

Basingstoke and Deane is the UK's least likely area to swim

Friday 29 January, 2016

People in Basingstoke and Deane sank right to the bottom of an England league table of regular swimmers published by Diabetes UK.

The results, based on Sport England data¹ and released ahead of the charity's Swim22 challenge event, showed that just 4.75 per cent of adults in Basingstoke and Deane swim at least once a week which ranks Basingstoke and Deane at 160th place out of 160 in England.

How other Hampshire areas rated;

Rate SE Ranking England ranking

Eastleigh 5.79% 31 138 BOTTOM 20% IN ENGLAND

Test Valley 6.67% 22 95

Hart 7.08% 16 68

Portsmouth 7.44% 14 54

New Forest 7.87% 11 42

Out of 160 in England, Poole took the top spot with 12.1 per cent of people saying they swim once a week or more. Basingstoke and Deane came last, with just 4.75 per cent of people saying they swim weekly.

The data was released to encourage people to get in the pool for Swim22, which gives swimmers three months to swim 22 miles in their local pool, either by themselves or by splitting the distance with teammates.

The event will take place between 22 February and 22 May 2016.

Laura Crowe, Diabetes UK Fundraising Manager, said: "People in Basingstoke and Deane may not be keen on swimming yet, but this doesn't have to be bad news.

"We want these results to challenge everyone to have a go at swimming in their local pool – and the fact Swim22 runs for three months means there is plenty of time for solo swimmers or teams to cover the distance. Swimming is a great way to keep physically active, which alongside healthy eating, is really important for preventing Type 2 diabetes or helping manage diabetes if you already have it.

"Money raised through sponsorship will help Diabetes UK to fund research, campaign on key issues, and offer education and support to more of the 4 million people in the UK who are living with the condition."

Sir Steve Redgrave, who has Type 2 diabetes and is backing the event, says: "Swimming is a great way to stay fit and healthy, and Swim22 is a fantastic idea. Why not join the thousands of people who will be able to say they have swum the distance of the Channel, while raising money for a great cause?

"Whether you're still developing your stroke or an Olympian in the water, this challenge works for everybody. I am often asked by people for advice about living with diabetes and keeping healthy and active with events like this is a great way to start."

Sign up for Swim 22 now at www.diabetes.org.uk/swim22. There is no closing date, so you can sign up anytime so long as you complete the challenge by 22 May 2016.

– ENDS –

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