

**Sports Participation & Football Support**  
**with special reference to Stoke-on-Trent and**  
**Port Vale FC**



A brief analysis based on data extracted from Sport England's website [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org) carried out

by

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August 2014

## General information, Sport England

Sport England carries out regular surveys of the number of people actively participating in sports, which may not necessarily be the same as people supporting a particular team such as a football team by being a 'fan' of the team. However, it may be reasonable to assume that people who **play** football regularly also do have an interest in watching football being played. The following general information relates to the national picture except for figure 4, 5 and table 5, which shows participation rates within the area of the City of Stoke-on-Trent and the area around Vale Park.

Activity rates here refer to: "The percentage of the adult population (aged 16 and over) who participate in sport and active recreation, at moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes on at least 12 days out of the last 4 weeks (equivalent to 30 minutes on at least 3 days a week). This includes light intensity activities (bowls, archery, croquet, yoga and pilates) for those aged 65 and over." (Source: Sport England)

**Table 1: Participation rates by activity**

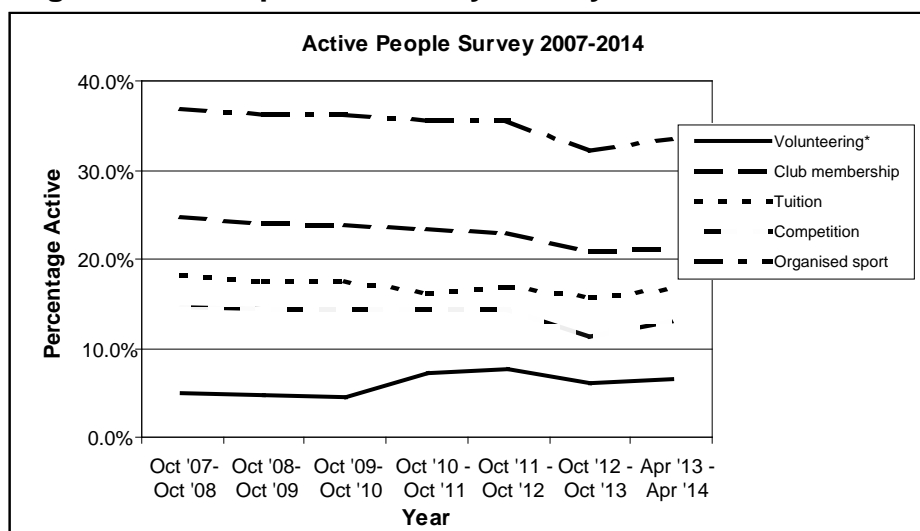
	Oct '07- Oct '08	Oct '08- Oct '09	Oct '09- Oct '10	Oct '10 - Oct '11	Oct '11 - Oct '12	Oct '12 - Oct '13	Apr '13 - Apr '14	Statistically significant change from 2007/8**
Volunteering*	4.9%	4.7%	4.5%	7.3%	7.6%	6.0%	6.6%	Increase
Club membership	24.7%	24.1%	23.9%	23.3%	22.8%	21.0%	21.2%	Decrease
Tuition	18.1%	17.5%	17.5%	16.2%	16.8%	15.8%	16.6%	Decrease
Competition	14.6%	14.4%	14.4%	14.3%	14.4%	11.2%	13.0%	Decrease
Organised sport	37.0%	36.1%	36.3%	35.5%	35.4%	32.2%	33.6%	Decrease
Satisfaction*	66.6%	68.4%	69.0%	-	-	60.3%	60.3%	Decrease

\*In these areas there have been changes to methodology. \*\* Comments as quoted from Sport England's website

Source: Sport England, Active People Survey

It is seen from table 1 above and figure 1 below that the rates of participation in most areas of sporting activities has fallen. This applies especially to 'club membership' and 'organised sport' and shows what challenges clubs such as Port Vale FC are faced with when they strive to maintain their support among the general population.

**Figure 1: Participation rates by activity**



Source: Derived from table 1.

The picture becomes more complicated when looking at these same trends by area. Table 4 and figure 3 below show the trends within some selected areas, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and some neighbouring area.

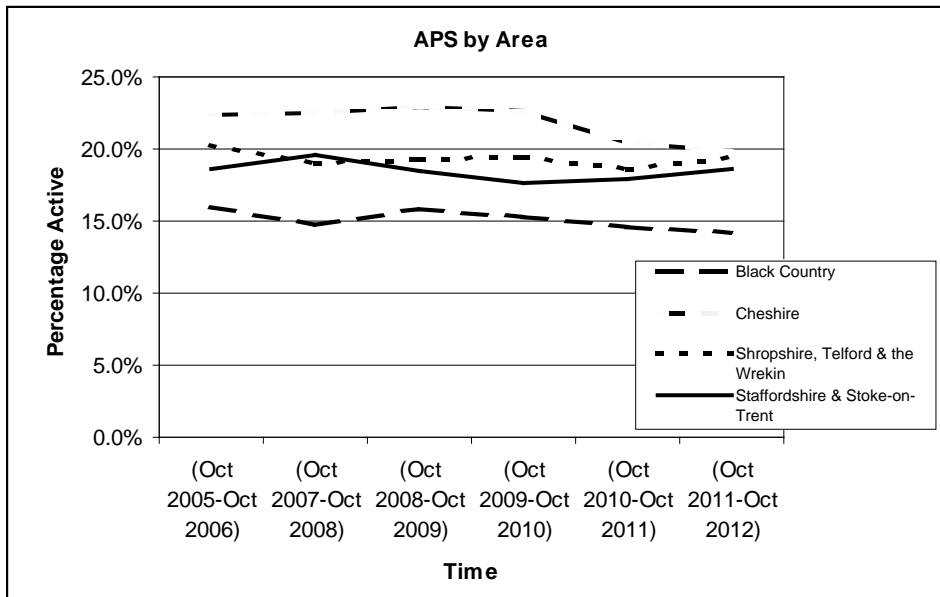
**Table 4: Participation rates by area**

	Birmingham	Black Country	Cheshire	Derbyshire	Greater Manchester	Shropshire, Telford & the Wrekin	Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent
(Oct 2005-Oct 2006)	16.9%	16.0%	22.4%	18.9%	18.9%	20.2%	18.6%
(Oct 2007-Oct 2008)	16.6%	14.7%	22.5%	19.1%	18.9%	19.0%	19.6%
(Oct 2008-Oct 2009)	15.8%	15.8%	22.9%	19.1%	18.5%	19.3%	18.5%
(Oct 2009-Oct 2010)	17.2%	15.3%	22.7%	18.6%	18.3%	19.4%	17.7%
(Oct 2010-Oct 2011)	16.7%	14.6%	20.5%	18.1%	18.2%	18.6%	17.9%
(Oct 2011-Oct 2012)	21.4%	14.1%	19.8%	19.5%	17.8%	19.4%	18.6%
Change from 2005	Increase	Decrease	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Decrease	No change

Source: Sport England's Active People Survey.

In 2005-2006 the urban areas of Birmingham and the Black Country had the lowest participation rates. By 2011-2012 the Black Country and Greater Manchester had the lowest rates. During the period Birmingham experienced a significant increase in sports participation and by 2011-2012 it had the highest rates. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent experienced no change.

**Figure 3: Participation rates by area**



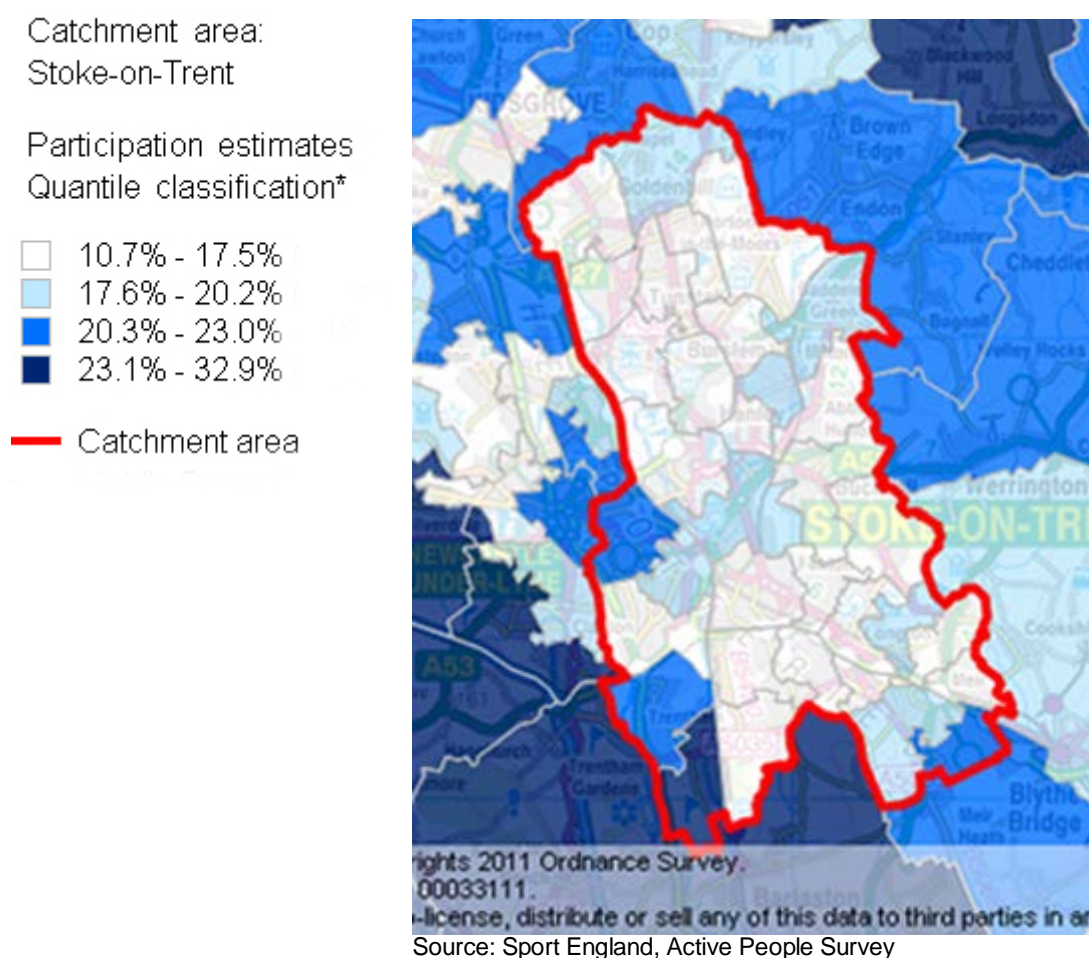
Source: Derived from table 2.

Figure 4 below gives a geographic depiction of participation rates throughout the City of Stoke-on-Trent and beyond. What is remarkable is that it appears to show that participation rates are lower within the City (the white and light blue areas) than outside (darker blue) even though the opportunities for sports participation most likely are greater within the city than outside. In the experience of the writer the universal picture appears similar to this: low rates of participation near urban centres, higher rates further away. There could be many reasons for this:

- An ageing population in urban areas
- A less wealthy population who cannot afford to use the facilities available
- Lower awareness of the benefits of participating
- An attitude within the urban population that suggests: “This is not for us!”

These factors will also influence how a club such as Port Vale sits within the community.

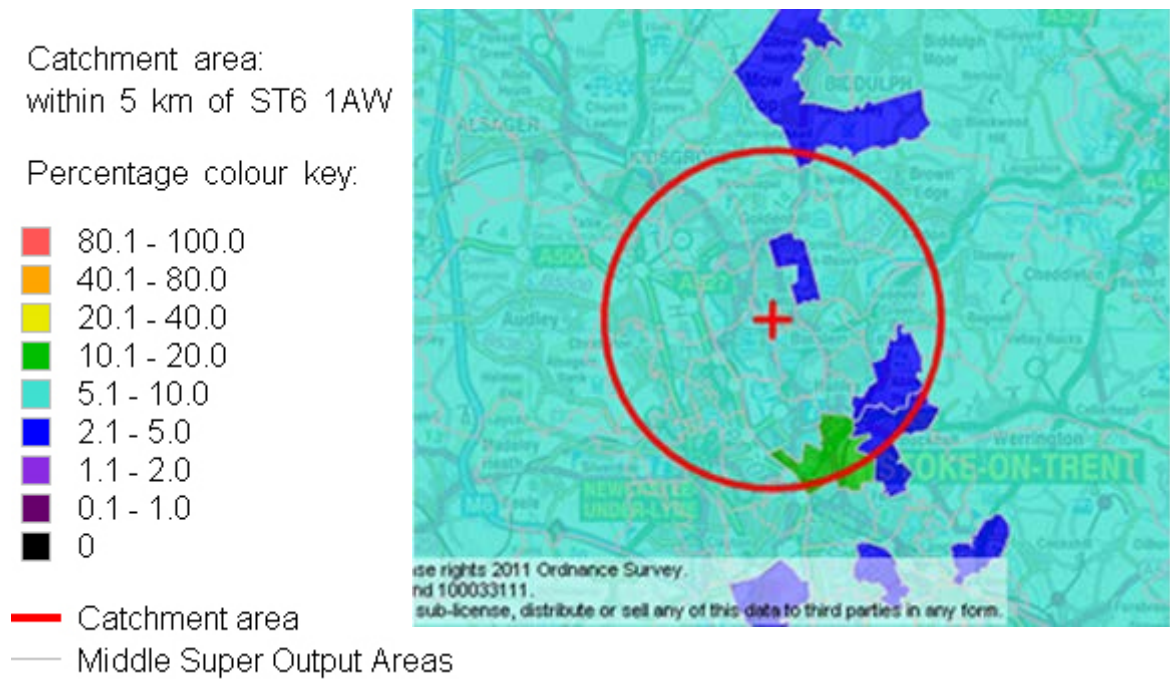
**Figure 4: Participation rates 2008-2010, Stoke-Trent**



Three years ago Ipsos MORI (2011) carried out a survey of people's satisfaction with their sporting experience between 2009 and 2011. The survey analysed satisfaction levels across 46 sports, considering whether satisfaction is driven mostly by provision, such as the quality of facilities, or by more personal factors. The survey looks at three different types of people in sport: general participants, club members and the talent pool. The study also includes a survey of those who no longer play sport, or who now take part less often, analysing their reasons for dropping out.

For football the survey showed a fall in overall satisfaction from a score of 78.2 in 2009 to 77.4 in 2011 (details of the survey's methodology is available on [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)). Club member satisfaction fell from a score of 77.2 in 2009 to 74.6 in 2011 while the satisfaction of the so-called talent pool (members of a sport's talent pool, defined by the sport within their four year plan submission to Sport England) rose from 84.8 (2009) to 88.6 (2011).

**Figure 5: Participation rates within 5 km of Vale Park**



The map shown in figure 8 is a geographical representation of participation rates in football downloaded from Sport England’s website. It includes the northern 1/3 of the Stoke-on-Trent City Council area and some neighbouring areas. The basic geographical unit is the so-called Middle Super Output Areas (MSOA) used in the 2001 Census and the 2011 Census. The said website will show the participation rate of each individual MSOA when the cursor is put on each. When the population of each MSOA is known we can then calculate the number of people participating in football. The calculation is shown in table 3 below.

**Table 5: No of people participating in football within 5 km radius of Vale Park**

<u>MSOA Code</u>	<u>MSOA Name</u>	<u>Participation rate</u>	<u>Population Aged 18+*)</u>	<u>No of participants</u>
E02006161	Newcastle-under-Lyme 004	6.2	5,597	347
E02006163	Newcastle-under-Lyme 006	6.0	6,150	369
E02006164	Newcastle-under-Lyme 007	6.2	5,676	352
E02006165	Newcastle-under-Lyme 008	6.9	5,912	408
E02006211	Staffordshire Moorlands 008	5.7	5,297	302
E02002951	Stoke-on-Trent 001	5.6	6,041	338
E02002952	Stoke-on-Trent 002	5.8	5,144	298
E02002953	Stoke-on-Trent 003	5.0	5,624	281
E02002954	Stoke-on-Trent 004	5.3	6,423	340
E02002955	Stoke-on-Trent 005	7.7	5,217	402
E02002956	Stoke-on-Trent 006	6.3	7,031	443
E02002958	Stoke-on-Trent 008	5.5	6,244	343
E02002959	Stoke-on-Trent 009	7.7	6,374	491
E02002961	Stoke-on-Trent 011	7.4	4,895	362
	Total		81,625	5,077

\*) derived from the 2011 Census

The result of the calculation shown in table 5 may be compared to the actual attendance by home supporters, bearing in mind that participation in football is not the same as supporting football. However, the average home attendance during the 2013/14 season was 5,200. The highest number was 8,140 at the match against Wolverhampton in August 2013. The lowest number was 2,209 against Bury the following month.

## **Appendix 1: Wards defining Port Vale FC's catchment area**

Without evidence as to where the fans come from it is impossible to delineate an actual catchment area for Port Vale FC and its home the Vale Park. However, it is suggested that perhaps there is an Inner Catchment area of 8 wards, all within the City Council area and grouped around Vale Park. In addition there may be an outer catchment area of 13 wards of which 5 are within the City Council area, 7 to the east within the neighbouring area of Newcastle-under-Lyme BC and 1 to the west within Staffordshire Moorlands DC. The names of the wards are listed below.

### **Inner Catchment:**

Bradeley & Chell Heath (SoT)  
Burslem Central (SoT)  
Burslem Park (SoT)  
FordGreen & Smallthorne (SoT)  
Little Chell & Stanfield (SoT)  
Moorcroft (SoT)  
Sneyd Green (SoT)  
Tunstall (SoT)

### **Outer Catchment:**

Baddeley, Milton & Norton (SoT)  
Birches Head & Central Forest Park (SoT)  
Bradwell (NuL)  
Brown Edge & Endon (Staffs Moors)  
Etruria & Hanley (SoT)  
Great Chell & Packmoor (SoT)  
Goldenhill & Sandyford (SoT)  
Kidsgrove (NuL)  
Newchapel (NuL)  
Porthill (NuL)  
Ravenscliffe (NuL)  
Talke (NuL)  
Wolstanton(NuL)

The wards within the Stoke-on-Trent area are shown in the map below in figure 4 with an arrow pointing to the location of Vale Park.





Source: SoT City Council website: [www.stoke.gov.uk](http://www.stoke.gov.uk).