Success story

In 2014, the National Programme for Prevention of Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases was established by the Council of Ministers. It is led by a national council comprising representatives of the nine ministries, the National Centre of Public Health and Analyses, the National Health Insurance Fund, the Bulgarian Medical Association and other stakeholders. There are two national coordinators and a coordinator for each risk factor, including physical activity. At local level, implementation is led by a municipal coordinator, with work groups and coalitions for health.
National recommendations on physical activity for health

**TARGET GROUPS INCLUDED**

- Children (<5 years)
- Children and adolescents (5-17 years)
- Adults (18-64 years)
- Older adults (> 65 years)
- Frail and very elderly adults (> 85 years)
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women
- People with disabilities
- People with chronic diseases

Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

**SECTORS WITH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS**

Levels of physical activity among adults are monitored in the national survey on risk factors for population health, on individually standardized questionnaires. The physical activity of children and adolescents is monitored in a national survey with questions adapted from the WHO Countrywide Integrated Noncommunicable Diseases Intervention (CINDI), ‘Healthy Children in Healthy Families, questionnaire.

**LEVEL OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

**ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS**

- **Children** 10–14 years: 33%
  - Boys: 42%
  - Girls: 24%
- **Adolescents** 15–19 years: 39%
  - Boys: 53%
  - Girls: 27%
- **Adults & older adults ≥ 20 years**: 26%
  - Women: 32%
  - Men: 21%
The National Strategy for Physical Education and Sports Development 2012–2022 was adopted by the National Assembly of Bulgaria in 2011. The aim of the Strategy is to emphasize the social function of physical education and sports in Bulgaria and the need for political, economic and social changes to improve uptake of physical activity. It addresses the principal stakeholders, including public authorities, local governments and public sports organizations.

The National Bulgarian Physical Activity and Recreation Programme was drafted by many experts, drawing on experience around the world. It includes a wide spectrum of international, national, local and community events and is designed for all age brackets, disabled people and socioeconomically disadvantaged people. The Bulgarian Sports for All Federation leads implementation of the Sports Clubs for Health Programme, with over 950 clubs using the guidelines.

Target groups addressed by national policies

- Low socioeconomic groups
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women
- Ethnic minorities
- People deprived of liberty
- Migrants
- **Oldest people**
- **People with disabilities**
- People with chronic diseases
Physical activity promotion in the health sector

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE TRAINED IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH

Medical doctors  
Nurses  
Physiotherapists  
Others

In Bulgaria, counselling on physical activity is offered as part of reimbursed primary health care services by general practitioners and specialists. The service was established in 2016, led by the Ministry of Health and funded by the National Health Insurance Fund.

Physical activity in schools

In primary and secondary schools, 3–3.5 h of physical education are mandatory. Optional modules for health-enhancing physical activity are included in the curricula followed by both primary and secondary physical education teachers.

Promotion of physical activity in the workplace

Schemes to promote active travel to work and physical activity at work are planned for the next 2 years.

National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

MEDIA USED IN NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Move means health – World day of physical activity is a national campaign established in 2002, run by the Ministry of Health and funded from regional and municipality budgets.