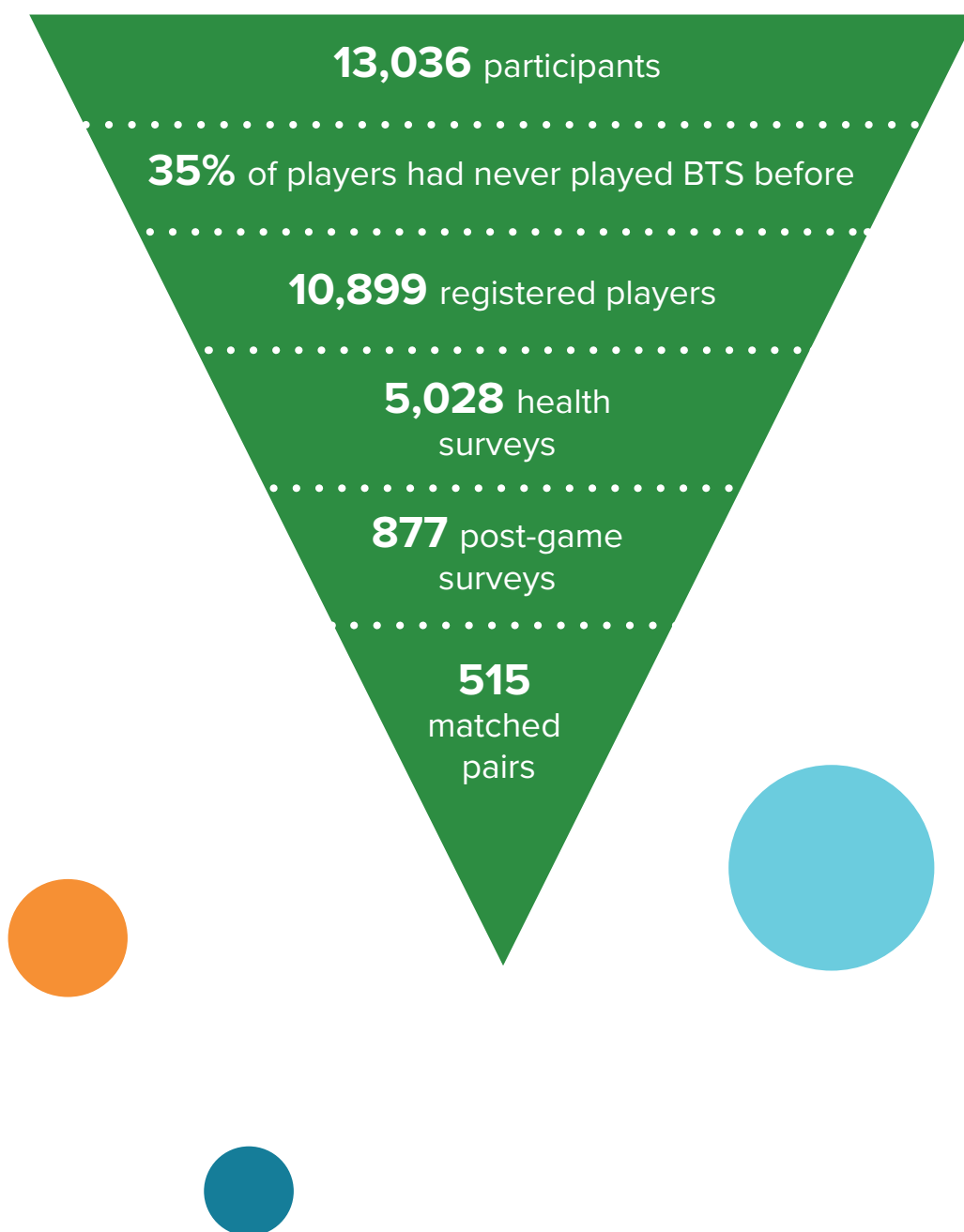
Beat the Street Burnley Go Explore week - 12,566 residents have signed up and have walked, cycled, run, scooted more than 54,000 miles



Capturing data

Registration data was collected on 10,899 people at the start of the game, providing audience insight into who was taking part; their age, gender, ethnicity and postcodes. Additionally, 5,028 people completed an optional survey on their physical activity levels, long-term conditions, disabilities and mental wellbeing.

Following the game phase, participants were invited to complete another survey containing additional questions which has allowed us to measure the behaviour change and impact that Beat the Street has had on individuals.



Who took part?

Players from more disadvantaged neighbourhoods were strongly over-represented compared with Burnley's local profile. 79% of participants lived in the 40% most deprived areas, and 58% in the most deprived 20%.

Within this, survey data showed that both new and returning players were consistently engaged, with 56% of new players and 52% of returning players coming from IMD 1–2 areas. The programme also engaged people with long-term conditions (15%) and disabilities (5%) across both groups. Contrasting profiles showed that new players included a higher share of inactive adults (25% vs 18%) and ethnically and culturally diverse participants (24% vs 19%), evidencing that BTS broadened participation into groups with greater need. Returning to Beat the Street was strongest among school ages with 71% of U11s and 75% of U18s identified as returning players.

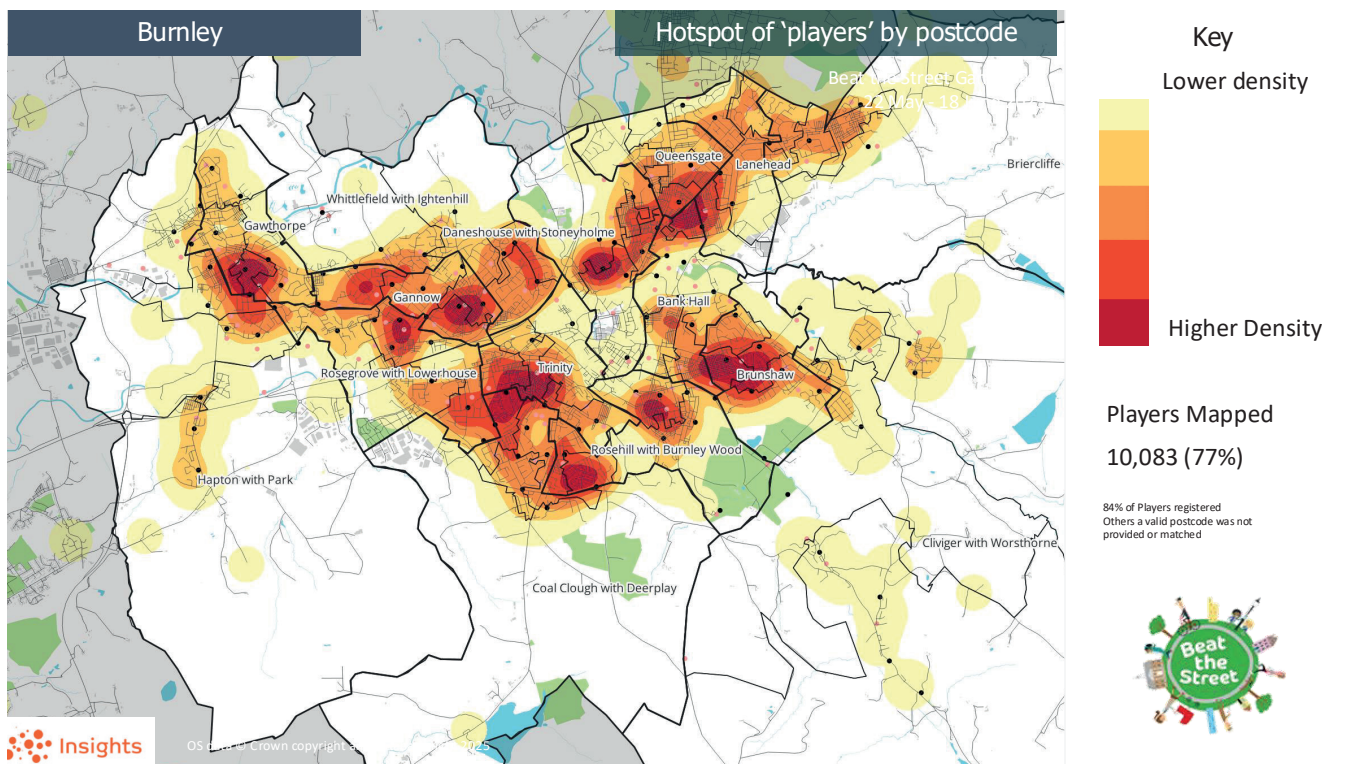


figure 2: Hotspot map of Beat the Street players by home postcode

Case Study: “It Should Be All Year Round” – Renee



Renee joined Beat the Street after hearing about it from her daughter and quickly discovered it wasn't just for children. Using her card on daily dog walks, she found herself walking further, meeting new people and reconnecting with her community after moving back to Burnley. The competition element kept her motivated, but what mattered most was the sense of belonging and daily purpose. As she put it, “It should be an all-year thing.” Renee’s story illustrates how Beat the Street engaged adults of all ages and abilities, strengthening both participation and social connection.



Nature Connection

Introduction

Burnley's Outdoor Town vision identifies stronger connection to nature as central to improving health, wellbeing and pride of place. It emphasises that access to and enjoyment of the borough's green and blue spaces must be inclusive, routine and community-driven. Beat the Street contributes directly to this ambition by providing a game-based framework that encourages residents to notice their surroundings, explore local parks, towpaths and trails, and embed outdoor journeys into daily life. Through the combination of points, team competition, events and partnerships with schools and community groups, the programme makes contact with nature visible, rewarding and social — turning connection into an everyday experience rather than a special occasion.

Strengthening Connection to Nature

Beat the Street Burnley 2025 deepened residents' relationship with the natural environment. Among adults, agreement with the statement “nature is part of who I am” increased by 11%-points, the largest attitudinal gain recorded. More adults also reported noticing everyday nature (+6%-points), showing that the programme shifted awareness from passive appreciation to an active sense of identity and belonging.

“My child has a chromosome disorder... by the end of the 6 weeks he was tolerating the canal and woodland much more, which definitely pleases me.”
Parent.

The Inclusion of the Nature in Self (INS) scale revealed the most striking change among adults with previously low connection: the proportion classified as having *low nature connection* fell from 34% to 20%, while those with *medium connection* rose from 21% to 36%. This demonstrates that Beat the Street was especially effective for residents starting furthest from nature, turning disconnection into engagement.



Changing Use of Local Green and Blue Spaces

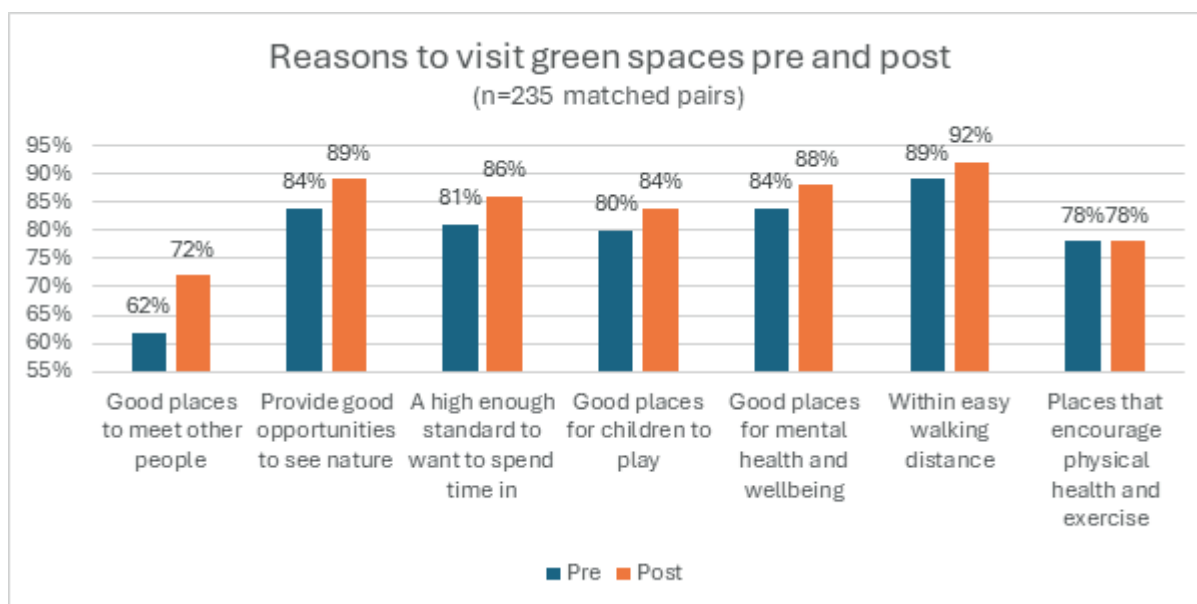


figure 3: Changes in Players Relationship of Value of Nature Spaces

Participants reported significant changes in how they viewed and used Burnley's outdoor assets. Public perceptions of green spaces improved across the board, with the largest increase being the view that parks are good places to meet others (+10%-points), alongside higher ratings for quality and wellbeing value (+5%-points each).

"I made more effort to get up earlier than usual to visit the Beat the Street places in my area on my way to take grandchildren to school... It also gave me opportunities to talk to people in my neighbourhood which was quite humorous too." – Female, 60s

The programme also shifted behaviour. Towpath use became more routine: among adults, weekly or more use increased from 30% to 38%; among children, weekly use doubled from 9% to 18%. Infrequent visits declined, with the share of adults saying they had not used the towpath in the past year falling from 18% to 13%, and occasional visits among children halving from 14% to 7%.

These shifts show that BTS encouraged residents not just to sample outdoor spaces but to embed them into everyday routines. Importantly, these changes connect with wider impacts seen in physical activity and active travel, where participants reported less sitting time and more walking and cycling. The detailed statistics are set out in those sections, but it is clear that improved connection to nature provided a foundation for healthier movement behaviours.

Equity in Nature Connection



The improvements were strongest among groups who often face barriers to outdoor access. Children from deprived areas recorded some of the biggest increases in active journeys, giving them more frequent exposure to local environments. Adults with the lowest baseline nature connection—who are often also inactive or from disadvantaged groups—made the largest gains, with the proportion of adults in the “low connection” category falling by 14%-points.

This is significant because national evidence consistently shows that disadvantaged communities, minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities are less likely to visit or feel connected to nature (Natural England, Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment). Connection and not just frequency of visits, is a critical predictor of wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviour (Richardson et al., 2017; Natural England, 2020). By achieving the largest shifts among those furthest away, Beat the Street has helped close an important equity gap in Burnley.

Continuing the approach from the 2023 Beat the Street game, where teams could earn trees for the miles they walked and points they collected, this year’s game once again ties physical activity to climate action.

 **A total of 1,946 trees were earned and will be planted at existing sites and help create new micro-woodlands, adding more green spaces for communities and supporting local wildlife.** 

This builds on the Burnley Climate Action Fund work, bringing people together across sectors to make a positive difference for both health and the environment.

Reframing Burnley’s Landscape

Beyond individual behaviour, Beat the Street influenced how residents saw their environment. After the programme, participants were more likely to describe Burnley’s landscape as distinct (+9%-points), historic (+8%-points), and attractive (+5%-points).

These attitudinal changes were strongest among new players and residents from IMD 1–2 areas, suggesting that Beat the Street helped residents who may have felt disconnected to view Burnley’s landscape more positively.

This growing sense of place attachment reflects the Outdoor Town Vision’s ambition to build ownership and pride in Burnley’s outdoor assets. It also resonates with WHO guidance on Urban Green Spaces and Health (2016), which highlights equitable access to quality outdoor spaces as a foundation for tackling health inequalities.

Case Study: Teen Team Tops Leaderboard Before University



A group of teenagers, competing as “**Crystal B Ind,**” set themselves a final goal before heading off to university: win the small teams leaderboard. After a late start, double points week spurred them on, and they succeeded. Along the way they explored Scott Park and stretches of the canal towpath they had never visited, cheered on by younger children. For them, Beat the Street was more than points: it was a way to bond, discover local green and blue spaces, and create lasting memories.

Key Statements - Nature Connection

- Agreement with “***nature is part of who I am***” increased by **11%-points**, the largest attitudinal gain.
- The proportion of adults with low connection to nature dropped from **34% to 20%**, while medium connection rose from **21% to 36%**.
- Adults’ weekly use of the canal towpath increased from **30% to 38%**, while children’s weekly use doubled from **9% to 18%**.
- Perceptions of parks as places to meet others improved by 10%-points, alongside higher ratings for quality and wellbeing value.
- Improvements were strongest among those usually least connected—new players, deprived communities, and adults starting with low nature connection.
- Participants were more likely to describe Burnley’s landscape as ***distinct, historic and attractive***, particularly new players and residents of IMD 1–2 areas.

These outcomes advance Burnley’s Outdoor Town Vision by embedding nature connection, routine use of green and blue spaces, and stronger attachment to local place.

Physical Activity

Introduction

Physical inactivity is one of Burnley’s greatest health challenges. The **Outdoor Town vision** highlights the need to reduce inequalities by creating environments where being active is easy, attractive and enjoyable. Beat the Street contributes to this by weaving activity into everyday life — walking to Beat Boxes, exploring parks and towpaths, and motivating participation through points and team competition. The 2025 game revealed the scale of inactivity at baseline but also demonstrated that with the right mechanisms, significant progress can be made, particularly among those facing the steepest inequalities.

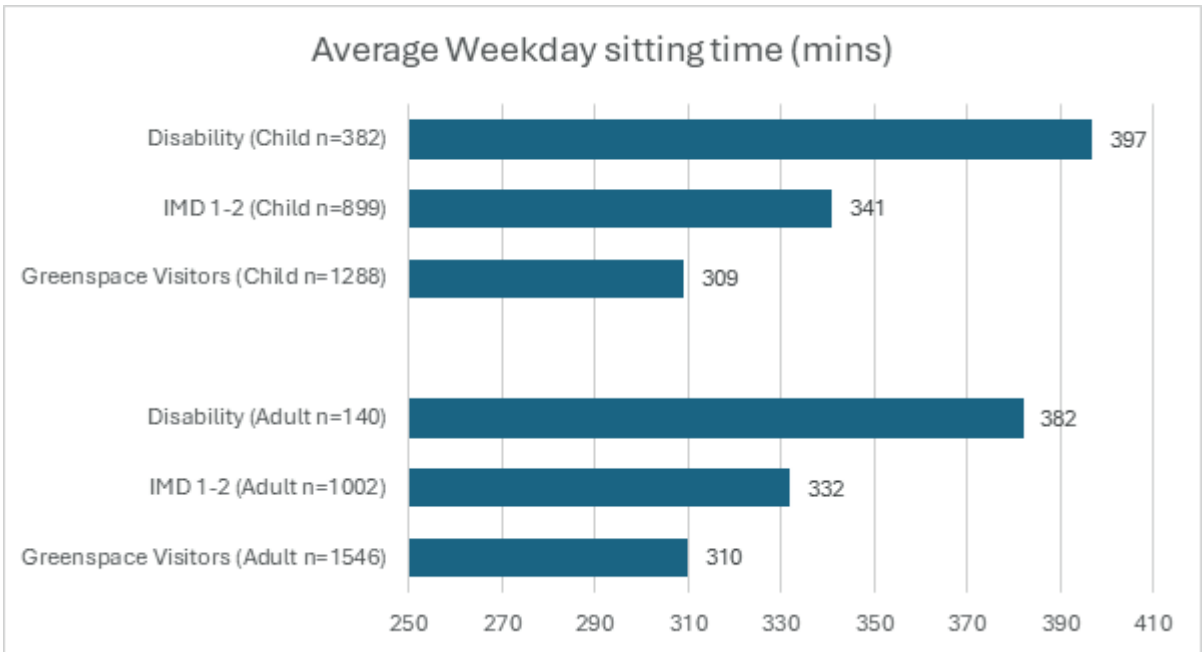


Figure 4: Difference in average weekday sitting time by circumstance



Adults

Baseline Challenge

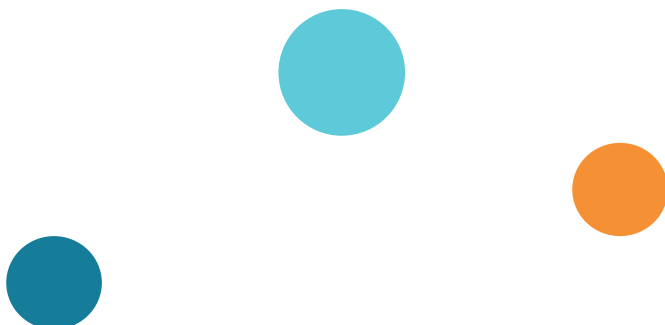
At the start of the programme, almost half of adults (48%) in Burnley were inactive. Inequalities were marked: inactivity rose to 53% among adults living in the most deprived 20% of areas, compared with just 25% among those who regularly visited greenspaces. Adults with disabilities and long-term conditions also reported higher baseline inactivity, highlighting the scale of disadvantage.

Change during the programme

Against this backdrop, Beat the Street made measurable inroads. Among returning adult players, inactivity fell by 3%-points and the proportion active increased by 7%-points. The biggest gains were seen among those with the highest barriers. For adults with a disability, inactivity fell by 7%-points and activity increased by 10%-points. Adults with long-term conditions also improved, despite starting from lower baselines. Inactive adults at the start of the programme showed progress too, demonstrating BTS's ability to reach and support those most in need.

Lifestyle shifts

Reductions in sitting time reinforced these patterns. Adults with a disability cut sedentary time by an average of –84 minutes on weekends and –75 minutes on weekdays. These results point to structural lifestyle change: people spending less time sitting indoors and more time moving in local environments. The nature connection data confirms this link: during the programme, weekly towpath use among adults rose from 30% to 38%, while agreement with “*nature is part of who I am*” increased by 11%-points. Together, these results show that Beat the Street supported a tangible shift from sedentary behaviour towards active engagement with local green and blue spaces.



Children Baseline challenge

As with adults, inactivity was high among children. At baseline, 60% were classed as inactive, rising to 64% in deprived areas, 62% among children with a disability, and 60% among children from ethnically and culturally diverse groups. This underscored the need for interventions to support those most at risk.

Change during the programme

Children responded strongly to Beat the Street. Among returning players, those walking on four or more days per week rose by 7%-points, with daily walking up 3%-points. Among new players, walking on four or more days rose by 6%-points, and daily walking increased by 5%-points.

"It helped me be more active. It made us walk little bits to school rather than drive... I even went on more runs as I wanted to get more points than my mum."
Male, 11 and under

Across the cohort, the proportion of less active children fell by 5%-points, while the proportion classed as active rose by 12%-points. Children with disabilities, long-term conditions or from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds recorded some of the largest reductions in sitting time, ranging from –31% to –45%. These changes demonstrate that BTS did more than reinforce activity among already active children; it successfully reached those who had the greatest need.



Equity and Broader Impact

The Burnley results underline two central insights about equity. Firstly, the scale of the challenge was stark: inactivity was patterned by deprivation, disability and exclusion, with the steepest barriers faced by those already at a disadvantage. Secondly, Beat the Street helped narrow these gaps. Disabled adults, people who were inactive at the outset, and children from lower-income families showed some of the strongest improvements, evidencing change where it mattered most.

These gains were made possible by the way Beat the Street was delivered and promoted. Assemblies in 16 primary schools, including faith and SEN schools, ensured that participation spread into communities often excluded from mainstream sport. Pupils across diverse communities had a route into the game. Meanwhile, community partners like BPRCVS, Burnley Together and the Canal & River Trust supported residents to take part, offering alternative gateways for people less likely to use traditional leisure services. The Padiham Town Hall launch, aligned with the Outdoor Town strategy and amplified by BBC Radio Lancashire, placed inclusion at the centre of civic messaging.

Together, these elements helped reduce barriers and strengthen the sense that movement is both possible and for everyone. The improvements seen in physical activity sat alongside wider ripple effects, stronger connections to nature, more walking in place of short car trips, and a growing cultural shift towards healthier everyday routines.



Case Study: Rosewood Primary School

At Rosewood Primary, Beat the Street became a whole-school effort. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 joined a community-supported walk through local parks, pairing younger with older children. The game reinforced geography lessons, built confidence in navigating routes, and encouraged families to walk further than ever before. Parents reported enjoying more time outdoors with their children, and staff saw the school community grow closer. The story of Rosewood shows how Beat the Street can increase daily activity while strengthening both learning and community ties.

Key Findings - Physical Activity

- At baseline, 48% of adults were inactive, rising to 53% in the most deprived areas, compared with 25% among adults who regularly visited greenspaces.
- Among returning adults, inactivity fell by 3 points and activity increased by 7%-points.
- Adults with a disability recorded the biggest improvements, with inactivity down 7%-points and activity up 10%-points.
- Adults with a disability also cut sedentary time by over an hour a day; at the same time, weekly towpath use among adults rose from 30% to 38%, showing more people were spending time outdoors.
- At baseline, 60% of children were inactive, including 64% in deprived areas, 62% with a disability, and 60% from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Across the cohort, the share of less active children fell by 5%-points, while active children rose by 12%-points.
- New players showed strong gains, with daily walking increasing by 5%-points.
- Children with disabilities, long-term conditions or from ethnically diverse backgrounds recorded the largest sitting time reductions (–31% to –45%).
- The programme delivered the greatest impact among those facing the steepest barriers, showing that Beat the Street helps to reduce inequalities in activity across Burnley.



Active Travel

Introduction

Active travel and Active Environments is a key focus of Burnley's Outdoor Town vision, with the ambition to make walking and cycling part of everyday life. Beat the Street supported this by turning routine journeys into opportunities for progress: walking to school, cycling to work, or choosing greener routes around the borough all contributed to a shared sense of purpose and achievement. The 2025 data revealed clear differences between how adults and children travelled, but also showed that the programme can build confidence, shape habits, and make active journeys feel both normal and accessible.

Delivery in Burnley played an important role. Schools led the way, with assemblies introducing pupils to the game and teachers weaving it into lessons and daily rhythms. Initiatives such as Christ the King Primary's walk-to-school bus wove movement into the school day and year-group leaderboards added ownership and friendly competition, helping younger players recognise their journeys as valuable.

Community partners strengthened this momentum. Through the Active Burnley Forum, organisations promoted local walking and cycling routes, highlighted towpaths and parks. Public events raised the profile of active travel: The Outdoor Town vision positioned active movement as part of the borough's strategic identity, while the celebration at Prairie Sports Village showcased how families and schools had built walking into everyday life.

These stories demonstrate that increases in active travel did not happen by chance but grew from coordinated, locally rooted structures that made walking and cycling easier, more visible, and more rewarding for residents.

"Encouraged me to walk rather than use the car." – Female, 60s



Adults

Baseline patterns showed that active travel was limited for commuting. Only 19% of adults reported walking or cycling to work at least once a week, with most relying on the car for daily journeys. In contrast, short active trips were already a strong feature of everyday life: 56% of adults walked outdoors for leisure on four or more days per week at baseline, rising to 62% after the programme. This highlights a gap between commuting and leisure patterns, but also shows a clear foundation that Beat the Street was able to build on.



The barriers adults reported centred on time and safety. Almost half cited being too busy with family or household responsibilities (45–49%), while over a quarter raised concerns about safety after dark and antisocial behaviour. At the same time, enablers were evident: fresh air (75%), exercise (69%) and mental wellbeing (65%) were the most common reasons for choosing to walk or cycle.

During Beat the Street, the evidence points to meaningful modal shifts. The proportion of adults commuting actively increased from a low baseline, while daily car use fell. Adults with disabilities and long-term conditions, though less likely to commute actively overall, reported the largest reductions in sitting time (–75 to –84 minutes per day). Alongside this, more adults incorporated local assets into their journeys: weekly towpath use rose from 30% to 38%. Together these results show that Beat the Street supported adults to rebalance travel behaviour, replacing some sedentary and car-based trips with active, outdoor alternatives.

Children

For children, active travel was already more established, but independence was constrained. At baseline, 57% of primary pupils and 37% of secondary pupils walked or cycled to school. Yet fewer than half were permitted to travel independently: only 48% were allowed to play out locally and 29% to walk or cycle home from school without an adult.



Beat the Street created a structured and positive reason for families to allow children more freedom, and this translated into measurable change. Across the cohort, walking to school increased by 4%-points, with the largest rise among children from the most deprived areas (+9%-points). Secondary pupils — who often see the sharpest drop in active travel as adolescence sets in — recorded a 7%-point increase in walking or cycling to school. These are significant shifts in modal share that point directly to children being trusted to travel more actively and independently. Leisure journeys reinforced these patterns.

Weekly towpath use among children doubled from 9% to 18%, while infrequent “once-a-year” visits halved from 14% to 7%.

These gains demonstrate that children were not only walking more for school but also using local blue and green spaces for play, exploration and socialising — all of which build confidence in moving around independently.



Equity and Connections

The strongest gains in active travel were recorded among those with the greatest need. Children from deprived areas increased walking to school by 9%-points, narrowing the gap with more affluent peers. For secondary pupils, a 7%-points increase reversed the typical decline in walking and cycling during adolescence. Adults, though starting from much lower baselines, also showed encouraging shifts: leisure walking increased from 56% to 62%, and more residents used the towpath and parks as part of everyday travel.

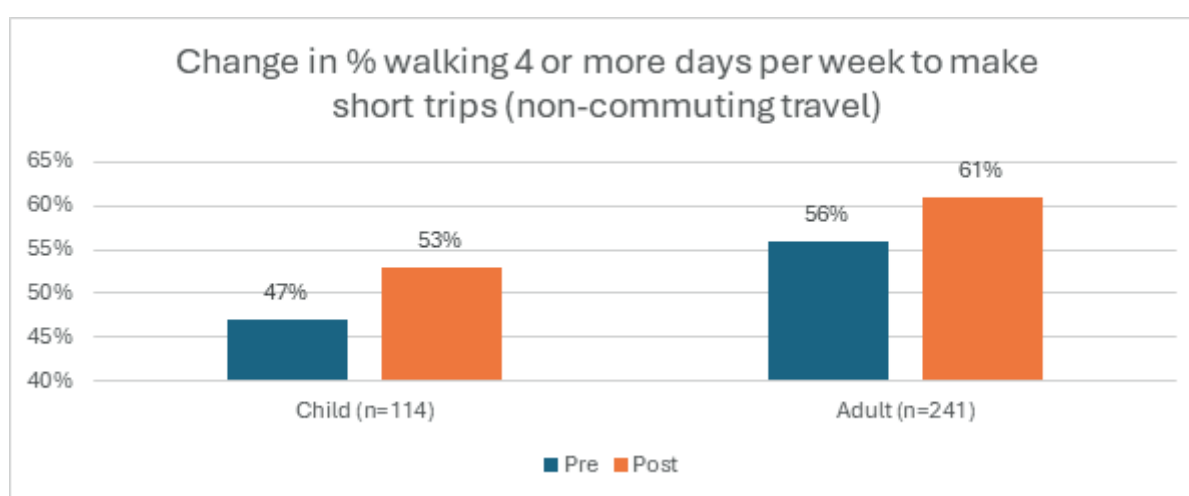


Figure 5: Increase in walking for everyday short trips

These changes are deeply connected to other themes. Active school travel was one of the key ways children increased their physical activity, while exploration of towpaths and parks reinforced nature connection. Equity was evident too: deprived neighbourhoods, which had the lowest levels of independence and the greatest barriers at baseline, saw the most substantial improvements. In this way, Beat the Street did more than alter mode choice — it created the conditions for healthier, more independent and more connected daily routines across Burnley.

Case Study: Our Journey to Active Wellbeing Across Borders



Nicola, a Burnley GP, and colleagues from the Primary Care Network used Beat the Street to combine workplace wellbeing with daily journeys. Linking the game to their “Mile a Day for Dementia” initiative, they walked together after work, shared routes via WhatsApp, and encouraged staff to move more. Friendly competition on leaderboards boosted motivation, while the team discovered new parts of Burnley. Their story shows how Beat the Street can embed active travel into routine life, foster teamwork, and support professionals to lead by example.

Key Statements - Active Travel

- At baseline, only 19% of adults walked or cycled to work weekly, while 56% walked for leisure on 4+ days per week, rising to 62% after BTS.
- We saw a modal shift towards walking to of 4%-points overall, and by 9%-points among children from deprived areas.
- Secondary pupils recorded a 7-point modal shift to active school travel, reversing the typical adolescent decline.
- Children’s independence was constrained, with only 48% allowed to play out and 29% allowed to walk or cycle home from school, but BTS provided a safe and structured reason for families to permit active travel. For example children’s weekly towpath use doubled from 9% to 18%, showing more leisure journeys into green and blue spaces.



Adults incorporated more outdoor routes into everyday travel, with weekly towpath use rising from 30% to 38%.



- The strongest gains were recorded among disadvantaged groups, showing that Beat the Street reduced inequalities in active travel across Burnley.

Health Creation

Introduction

Health is created when people feel safe, valued and able to belong, supported by the relationships, places and shared stories that underpin community life. Beat the Street in Burnley strengthened these foundations by making everyday activities — walking, cycling, exploring local parks and canals — visible, social and rewarding. In doing so, the programme combined physical activity, nature connection and active travel with opportunities to engage with neighbours, schools, community groups and local assets. These mechanisms helped build trust, strengthen networks and derive wider value from community spaces, which are all essential ingredients of community strength and resilience. The impact of this was captured through the Health Creation Index (HCI) and the ABCD Maturity Index.

Wellbeing Outcomes

Adult life satisfaction improved slightly overall, equating to a **WELLBY** social value of £18 per participant. Gains were far greater among those most in need: previously inactive adults recorded £212 per person, while returning players saw £371. Children's wellbeing, measured through the WHO-5, also rose, with the largest increases among first-time players, children from deprived areas, and those less active at baseline. These patterns show that wellbeing gains were not uniform but were strongest among those who started from the lowest baseline, a hallmark of reduced inequality.



Health Creation Index



Figure 6: Health Creation index Scores by Demographic Group

At baseline, greenspace visitors scored highest on the HCI (3.68/5), while adults with disabilities (3.37), long-term conditions (3.48), and inactive adults (3.54) scored the lowest. This demonstrates the protective effect of nature and activity, but also the challenges faced by those living with disadvantage.

Findings

Post-programme, average HCI scores increased by 1–3% across most groups. The biggest improvements came from inactive adults (+3%), followed by greenspace visitors (+2.5%) and returning players (+2.4%). Notably, inactive adults reported an 11% increase in “spending time with people who share my values” and a 9% increase in “belonging to a group or community”. These findings underline that Beat the Street did more than promote steps, it strengthened protective buffers of belonging and social connection, especially for those who needed them most.

“Due to my autism I normally have a short concentration span. Doing Beat the Street made me focus on one thing at a time instead of multiple things. It also helped me because I love exploring new places.” – Age 11 and under

Among children, baseline HCI scores were generally high (3.7–4.1/5). The lowest scores were recorded among disabled children (3.72) and less active children (3.83), particularly around external support and self-belief. Post-game, returning children showed gains in neighbourhood belonging and external support, reinforcing the role of continuity and community identity.

ABCD Maturity

Baseline measures showed that greenspace visitors and active adults were most engaged with local associations and skills, while adults with disabilities were least connected (just 23% felt part of a local network).

Change data demonstrated that ABCD maturity improved across all groups, with the strongest gains for returning players (+10%-points), inactive adults (+9%-points) and residents from IMD 1–2 areas (+9%-points). For inactive participants, the biggest uplift came in “stories that capture our culture” (+15%-points), pointing to how gameplay helped create shared identity and narrative. This is a direct reflection of how visible initiatives — from school leaderboards to community teams — became part of Burnley’s collective story



Equity and Impact

The evaluation highlights a consistent pattern: those starting from lower baselines gained the most. Inactive adults, disabled participants, and children from deprived areas all reported stronger improvements in wellbeing, HCI, and ABCD maturity than their peers. This demonstrates that Beat the Street acts as a leveller — by strengthening belonging, social connection and community identity, it reduces inequities in how health is created.

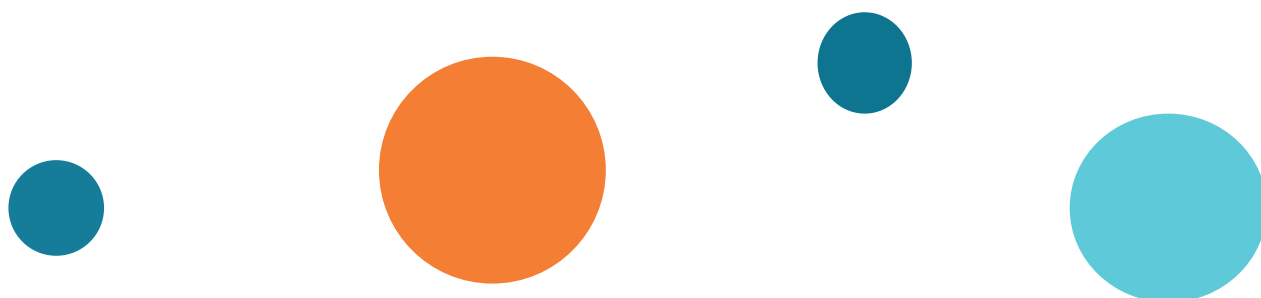
Crucially, these findings connect with other themes: nature access amplified HCI scores, while physical activity improvements reinforced wellbeing. In Burnley, Beat the Street did not just create healthier individuals; it fostered healthier, more resilient communities.

The ward-level analysis shows a consistent pattern across Burnley. Wards such as Cliviger with Worsthorne tended to rank higher on both adult and child Health Creation and on ABCD Maturity, indicating stronger foundations of trust, belonging and connection. By contrast, wards including Brunshaw, Rosehill with Burnley Wood, Bank Hall, and Rosegrove with Lowerhouse ranked lower across these measures. The consistency of these patterns suggests that strengths and gaps in community health creation are not isolated to one age group but are broadly shared across generations.

At the same time, the data also highlights assets within lower-ranked wards that can be built upon. For example, Rosegrove with Lowerhouse showed relatively stronger child Health Creation scores compared with its adult ranking, suggesting resilience among younger residents. In Bank Hall, scores pointed to active associations and community stories as emerging strengths, even where overall levels of trust and belonging were weaker. These bright spots show that every ward has relational and place-based assets to work with. Beat the Street is well placed to amplify these, helping communities with lower scores build on what already exists while narrowing the gap with higher-scoring areas.

Key Statements - Health Creation

- Beat the Street strengthened wellbeing across Burnley, with the largest gains for inactive adults (£212 per person) and returning players (£371 per person) in WELLBY value.
- Children who were less active at baseline and those living in lower-scoring wards recorded the strongest improvements in wellbeing and belonging, showing that those starting furthest behind benefitted most.
- Inactive adults showed a 3% increase in Health Creation Index scores, including +11% in “spending time with people who share my values” and +9% in “belonging to a community.”
- ABCD Maturity improved most for returning players (+10%-points) and inactive adults (+9%-points), with the greatest single gain in “stories that capture our culture” (+15%-points).
- Adults who regularly visited greenspaces had the highest HCI scores (3.68/5), showing the protective effect of nature, while adults with disabilities (3.37) and long-term conditions (3.48) started lower but still made meaningful gains.
- Ward-level analysis showed consistent differences, with Cliviger and Worsthorne ranking highest and Brunshaw, Rosehill with Burnley Wood, Bank Hall and Rosegrove with Lowerhouse ranking lower, though each had identifiable strengths to build upon.
- Overall, Beat the Street reduced inequities in how health is created, supporting resilience, connection and belonging for groups and neighbourhoods facing the greatest challenges.





Conclusion

Beat the Street Burnley 2025 successfully inspired people of all ages and backgrounds to move more, explore their environment, and engage with local green and blue spaces. Beyond its core aim of increasing active travel and leisure walking, the programme strengthened community pride, addressed inequalities in participation, and supported wellbeing.

The findings highlight the structural challenges Burnley faces, high levels of inactivity, health inequalities, and uneven community strength across wards, but also demonstrate the capacity of relational, place-based programmes to narrow gaps and create the conditions for health.

Increased walking and cycling activity changed how local spaces were used. Parks, towpaths and neighbourhood routes became more visibly occupied, increasing the likelihood of incidental interactions and reinforcing social norms around active travel. Research shows that visible peer behaviour can significantly shape walking and cycling uptake (Winters et al., 2017). Burnley's rise in towpath use and school walking reflects these feedback loops of visibility and participation.

Those who regularly visited greenspaces scored higher on the Health Creation Index, and participants who increased nature contact during the game also reported higher wellbeing. Evidence from Natural England demonstrates that frequent engagement with nature improves both mental health and social cohesion, with particular benefits for disadvantaged groups (Natural England, 2020). Beat the Street extended access to these buffers by drawing new participants into local green and blue spaces.

The increases in school walking and leisure use of towpaths were not only about physical activity but also about independence and autonomy. In total 29% of children reported being permitted to walk or cycle home from school, and 48% were allowed to “play out.” Beat the Street provided a structured and safe context for families to grant more independence, which in turn builds confidence and belonging. This aligns with mobility research that frames independent movement as a key determinant of adolescent wellbeing and identity (Panter et al., 2010).

Schools, community groups and local institutions played crucial enabling roles. Assemblies, walk-to-school buses, year-group leaderboards and public celebrations created stories that participants shared, strengthening the “cultural narrative” domain of ABCD maturity. Literature on asset-based community development emphasises the role of stories in sustaining identity and cohesion (Russell, 2020). In Burnley, gameplay became part of the borough’s cultural life, with media coverage and visible Beat Boxes embedding the programme into collective memory.

Gains were strongest among those starting from the lowest baseline — inactive adults, people with disabilities and long-term conditions, and children from lower-ranked wards. Inactive adults recorded a 3% increase in Health Creation scores, with double-digit improvements in belonging and shared values. Returning players and those from disadvantaged areas made the largest gains in ABCD maturity, particularly in the “stories that capture our culture” domain.

The evidence shows that Burnley’s partnership has been able to use Beat the Street as a catalyst for health creation. Across engagement, nature connection, physical activity, active travel and community strength, the programme demonstrated that local people can be mobilised at scale, that those facing the greatest barriers can achieve the largest gains, and that communities can grow stronger through shared stories and experiences. In doing so, Beat the Street has advanced the borough’s Outdoor Town Vision - making everyday life more active, connected and rooted in place, while also showing how local action can give tangible form to national ambitions around equity, wellbeing, active travel and nature connection.

Looking forward, continued collaboration with local schools, community groups, and strategic partners will help sustain momentum. Additional focus will target underserved groups and workplaces, ensuring everyone in Burnley has the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from the borough’s spaces.

Beat the Street was delivered by Intelligent Health.

For more information please visit:
<https://www.intelligenthealth.co.uk/>



