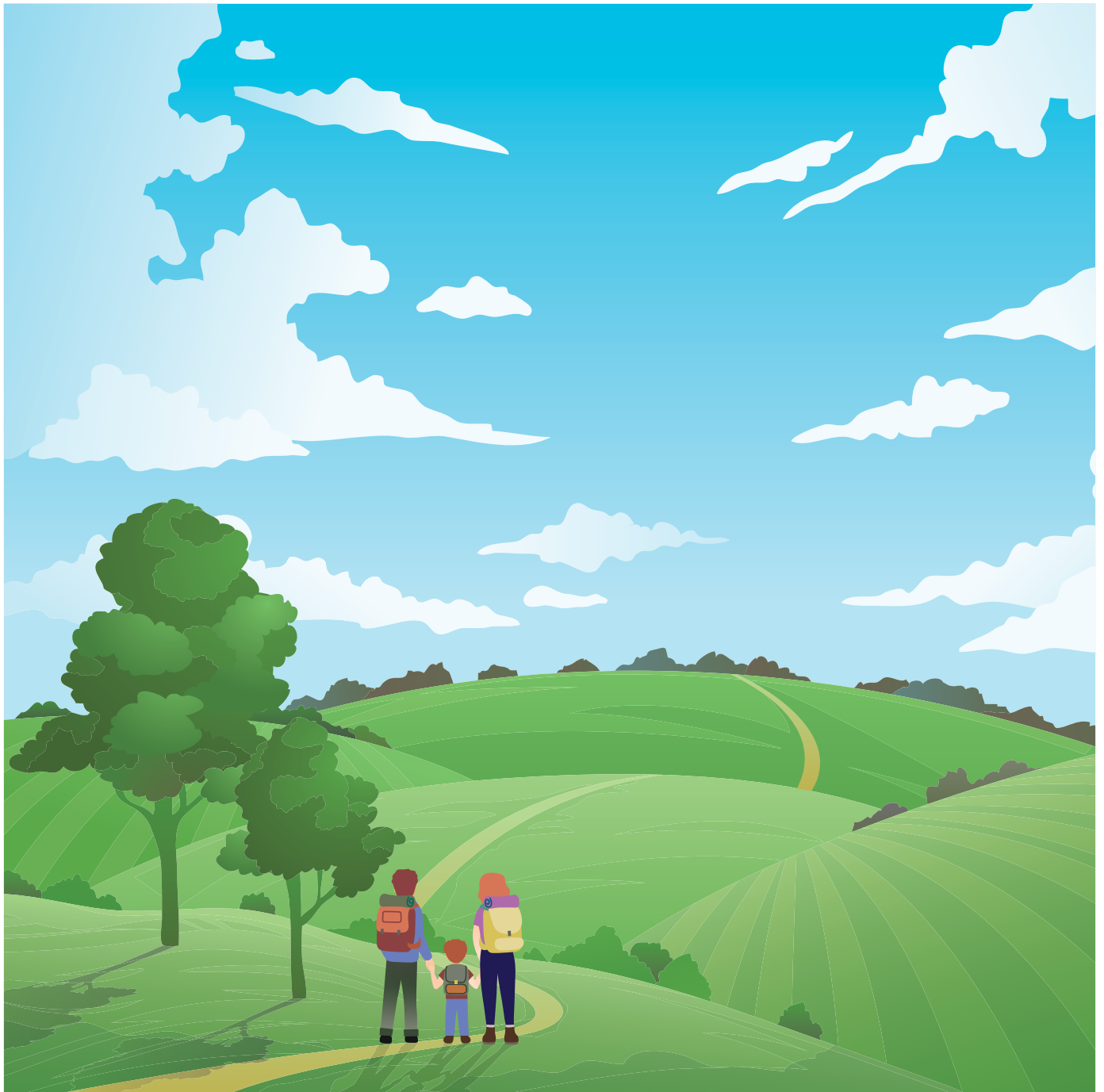


# Discoveries on Your Doorstep

Annual progress report 2021



# Contents

Introduction .....	3
A note from the Discoveries on Your Doorstep Project Officer .....	3
Discoveries on Your Doorstep - The background and history .....	4
Patterns and trends of physical activity and walking .....	6
Discoveries on Your Doorstep footfall counters .....	10
Key project updates .....	12
Ramblers Wellbeing Super Partner Offer .....	12
Long Preston Deeper Connections .....	13
Website Review .....	13
Route checks .....	14
Creating new connections and links .....	14
Communications .....	15
Works in progress .....	16
Eastfield Regeneration PACT .....	16
Disability forums .....	17
Selby High School Park and Stride .....	17
Challenges faced .....	17
“The Bigger Picture” .....	18
Next steps .....	19

# Introduction

## A note from the Discoveries on Your Doorstep Project Officer

Discoveries on Your Doorstep has gone through many changes since its pathway to health origin. Originally about encouraging people to access public rights of way for walking to improve health, it has grown and evolved to have a much more holistic approach with regard to encouraging physical activity outdoors.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought about a review of the focus of Discoveries on Your Doorstep; whilst evidence suggests that physical activity levels have decreased nationally, many people have a newfound appreciation of being active outdoors, especially walking, for the benefit it had on their physical and mental wellbeing, particularly during the lockdowns. Additionally, the pandemic has emphasized the importance of social connection with our family, friends, neighbours, and colleagues etc., to help people through difficult times.

The key question that arose from the review following the Covid-19 pandemic, was how the project can help to address the decrease in overall physical activity habits, by capitalising on the newfound appreciation of outdoor activity and social connection. Essentially it re-highlighted the importance of the five ways to wellbeing, of which the “Be active” element was part of the basis behind the original Pathways to Health project.

The work that has been done during the project since, has considered how to target the different ways to wellbeing, mainly the “Be Active”, “Connect” and “Take Notice” elements, whilst building upon the original ethos of helping people “discover what is on their doorstep”. It is important to have a holistic approach as to what contributes to a positive outdoor physical activity experience, as ultimately, current and future physical activity habits are determined by the affective response to prior physical activity experiences, and so working to ensure that people have positive and memorable experiences is key.

This need to help people have positive and memorable physical activity experiences outdoors has pushed the project to strengthen links with existing partners and establish links with new partners, as a way to diversify its approach, to help address both the pre and post pandemic barriers that people face to being physically active outdoors.

# Discoveries on Your Doorstep

## The background and history

### 2015 – The beginning

The project originally began under another name “Pathways to Health” in 2015, which was originally a 2 year “proof of concept” project focused in Scarborough and Selby. It aimed to convincingly evidence that improving access to the Public Right of Way network with the help of volunteers, would have a direct benefit on the health and wellbeing of the people of North Yorkshire. Lots of focus work was done in Scarborough and Selby by Stronger Communities leads to develop what were known as “The Scarborough Trails” and “The Selby Trails” and a website was created alongside a number of interesting walking routes.

### 2017 – Public Health take over the lead

Under its Pathways to Health name, the project was led by the Public Rights of Way team with key input from Stronger Communities and Public Health. However, upon completion of the original project in 2017, where it was successfully shown that improved access to the Public Right of Way network had improved people’s health and wellbeing, Public Health assumed control and began funding the project from this point.

### 2018 – “Discoveries on Your Doorstep” & Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

In 2018 a creative design agency known as Magpie were commissioned to do some insight work and following this, the name of the project was changed to “Discoveries on Your Doorstep” which was to reflect the population’s motivations and drivers for walking: ‘discovering’ their local area as opposed to walking for ‘health’. In the same year, Public Health opened the project up to a partner organisation, with the vision of strengthening the way in which the project was delivered by being better linked to nature based work. After discussions with the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Partnership, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust came on board and from this point have hosted the post, with North Yorkshire County Council Public Health co-funding the post.

### 2019 – Addition of Ripon to focus areas

In 2019 it was decided that the project would expand to Harrogate district, specifically focusing upon Ripon. Two footfall counters were installed in the Hell Wath Nature Reserve and there was consultation with the local community to decide the most appropriate way for the project to support local residents to be active outdoors.

### 2020 – Covid-19

In 2020, the pandemic hit and brought about a review of the focus of Discoveries on Your Doorstep, given the way that many people’s physical activity habits had been affected.

### 2021 – New Project Officer & Long Preston Deeper Connections

In 2021, a new project officer took over the post, which was contracted until March 2022 but after a successful funding bid to the Government’s Green Recovery Challenge Fund this has been extended until March 2023, whilst also expanding Discoveries on Your Doorstep to the Long Preston Floodplain and surrounding settlements.

### How the project is governed

The project is governed by a steering group, whereby the project officer feeds back progress and future plans to the group, who then provide guidance and advice and it allows the project officer to draw upon the groups’ diverse range of knowledge and experience to move the project forward. The current steering group for the project includes representatives from NYCC Public Health, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, North Yorkshire & York Local Nature Partnership, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and a recent invitation to become part of the steering group has been extended to North Yorkshire Sport who have accepted.



# Patterns and trends of physical activity and walking

## Children and adults

### Physical activity – Adults

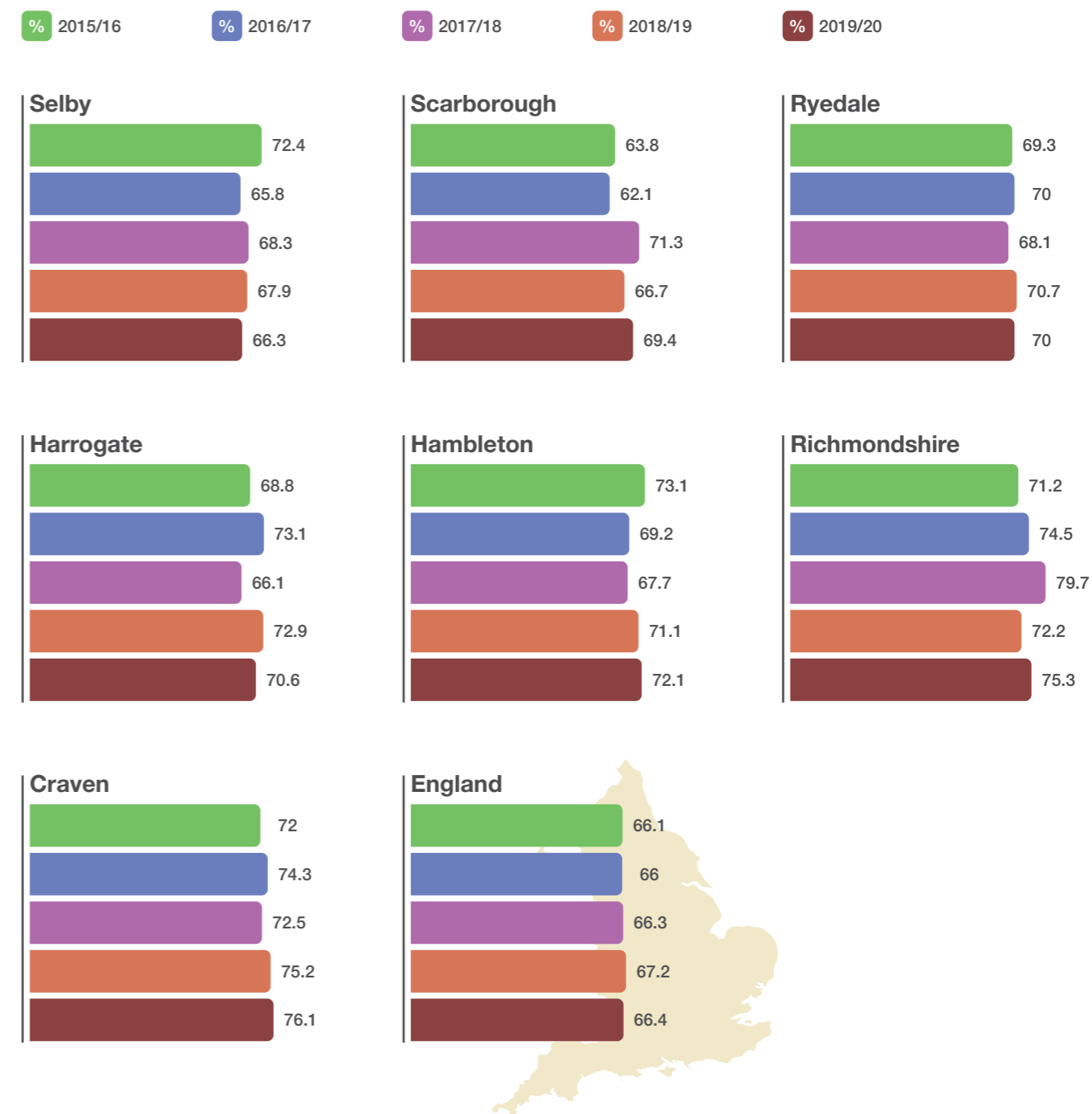
The Active Lives Adult Survey ([www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives](http://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives)) looks at the number of adults aged 19 and over that are physically active. 2019/20 data shows an England average of 66.4% physically active adults.

In North Yorkshire the proportion of adults who are physically active is reported as 70.9% in 2019/20, which is a slight increase from 70.7% in 2018/19 and is also statistically better than the England average (66.4%).

At a district level, 2019/20 data highlights Ryedale (70.0%), Scarborough (69.4%) and Selby (66.3%) as statistically similar to the England (66.4%) average. Craven (76.1%), Hambleton (72.1%), Harrogate (70.6) and Richmondshire (75.3%) are statistically significantly better than England.

The number of respondents aged 19 and over, with valid responses to questions on physical activity, doing at least 150 moderate intensity equivalent (MIE) minutes physical activity per week in bouts of 10 minutes or more in the previous 28 days expressed as a percentage of the total number of respondents aged 19 and over.

The table below highlights physical activity levels in adults from the Active Lives Adult Survey for 2015/16 to 2019/20.



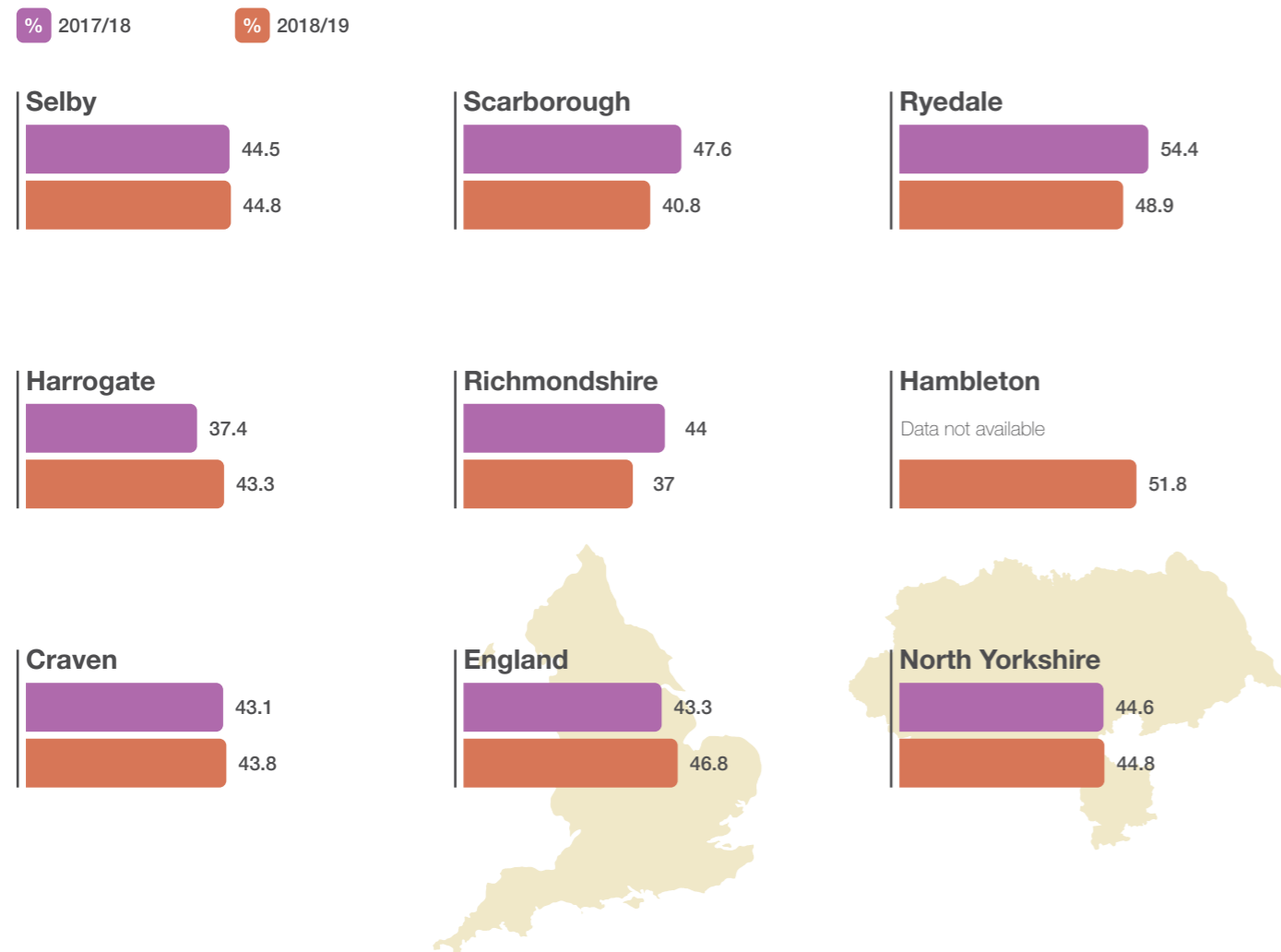
The annual Active Lives Children and Young People Survey looks at physical activity participation figures<sup>^</sup>. As a result of Covid-19 the survey data for 2019/20 was incomplete, due to schools being shut for much of the year and so the most recent data is from 2018/19. The 2018/19 data shows an England average of 46.8% physically active children and young people. [www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives](http://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives)

The proportion of children and young people in North Yorkshire who are physically active is reported as 44.8% in 2018/19, which is statistically similar to the England average.

At a district level, 2018/19 data highlights Craven (43.8%), Hambleton (51.8%), Harrogate (43.3%), Ryedale (57.9%), and Selby (44.8%) being statistically similar to the England (46.8%) average. Richmondshire (37.0%) and Scarborough (40.8%) are statistically significantly worse than England.

<sup>^</sup> Percentage of children aged 5-16 that meet the UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs') recommendations for physical activity (an average of at least 60 minutes moderate-vigorous intensity activity per day across the week).  
Source: PHE (based on Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, Sport England).

**The table below shows the percentage of physically active levels in children and young people from the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey for 2017/18 and 2018/19.**



**Walking for travel – Adults**

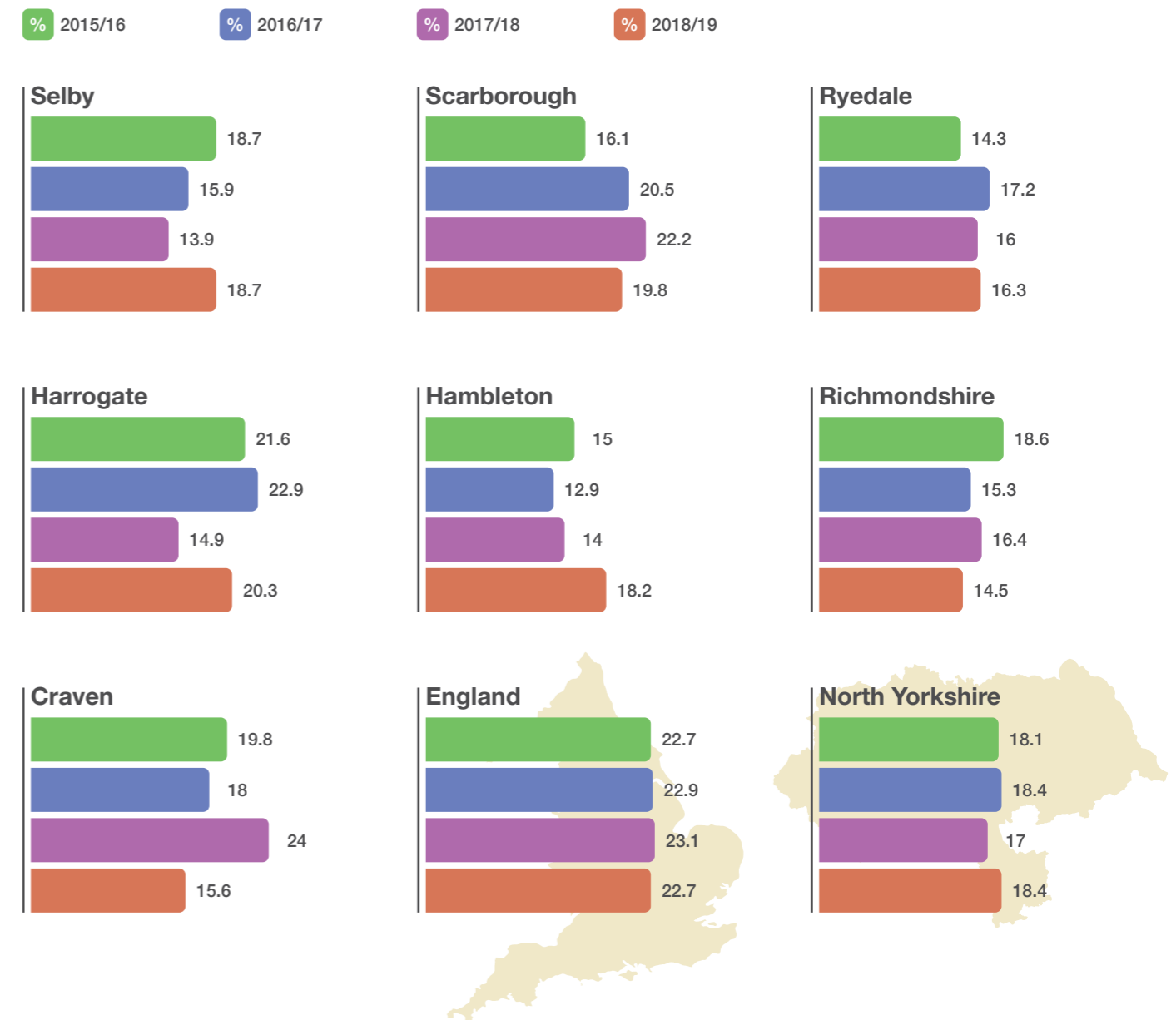
The Active Lives Adult Survey ([www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives](http://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives)) looks at the number of adults aged 19 and over that walk for travel at least three days per week. 2018/19 data shows an England average of 22.7% of adults that walk for travel at least three days per week.

In North Yorkshire the proportion of adults walking for travel at least three days per week was

reported as 18.4% in 2018/19, which is statistically worse than the England average (22.7%).

At a district level, 2018/19 data highlights Hambleton (18.2%), Harrogate (20.3%), Scarborough (19.8%) and Selby (18.7%) as statistically similar to the England average (22.7%). Craven (15.6%), Richmondshire (14.5%) and Ryedale (16.3%) are statistically significantly worse.

**The table below highlights the proportion of adults walking for travel for at least three days per week from the Active Lives Adult Survey for 2015/16 to 2018/19.**



## Discoveries on Your Doorstep footfall counters

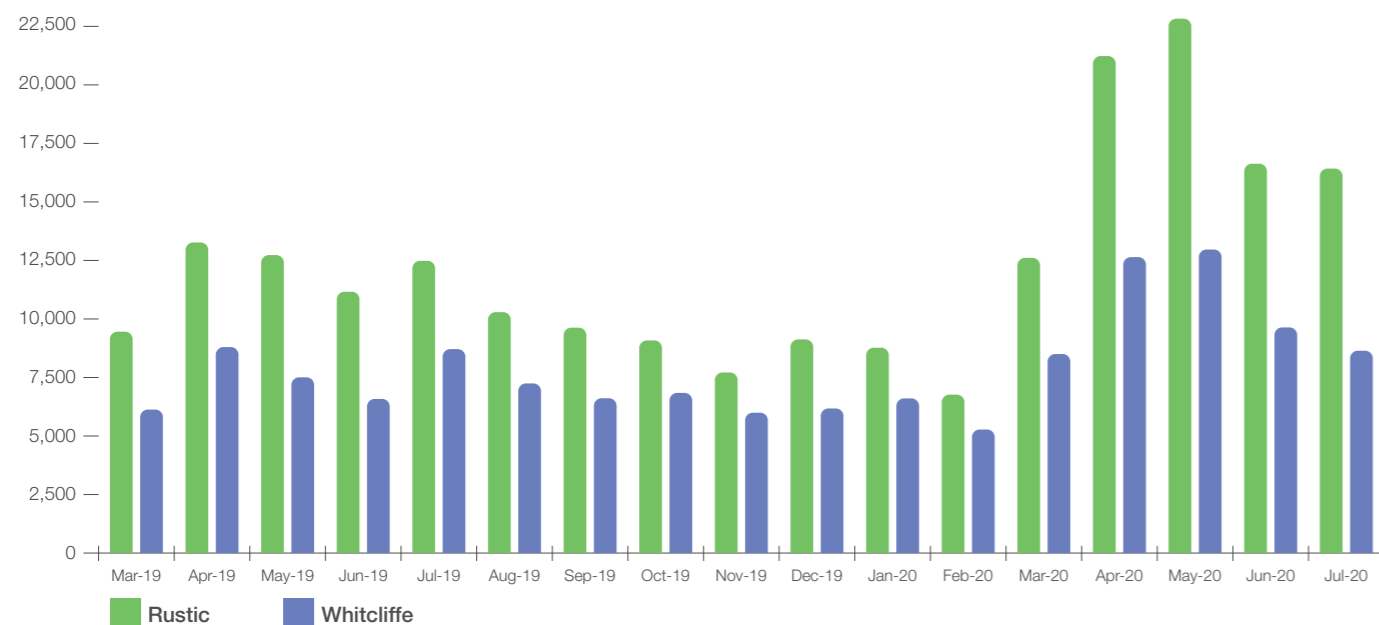
Previously footfall counters have been used to track the impact of the project, by comparing levels of activity to a pre-recorded baseline period. This data has previously been the most valuable form of insight into the impact of the project, however, over the last year the footfall data has been inaccessible.

The footfall counters and their data were previously managed and collected by an external company but the company has now ceased to operate. Since this point, the data has not been collected but below are some examples of the way the data was used previously. Plans are however underway to regain access to these footfall counters and begin utilising the data to once again provide evidence for the impact of Discoveries on Your Doorstep.

### Ripon

#### Rustic/Whitcliffe

The graph below highlights the number of counts per calendar month for each of the two footfall counters in Ripon

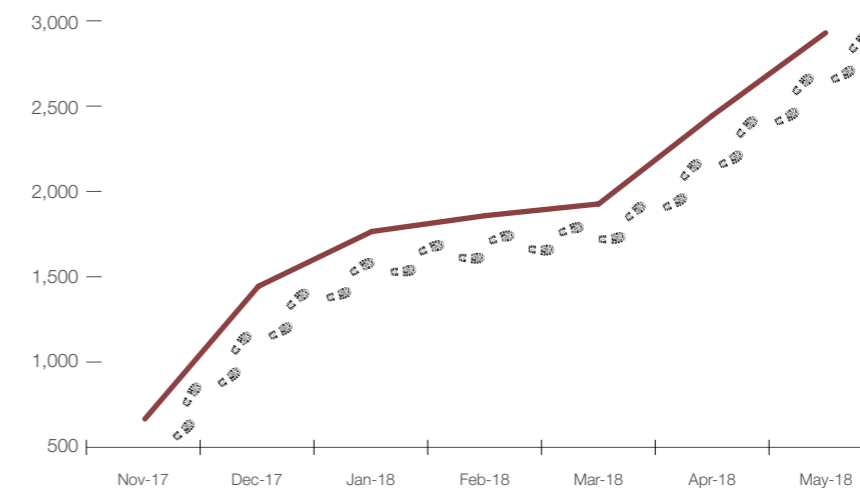


As you can see, a year after Discoveries on Your Doorstep was introduced to Ripon the amount of footfall along the two routes increased drastically. However, it's possible that this rise in footfall could be attributed to Covid-19 restrictions which limited people to very few choices of physical activity. It would be interesting to see whether this level of footfall was sustained after restrictions ended, which will hopefully be possible upon regaining access to the footfall counter data.

### Scarborough

#### The Dell - Eastfield

The graph below highlights the number of counts per calendar month for the footfall counter at the Dell, Eastfield.



#### The Cinder Track

The graph below highlights the number of counts per calendar month for the footfall counter at The Cinder Track.



### Selby

Unfortunately the historic footfall data for the Selby trails is not accessible, but written reports conclude that it followed a similar pattern to the tracks in Scarborough.

# Key project updates

## Ramblers Wellbeing Super Partner Offer

A partnership between North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Sport and The Ramblers was established to provide volunteer led group walks across North Yorkshire, under the premise of Ramblers Wellbeing walks, which are developed to be accessible to people who have done little or no exercise before, or who may need more support to stay active than they have in the past. Following the establishment of the partnership, utilisation of public health links have been helped to facilitate conversations with partners and service providers i.e. Adult Weight Management and North Yorkshire Horizons to explore creation of new walking groups in districts where there currently are not any Ramblers Wellbeing walking groups (Harrogate, Ryedale, Scarborough & Selby) or to encourage referral into said groups.

The Ramblers are a charity whose goal is “to protect the ability of people to enjoy the sense of freedom and benefits that come from being outdoors on foot by protecting and expanding where people walk and by promoting walking”. They successfully ran a previous initiative called Ramblers Walking for Health for over a decade but due to a change in funding requirements have rebranded to “Ramblers Wellbeing Walks”. This rebrand requires organisations to pay a yearly fee and in return Ramblers deliver strategic guidance for the overall programme and provide support and resources such as training, insurance, and national promotion.

**Lucy Psarias Active Communities Manager for North Yorkshire Sport** - North Yorkshire Sport aims to promote and encourage increased participation in Sport & Active Recreation, whether as a participant, volunteer or coach, supporting the sports infrastructure whilst creating meaningful and lasting partnerships with a range of key partners interested in sport and the health & wellbeing of North Yorkshire residents.

The Ramblers Wellbeing Walking project looks to support existing NY Walking for Health groups and encourage new Wellbeing Walks groups. This combines the benefits of a localised, community-based approach through Wellbeing Walk groups, with background support of regional partners (NYCC, NY Sport), and specific walk related support from The Ramblers. Together, this has allowed the sharing of local, County and national expertise, contacts and resources.

The Ramblers Wellbeing Walks project is important as it aims to increase numbers of individuals accessing Wellbeing Walks across the County area with a focus on identified targeted groups. Additionally, it assists to upskill the workforce, helping to increase the number of Wellbeing Walk volunteers leading on physical activity providing opportunities for individuals to access valuable training events.

## Long Preston Deeper Connections

The DOYD project supported a successful bid for round 2 of the Government’s Green Recovery Challenge Fund through Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. The wider bid known as “Long Preston Deeper Connections” aims to create and restore 10 hectares of habitat and help connect 8000 people to nature. The bid included an extension of Discoveries on Your Doorstep from 3 days per week to 5 days per week, with the 2 extra days dedicated solely to the Craven area surrounding the Long Preston floodplain, helping to support the surrounding population to access the underutilised floodplain for the benefits that accessing nature has for physical and mental health and wellbeing but also the affect that positive exposure to nature has on future Pro-Environmental behaviour.



## Website Review

Historically the project work under the term “Discoveries on Your Doorstep” was somewhat segregated and was known separately as Scarborough Trails and Selby Trails, with the website also being structured in this way and each location having a separate website. Given that Ripon had since been added to the project, this no longer made sense and equally the steering group felt that having them separate on the website hindered the branding of Discoveries on Your Doorstep and anecdotally people had mentioned being confused as to who was responsible for the trails. Following consultation with the steering group, new plans for the website were submitted to the North Yorkshire County Council Web Design team and the work is ongoing. The vision for the website is for the focus to be on the project as a whole, as opposed to appearing as separate projects, and equally for all the information to be concise and easily accessible, whereas previously it did not feel easy enough to navigate.

## Route checks

It had been recognised that some of the Discoveries on Your Doorstep routes may no longer be fit for purpose, due to either dated instructions or physical issues with routes, such as missing way markers. So, a key priority for the project was to have all of the routes checked to identify any potential issues and work to address them, as the last thing wanted was for someone to have a negative experience of walking outdoors due to poor condition of a route or poor instructions. Whilst the original plan was to keep the route checking within the project, Covid-19 restrictions delayed the start of the checking and with the Discoveries on Your Doorstep project officer only being part time, additional support was sought to speed up the process. Contact was made with the North Yorkshire County Council Countryside Access volunteers who have been instrumental in helping get the routes checked and have provided lots of feedback to ensure all the routes and their instructions are easy to follow. Any areas for improvement that have been identified by both the project officer and the Countryside volunteers are now being addressed.



## Creating new connections and links

A key consideration for Discoveries on Your Doorstep, as mentioned previously, is how to help as many people as possible have positive outdoor experiences, one of the positives of the project is its flexibility and the ability to explore new ideas and ways for the project to appeal to more people.

Over recent months a number of new connections have been made. Some examples include:

- Connecting with North Yorkshire Horizons, where there is potential to work with their community volunteers in the future to support adults during their recovery from drugs and alcohol.
- Connecting with North Yorkshire libraries where there is potential in the future to utilise their archives to develop historical and educational walks.

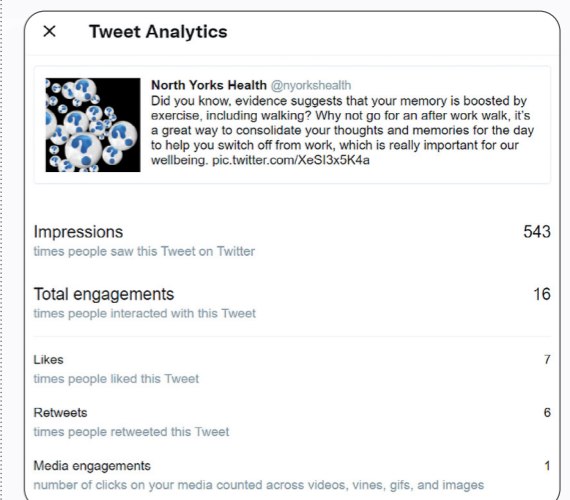
These are just some of the key examples of new connections, and whilst not all the links have led to any immediate plans, they are all incredibly useful nonetheless, as the links are now there and allow for the project to be flexible in the way it supports different populations and communities to be active outdoors.

## Communications

The project is part of the Public Health communications group and plan. The group is made up of the Public Health Officers and an overseeing manager, and each officer is responsible for promoting Public Health Campaigns related to their portfolio of work, primarily through the shared Public Health Twitter account @NorthYorksHealth but also through other avenues when deemed appropriate, i.e. Director of Public Health Blogs, Radio, press releases etc. The premise of the Twitter account is to inform and advise partners and stakeholders about relevant campaigns to then share with their networks, as opposed to being targeted directly at the general public.

Some key updates for the involvement of Discoveries on Your Doorstep in the communications group were supporting a press release on Discoveries on Your Doorstep in February 2021, including going on BBC Radio York to discuss the plans for the project. As well as promoting a number of national campaigns through the NorthYorksHealth Twitter account related to outdoor physical activity, such as Living Streets Walking Month, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Great Yorkshire Creature Count, Clean Air Day and Cycle to Work Day.

Below are some screenshots of the types of tweets created for the campaigns mentioned above, as well as analytics for the tweets.





# Works in progress

## Eastfield Regeneration PACT

Currently Discoveries on Your Doorstep is involved with the Aspirations group of the Eastfield Regeneration PACT, as well as a physical activity subgroup. Discussions within these groups have enabled the exploration of how Discoveries on Your Doorstep can support the Eastfield area from a physical activity perspective. As mentioned previously, a key priority of Discoveries on Your Doorstep is to help ensure that people have positive experiences of being active outdoors, and currently there has been a littering issue particularly around the Dell, which is the local nature reserve. The groups have been having conversations to address the littering issue, to help ensure people have positive experiences outdoors. Engagement with North Yorkshire Police and utilisation of links with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust have created the opportunity to look at possible solutions. One solution currently being looked at

in collaboration with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is the installation of an interpretation board using Source-to-sea messaging, to help raise awareness of how litter ends up in oceans, as well as detailing local history of the reserve to raise awareness of why it is important to improve and protect it. There is also vested interest in co-ordinating local litter picking groups that are currently working in silo.

Additionally, the PACT group are really keen to work with Discoveries on Your Doorstep to develop some more walking routes through The Dell. Currently, there are two existing routes that go through the Dell but work is underway to identify additional routes that highlight local points of interest to give a wider variety of routes that can be promoted. Additional routes will hopefully appeal to as many people as possible and help make the Dell and surrounding area a desirable place to be active.



## Disability forums

After initially being contacted with a query in relation to accessibility of the Discoveries on Your Doorstep routes, it became apparent that there was limited information to answer the query with, because it seemed that disabled access wasn't something that had previously been looked at for the routes. This led to further conversations with one of the NYCC Participation and Engagement Officers as to how access for people with disabilities within Discoveries on Your Doorstep could be improved. Going forward the project is seeking to be involved with the disability forums in each locality where Discoveries on Your Doorstep focuses. This is to ensure that the correct information is provided and there is consideration for the most appropriate ways to make the routes as accessible as possible for people with disabilities.

## Selby High School Park and Stride

In addition to the direct Discoveries on Your Doorstep work, work on a Selby High School Park and Stride will be re-mobilised, which had been on hold due to the pandemic. Whilst it was not originally direct Discoveries on Your Doorstep work, it is within the shared Selby focus area and is very similar in nature of work as to where it fits within the Public Health agenda.



## Challenges faced

Despite the progress that has been made within the project, it has not been without certain challenges, which is part and parcel of any project. However, it is important to identify and highlight the key challenges, to help make changes to address them and ensure the project keeps moving forward in the desired way:

### Footfall counters

Previously, footfall counters had been present at all three of the locations of Discoveries on Your Doorstep, which are Scarborough, Selby and Ripon. Unfortunately the Scarborough footfall counter was vandalised and then taken so is no longer in action. Additionally, the footfall data for the all of the footfall counters had previously been collected and managed by an external solo person company, but unfortunately the company has ceased to exist and so far the data has been inaccessible ever since. As a result, there is limited ability to quantitatively demonstrate the effect that the project has on people's outdoor physical activity habits. However, work is currently underway to regain access to the counters.

### Covid-19

As with everything, Covid-19 has been a challenge for the project. It has not been as limiting as other areas of work, due to the fact the project is about outdoor activity in people's local area, which has been the recommended form of physical activity throughout many periods of the pandemic. However, the way it has sometimes challenged the project is by some partners, organisations or community groups working at a reduced capacity during lockdowns either due to increased workload in other areas or due to not being able to carry out usual work, which sometimes delayed the progress of the project or forced a re-think in its approach.

# Discoveries on Your Doorstep

## “The Bigger Picture”

Despite the specific project title and original scope of encouraging physical activity outdoors by helping people “discover what is on their doorstep”, the project actually both inadvertently and advertently feeds into a number of other key objectives and agendas within North Yorkshire. It feeds into work on climate change by encouraging and promoting active travel, as well as supporting habitat recovery and raising awareness of key environmental issues i.e. littering and pollution.

The project also supports achievement of aspirations for culture in North Yorkshire, linking with many cultural development projects within North Yorkshire locality areas. There is scope to support local regeneration, through employability opportunities and maintaining a healthy workforce and linking with Community Infrastructure Levy, High Street Recovery Fund, and Coastal Community Fund projects, for example.

Also, the Local Government Reorganisation that is taking place in North Yorkshire provides the opportunity to link with some key transitional and transformational work streams, including culture, leisure and sport, planning, economic development, highways and street scene.

The project has been and continues to be flexible and adaptable to suit the needs of communities across North Yorkshire, its future is very exciting and we look forward to sharing more in the next annual report.

## Next steps

Review footfall counter situation and potentially plan implementation of new footfall counters

Liaise with disability forums to help inform future work

Work with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Eastfield Regeneration PACT to address litter issues

Begin work for Long Preston Deeper Connections, which involves engaging with schools to look into rolling out Green Miles Active Travel scheme and working with local groups to improve access to the floodplain

Re-start Selby High Park and Stride task and finish group and begin implementation of the park and stride

Create new Discoveries on Your Doorstep walking route in Eastfield and explore other routes elsewhere

## Contact us

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