



**Active Lives Adult Survey
November 2021-22 Report**

Published April 2023

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Interpreting this report

We only highlight increases/decreases within this report where we're confident there are genuine differences. If the data is showing small differences which are within the margin of error, they're noted as 'no change'.

Key information

This report presents data from the Active Lives Adult Survey for the period mid-November 2021 to mid-November 2022. Data is presented for adults aged 16+ in England.

This report contains a full year of post-coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions.

Release dates

This release: 20 April 2023
Next release: 25 April 2024

Find out more

For more information on the data presented in this report, please visit the [Active Lives section](#) of our website.

Welcome



Covering the period from mid-November 2021 to mid-November 2022, this report provides an update on the sport and physical activity behaviours of adults (aged 16+) in England.

This is the first full year of data since November 2018-19 that had no interruptions due to Covid-19, and it shows a very welcome return to pre-pandemic activity levels for adults, as well as an overall increase of 1.5m active adults since the survey began in 2015.

However, while this overall number is positive, there are areas of concern where we will, working with partners, continue to focus our time, energy and investment.

Inactivity levels are still higher than before the pandemic, women's activity levels have recovered slower than men's and the long-term decline in young people's participation in sport and physical activity continues, despite a recovery in this period. We can also see the gap between most and least affluent continuing to grow and significant inequalities between the physical activity levels of some minority ethnic groups have widened.

But overall, this release is a story of recovery - demonstrating that overall attitudes to sport and physical activity remain robust. Recovering to the levels seen before Covid-19, despite the extraordinary disruption to people's lives and sporting habits, is hugely impressive and is in no small part down to the incredible hard work and dedication of tens of thousands of clubs, coaches and organisations up and down the country.

This report provides the headlines, with the opportunity to dig deeper into the results via links to the more [detailed data tables](#).

Alternatively, check out [Active Lives Online](#), which is updated shortly after each release, where you can explore trends over time, audiences not covered in this report and more specific activities and places.

Nick Pontefract, Chief Strategy Officer

This chapter presents information on three levels of activity:

- **Active**
(at least 150 minutes a week)
- **Fairly active**
(an average of 30-149 minutes a week)
- **Inactive**
(fewer than 30 minutes a week).

What do we mean by physical activity?



At least moderate intensity *

Bouts of **10 minutes** or more that add up to one of the three levels of activity

* Vigorous intensity counts as double

Note: we count most sport and physical activity, but exclude gardening. However, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) does include gardening in its local level physical activity data.

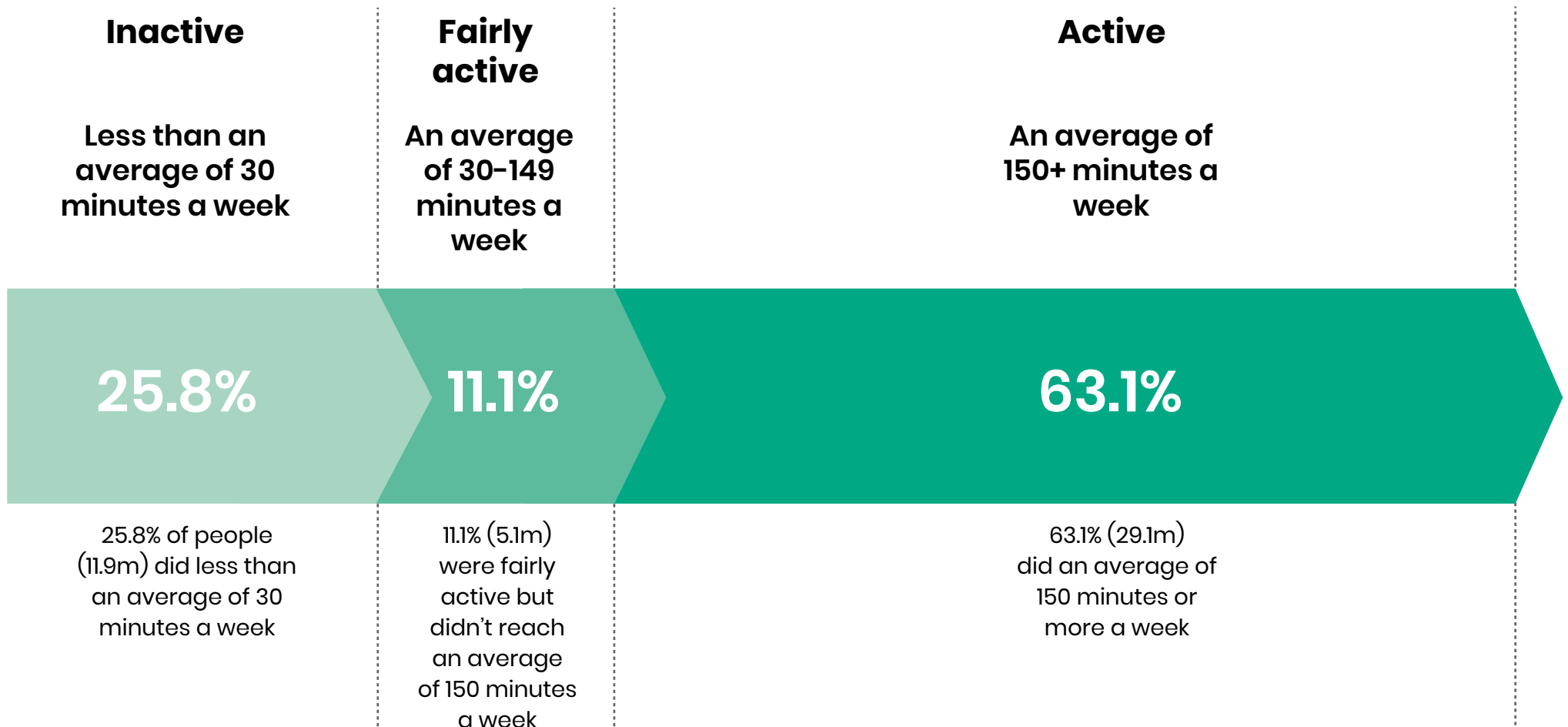
You can [view the OHID data here](#).

Levels of activity



Headlines

Our data shows that between mid-November 2021 and mid-November 2022, just over six in 10 adults (29.1 million) achieved 150+ minutes of activity a week.



[Link to data tables](#)

Levels of activity



Summary of change

Overall, activity levels have recovered following a period of falls resulting from the restrictions applied to everyday life during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

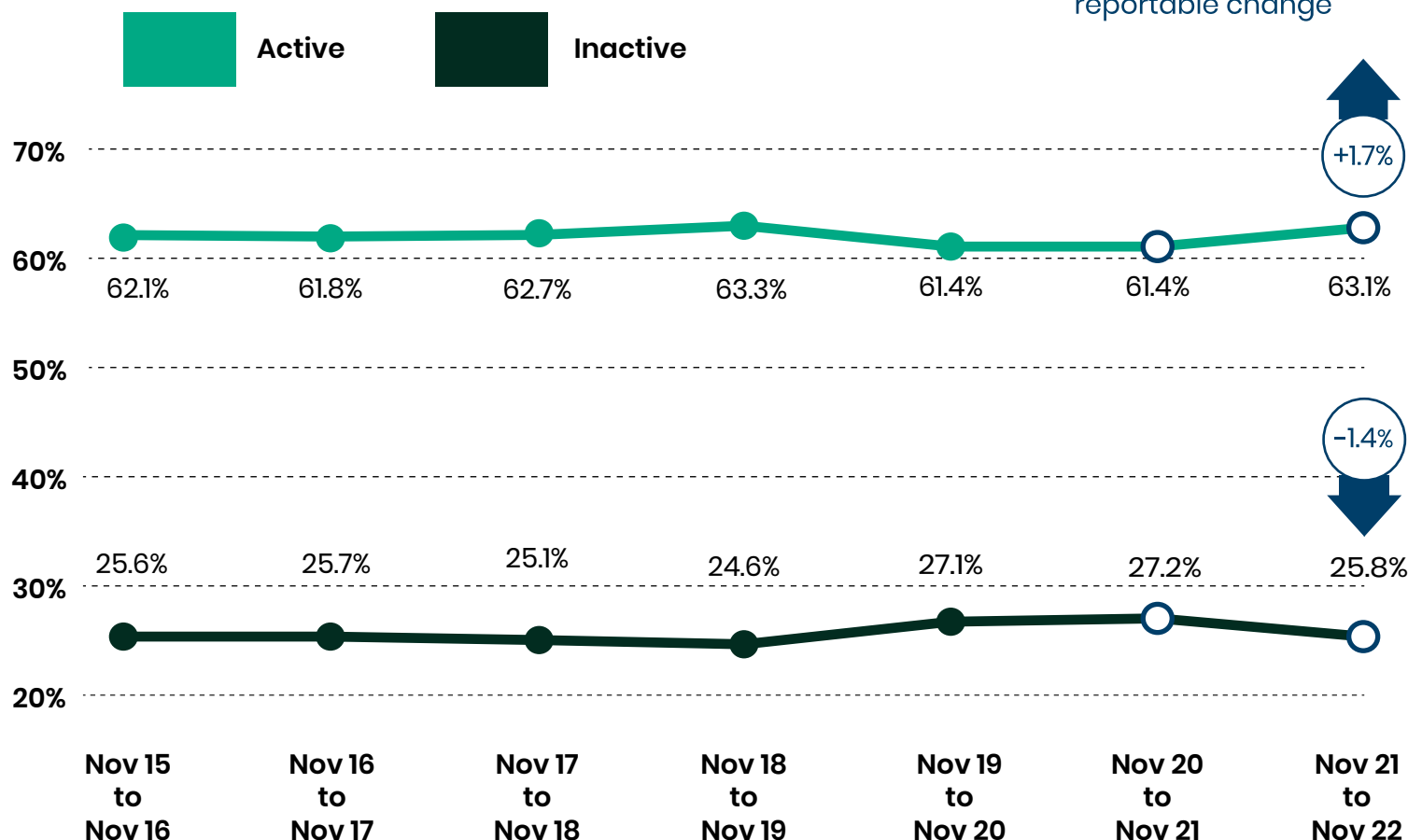
The proportion of active adults is back in line with levels seen pre-pandemic (Nov 18-19) and above those seen six years ago.

The proportion of inactive adults remains slightly up on pre-pandemic levels, with fewer adults being 'fairly active'.

Compared to six years ago (Nov 15-16) we see:

- 1.5m (+1.0%) more active adults
- no change in inactive adults.

All adults (aged 16+)



[Link to data tables](#)

For details on how we measure change, see the [notes](#) pages.

Levels of activity

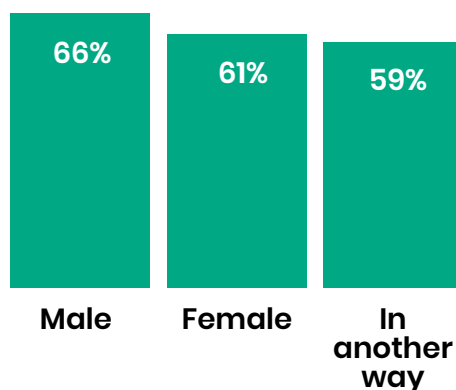


Summary of demographic differences

Our data shows there are significant inequalities:

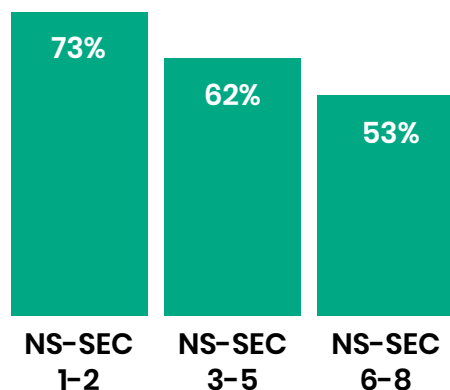
1 Gender

Men (66% or 14.7m) are more likely to be active than women (61% or 14.2m) and those who describe themselves in another way (59% or 0.2m).



2 Socio-economic groups

Those from lower social groups (NS-SEC 6-8*) are the least likely to be active (53%).



[Link to data tables](#)

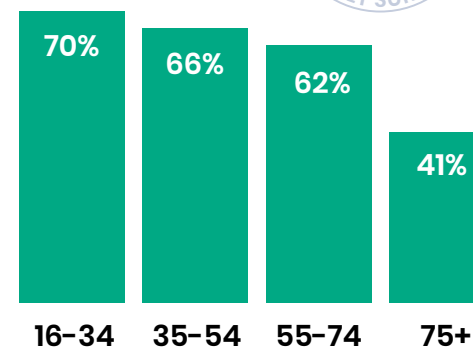


*See our [definitions](#) page for the full definition of each demographic group.

Active

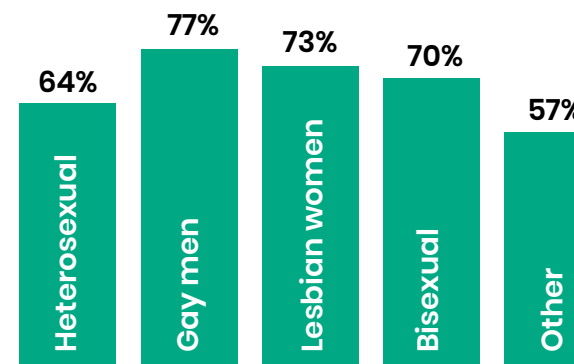
3 Age

Activity levels generally decrease with age, with the sharpest decrease coming at age 75+ (to 41%).



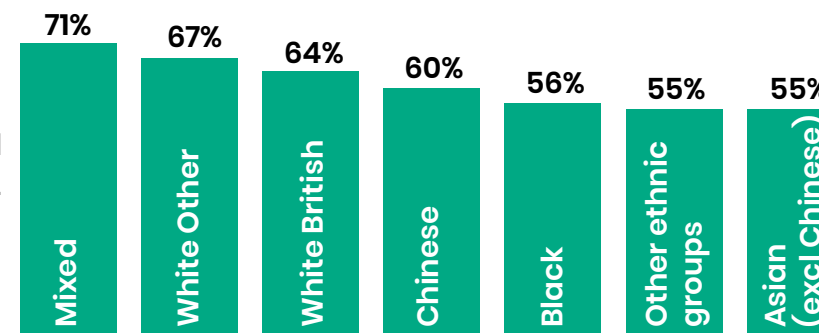
4 Sexual orientation

Gay men, lesbian women and bisexual adults are all more likely to be active than heterosexual adults.



5 Ethnicity

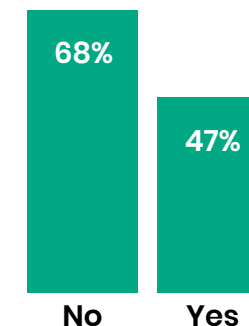
There are differences in activity levels based on ethnic background.



6

Disability and long-term health conditions

Activity is less common for adults with a disability or long-term health condition* (47%) than those without (68%).



Additional demographic breakdowns for faith, working status and education stage can be found in the data tables.

Activity levels among women are taking longer to fully recover

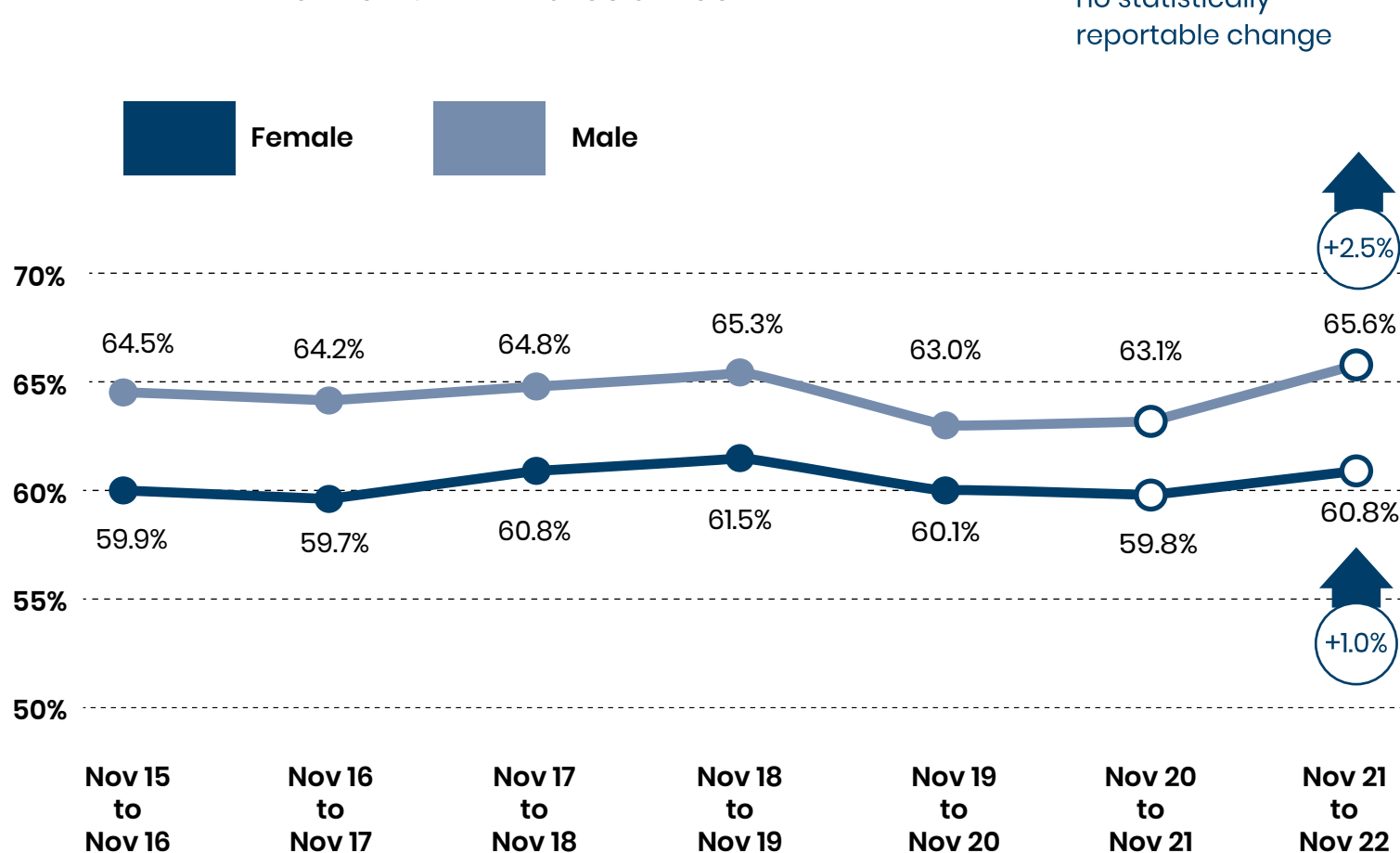
Both men and women saw a clear drop in activity levels during the pandemic but men saw slightly more pronounced changes.

While men's activity levels have returned to the highs seen in November 18-19, women's activity levels remain slightly below this (down 0.7%). Both, however, continue to see activity levels up over the longer term (since Nov 15-16).

Across mid-November 2021 to mid-November 2022:

- 65.6% (14.7m) of men were active
- 60.8% (14.2m) of women were active

Active: 150+ minutes a week



Note: Data on gender identification was collected on male, female, non-binary and prefer to self describe. Results for the latter categories are combined into 'in another way' for reporting and can be found in the data tables.

Over the longer term, activity levels have fallen among young adults

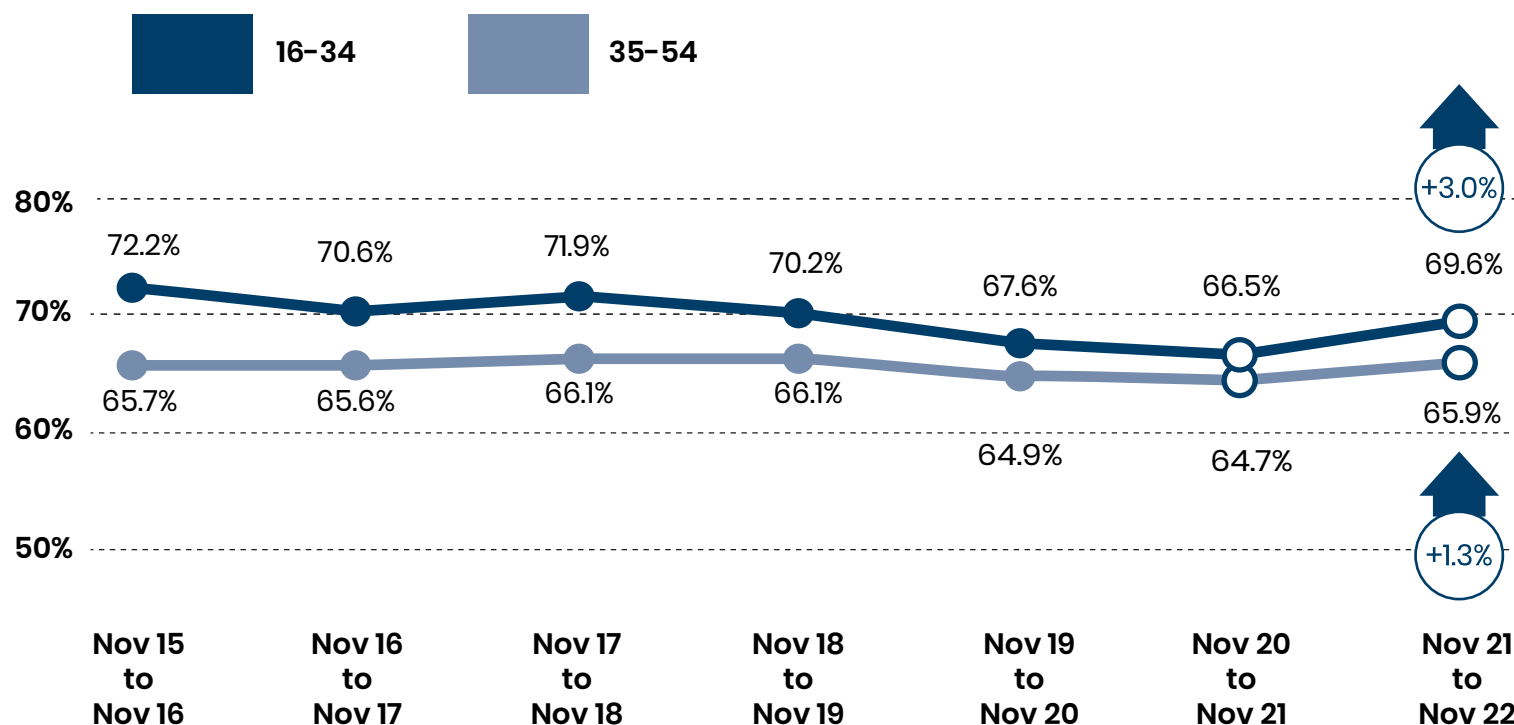
Among young people aged 16–34, activity levels were falling before the pandemic and this trend continues.

Despite some recovery from drops seen during the pandemic, there are now nearly half a million (2.7%) fewer active young people than six years ago (Nov 15–16).

Among the 35–54 age group, there is an underlying flat trend in activity levels disrupted only by drops during the pandemic period.

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Active: 150+ minutes a week

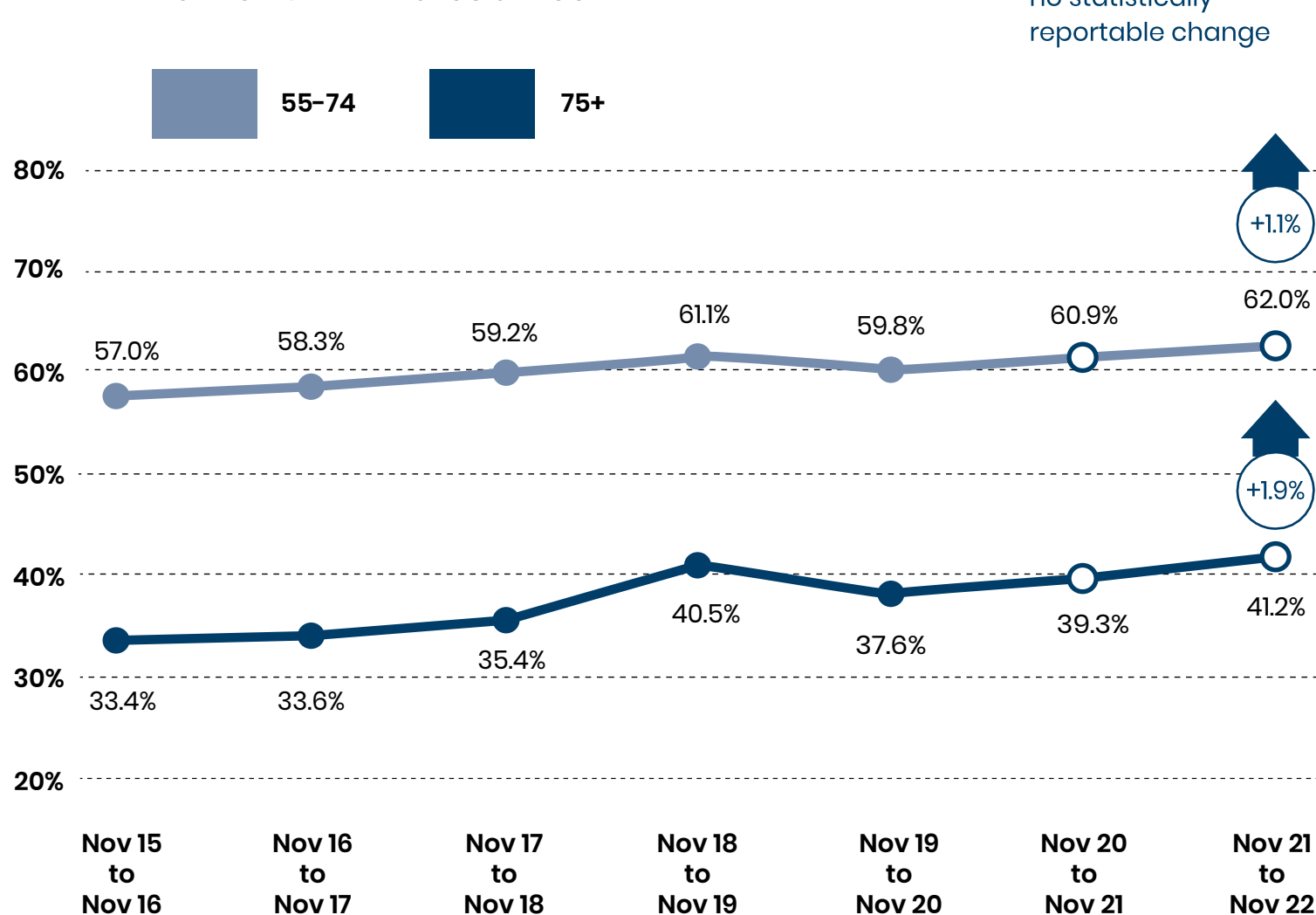


Activity levels continue to grow among older adults

Both 55-74-year-olds and those aged 75+ were seeing activity levels grow before the pandemic. This growth stalled during the pandemic but those aged 55-74 have now seen activity levels increase once more (up 0.9% from Nov 18-19), while those aged 75+ record their highest ever reported activity level.

Over the last six years, since November 2015-16, this represents 1.3m (5.0%) more active 55-74-year-olds and just over half a million (7.8%) more active people aged 75+.

Active: 150+ minutes a week



Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

[Link to data tables](#)

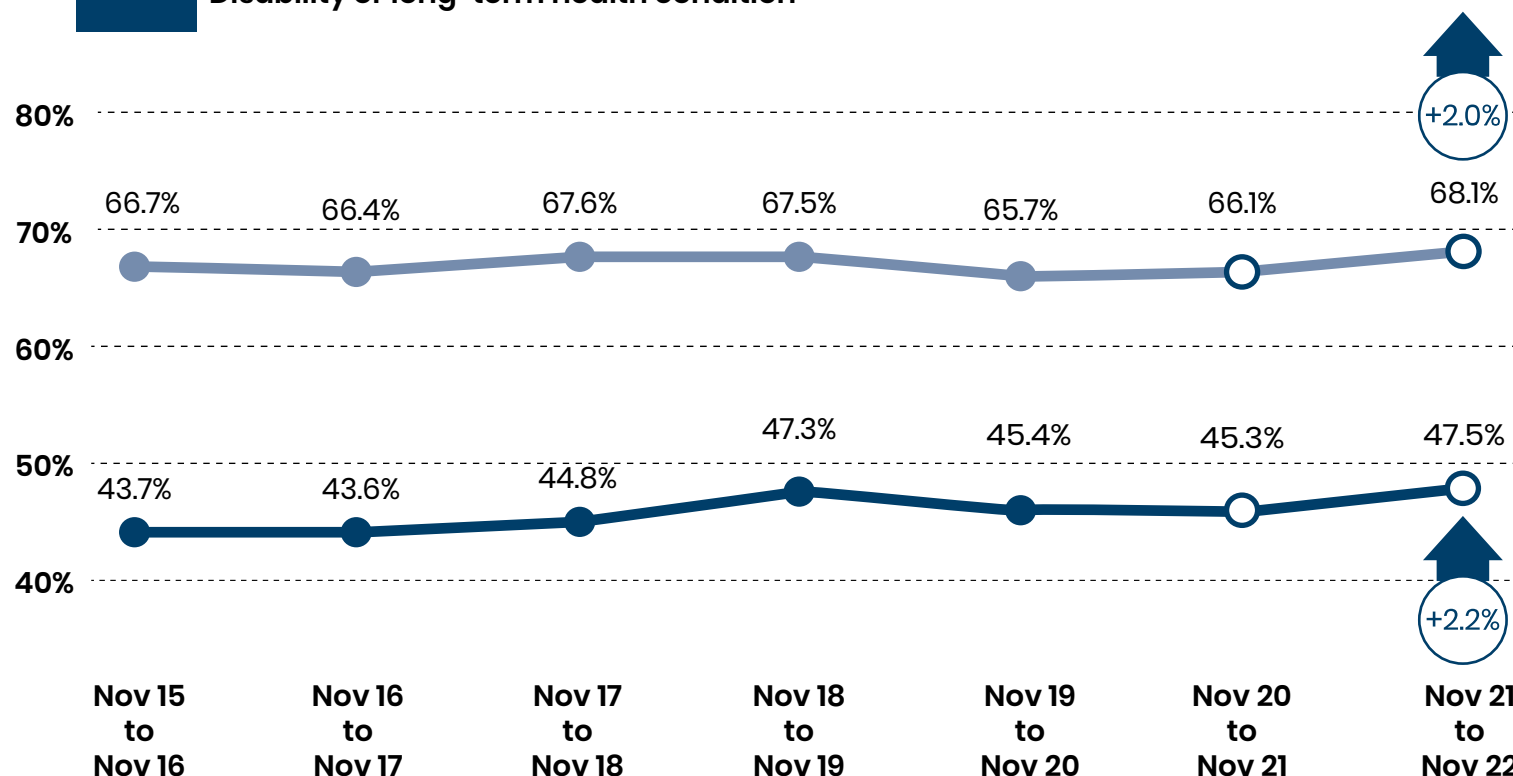
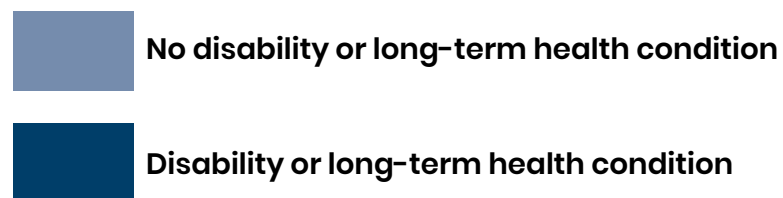


Adults with a disability or long-term health condition have seen activity levels recover

Both those with and without a disability or long-term health condition saw activity levels fall during the pandemic, however both groups have returned to November 18-19 levels.

As a result, there are now 3.8% more adults with a disability or long-term health condition who are active than in November 2015-16.

Active: 150+ minutes a week



Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

[Link to data tables](#)





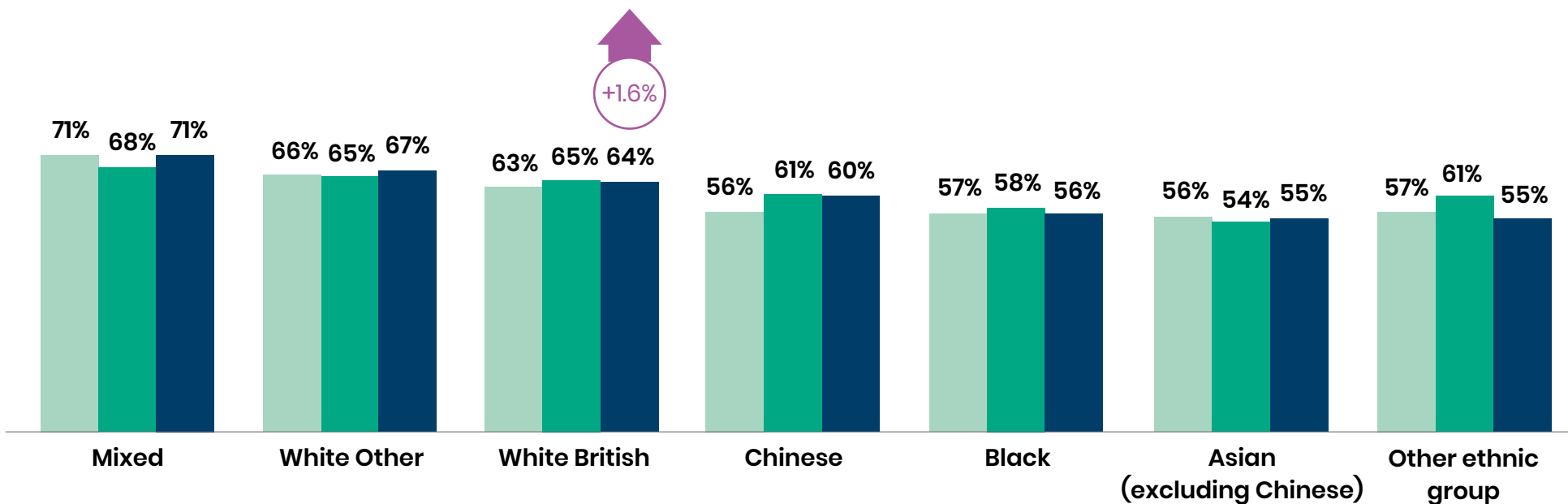
Significant inequalities continue to exist in activity levels between some minority ethnic groups

Activity levels fell generally during the pandemic, with drops greatest among adults with Asian (-4.4%), Black (-4.5%) and other ethnicities (-7.6%). Recovery back to November 2018-19 levels has been seen across all groups, with the exception of those from Other ethnicities who remain down by 6.2%. No ethnic minority group is showing a reportable difference compared to November 2015-16, within our margin of error. As a result, inequalities continue to widen as White British adults have seen activity levels increase over the same period (up 1.6%).

Arrows show change to November 15-16 (six years ago). No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Active: 150+ minutes a week

Nov 15-16 Nov 18-19 Nov 21-22



[Link to data tables](#)



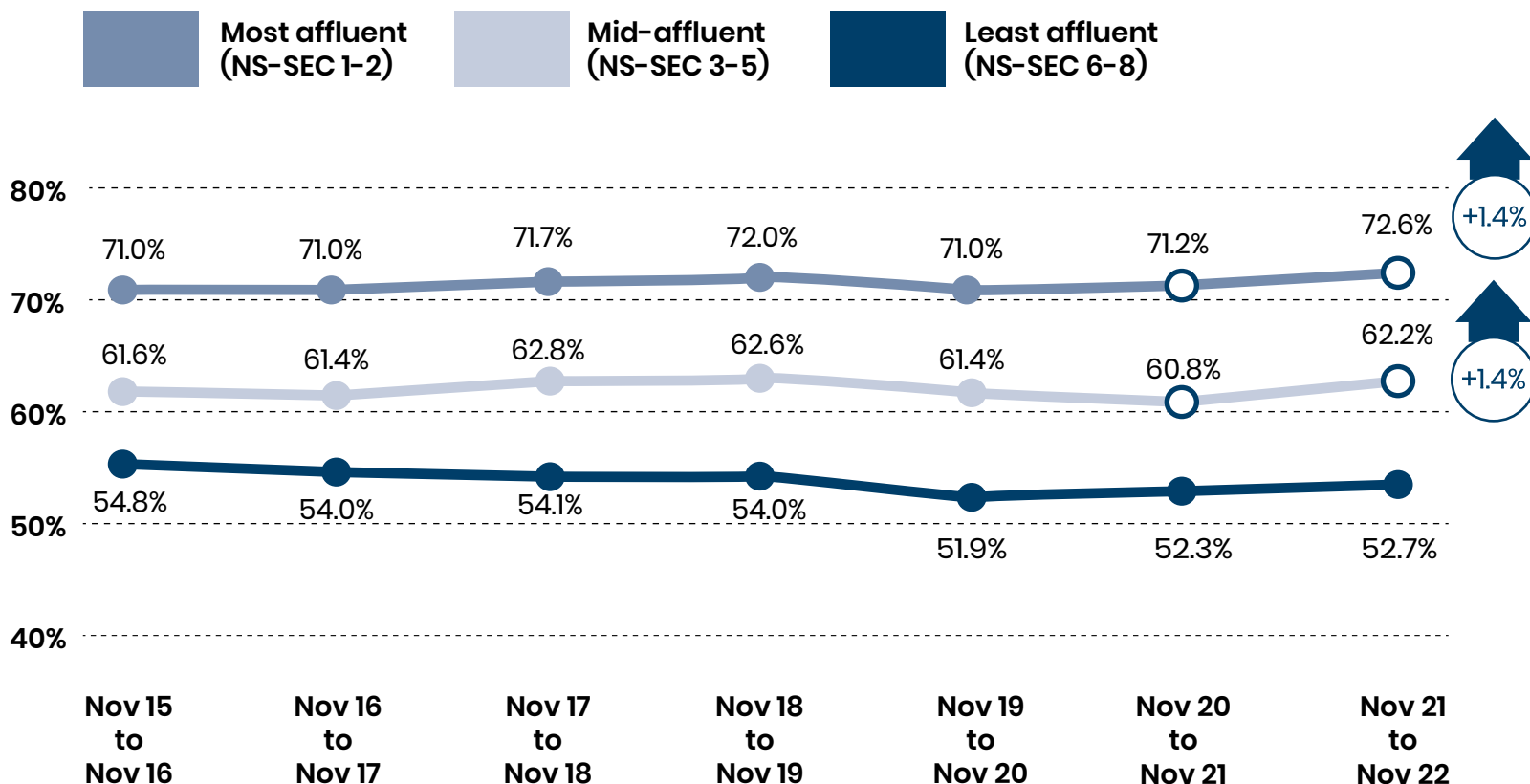
The least affluent continue to see activity levels negatively impacted

Activity levels fell across all social groups during the pandemic, however it was the least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8) that saw the greatest impact.

While activity levels have recovered and risen above pre-pandemic levels (up 0.6% from Nov 18-19) among the most affluent (NS-SEC 1-2) and back in line with pre-pandemic levels for the mid-affluent groups (NS-SEC 3-5), they remain below the highs seen six years ago (Nov 15-16, down 2.1%) for the least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8).

This may be the impact of the ongoing cost-of-living pressures but also indicates a longer-term downward trend among this group.

Active: 150+ minutes a week



[Link to data tables](#)

Note: NS-SEC classifications refer to ages 16-74 only. Full details of what the NS-SEC categories mean can be found on the [definitions](#) page.

Those living in the most deprived places are yet to see activity levels fully recover

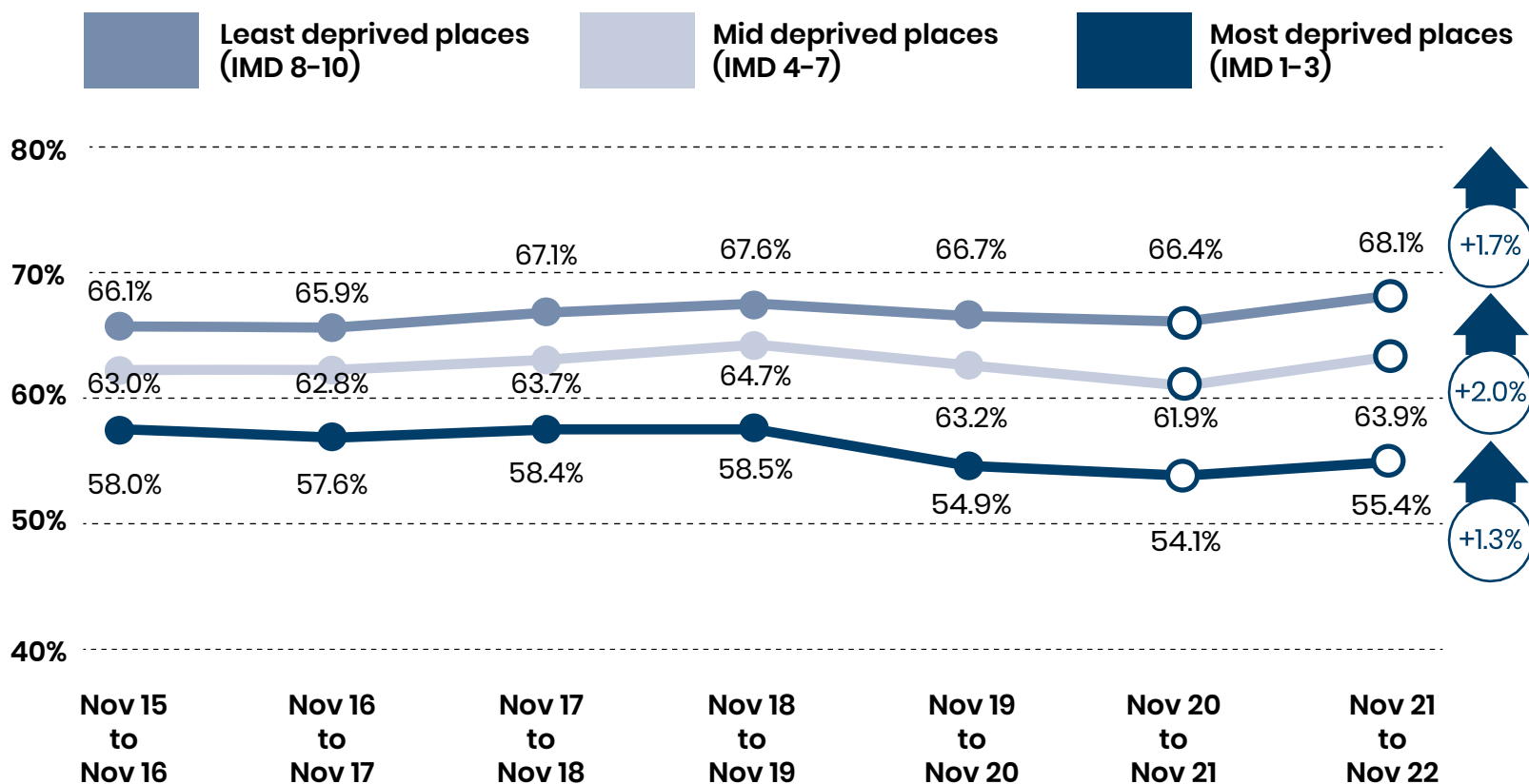
Activity levels fell across all places during the pandemic, however the scale of the drops were greatest in the most deprived places (IMD 1-3).

The picture of recovery also differs by deprivation level. The least deprived places (IMD 8-10) see a return to pre-pandemic levels, with indications of an underlying upward trend. The mid-deprived places (IMD 4-7) haven't seen full recovery to pre-pandemic levels, remaining 0.8% down but still see activity levels above November 2015-16 (up 1.0%).

However, it is again the most deprived places (IMD 1-3) that fare worse, with activity levels remaining below both pre-pandemic (down 3.1%) and November 2015-16 levels (down 2.6%).

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Active: 150+ minutes a week



Note: Deprivation of place is taken from the Office for National Statistics' Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

[Link to data tables](#)

Alongside doing at least 150 minutes of physical activity a week, the Chief Medical Officers also recommend adults should do muscle strengthening activities on at least two days a week.

Data has been collected to measure muscle strength since November 2019.

Data has previously been, and continues to be, captured through the [Health Survey for England \(HSE\)](#). The HSE includes housework, manual gardening and DIY within their estimates but doesn't include walking. As such, the estimates across the two surveys are not comparable. HSE data can be viewed [here](#).

What do we mean by muscle strengthening exercises?



Muscles feel some tension, shake or feel warm


At least two sessions a week

Muscle strength

Muscle strengthening is unchanged overall

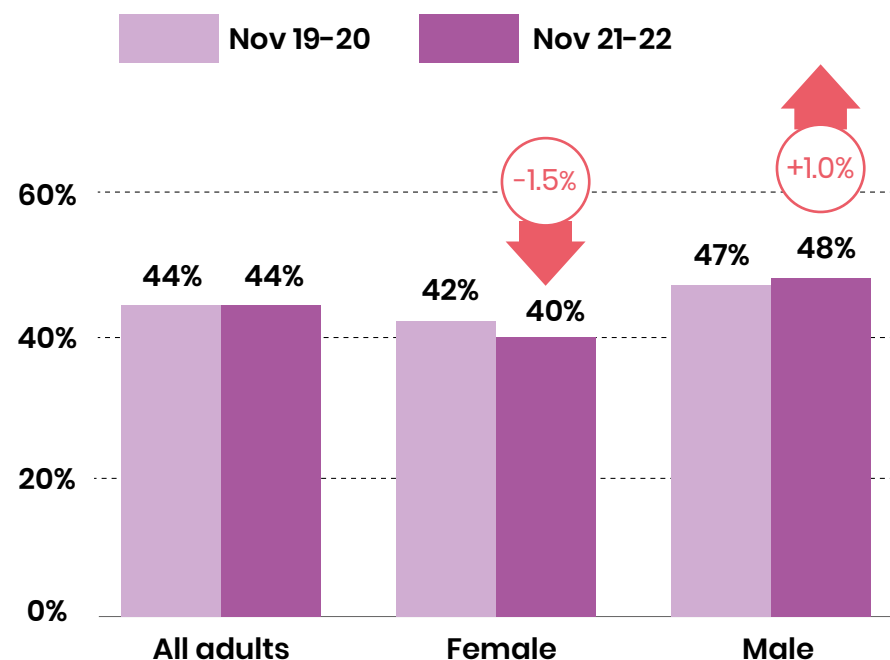
Those doing two or more sessions of muscle strengthening activity a week remains unchanged compared to November 19-20, having recovered from a small drop seen 12 months ago. In total, 20.1m (44%) met the guideline across November 21-22.

- This masks a drop for women, with men seeing an increase - widening the gap between them.
- Similarly, a drop among those aged 35-54 (-1.2%) is countered by an increase among those aged 55-74 (+1.0%). Despite this, it remains that the proportion of those meeting the guideline declines with age, with a sharp drop at age 75 or over (to 29%).
- There's been a small increase in those with a disability or long-term health condition meeting the guideline (+1.5%), narrowing the gap slightly to those without, although it remains wide (32% vs. 48%).
- The least affluent groups (NS-SEC 6-8) remain less likely to meet the guideline (33% vs. 52% most affluent).
- Despite increases for Asian (excluding Chinese) (+3.0%) and Chinese (+6.9%) adults, those from Black (40%), Asian (excluding Chinese) (38%) and Other (37%) ethnic groups continue to be the least likely to meet the guideline.

 Arrows show change from 24 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change



2+ sessions a week of muscle strengthening physical activity



[Link to data tables](#)



This chapter presents data broken down by different types of activity and looks at those who've participated at least twice in the last 28 days.

Looking at participation at least twice in the last 28 days provides:

- a useful measure of engagement in different sports and physical activities
- an understanding of the contribution of activities to achieving 150+ minutes a week.



We count sport and physical activity if it's done...



at least **twice in the last **28** days**

At least moderate intensity



Types of activity

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change



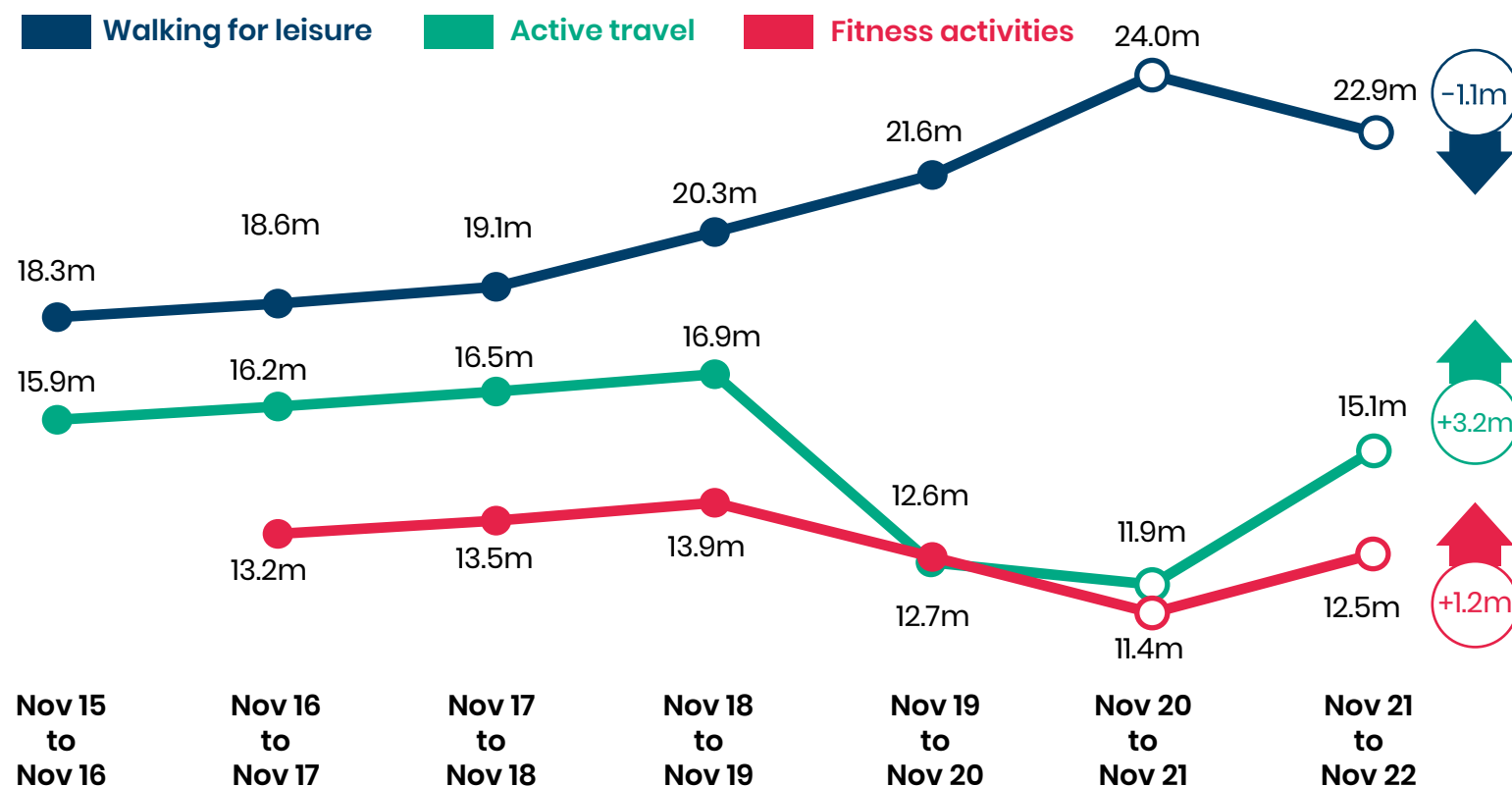
Fitness and active travel are yet to fully recover

This page shows the three activity groups with the highest number of participants, the next page looks at a further four activity groups.

Walking for leisure was growing steadily before the pandemic and saw accelerated growth during it, with walking often becoming the activity of choice when others were less readily available. While we've seen a dip compared to 12 months ago, this isn't unexpected given other activities saw their numbers recover - we continue to see an underlying strong upward trend, with 2.6m more walkers compared to before the pandemic (Nov 18-19) and 4.6m more compared to six years ago (Nov 15-16).

Conversely, despite seeing some growth previously, fitness activities and active travel both saw large drops in numbers during the pandemic that are yet to be fully recovered. As a result, both see fewer people taking part - with fitness down by more than 650,000 people (compared to Nov 16-17) and active travel down by more than 800,000 people (compared to Nov 15-16).

Taken part at least twice in the last 28 days (age 16+) for selected activity groups



[Link to data tables](#)

Types of activity

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change



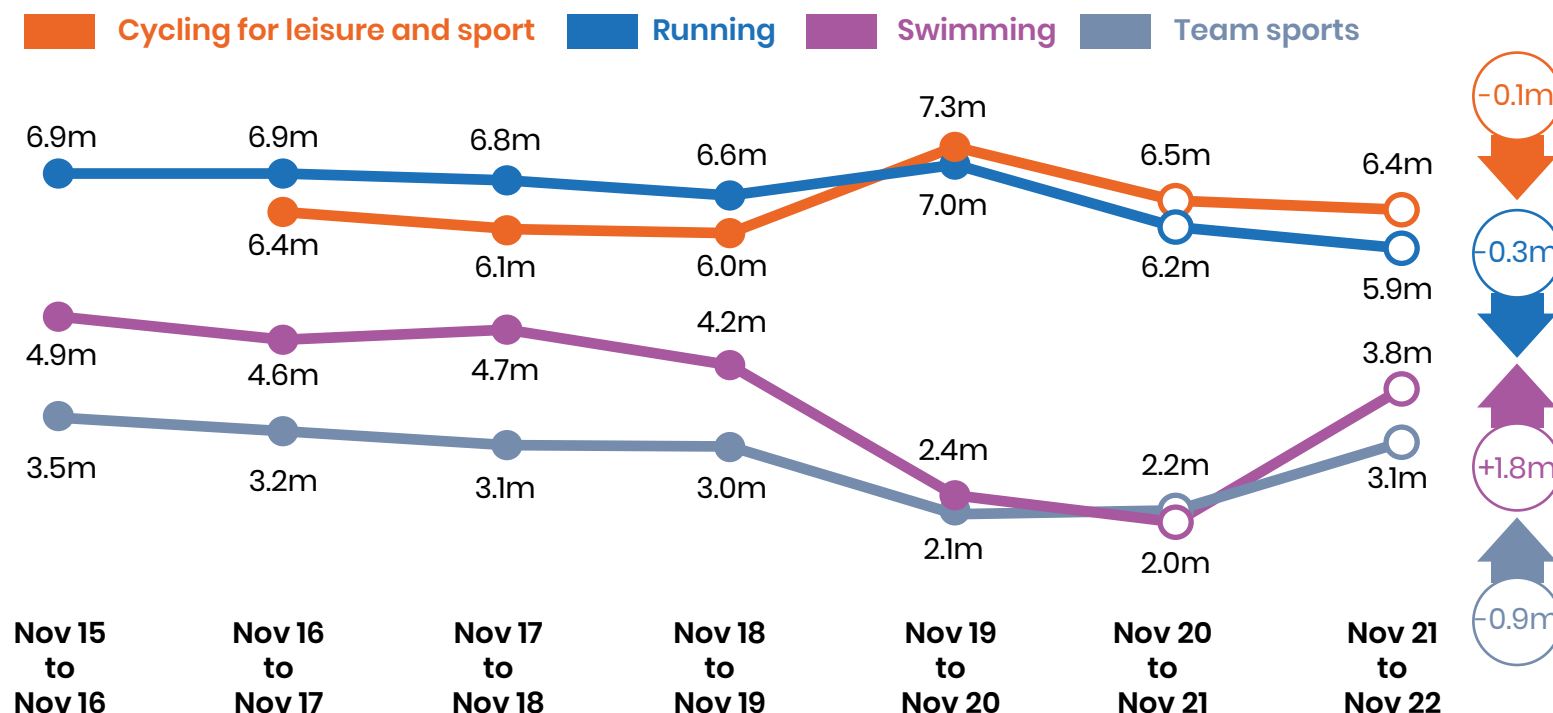
Running and swimming activity levels have declined over the long term

This page shows four notable activity groups, the previous page looked at the three activity groups with the most people taking part.

Cycling for leisure and sport, and running (includes treadmill) both had slightly falling numbers before the pandemic and both saw numbers increase during it. However, since the pandemic we've seen different outcomes for each with cycling for leisure and sport remaining up on pre-pandemic (by just over 300,000) and running dropping further, continuing the prior trend (down by nearly 1m since Nov 15-16).

Swimming and team sports both had downward trends before the pandemic but were perhaps the most impacted activities given the nature and locations of taking part in them. While swimming has seen significant recovery, levels remain below pre-pandemic and we see a continuation of the downward trend (down by just over 1m since Nov 15-16). In contrast, team sports has recovered to pre-pandemic levels with indications of a stabilisation at around 3.1m players.

Taken part at least twice in the last 28 days (age 16+) for selected activity groups



[Link to data tables](#)

A volunteer makes all the difference. Volunteering benefits both the volunteer and the person receiving the support. Whether it's serving refreshments, coaching a player or assisting disabled people to take part, the sport and activity sector needs people to give their time.



A person counts as having volunteered if:

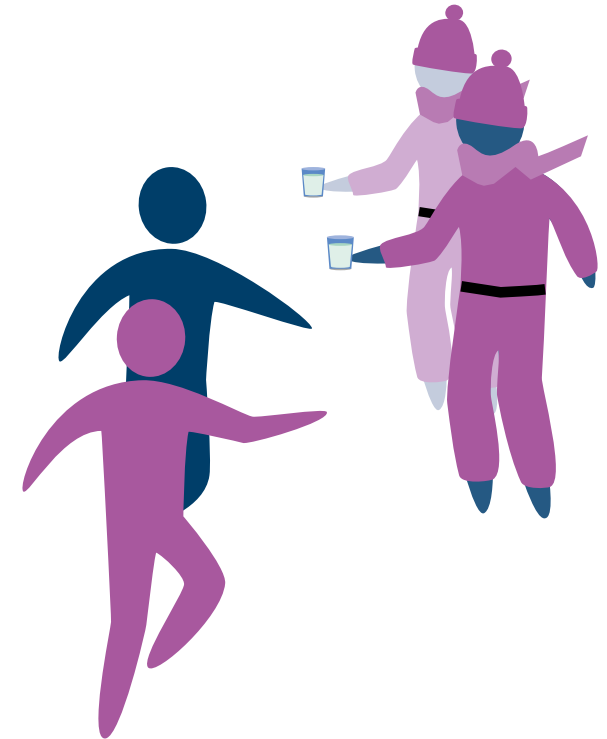
They've taken part in a volunteering role to support sport/physical activity in the past 12 months.

(A full list of roles can be found in our definitions at the end of this report, on [page 42](#)).



Volunteering is captured across four levels of frequency (in the past 12 months):

- Volunteered once/one-off in the past year
- Volunteered a few times in the past year
- Volunteered at least once a month, but not once a week, throughout the year
- Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year.



Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

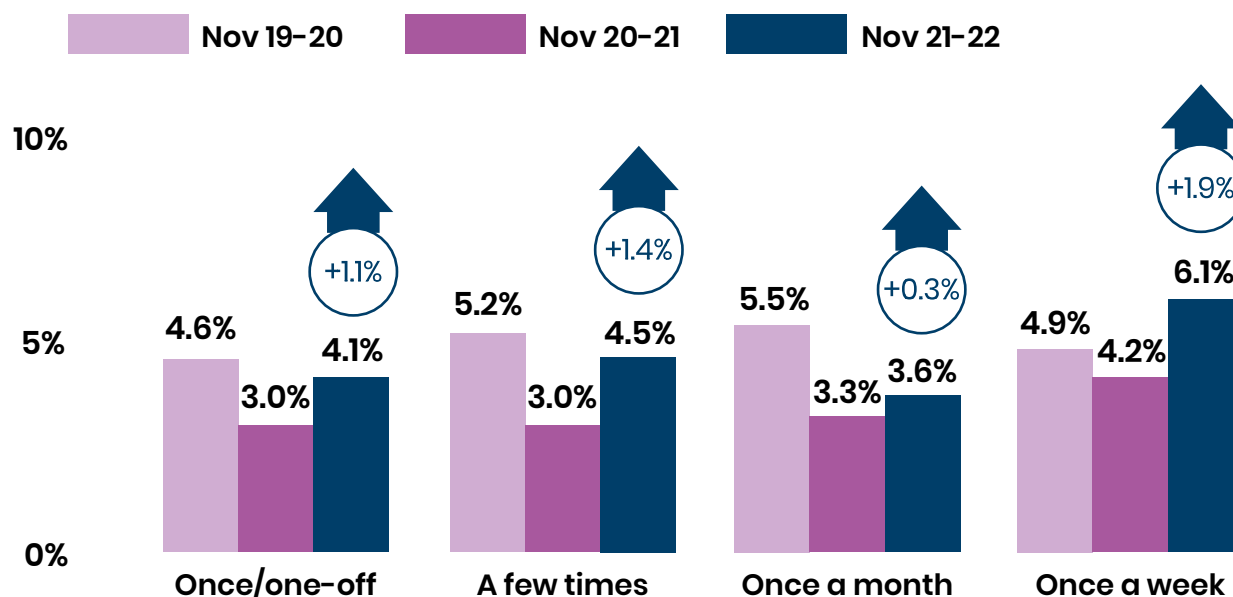


Volunteer numbers have started to recover

The proportion volunteering once a week throughout the year has increased and is now above November 2019-20 levels. It's likely that levels were lower than usual across November 2019-20 due to the pandemic and so it's not possible to tell if this represents a full or partial recovery. All other frequencies of volunteering remain below November 2019-20 levels - it's too early to determine whether these frequencies are seeing slower recovery, or whether there's been an overall drop.

In total, more than 8.8m (19%) adults have given up their time to support sport and physical activity at some point across the latest 12-month period (Nov 21-22) – an increase of 2.3m (4.8%) compared to 12 months ago but a decrease of 0.8m (2.1%) compared to November 2019-20.

Volunteered to support sport and physical activity in the last 12 months



Note: Data is only available since November 2019-20 and this reference period includes eight months of coronavirus restrictions. As such, it's not possible to make comparisons to pre-pandemic or establish the scale of recovery.

[Link to data tables](#)

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

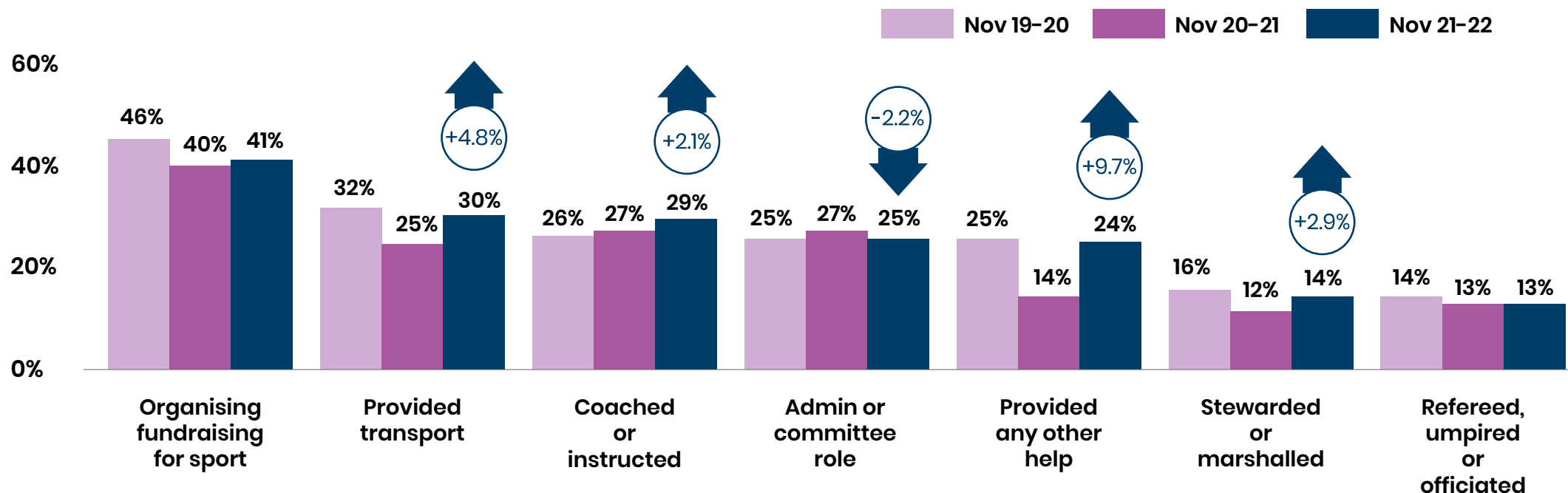


A variety of different roles are performed by volunteers

Across all adults who reported doing any volunteering over the past 12 months, organising fundraising for a sports club, organisation or event, remains the most common role, despite seeing a fall in the share doing it compared to November 2019-20.

Many roles remain down as a share of volunteers compared to November 2019-20, however coaching or instructing is up - indicating volunteers are coming back to this role faster than others. Admin or committee roles are back in line with November 2019-20.

Proportion of those doing any volunteering to support sport and physical activity in the past 12 months



[Link to data tables](#)

Volunteering

Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year

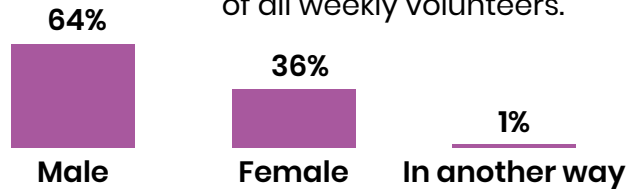
Population



Summary of demographic profile

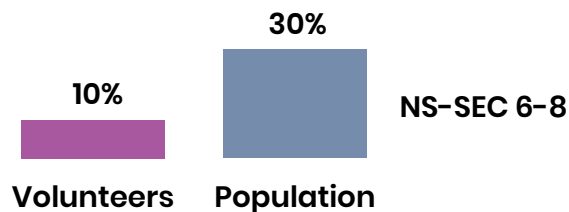
Our data shows there are significant inequalities:

1 Gender Men are more likely to regularly volunteer to support sport and physical activity than women, comprising 64% of all weekly volunteers.



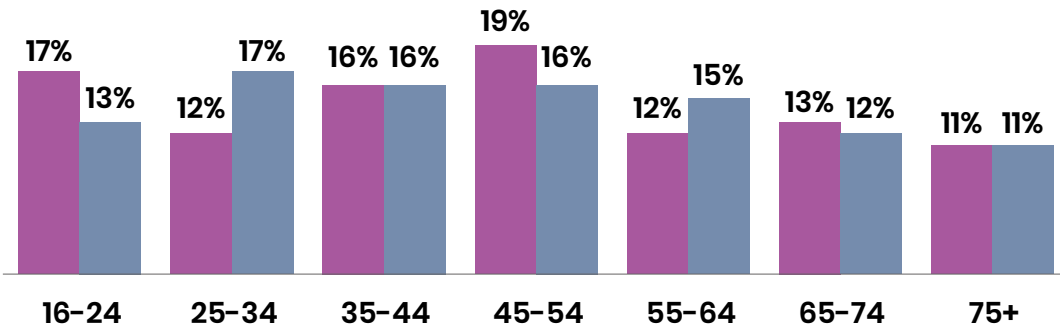
2 Socio-economic groups

People from lower socio-economic backgrounds (NS-SEC 6-8) are under-represented in volunteering, comprising just 10% of all weekly sport volunteers but 30% of the adult population (aged 16-74).



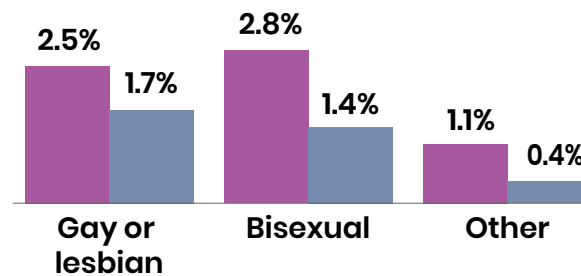
3 Age

The greatest shares of regular volunteers come from the 16-24, 35-44 and 45-54 age groups.



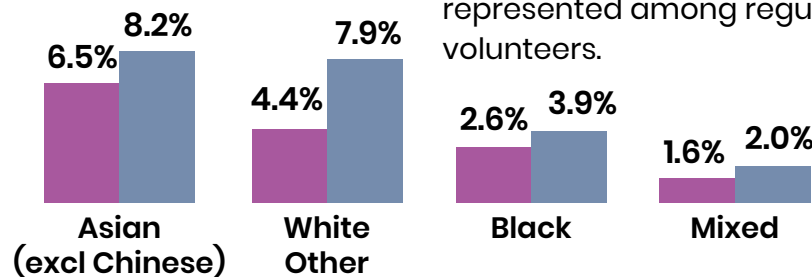
4 Sexual orientation

All non-heterosexual groups are slightly over-represented among regular volunteers.



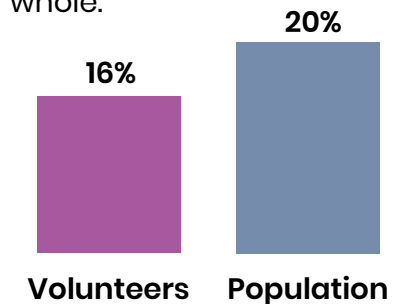
5 Ethnicity

Adults from all ethnic minority groups are under-represented among regular volunteers.



6 Disability and long-term health conditions


People with a disability or long-term health condition* account for 16% of regular volunteers, despite accounting for 20% of the population as a whole.



[Link to data tables](#)



*See our [definitions](#) page for the full definition of each demographic group.

 Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

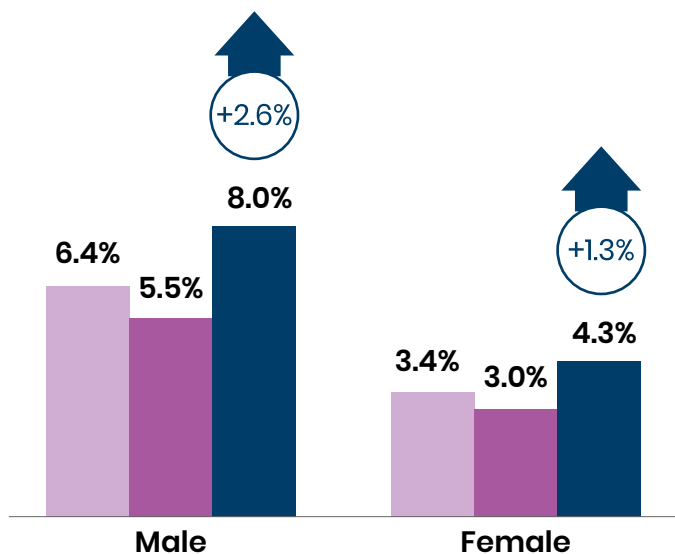


Gender

The increases seen among regular volunteers are proportionately similar for both men and women, when compared to both 12 and 24 months ago. This is also the case among less regular frequencies of volunteering.

Women continue to comprise a smaller share of volunteers as the regularity of volunteering increases.

Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year

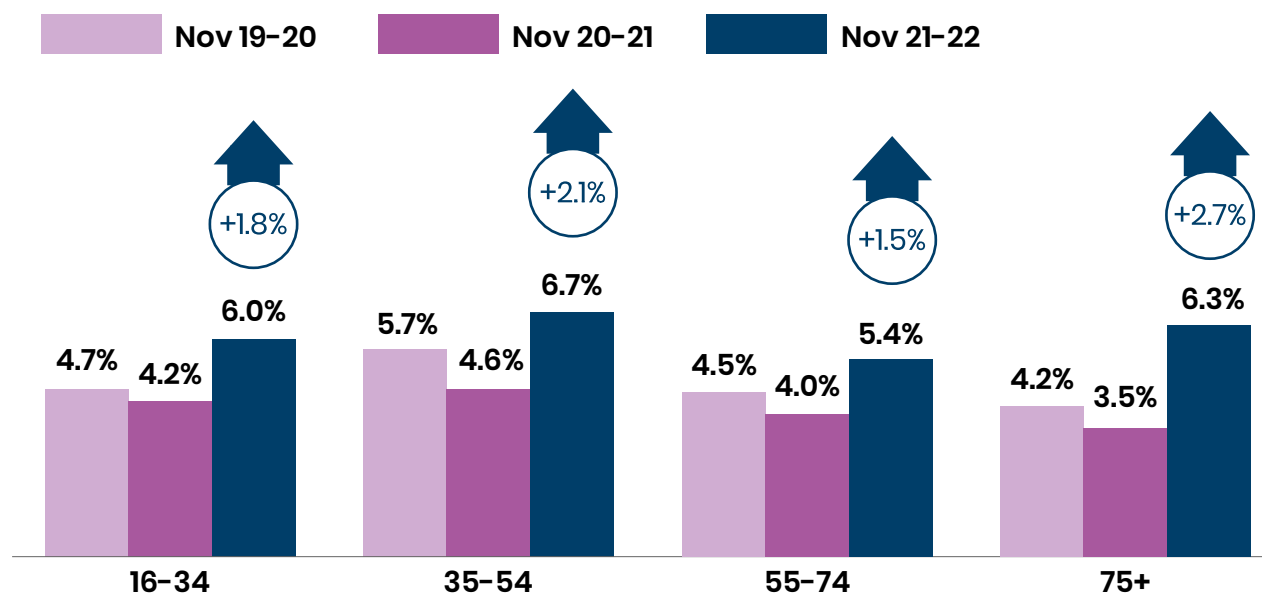


Age

Those aged 75+ have seen the greatest increase in regular volunteering.

Volunteering once/one-off continues to see higher numbers among the younger age groups but levels remain down for all age groups except 75+, compared to November 2019-20.

Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year



[Link to data tables](#)

Note: Data on gender identification was collected on male, female, non-binary and prefer to self describe. Results for the latter categories are combined into 'in another way' for reporting and can be found in the data tables.

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

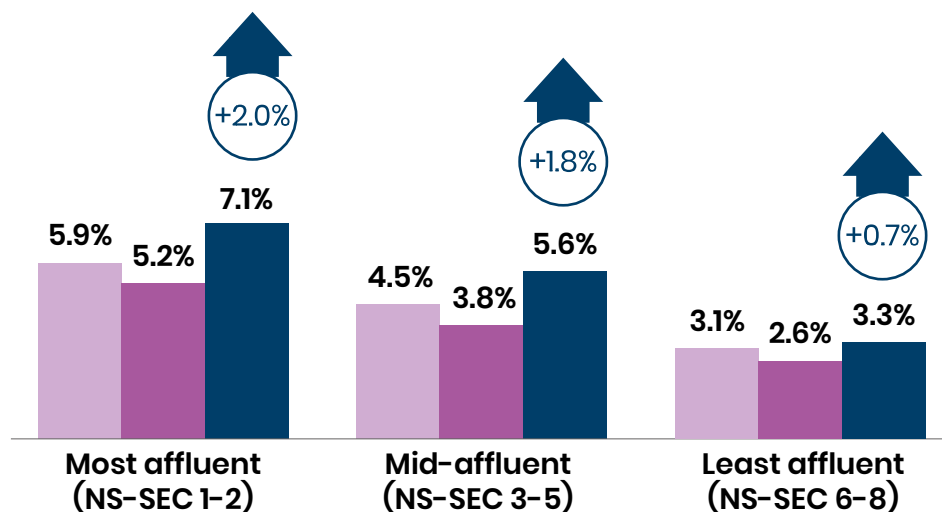


Socio-economic group

The least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8) have seen regular volunteering rates recover to those seen across November 2019-20 but unlike the other groups, haven't seen them increase higher - suggesting less and/or slower recovery from the pandemic. All socio-economic groups follow the same overall pattern for all other frequencies of volunteering.

The most affluent (NS-SEC 1-2) remain more likely to volunteer at all frequencies, when compared to the least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8).

Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year

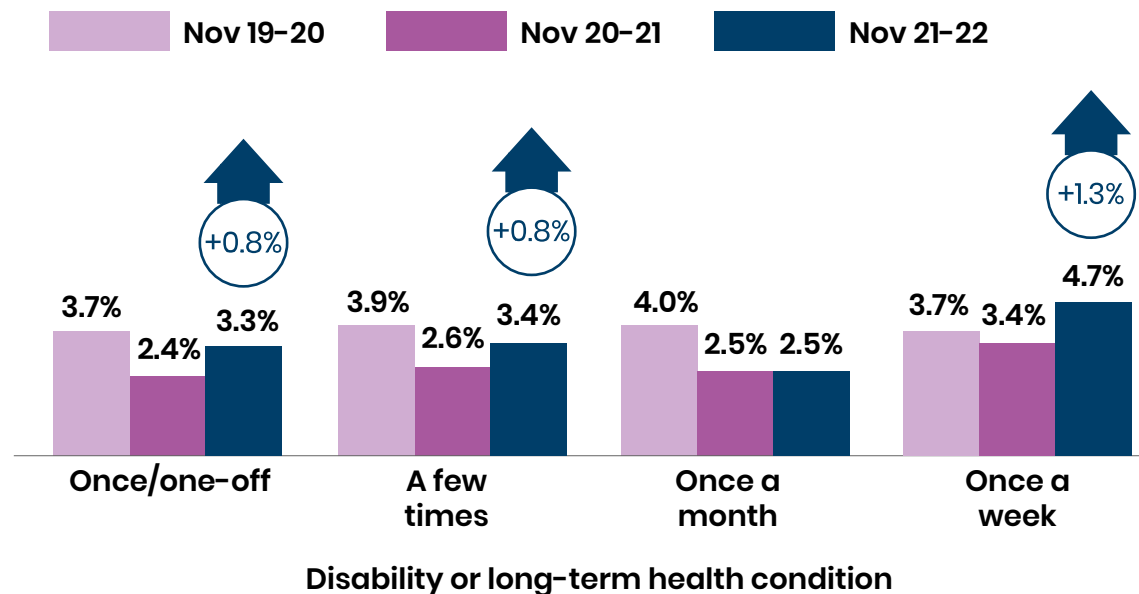


Disability and long-term health conditions

For all frequencies of volunteering, adults with a disability or long-term health condition have seen similar changes to adults overall.

Adults with a disability or long-term health condition remain less likely overall to volunteer to support sport and physical activity (15%), compared to those without (20%).

Volunteering frequency



Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

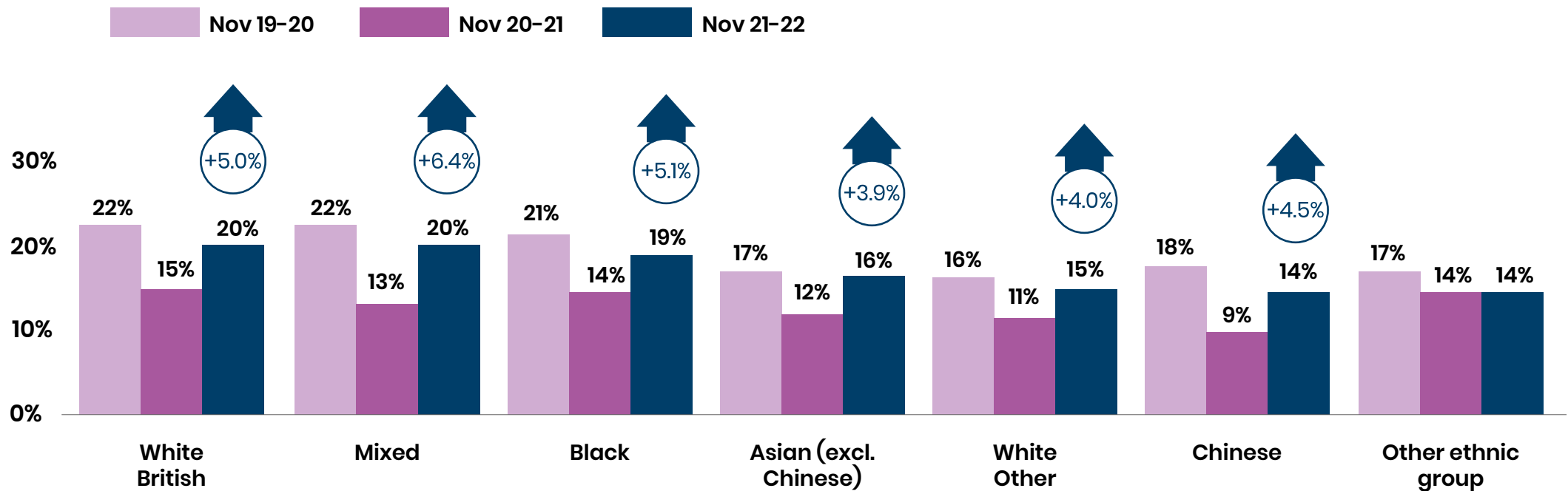


Differences remain in the likelihood to volunteer by ethnic group

Only adults from Other ethnic groups haven't seen volunteering levels increase over the last 12 months.

Adults who are Asian, Chinese, White Other or from Other ethnic groups continue to be the least likely to volunteer to support sport and physical activity.

Any volunteering in the last 12 months



[Link to data tables](#)



Physical wellbeing



Mental wellbeing



Individual development



Social & community development



Economic development

Sport and physical activity – and volunteering to support it – has the power to improve lives. In addition to capturing the behaviour of adults when it comes to sport and physical activity, Active Lives also captures data designed to better understand impact against four of the five social outcomes identified within the government’s sport and physical activity strategy – [Sporting Future](#).

Chapters one and two of this report covered the first of those outcomes – physical wellbeing. This chapter will focus on mental wellbeing, individual development and social and community development.

For further details on the outcomes, see our [evidence review](#).

Sport and physical activity can...

- Help improve and maintain fitness, strength and balance
- Help prevent and manage medical conditions.

- Contribute to happiness and improved self-esteem
- Reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

- Help develop soft/social skills and increase persistence and perseverance
- Impact positively on employment opportunities.

- Bring people together
- Build trust and reduce isolation.

- Promote economic growth
- Create jobs.

Measured by...

- Proportion of adults who:
- Undertake an average of **150+ minutes** a day of sport and physical activity.
 - Undertake two or more sessions of **muscle strengthening** activity a week.

- Agreement to:
- How **happy** did you feel yesterday?
 - How **satisfied** are you with your life nowadays?
 - To what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are **worthwhile**?
 - How **anxious** did you feel yesterday?

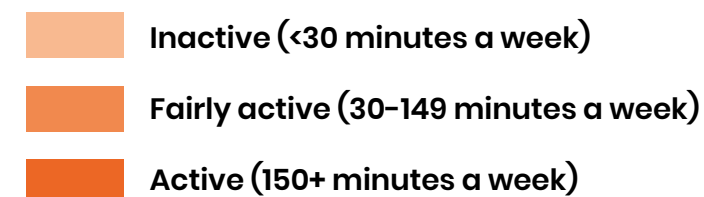
- Agreement to:
- I can **achieve** most of the goals I set myself
 - If I find something difficult, I **keep trying** until I can do it.

- Agreement to:
- Most people in our local area can be **trusted**.
 - My local area is a place where people from **different backgrounds** get on well together.

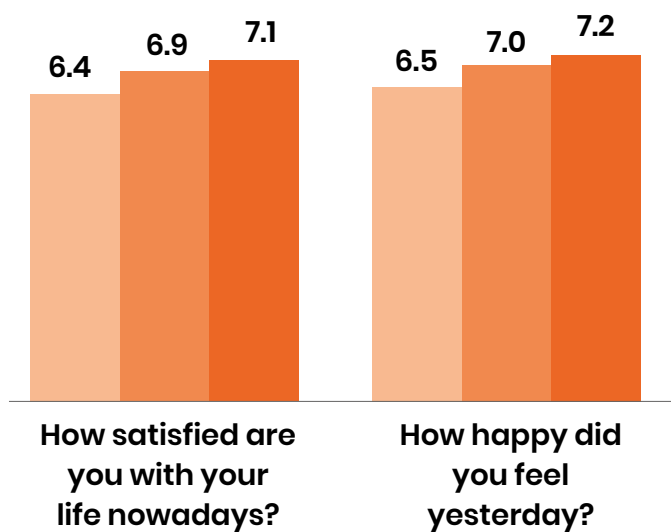
- The economic value of sport, as reported in:
- [DCMS’s Sports Satellite Accounts](#)
 - Our [report on the social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England](#).

There's a positive association between activity levels and mental wellbeing – some activity is good, more is better

This relationship also holds across feeling your life is worthwhile and feelings of anxiety.

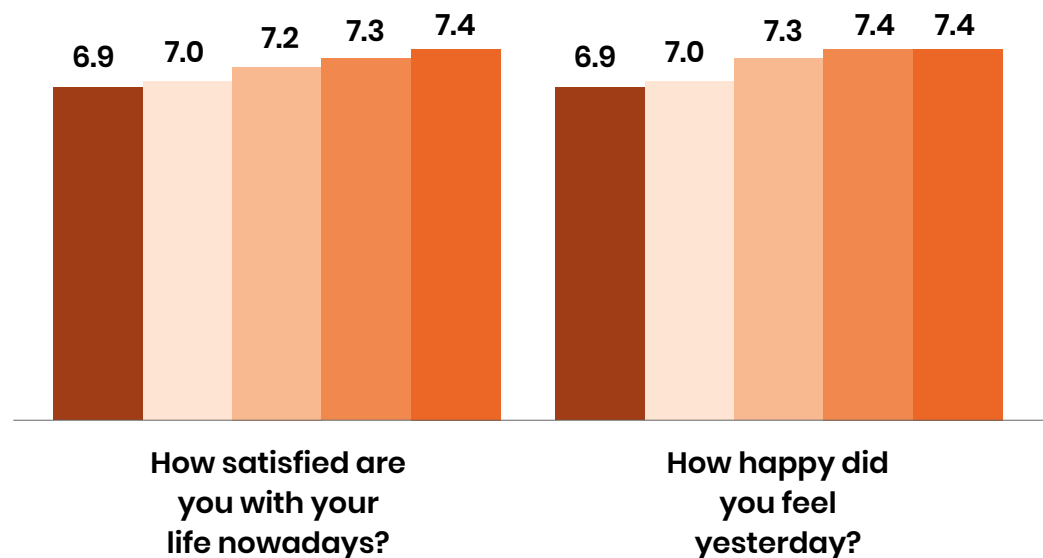


(mean score out of 10)



There's a positive association between frequency of volunteering and mental wellbeing

Regular volunteers generally have higher wellbeing scores than those who volunteer as a one-off or not at all.



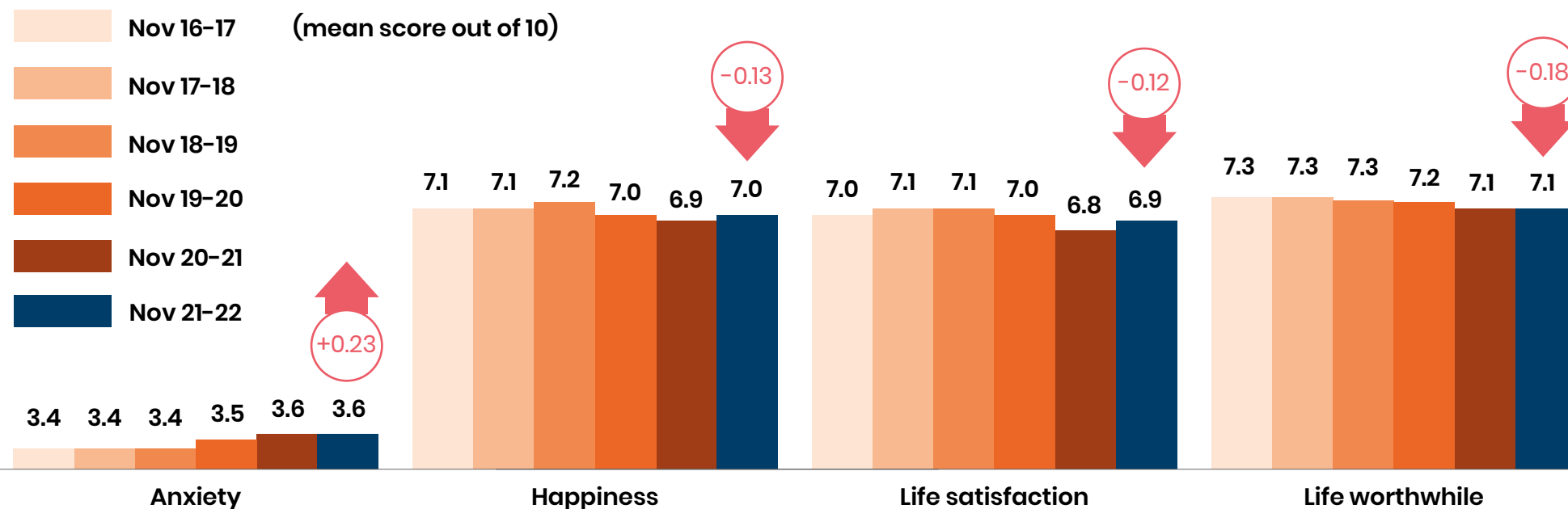
Arrows show change from November 2016-17. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change



Summary of change

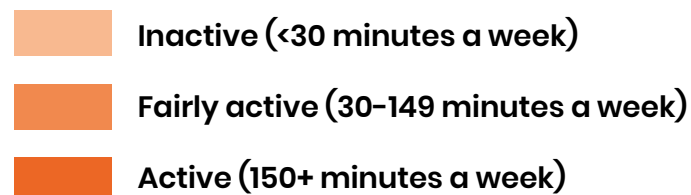
Collective wellbeing scores typically change very little over time and we need to look at a 5-10-year time frame to see any trends. However, disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented and, as such, we've seen a much shorter-term change.

Despite activity levels recovering, we're yet to see mental wellbeing scores recover. Given we tend to see a lag, it's too early to know if they'll fully recover or what long-term trends will emerge. Anxiety and happiness are generally considered immediate measures of wellbeing, life satisfaction a medium-term marker and feeling that your life is worthwhile the longer-term marker - all are down, with anxiety and life worthwhilness seeing the greatest changes compared to November 2016-17.

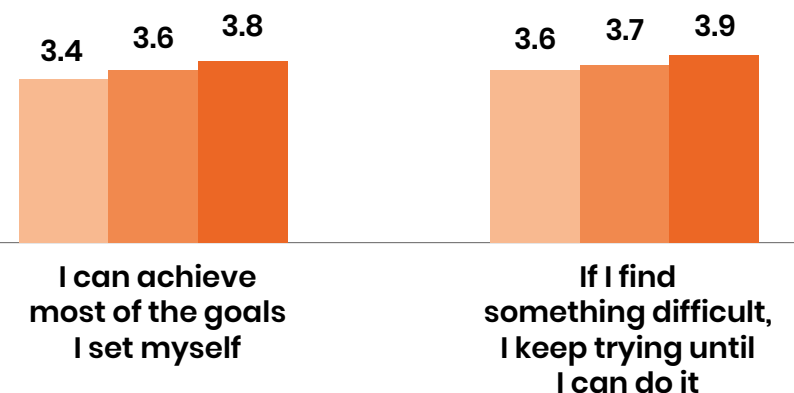


There's a positive association between activity levels and individual development

Those who are active have higher scores than those who are fairly active, who have higher scores than those who are inactive.



(mean score out of 5, where 5 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree)

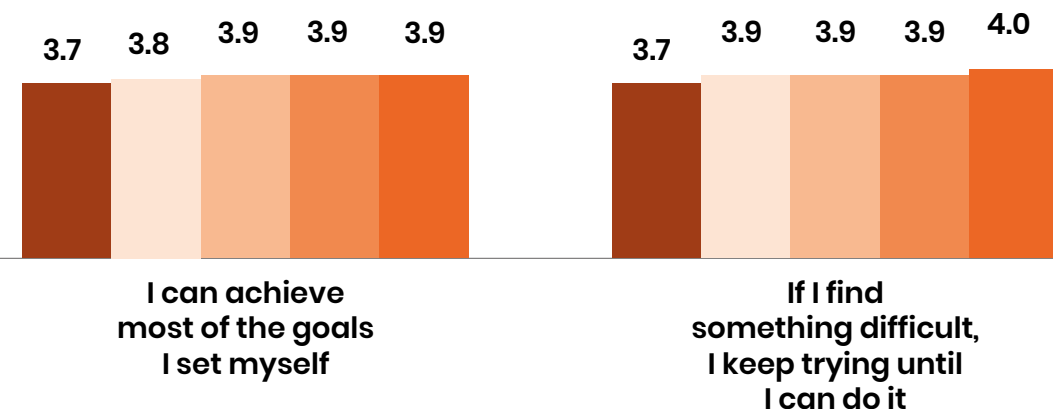


There's a positive association between frequency of volunteering and individual development

Those who volunteer regularly generally have higher scores than those who volunteer as a one-off or not at all.

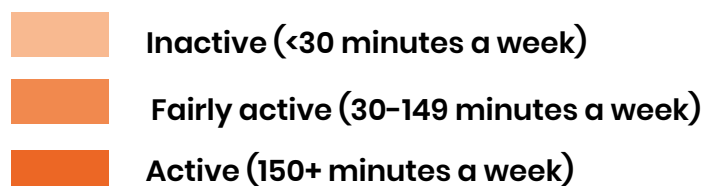


(mean score out of 5, where 5 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree)

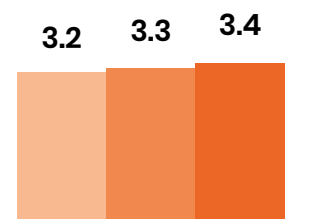


There's a positive association between activity levels and social and community development

Those who are active have higher social trust and community integration scores than those who are inactive.

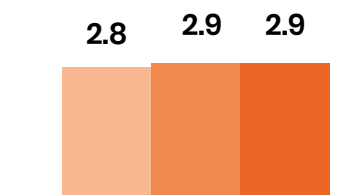


(mean score out of 5, where 5 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree)



Most people in our area can be trusted

(mean score out of 4, where 4 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree)



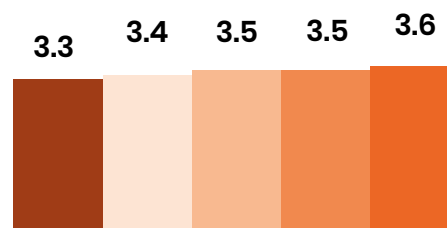
My local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

There's a positive association between frequency of volunteering and social and community development

There's a small positive association between volunteering and social trust overall, but not between the different frequencies of volunteering. For community integration there is only an association between volunteering weekly and not at all.

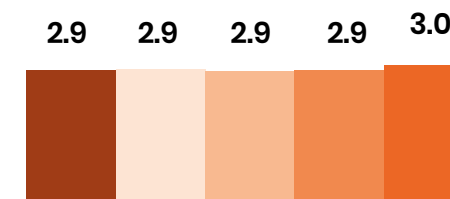


(mean score out of 5, where 5 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree)



Most people in our area can be trusted

(mean score out of 4, where 4 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree)



My local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together



In October 2018, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published 'A Connected Society', its first strategy for tackling loneliness in England.

This chapter sets out the role sport and physical activity – and volunteering to support it – has in this.

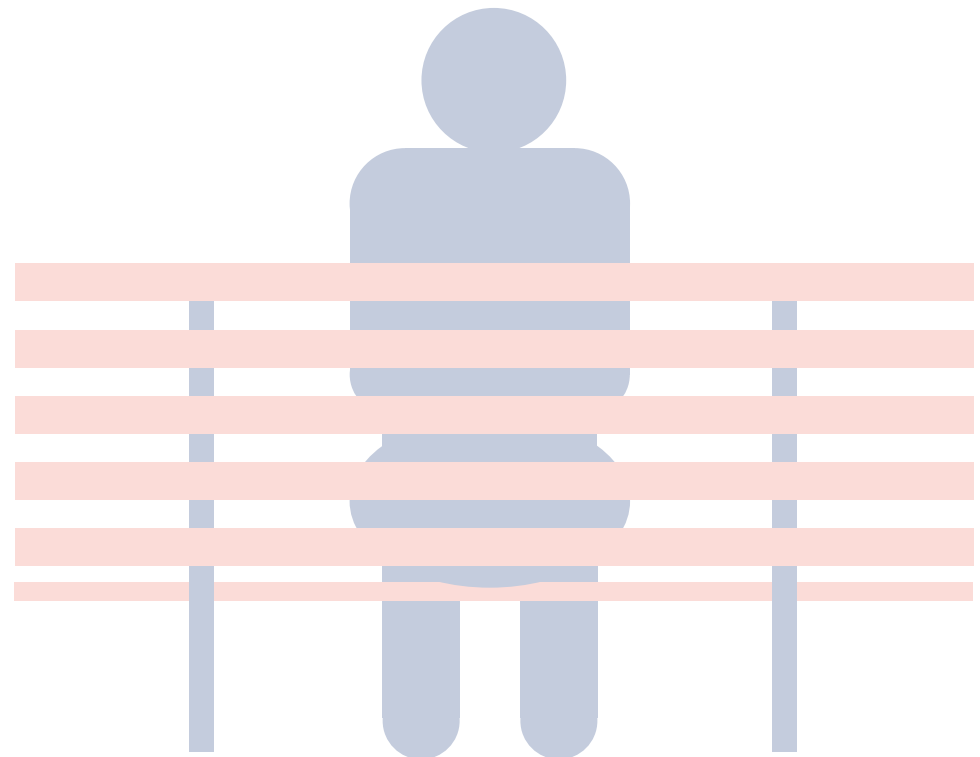
Supporting people to have meaningful social relationships isn't just crucial to people's physical and mental health, it also affects their engagement in the workplace and wider community cohesion.

We've focused on those who are often/always lonely, as policy is centred around this group.

We ask a single question which has five response options:

How often do you feel lonely?

- Often/always
- Some of the time
- Occasionally
- Hardly ever
- Never



Loneliness

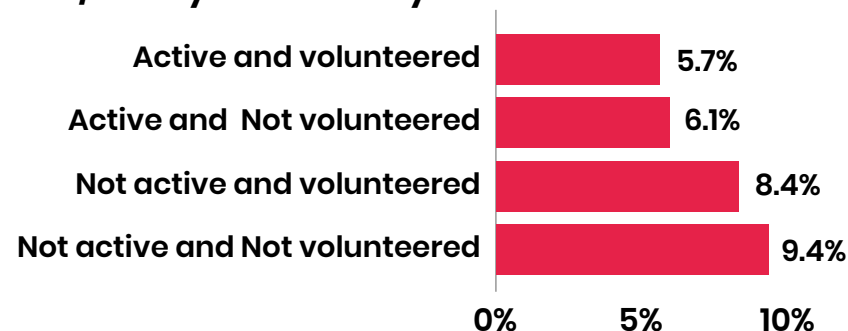
Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change



People who engage in sport and physical activity are less likely to feel lonely

Those who are active are less likely to feel lonely than those who are not active, regardless of whether they also volunteer or not. However those who aren't active, but do volunteer to support sport and physical activity, are less likely to feel lonely than those who don't volunteer. Many forms of sport and physical activity include a social element, so this is perhaps not surprising.

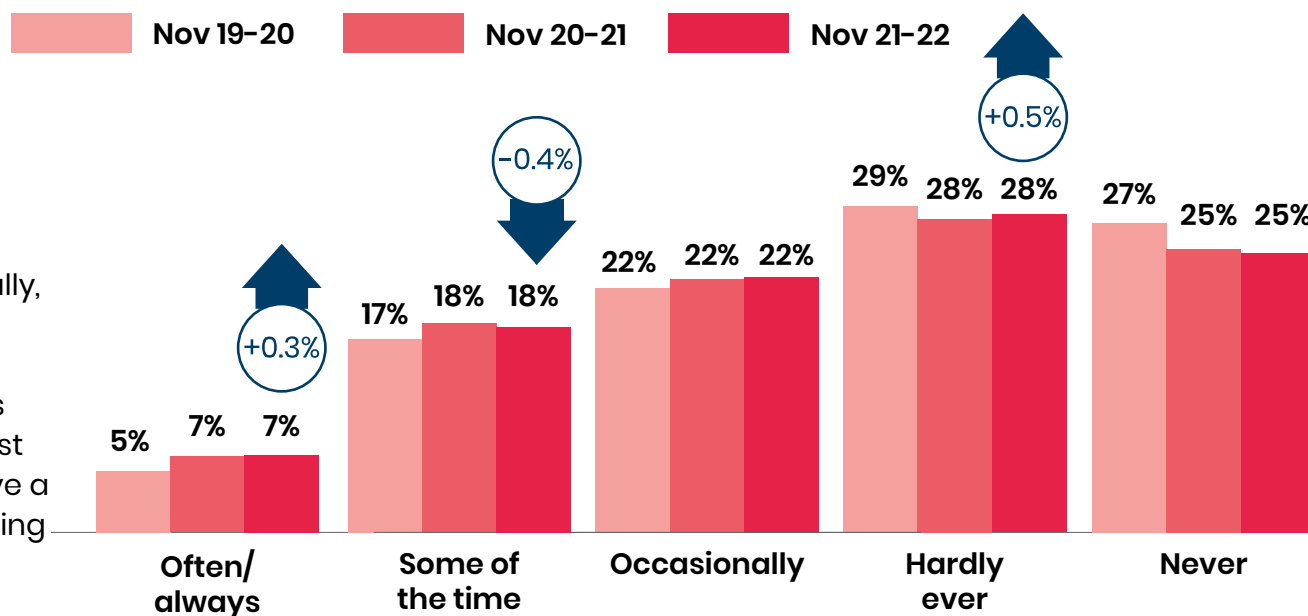
Often/always feel lonely



Summary of change

Loneliness levels have remained relatively unchanged compared to 12 months ago. Despite a very small decrease among those feeling lonely some of the time, we continue to see overall increases in those feeling lonely often/always, some of the time and occasionally, compared to November 2019-20.

Those reporting the highest levels of loneliness are also the groups that have seen the greatest increases (younger, women, least affluent, have a disability or long-term health condition and living in the most deprived places).



[Link to data tables](#)

We ask the following attitude questions:

Capability

- I feel I have the ability to be physically active.
Ability includes physical ability and confidence.

Opportunity

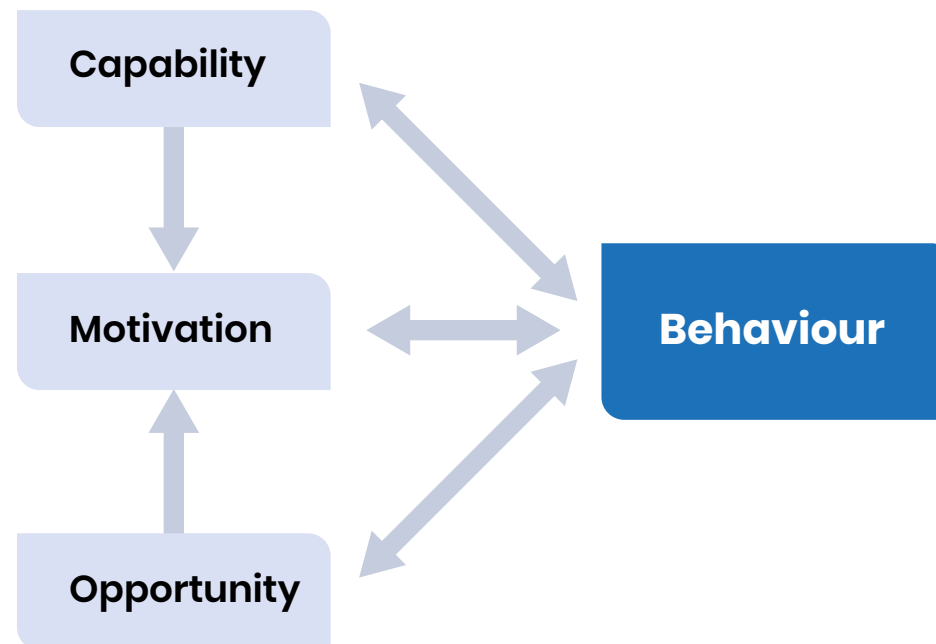
- I feel I have the opportunity to be physically active.
Opportunity includes things such as having somewhere to do it, being able to afford it, having the right kit, support from family, someone to take part with etc.

Motivation

- I find sport enjoyable and satisfying.
Four questions covering motivation are included within the survey, however just enjoyment is included in this report.

Results are presented for those saying 'strongly agree' to each question.

Someone's **C**apability, **O**pportunity and **M**otivation to be active combine to drive their **B**ehaviour (the COM-B model). The absence of just one of these can lead to someone becoming inactive. Data on these attitudes helps us to better understand people's activity levels.

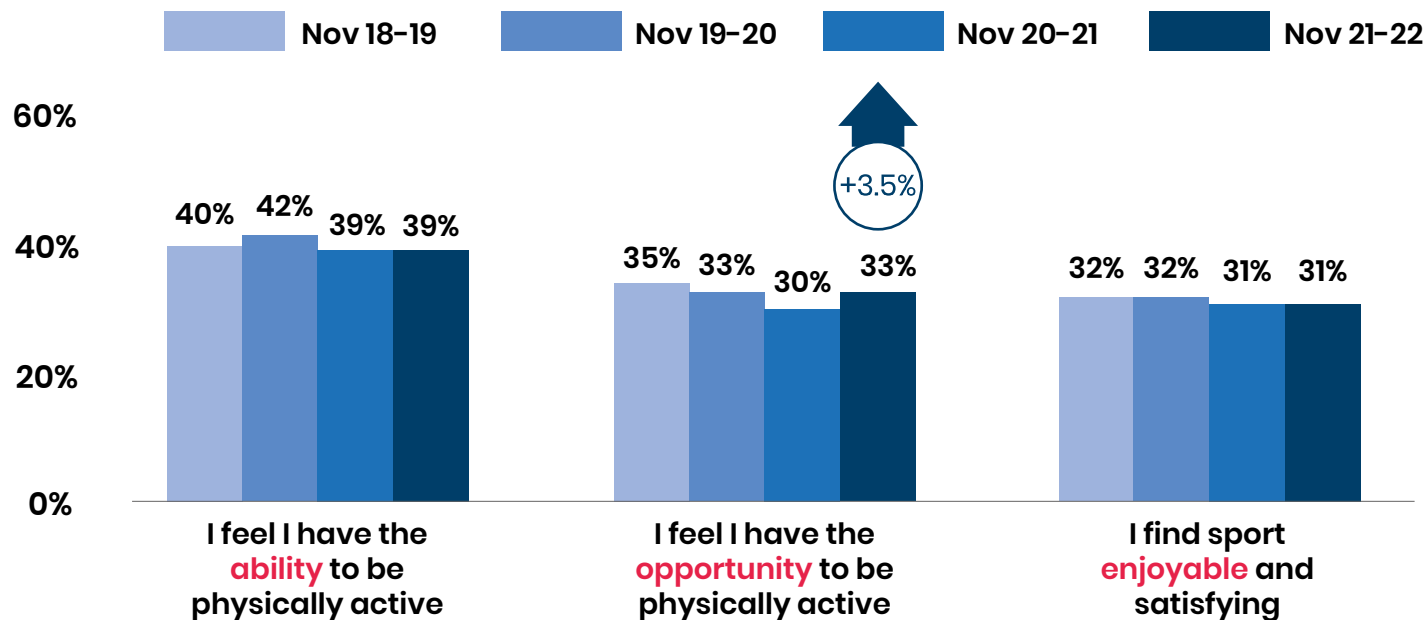


Perceived opportunity to be active is yet to fully recover

The proportion strongly agreeing they have the ability to be active is broadly unchanged over time, with a small increase at the start of the pandemic countered the following year by a small drop. It remains marginally down (-1.0%) compared to November 2018-19. Similarly, the proportion strongly agreeing that they find sport enjoyable and satisfying is broadly flat over time (down 0.7% compared to Nov 18-19) but in this instance there's been very little change, even across the pandemic period.

In contrast, those strongly agreeing they have the opportunity to be active unsurprisingly fell during the pandemic, as many activities were forced to close. While they have recovered in the last 12 months, levels remain 1.4% down compared to November 2018-19.

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change



(proportion who strongly agree)

[Link to data tables](#)

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

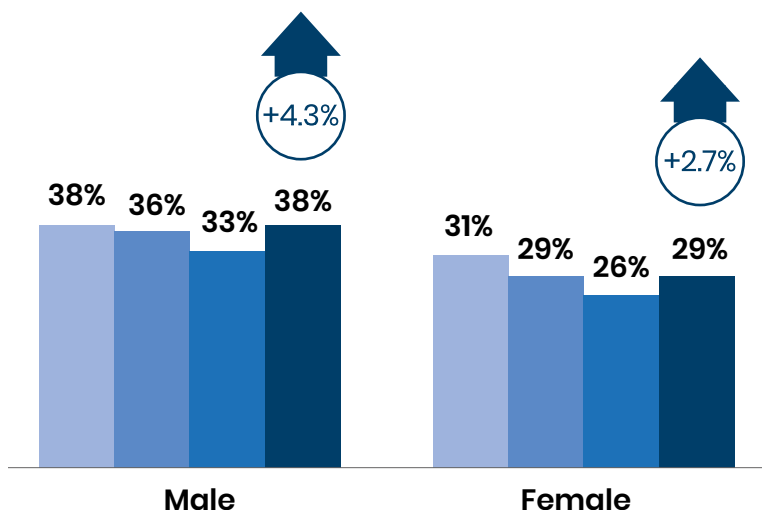


Gender

Men (44%) are more likely to feel able to be active than women (35%), however both have followed the same broad patterns over the last three years. Similarly, men are also more likely to perceive they have the opportunity to be active (38% vs. 29%) and to find sports enjoyable and satisfying (38% vs. 25%).

In a similar way that activity levels haven't recovered fully for women where they have for men, perceived opportunity to be active remains down by more for women (-1.9%) than men (-0.8%).

I feel I have the **opportunity** to be physically active (proportion that strongly agree)



[Link to data tables](#)

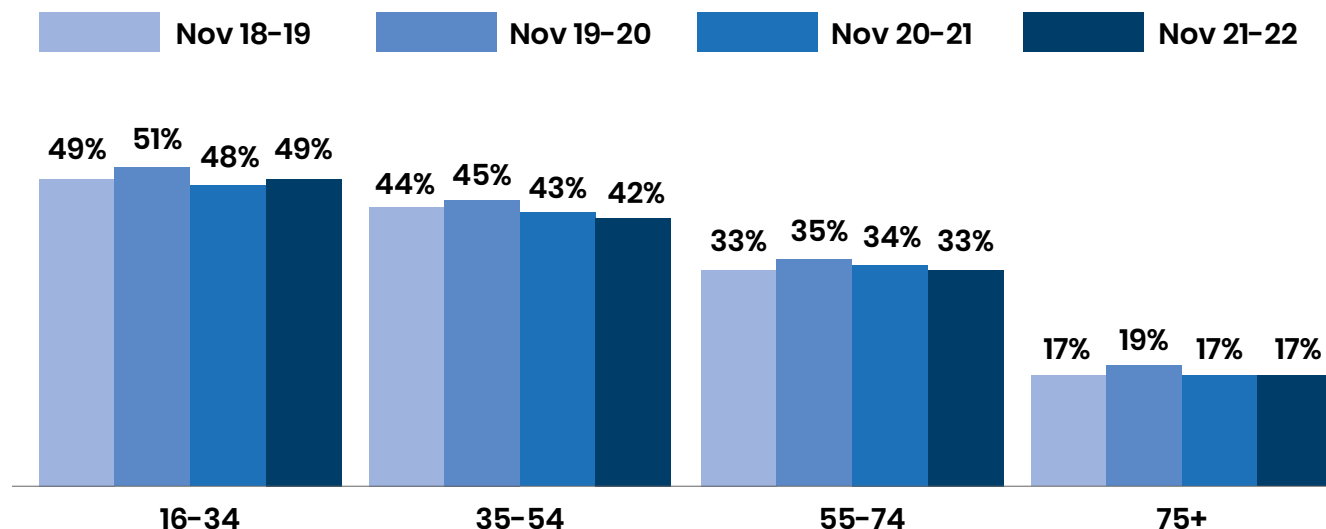
Age

The proportion strongly agreeing to each of the attitude statements decreases with age.

Those aged 35-54 are driving the small drop, over the longer term, in both perceived ability to be active and finding sports enjoyable and satisfying.

Those aged 16-34 have seen perceived opportunity to be active return to pre-pandemic (Nov 18-19) levels.

I feel I have the **ability** to be physically active (proportion that strongly agree)



Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change



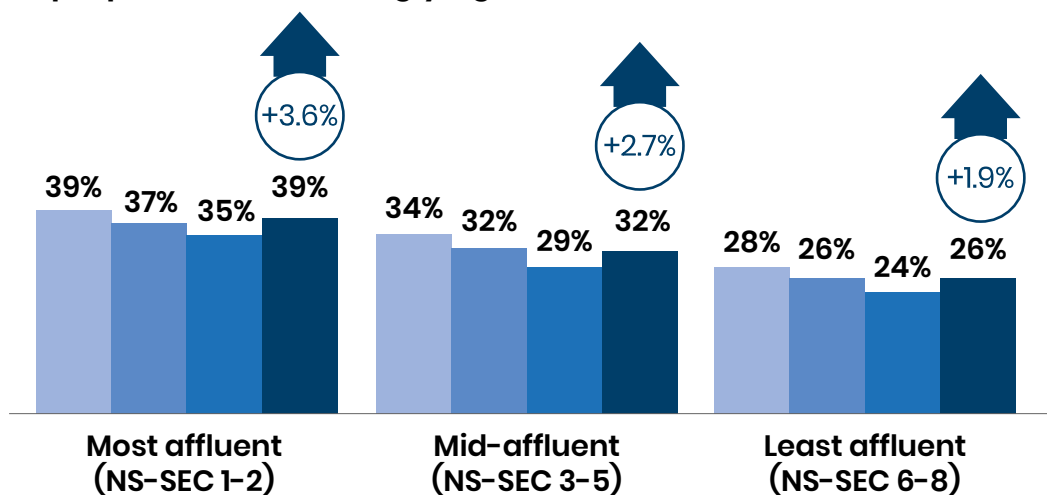
Socio-economic group

The least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8) are the least likely to feel they have the ability to be active, perceive they have the opportunity to be active, or to find sports enjoyable and satisfying.

The small decreases over the longer term in perceived ability to be active and finding sports enjoyable and satisfying have been driven by the least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8). The most affluent (NS-SEC 1-2) have seen a much smaller a drop in perceived opportunity to be active (-0.6%).

A similar picture is found when looking at deprivation of place.

I feel I have the **opportunity** to be physically active (proportion that strongly agree)

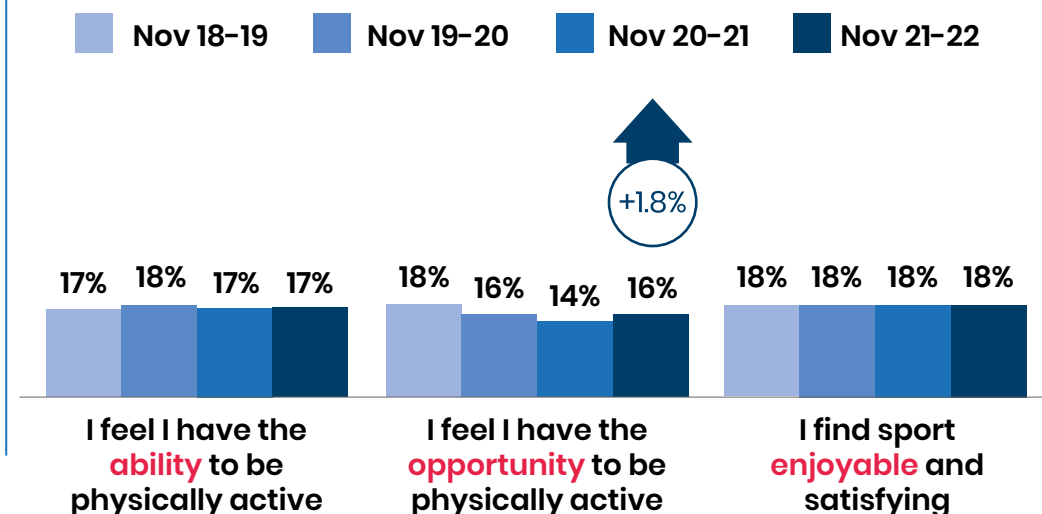


Disability and long-term health conditions

Adults with a disability or long-term health condition are notably less likely to feel able to be active, to perceive they have the opportunity to be active, or to find sports enjoyable and satisfying, compared to those without.

Like adults overall, perceived opportunity to be active has yet to fully recover, remaining 1.9% below November 2018-19 levels.

Disability or long-term health condition (proportion that strongly agree)



[Link to data tables](#)

Arrows show change from 12 months ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

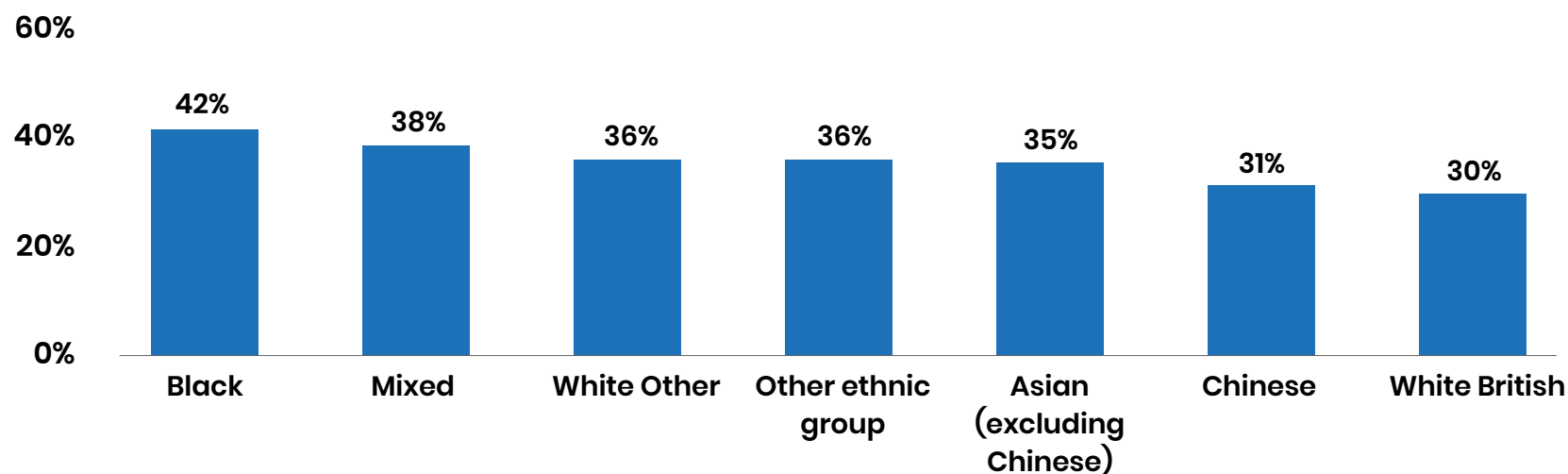


Attitudes are higher among Black and Mixed adults

Black and adults of Mixed ethnicity are more likely to report that they strongly agree to all three attitudes than adults overall. In contrast, White British adults are less likely to find sports enjoyable and satisfying.

Across all groups, the trends broadly follow those of adults overall. The only reportable difference is that Asian (excluding Chinese) adults remain slightly further below pre-pandemic (Nov 18-19) levels, than adults overall, for perceived opportunity to be active (down 2.1%).

I find sport **enjoyable** and satisfying (proportion that strongly agree)



[Link to data tables](#)



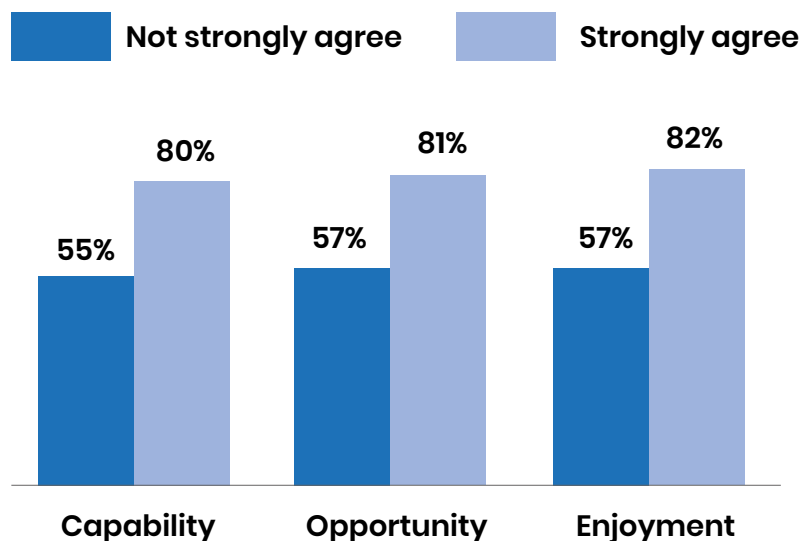
This matters because...

There's a positive association between positive attitudes and activity levels

Those who strongly agree they feel they have the ability to be active, the opportunity to be active, and enjoy being active are more likely to be active than those who don't strongly agree to these statements.

This reinforces the importance of the COM-B model in understanding those factors that influence activity levels.

Active: 150+ minutes a week

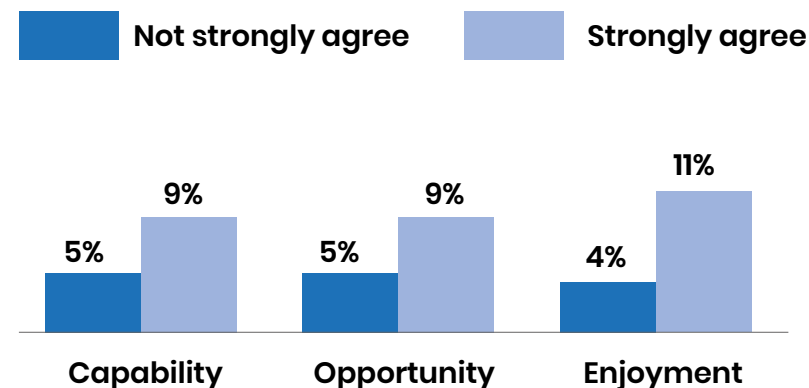


There's a positive association between positive attitudes and volunteering

Those who strongly agree they feel they have the ability to be active, the opportunity to be active, and enjoy being active are more likely to regularly volunteer to support sport and physical activity than those who don't strongly agree to these statements.

This illustrates that not only is the COM-B model relevant to activity levels but it also applies to volunteering behaviours

Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year



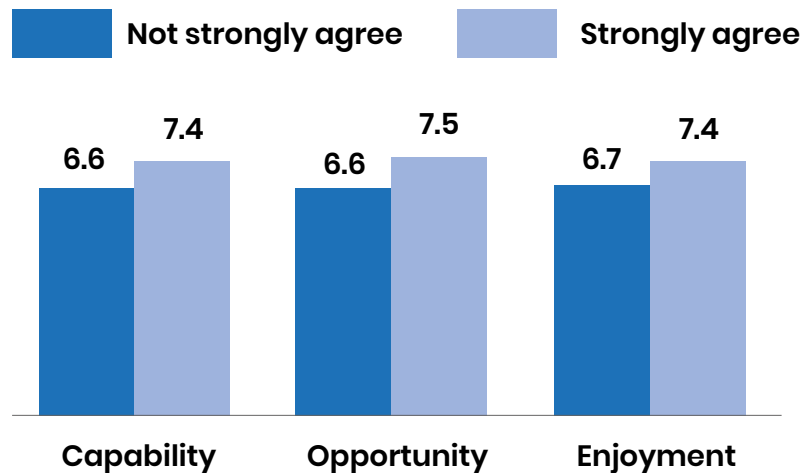
This matters because...

There's a positive association between positive attitudes and wellbeing

Those who strongly agree to each of the attitude statements are more likely to have higher mental wellbeing (shown below), individual development and community development scores than those who don't strongly agree to these statements.

Positive experiences have benefits for wider outcomes.

How satisfied are you with your life nowadays (mean score out of 10)

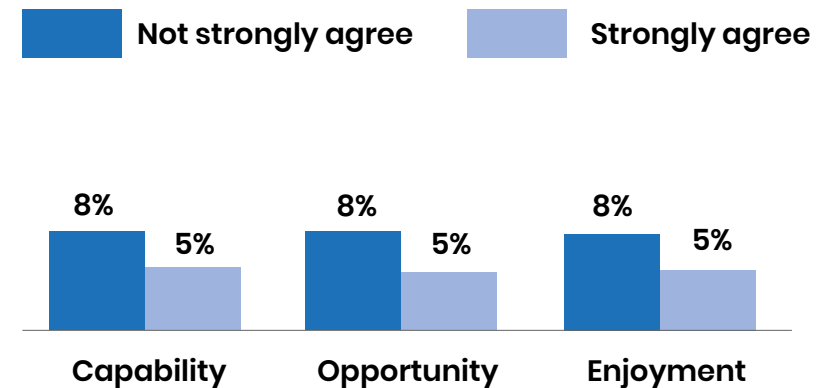


There's a negative association between positive attitudes and loneliness

Those who strongly agree they feel they have the ability to be active, the opportunity to be active, and enjoy being active are less likely to often or always feel lonely than those who don't strongly agree to these statements.

The benefits of a positive experience/attitude towards sport and physical activity are also seen in people's general connectivity with each other.

Often/always feel lonely



Further breakdowns



Local level data

Data for local areas are available for the following measures:

- Levels of activity (regions, Active Partnerships and local authorities)
- Volunteering (regions, Active Partnerships and local authorities)
- Loneliness (regions and Active Partnerships).

Additional demographic groups

Data for additional demographic groups are available in the accompanying data tables, covering:

- faith
- working status
- stage of education
- pregnant or with a child under the age of one.

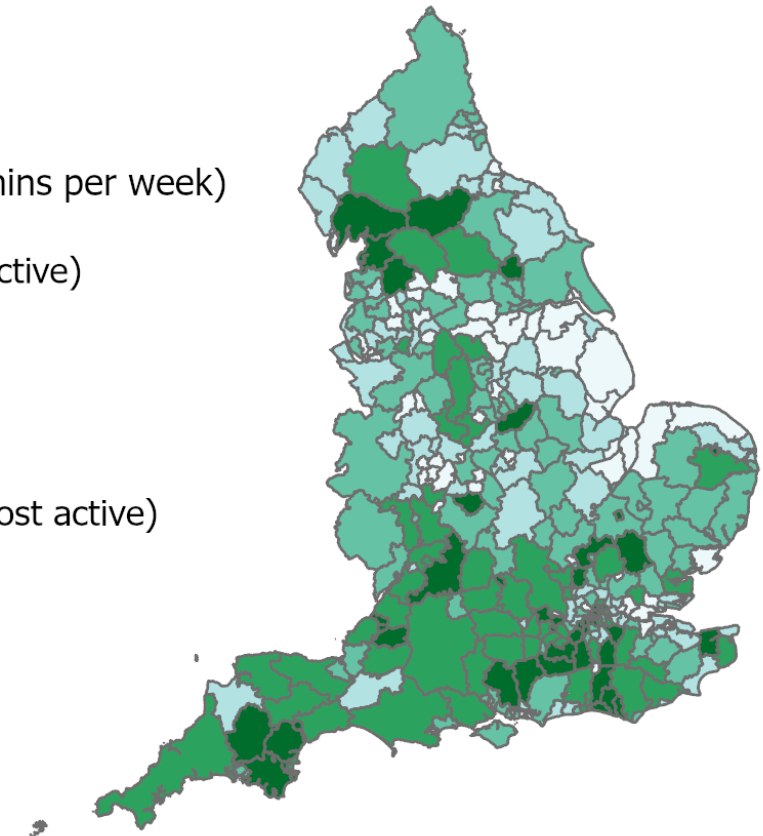
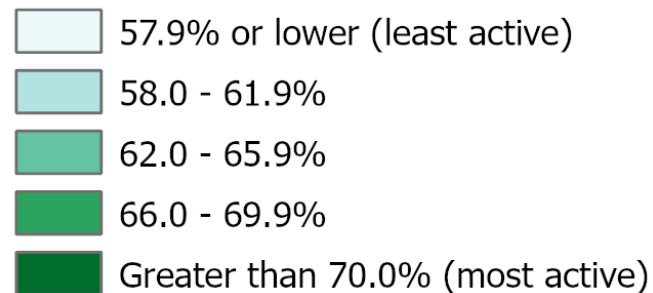
Exploring the data

Please use the [Active Lives Online Tool](#) to run your own analysis of the data – this will be updated with the latest data shortly after its publication.

Activity across England

Active

(an average of at least 150 mins per week)



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Sport England 100033111 2023

Definitions



Moderate activity is defined as activity where you raise your heart rate.

Vigorous activity is where you're out of breath or are sweating (you may not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for breath).

Muscle tension is where the effort of the activity was usually enough to make your muscles feel some tension, shake or feel warm.

More information on measures and demographics



NS-SEC groups are defined as:

- Most affluent (NS-SEC 1-2): managerial, administrative and professional occupations (e.g. chief executive, doctor, actor, journalist).
- Mid-affluent (NS-SEC 3-5): intermediate, lower supervisory and technical occupations; self-employed and small employers (e.g. auxiliary nurse, secretary, plumber, gardener, train driver).
- Least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8): semi-routine and routine occupations; long-term unemployed or never worked (e.g. post man, shop assistant, bus driver).
- Students and other (NS-SEC 9).

Limiting disability and long-term health condition

is defined as an individual reporting they have a physical or mental health condition or illness that's lasted, or is expected to last, 12 months or more, and that this has a substantial effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

Impairment types cover matters that limit day-to-day life, including chronic

health conditions (e.g. diabetes and cancer), physical disability (e.g. mobility and dexterity), mental health (e.g. depression and anxiety) and sensory impairments (e.g. hearing and vision).

The White British group within **ethnicity** includes those who say they are White-Irish.

Volunteering roles are all in relation to supporting sport or physical activity and/or a sports organisation or event. They're defined as:


- Organising fundraising for a sports club, organisation or event. Doesn't include general fundraising through taking part in a sports event or activity
- Provided transport to help people other than family members take part
- Coached or instructed an individual or team(s) other than solely for family members
- Refereed, umpired, or officiated at a match, competition or event
- Administrative or committee role e.g. chairman, treasurer, social secretary, first aider, welfare officer
- Stewarded or marshalled
- Provided any other help e.g. helping with refreshments, sports kit or equipment.



The Active Lives Adult Survey is a push-to-web survey.

Carried out by Ipsos, it involves postal mailouts inviting participants to complete the survey online.

The survey can be completed on mobile or desktop devices. A paper questionnaire is also sent out to maximise response rates. [More information on the survey can be found here.](#)

[More information on measures and demographics](#) 

Sample and weighting

The achieved sample was 177,551 (16+).

Data have been weighted to Office for National Statistics (ONS) population measures for geography and key demographics.

Confidence intervals can be found in the linked tables. These indicate that if repeated samples were taken and confidence intervals computed for each sample, 95% of the intervals would contain the true value. Only significant differences are reported within the commentary. Where results are reported as being the same for two groups, any differences fall within the margin of error.

Significance tests can be found in the linked tables. The tests indicate that if repeated samples were taken, 95% of the time we'd get similar findings, i.e. we can be confident that the differences seen in our sampled respondents are reflective of the population. When sample sizes are smaller, confidence intervals are larger, meaning differences between estimates need to be greater to be considered statistically significant.

Population totals are estimated values and have been calculated using ONS mid-year estimates from 2015-2021. Confidence intervals also apply to these. [More detail can be found here.](#)



Sport spectating

While not covered in this report, data tables showing the number of people attending live sports events form part of this release.

[More information on measures and demographics](#) 

Data considerations

How we measure change

Active Lives figures are based on the response of 177,551 adults, which we then scale up to provide an England-wide picture. That means there will naturally be small fluctuations when we compare the figures we have now, with 12 months ago. In accordance with Government Statistical Service good practice guidance, we highlight changes within the report where we're confident there are genuine differences. If the data is showing only small differences which are within the margin of error, they're noted as "no change".

Where we comment on change, this refers to a percentage point (absolute) change.

[Link to data tables](#) 

Suppressed data

During the first six months of surveying, a number of respondents were double counting a gym session and the individual activities they did within the gym. We resolved this problem by rewording the question from May 2016. Due to exercise bike being counted within cycling for leisure and sport, this means we can't report November 15-16 data for either fitness activities or cycling for leisure and sport.

Associations

Where associations between wellbeing, individual and community development and engagement in sport and physical activity are referenced, this doesn't tell us about causality. We don't know the direction of the association or whether we're seeing a direct or indirect link.