SPORT ENGLAND

Active Lives Adult Survey November 2023-24 Report

Published April 2025

sportengland.org

Contents

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 2023 to mid-November 2024. Data is presented for adults aged 16+ in England.

Release dates

This release: 24 April 2025
Next release: 23 April 2026

Find out more

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

Lead statistician

Helen Price - activelives@sportengland.org

Welcome

Nick Pontefract
Chief Strategy Officer

Covering the period from mid-November 2023 to mid-November 2024, this report provides an update on the sport and physical activity behaviours of adults (aged 16+) in England.

As we approach a decade since the first fieldwork started for the Active Lives survey and the government launched its Sporting Future strategy, and five years since the launch of Uniting the Movement, the headline picture is better than ever.

The huge negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on sport and physical activity has been almost completely reversed, with activity levels significantly higher – and inactivity levels significantly lower – than both when the survey began and when we launched Uniting the Movement.

Since we started the survey, just over 2.4 million more adults are regularly active, and nearly half a million fewer adults are inactive. This is down to the hard work, dedication and collaboration of an entire sector, all working towards the same vision: to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

So, these positive results don't belong solely to Sport England; they are owned by thousands of organisations and millions of individuals who work together to use the immense power of sport to make people's lives better.

However, if you scratch beneath the surface, the picture is more mixed. We said in our strategy that we wouldn't stop until everyone had the opportunity, inspiration and freedom to get moving. We haven't achieved this part of our vision yet.

For too many people, the barriers to getting active are still too high: if you are less affluent, or live in a less affluent place, you are much less likely to be active. The same is true if you have a disability or long-term health condition, and women's activity levels are still lower than men's.

This is why our work is disproportionately focused on these groups, to provide more support and more investment targeted towards those who haven't been well served in the past.

But there is still much to be positive about. There has been huge growth in activity levels for older adults – helping support people to live healthier and happier lives for longer. There has also been significant growth in gym and fitness activities, ongoing growth in volunteering in sport and the stabilisation of crucial activities like swimming and team sport, either at or above their pre-pandemic levels.

This report provides the headlines. You can use the more detailed data tables to dig deeper into the results, or visit Active Lives Online, which is updated shortly after each release, to explore trends over time, audiences not covered in this report and more specific activities.

Levels of activity

Definition

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).

All measures refer to 'over the last 28 days' at point of survey completion.

The definition of 'active' is drawn from the Chief Medical Officers' recommendation that adults should do at least 150 minutes of physical activity 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

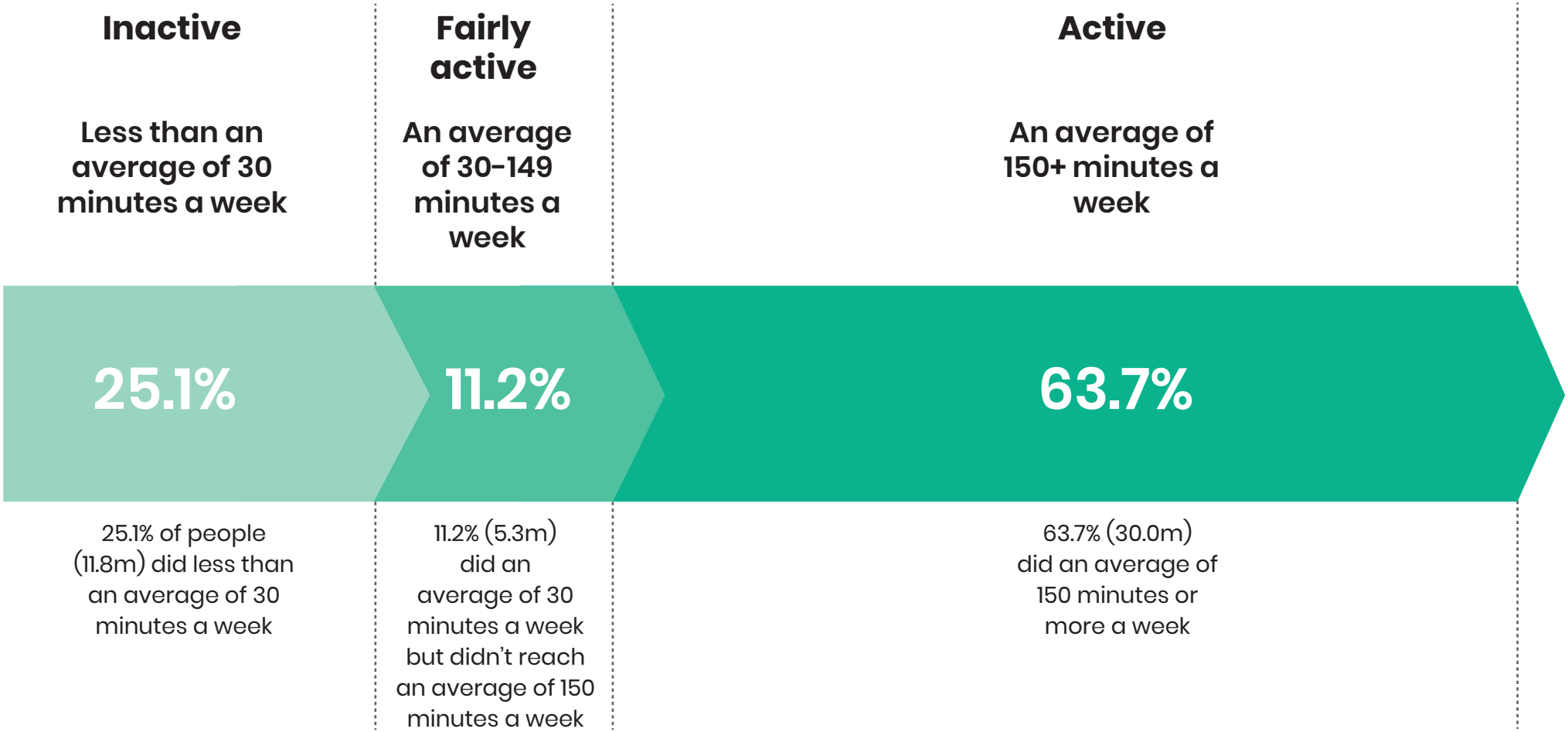
Note: we count most sport and physical activity, but exclude gardening. However, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) does include gardening in its local level physical activity data.

You can view the OHID data here.

Levels of activity

Headlines

Our data shows that, between mid-November 2023 and mid-November 2024, just over six in 10 adults (30 million) achieved 150+ minutes of activity a week.



Link to data tables

Levels of activity

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

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

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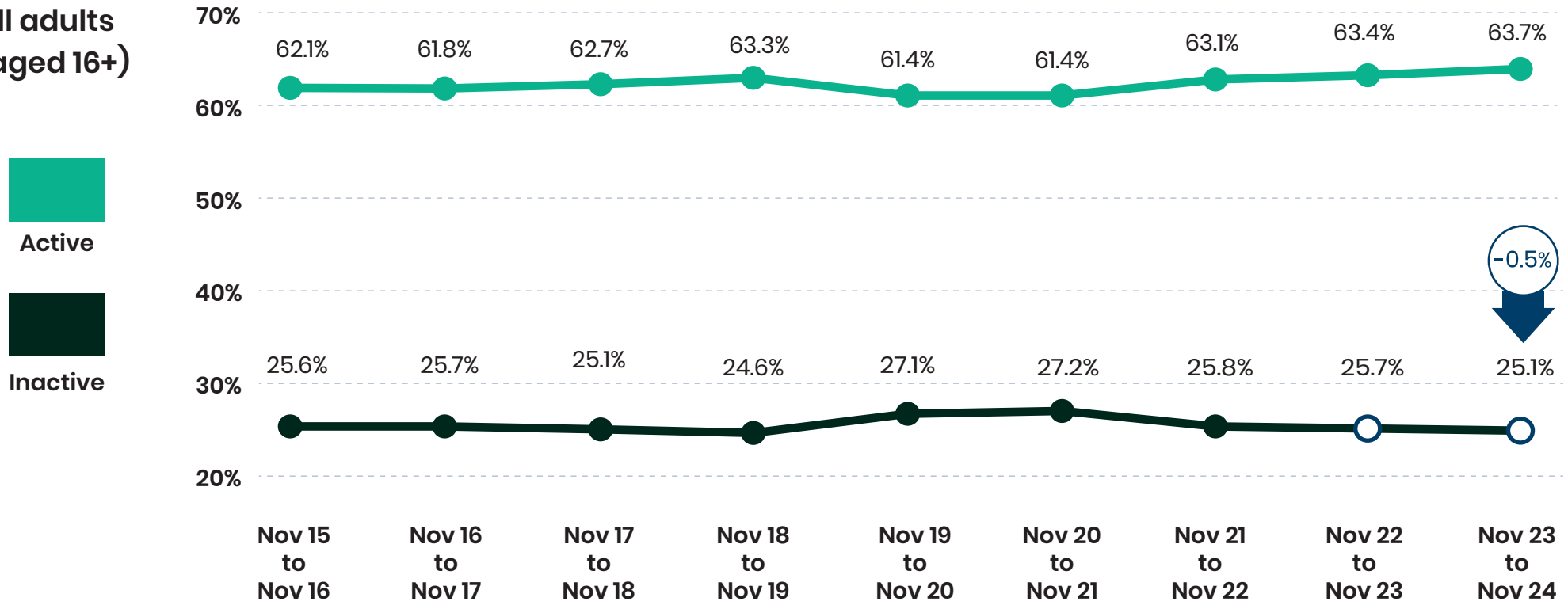
Summary of change

Activity levels have increased over the last 12 months. While there is no reportable change in the proportion reported as either active or fairly active, the proportion who are inactive has fallen by 121,000 (-0.5%), compared to November 2022-23.

There remains growth over the longer term, compared to November 2015-16. The number of adults who are active has increased by 2.4m (+1.6%), while the number who are inactive has decreased by -0.4%. The proportion who are fairly active has also decreased over the same period (-1.2%).



Link to data tables

For details on how we measure change, see the notes pages.

Levels of activity

Active: 150+ minutes a week

Nov 23–24

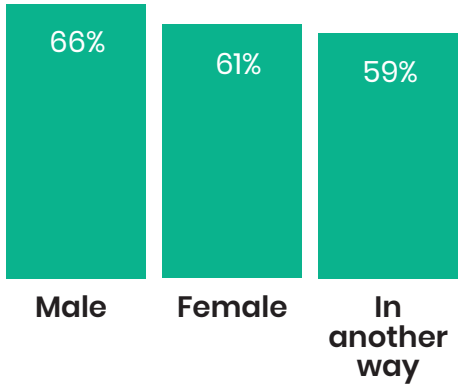
SPORT ENGLAND

Summary of demographic differences

Our data shows there are significant inequalities:

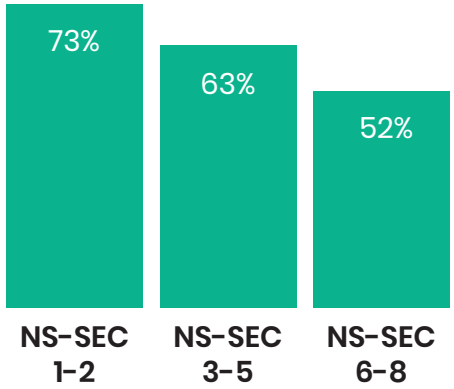
1 Gender

Men (66% or 15.1m) are more likely to be active than women (61% or 14.6m) 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 less likely to be active (52%).

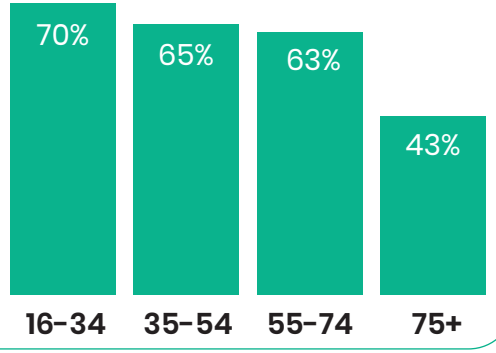


Link to data tables

*See our definitions page for the full definition of each demographic group.

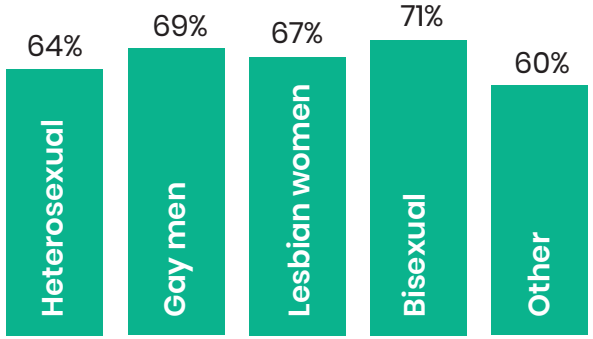
3 Age

Activity levels generally decrease with age, with the sharpest decrease coming at age 75+ (to 43%).



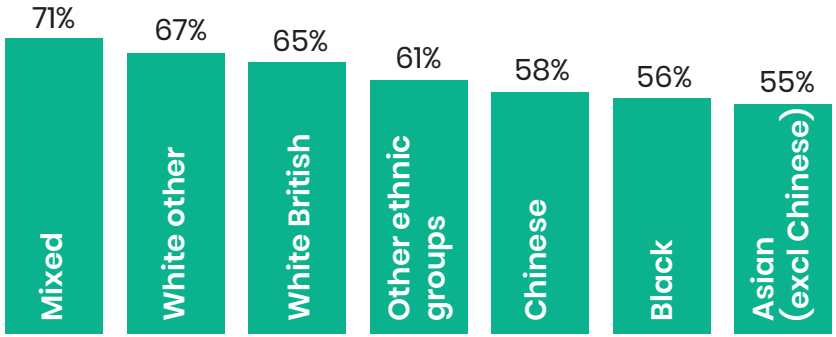
4 Sexual orientation

Gay men and bisexual adults are both more likely to be active than heterosexual adults.



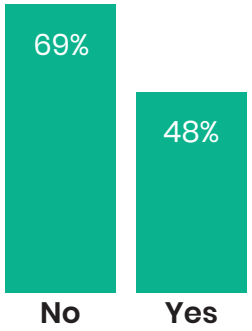
5 Ethnicity

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* (48%) than for those without (69%).



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

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

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Activity levels have increased for both men and women over the last eight years

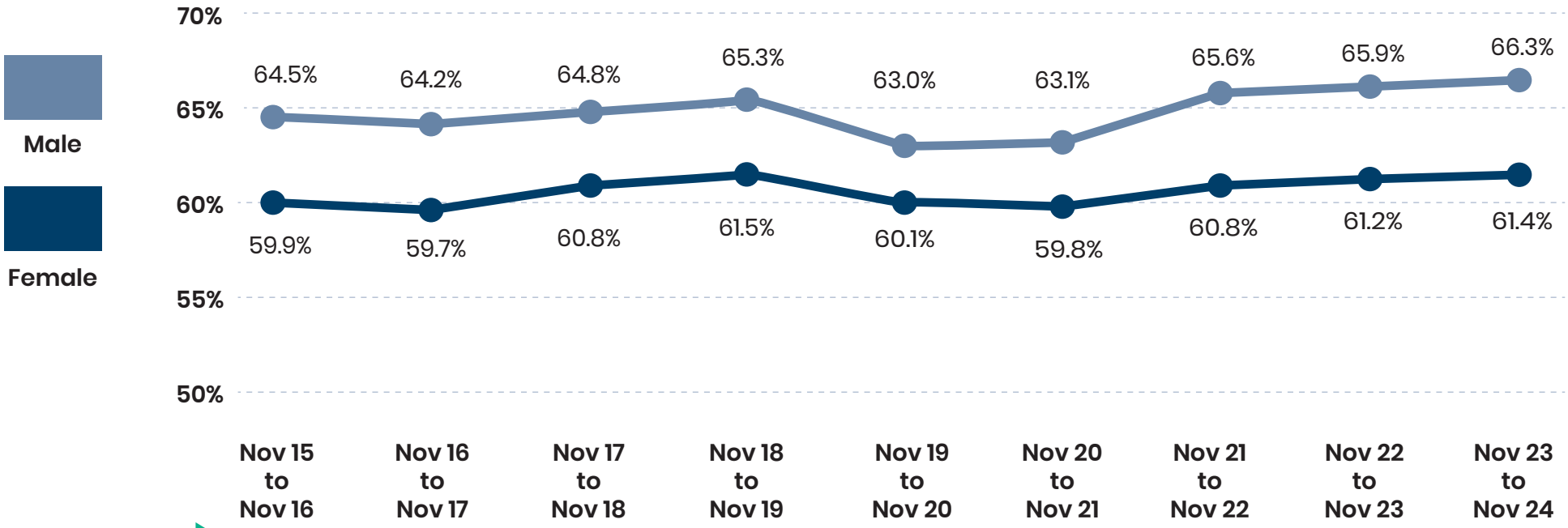
Over the longer term, growth has been similar for both men and women, with 1.2m (1.8%) more active men and 1.0m (1.5%) more active women compared to November 2015-16.

Despite this, neither men nor women have seen a statistically reportable change in activity levels compared to 12 months ago, although women have seen a small drop in those who are inactive (down 0.7% to 26.3%) over the same period.

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

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 (due to small sample sizes) and can be found in the data tables.

Active: 150+ minutes a week



Link to data tables

Levels of activity

Ages 16-54

Nov 23-24

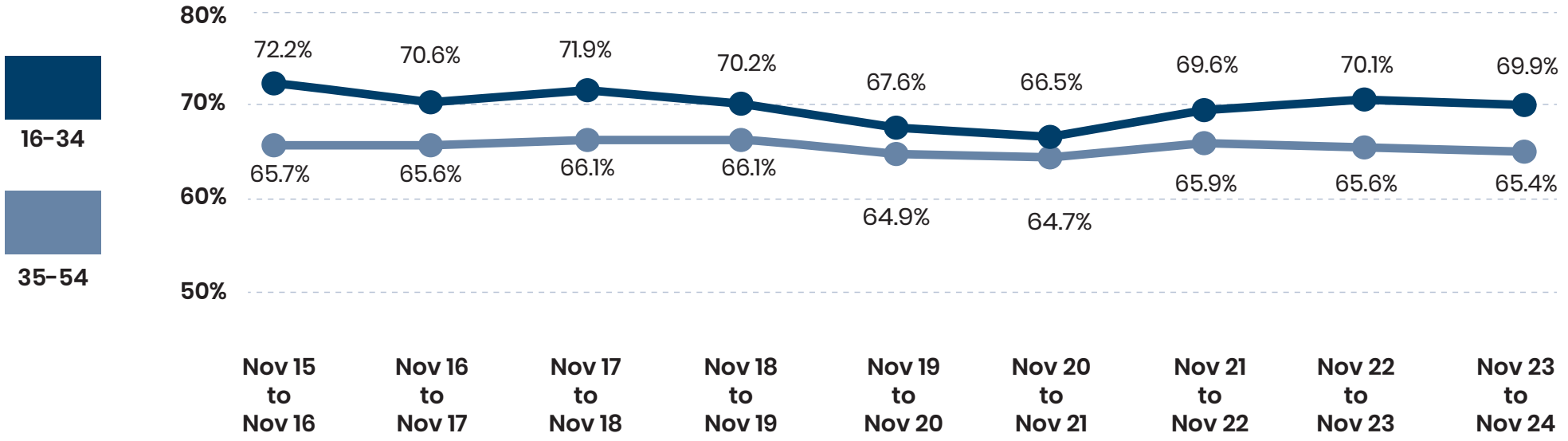
Activity levels have stabilised among younger adults

Among young people aged 16-34, activity levels are unchanged over the last two years, indicating a stabilisation at pre-pandemic (Nov 18-19) levels following long-term decreases. The proportion who are active remains 2.3%, or 217,000 young adults, down compared to eight years ago (Nov 15-16).

Among the 35-54 age group, there's 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



Link to data tables

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

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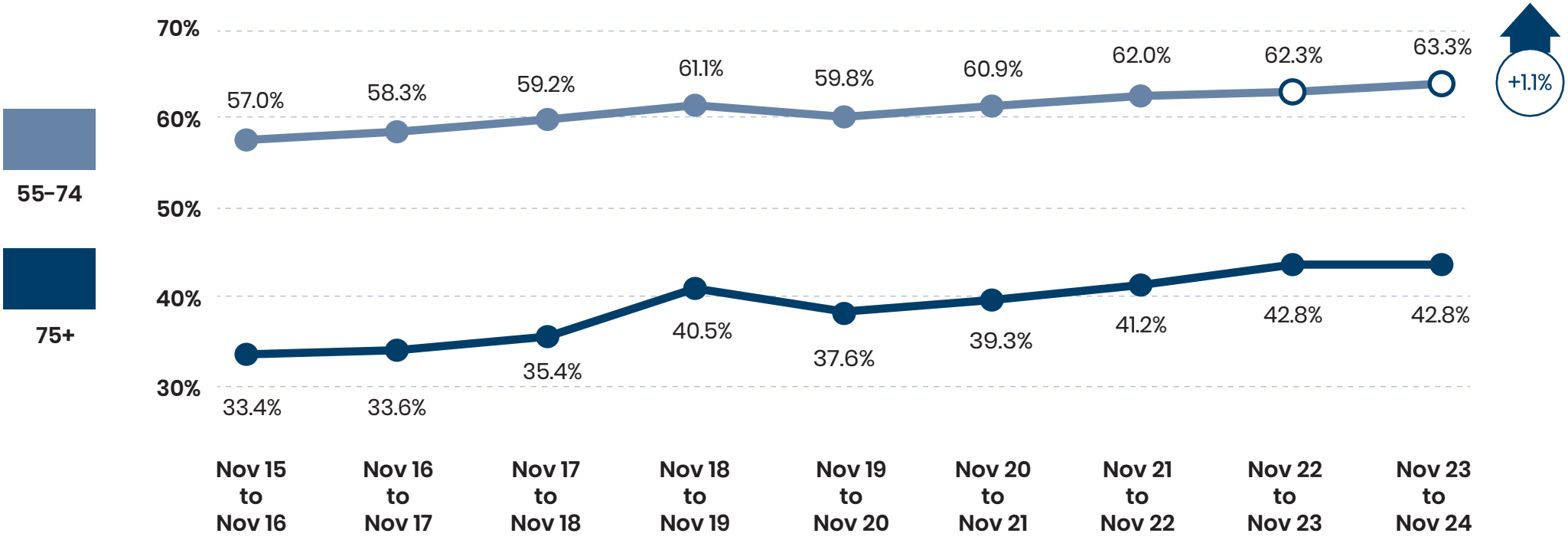
ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Activity levels continue to grow among older adults

Both adults aged 55-74 and 75+ continue to see a slight but steady increase in activity levels over the last three years. Among those aged 55-74, the latest result represents an increase of just under 380,000 (1.1%) adults aged 55-74 who are active, compared to 12 months ago. This is part of a long-term increase of 1.9m (6.4%) compared to eight years ago (Nov 15-16).

While adults aged 75+ have seen no statistically reportable change in the proportion active compared to 12 months ago, we continue to see a long-term increase of 600,000 (9.4%) compared to eight years ago (Nov 15-16).

Active: 150+ minutes a week



Link to data tables

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

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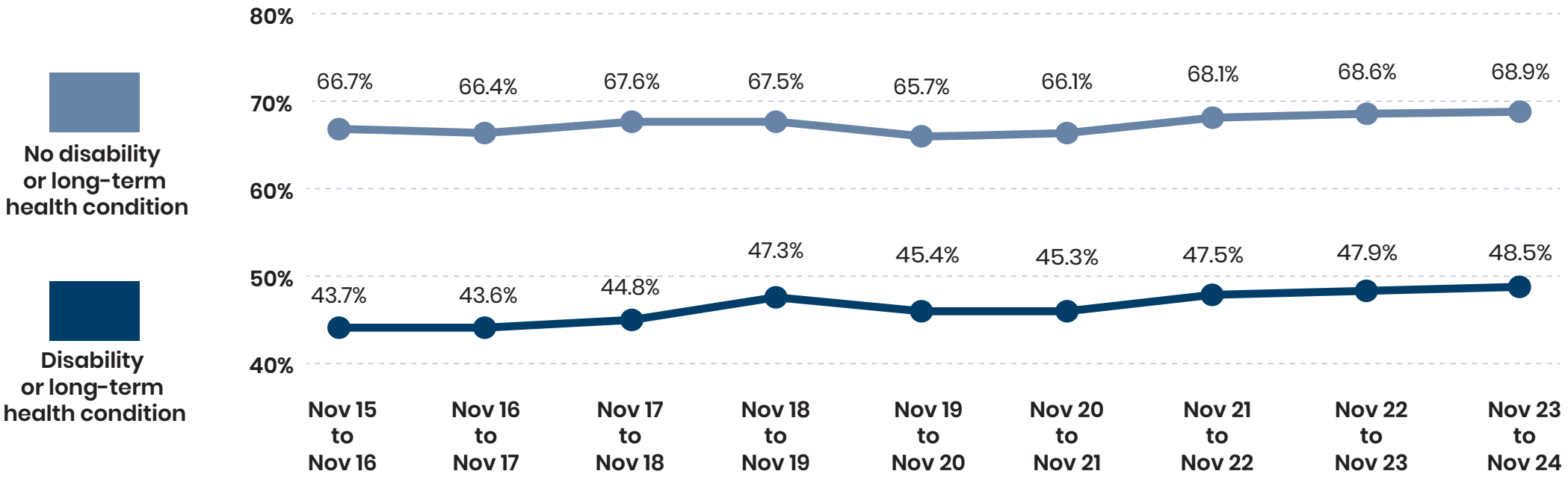
ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Activity levels remain stable both for those with and without a disability or long-term health condition

While the proportion active remains unchanged compared to 12 months ago for those with a disability or long-term health condition, the proportion who are inactive has fallen slightly (down 1.3% to 39.5%).

Before the pandemic, activity levels were increasing and, as such, there are 4.8% more active adults with a disability or long-term health condition compared to eight years ago (Nov 15-16). This long-term growth is greater than for those without a disability or long-term health condition, where the proportion active is up by 2.2% over the same period.

Active: 150+ minutes a week



Link to data tables

The full definition for disability and long-term health condition can be found in our definitions page.

Nov 23-24

Significant inequalities continue to exist

We have seen no statistically reportable change in the proportion who are active for any Black, Asian or minority ethnic group compared to November 15-16. White British adults have seen activity levels increase over the same period (up 2.4%).

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

Active: 150+ minutes a week

Link to data tables

Socio-economic groups

Active Lives Nov 23-24 Adult Survey

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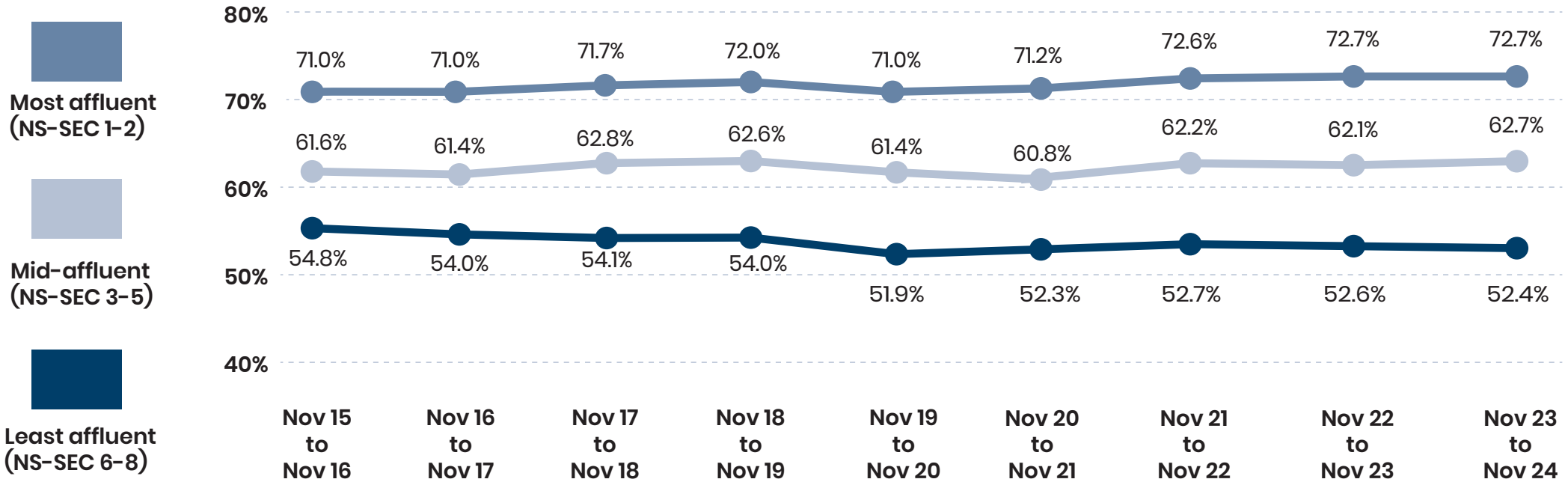
Inequalities in activity levels have increased between affluence groups

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

There have been no statistically reportable changes in activity levels by social grade compared to 12 months ago.

Over the longer term, we have seen long-term growth in activity levels among the most affluent (NS-SEC 1-2), with those who are active increasing by 1.6% compared to eight years ago (Nov 15-16). In contrast, among the least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8) we have seen the proportion active drop by 2.5% over the same period. There is an increased gap in activity levels between the two.

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.

Deprivation of place

Nov 23-24

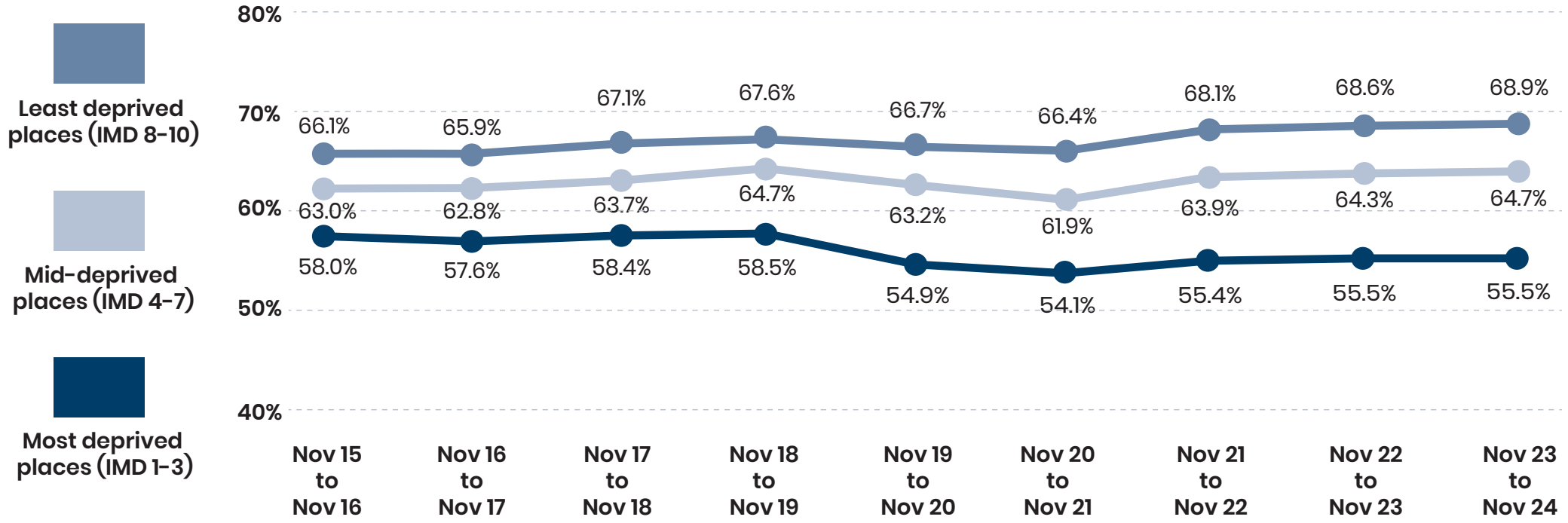
The divide in activity levels based on where someone lives is widening

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

The proportion of active adults remains unchanged compared to 12 months ago, regardless of where they live.

Over the longer term, we're seeing increases in activity levels among adults living in the the least (IMD 8-10, +2.9%) and mid- (IMD 4-7, +1.7%) deprived places compared to eight years ago (Nov 15-16), whereas among adults living in the most deprived places (IMD 1-3) the proportion who are active has fallen by 2.4% over the same period.

Active: 150+ minutes a week



Link to data tables

Note: Deprivation of place is taken from the Office for National Statistics' Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The numbers referenced refer to deciles.

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

SPORT ENGLAND

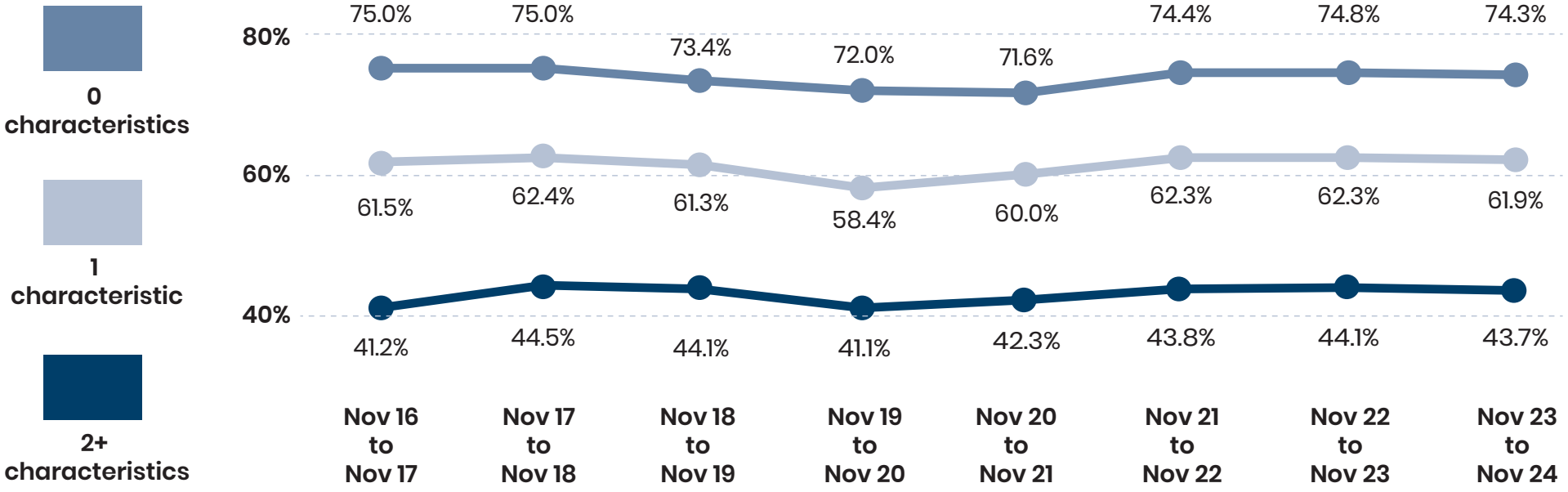
ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Activity levels are lowest for those with two or more characteristics of inequality

Adults with two or more characteristics of inequality are the least likely to be active, with only 44% meeting the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines – compared to 62% of those with one characteristic and 74% with no characteristics of inequality. Inequalities are, however, narrowing.

While the proportion active has not changed compared to 12 months ago, it has increased by 2.5% compared to seven years ago (Nov 16-17) for those with 2+ characteristics of inequality. In contrast, there has been no change over the same period for those with no and one characteristic.

Active: 150+ minutes a week



Link to data tables

Note: Some of the data used to compile the Inequalities Metric was not introduced into the survey until Nov 2016-17 and, as such, data for the metric cannot be reported before that date. See the definitions page for more details on how the metric is comprised.

Nov 23-24

There's an increasing variation in activity levels across English regions

The regional divide in activity levels is increasing, with more long-term growth coming from areas that generally already have higher activity levels. No region has seen a statistically reportable difference in the proportion active compared to 12 months ago.

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

Active: 150+ minutes a week

Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

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There's an increasing variation in activity levels by local authority

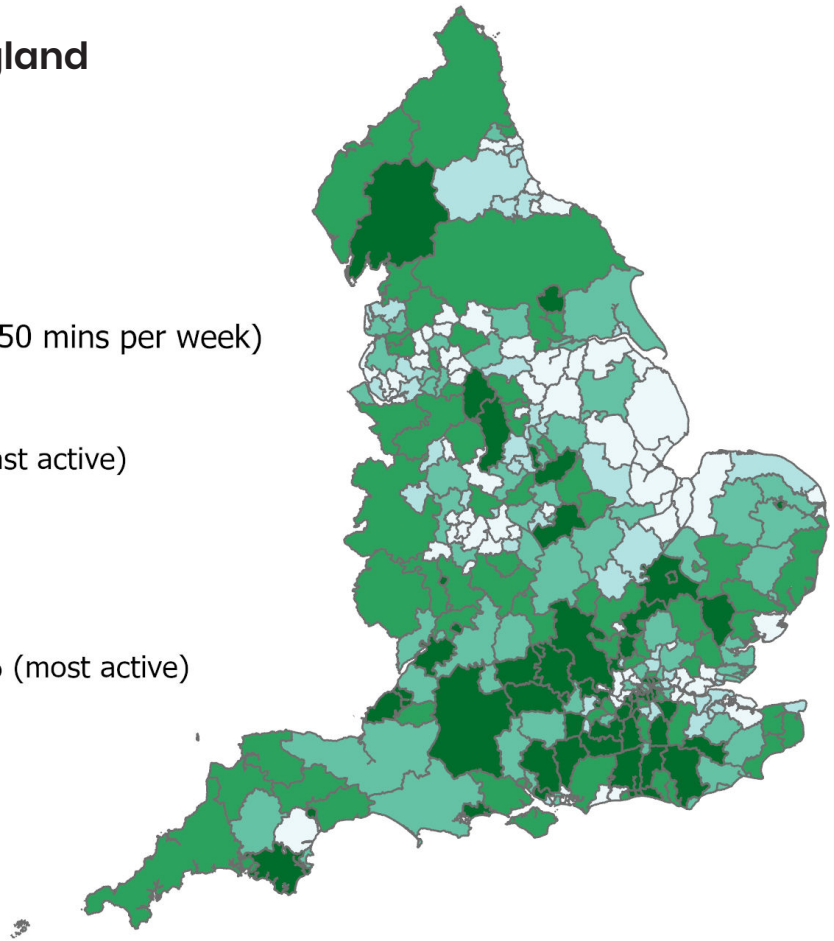
Activity levels by local authority area vary greatly across the country, from a high of 78% active in the Mole Valley (South East region) to a low of just 46% active in Blackpool (North West region). This compares to a range of 77% down to 50% in November 2015-16.

The largest increases over the longer term (compared to Nov 15-16) have been seen in Braintree and Breckland (East region), Harborough (East Midlands), Kingston upon Thames (London region), Adur, Eastleigh, Hart, Mole Valley, Tandridge and West Berkshire (South East region), East Suffolk and West Suffolk (South West region) and Staffordshire Moorlands (West Midlands region).

Decreases over the same period have been seen in Luton (East region), Chesterfield, East Lindsey and North Kesteven (East Midlands region), Bexley (London region), Blackpool and Oldham (North West region), Arun (South East region), Teignbridge (South West region) and Redditch and Walsall (West Midlands).

Please refer to the data tables for these figures.

Activity across England



Link to data tables

Muscle strength

Definition

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 is also captured through the Health Survey for England (HSE). The HSE includes housework, manual gardening and DIY within its estimates but doesn't include walking.

As such, the estimates across the two surveys aren't 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 activity is unchanged overall

Those doing two or more sessions of muscle strengthening activities a week remains unchanged compared to November 19-20. In total, 20.6m (44%) met the guideline across November 23-24.

This guideline is specifically relevant to older adults and we continue to see a decrease in the likelihood to meet it as age increases. Despite this, we have seen an increase of just over half a million (+1.0%) adults aged 55+ meeting the guideline since November 2019-20.

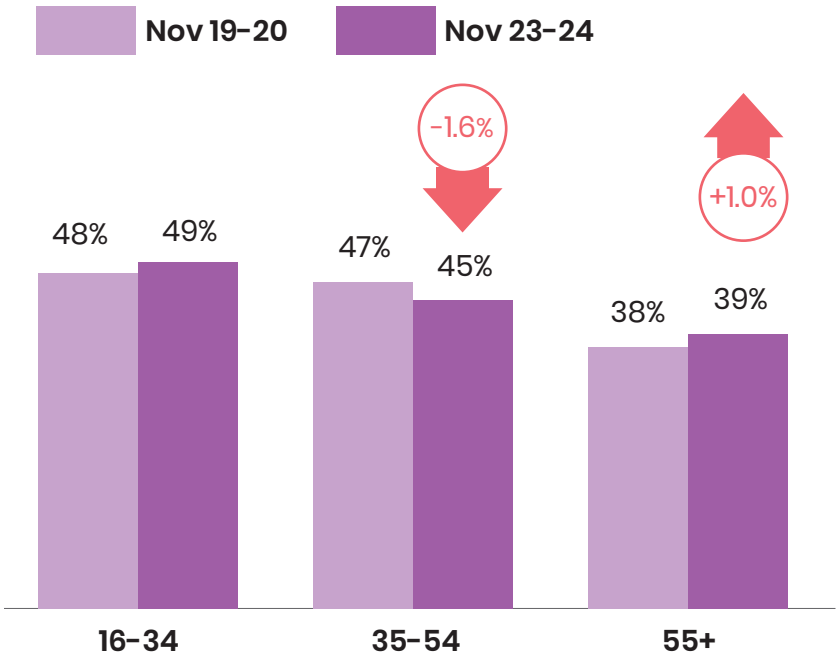
We also note the following differences for all adults by demographic group:

- Men (47%) are more likely than women (41%) to meet the guideline.
- There remains a large gap between those with a disability or long-term health condition and those without meeting the guideline (31% vs 48%).
- The least affluent groups (NS-SEC 6-8) remain less likely to meet the guideline than the most affluent groups (32% vs 52%).
- Adults from Asian (excluding Chinese) (37%), Black (41%), Chinese (41%) and other ethnic groups (40%) continue to be less likely to meet the guideline.

Link to data tables

Arrows show change from four years ago. No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

Two+ sessions a week of muscle strengthening physical activity



Types of activity

Definition

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

Link to data tables

Types of activity

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

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

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Numbers taking part in fitness activities continue to increase

The number of adults walking for leisure has dropped slightly compared to 12 months ago (down 164,000 or 0.9%), indicating a slight downward trend following the highs seen in Nov 20-21. However, levels remain high and up over the longer term, with 4.3m (+6.8%) more adults going for a walk compared to eight years ago (Nov 15-16).

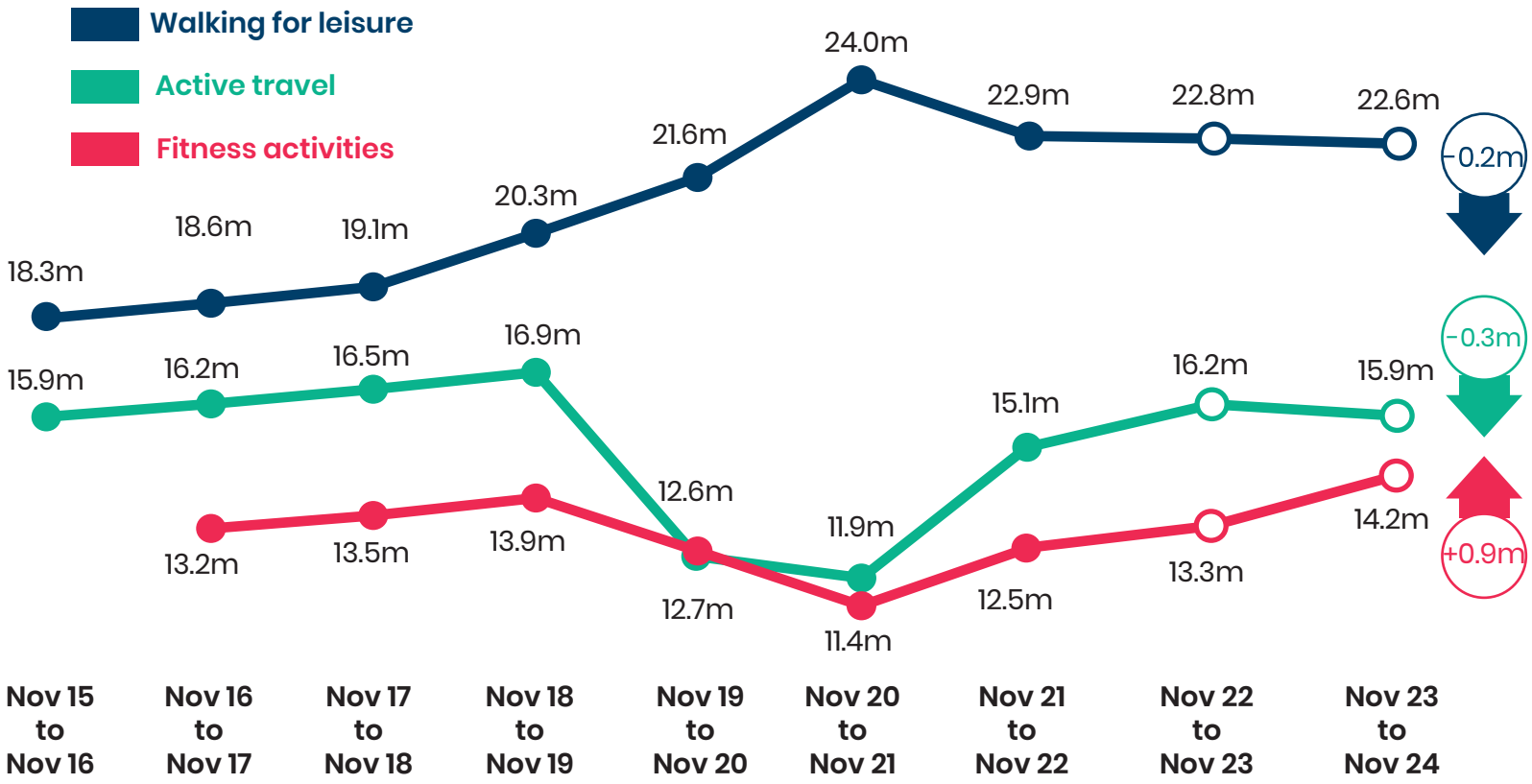
Numbers walking or cycling to get to places (active travel) have fallen back slightly compared to 12 months ago (down 334,000 or 1.1%) and now sit level with numbers seen back in Nov 15-16.

In contrast, fitness numbers continue to recover, with 904,000 (+1.6%) more adults having taken part in fitness activities compared to 12 months ago. This represents just over one million (+0.8%) more adults taking part compared to seven years ago (Nov 16-17).

Note: Fitness data is not available before Nov 16-17; please see the notes page for more details.

Link to data tables

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



Types of activity

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

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

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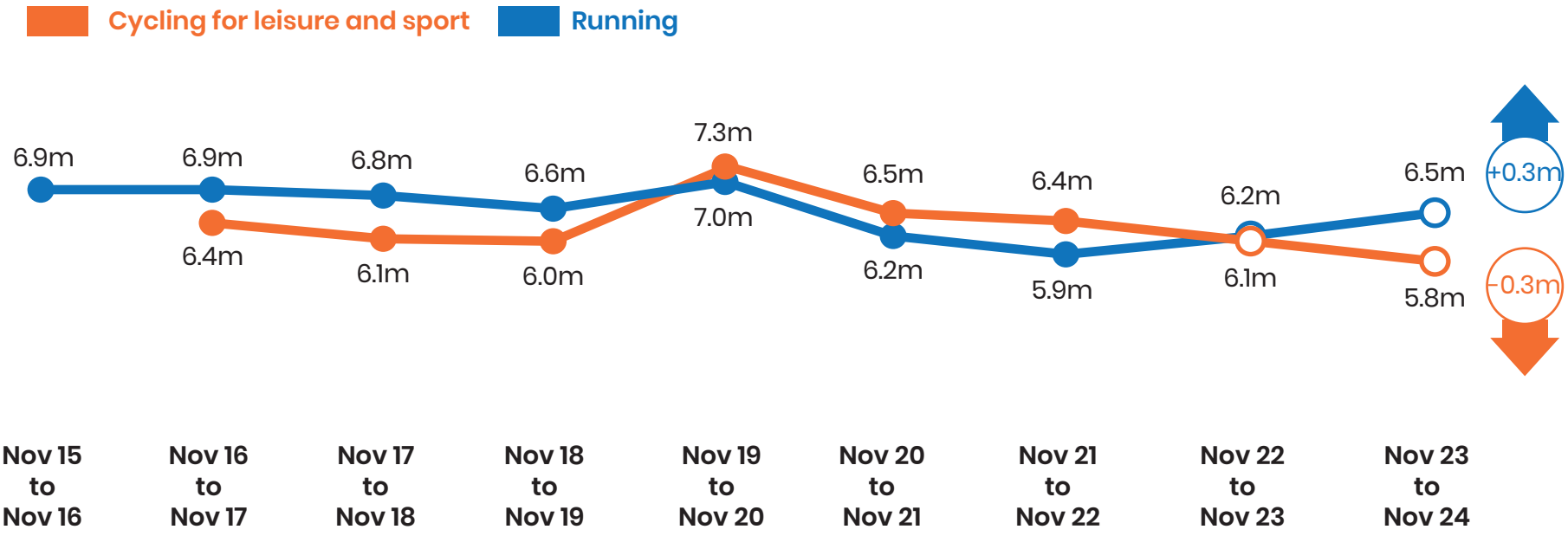
Cycling has fallen to the lowest number recorded in seven years

Cycling numbers continue to fall back, with 304,000 (-0.8%) fewer adults cycling compared to 12 months ago. This represents a return to the downward trend seen previously. There are 550,000 (-1.9%) fewer cyclists now than seven years ago (Nov 16-17).

Running numbers have increased, by 349,000 (+0.6%), compared to 12 months ago, suggesting an emerging upward trend. Despite this, numbers remain down over the longer term, with 307,000 (-1.5%) fewer runners compared to eight years ago (Nov 15-16). Women appear to be driving the resurgence in running (up 250,000 or 0.9% compared to 12 months ago vs no change for men).

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



Note: Cycling data is not available before Nov 16-17; please see the notes page for more details.

Link to data tables

Types of activity

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

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

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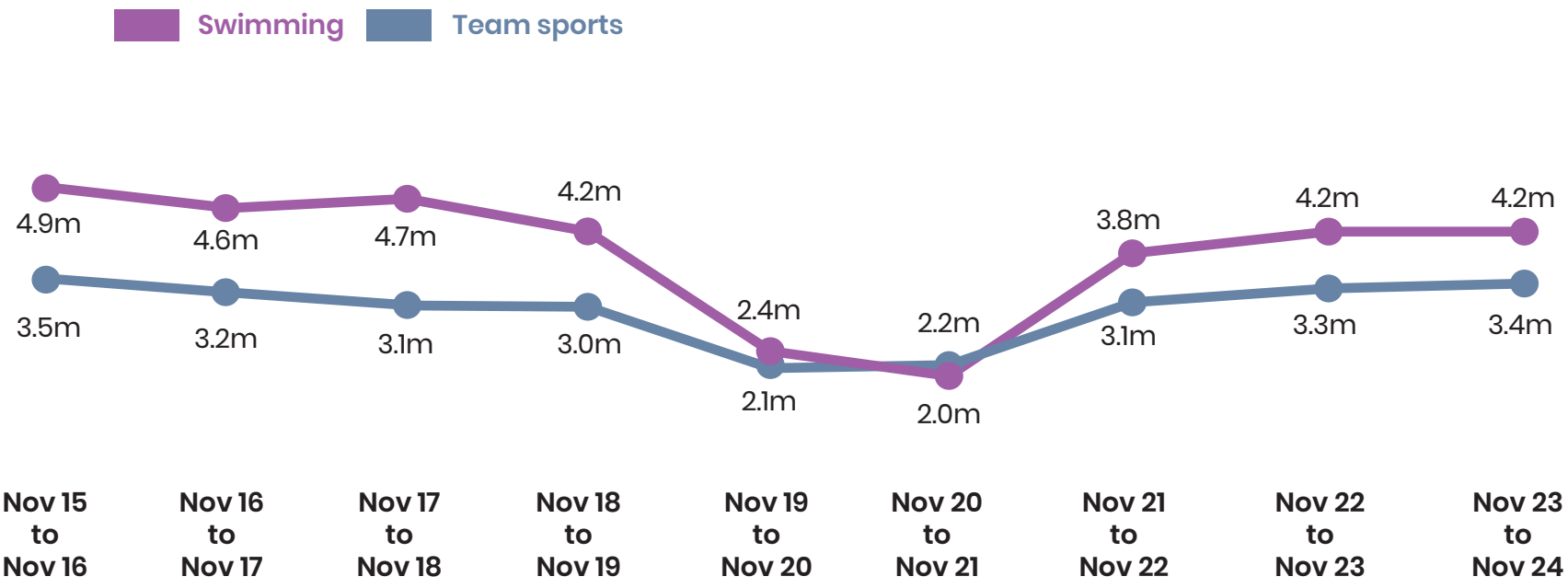
Team sport numbers are not far behind the highs seen eight years ago

Swimming numbers remain unchanged compared to 12 months ago, with 4.2m (8.9%) adults having taken part at least twice in the last 28 days. Numbers are down over the longer term, following a period of drops between Nov 15-16 and Nov 18-19. There are currently 658,000 (-2.0%) fewer adults swimming compared to eight years ago (Nov 15-16).

There has been no statistically reportable change in team sports numbers compared to 12 months ago. Numbers are, however, closer to those seen eight years ago than any point since, albeit it remains that 34,000 (-0.5%) fewer adults are playing now than in Nov 15-16.

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



Link to data tables

Volunteering

Definition

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.

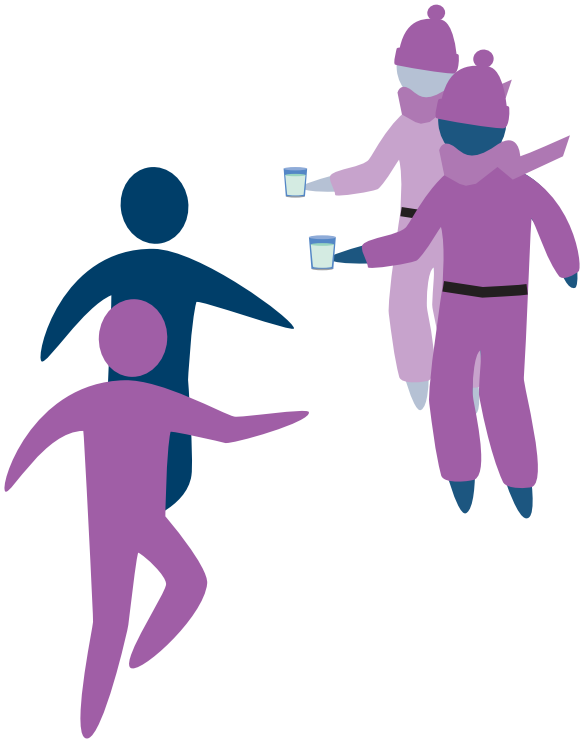
A person counts as having volunteered if:

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).

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.



Volunteering

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

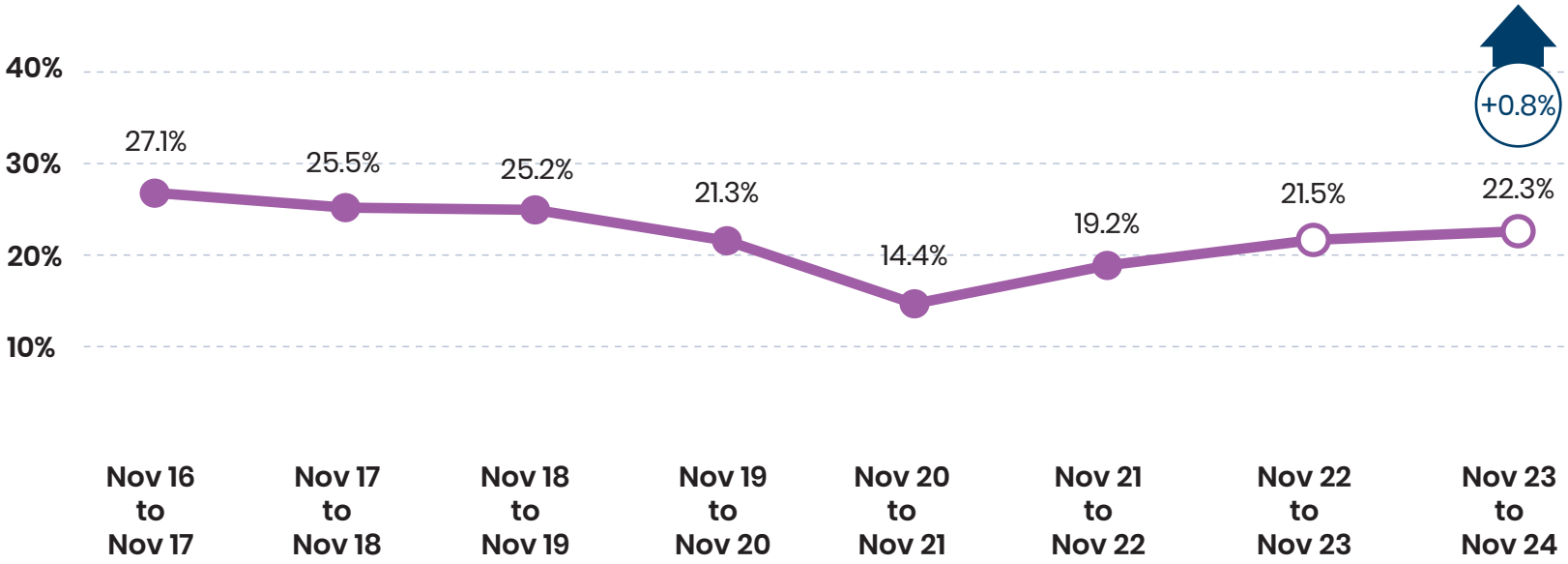
Volunteer levels have seen a small increase but remain down over the longer term

Nov 23-24 ACTIVE LIVES ADULT SURVEY

Roughly 10.5m adults (22.3%) gave up their time, across the 12-month period from mid-November 2023 to mid-November 2024, to support sport and physical activity. This is 488,000 (0.8%) more than the previous 12 months.

However, volunteering levels have been falling over the long term, accelerated by the pandemic. And while this increase is promising, we're yet to see volunteering return to pre-pandemic (Nov 18-19) levels. There remain 1.7m (4.8%) fewer volunteers compared to seven years ago (Nov 16-17).

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



Link to data tables

Arrows show change to November 16-17 (seven years ago). No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

SPORT ENGLAND

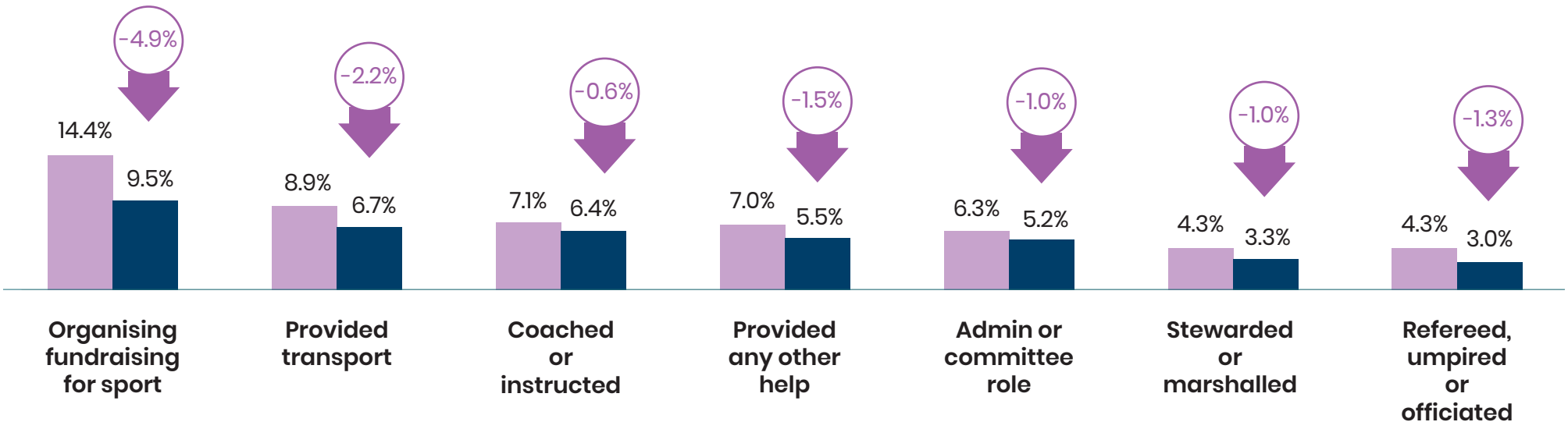
ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Coaching levels are recovering

Fewer adults have done each volunteering role compared to seven years ago (Nov 16-17), with drops generally around 1-2%. We have, however, seen larger drops in those organising fundraising for a sports club, organisation or event, with 4.9% or 2.0m fewer adults undertaking this role. Despite this, there has been a small increase compared to 12 months ago (+0.6%) and it remains the most common role, with 9.5% of adults (4.5m) having undertaken it in Nov 23-24.

We have also recorded a small increase in those who have coached or instructed compared to 12 months ago (+0.3%), bringing rates back in line with pre-pandemic (Nov 18-19) but remaining down over the longer term (-0.6%). The proportions doing all other roles remains down.

Roles undertaken to support sport and physical activity in the past 12 months



Link to data tables

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

SPORT ENGLAND

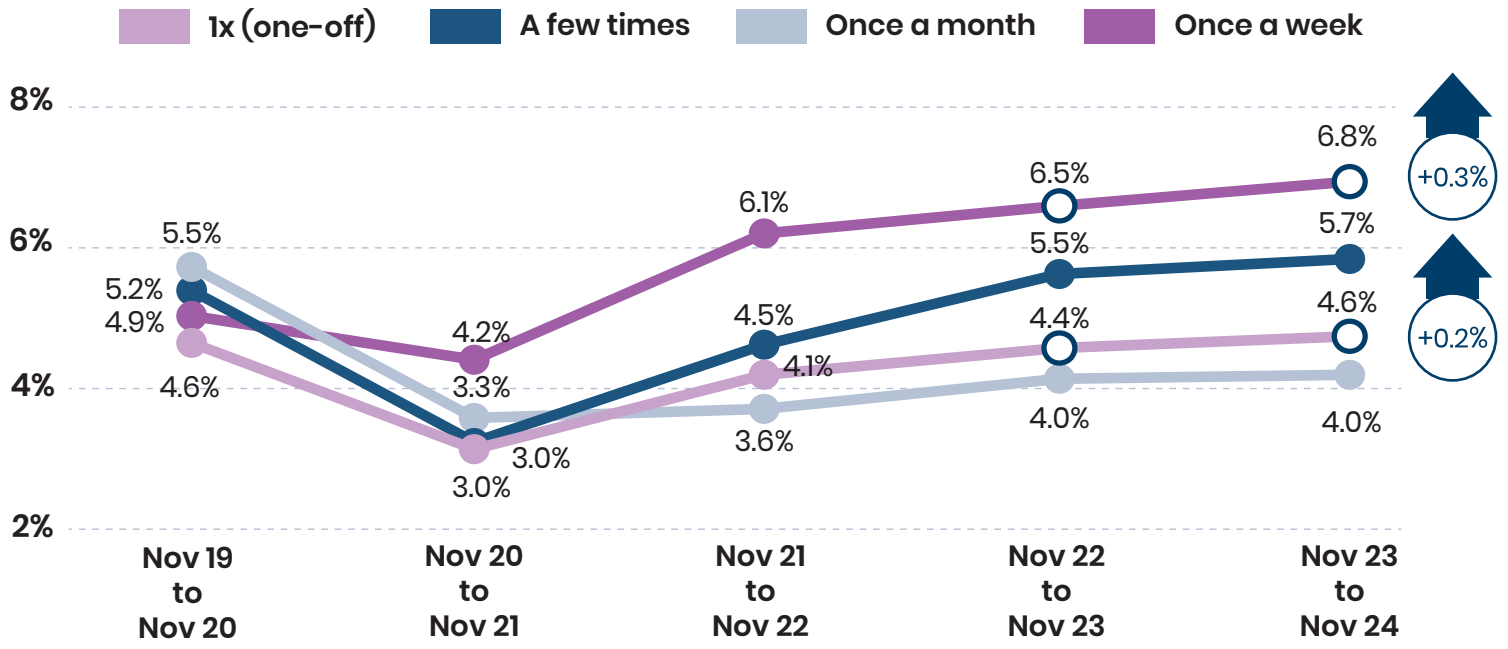
ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

We continue to see people volunteer more regularly

The proportion of adults volunteering at least once a week throughout the year has seen another small increase compared to 12 months ago, indicating a small upward trend in those volunteering most often since the end of the pandemic restrictions (Nov 21-22).

In contrast, numbers volunteering once a month remain low, with no change compared to 12 months ago, and 597,000 (-1.5%) fewer doing so compared to November 2019-20.

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



Note:
Data is only available since Nov 2019-20 for this metric.

Link to data tables

Volunteering

Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year

Population

Active Lives Adult Survey Nov 23-24

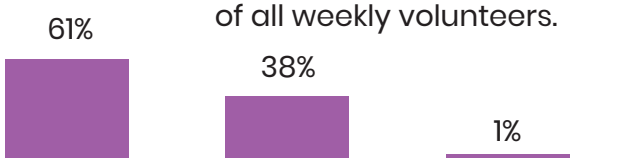
SPORT ENGLAND

Summary of demographic profile

Our data shows there are significant inequalities:

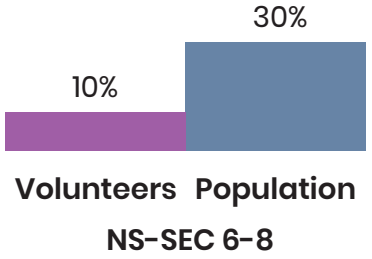
1 Gender

Men are more likely to regularly volunteer to support sport and physical activity than women, comprising 61% of all weekly volunteers.



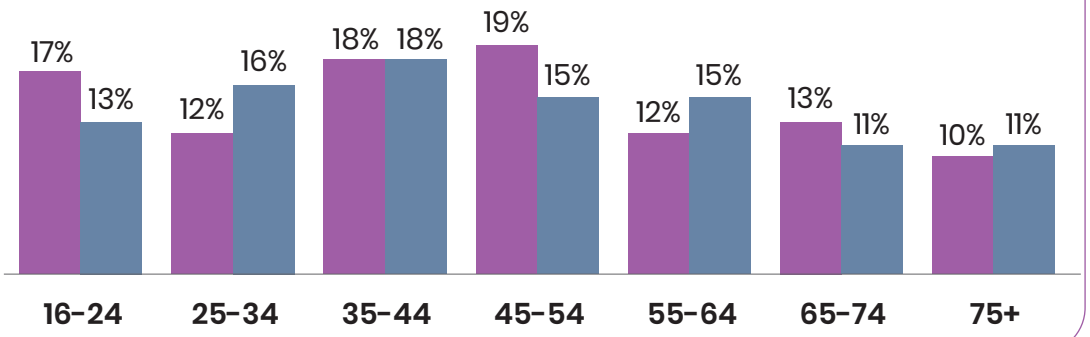
2 Socio-economic groups

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



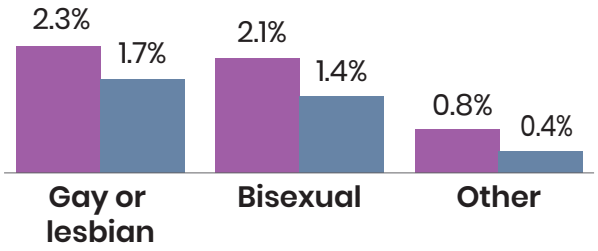
3 Age

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



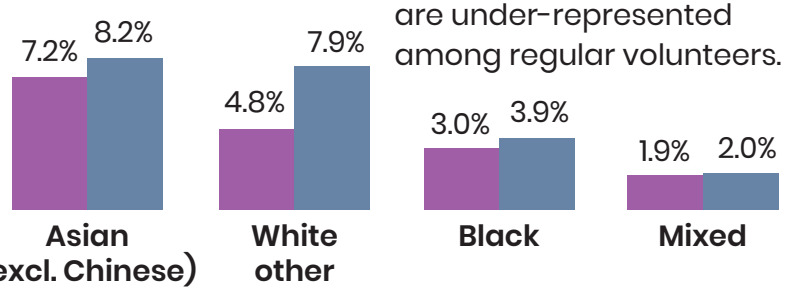
4 Sexual orientation

All three minority groups are slightly over-represented among regular volunteers.



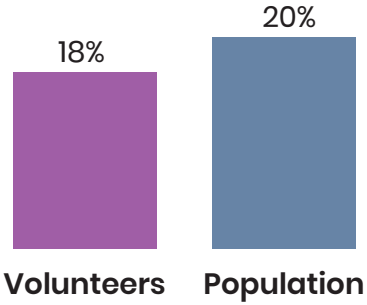
5 Ethnicity

Adults from Black and White other 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 18% of regular volunteers, despite comprising 20% of the population as a whole.



Link to data tables

*See our definitions page for the full definition of each demographic group.

Volunteering

Gender and age

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

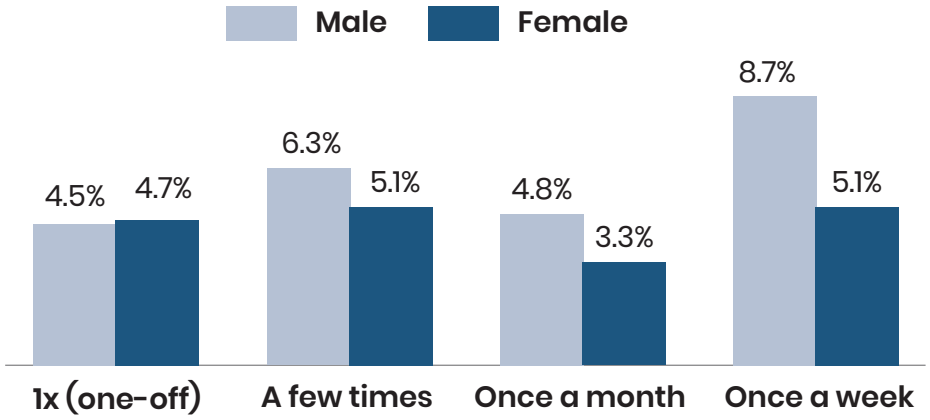
SPORT ENGLAND

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Gender

Men (25%) are more likely to volunteer than women (19%). This gap is widest for those volunteering once a week throughout the year, while men and women are equally likely to volunteer as a one-off in the last year.

Men and women are following the same overall patterns in volunteering, both overall and by the different frequencies.



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 (due to small sample sizes) and can be found in the data tables.

Link to data tables

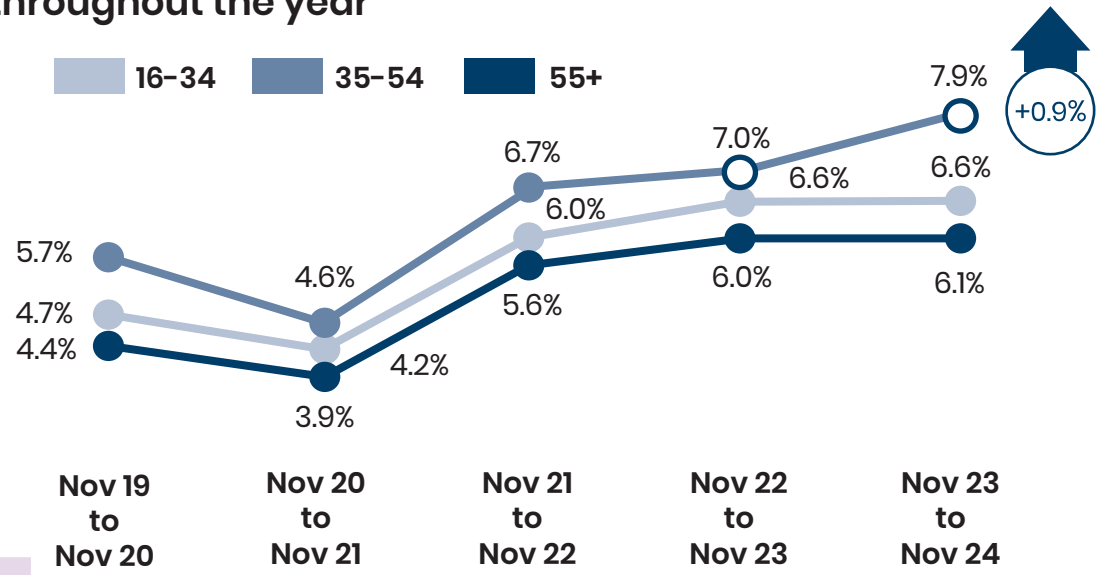
Note: Data is only available since Nov 2019-20 for these metrics.

Age

All age groups are following the same pattern in volunteering overall, but there are a couple of notable differences when looking at the different frequencies. Those aged 35-54 are driving the increase in volunteering once a week, with 0.9% more doing so compared to 12 months ago. However, it is the 16-34 age group that is driving a longer-term increase in those volunteering a few times, up 1.0% (to 6.6%) compared to Nov 19-20.

The 35-54 age group is driving the small recovery seen in coaching or instructing (up 1.3% to 7.3% compared to 12 months ago).

Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year



Affluence and health conditions

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

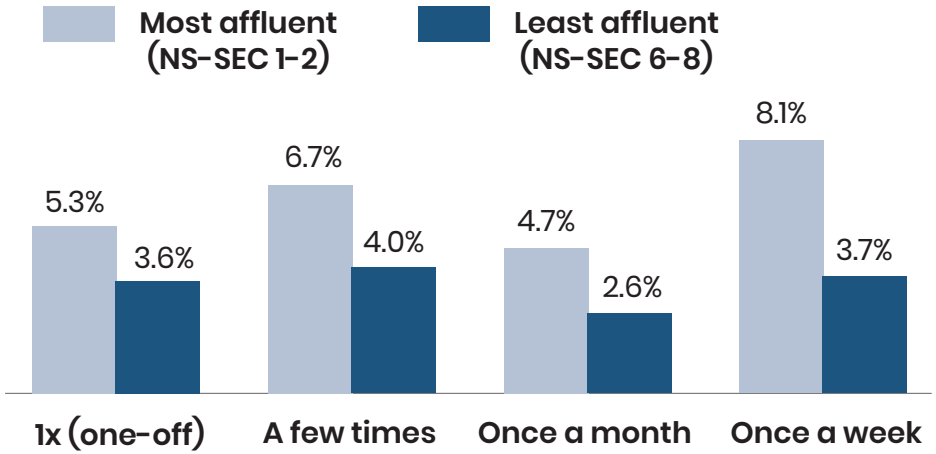
SPORT ENGLAND

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Socio-economic group

All social groups are following the same overall patterns in volunteering, both overall and by the different frequencies.

The most affluent (NS-SEC 1-2) remain more likely to volunteer across all frequencies, when compared to the least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8), with the gap the widest for those volunteering once a week throughout the year.



Link to data tables

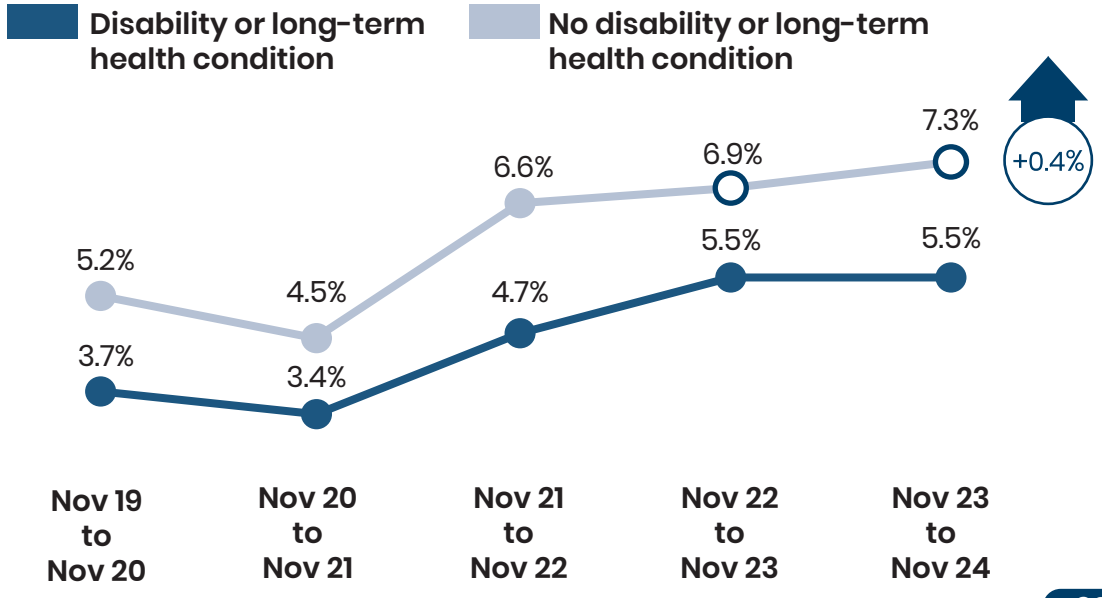
Disability and long-term health conditions

Adults with a disability or long-term health condition are less likely to volunteer across all frequencies, compared to those without.

Volunteer levels remain unchanged compared to 12 months ago, both overall and across all frequencies, for those with a disability or long-term health condition. This is in contrast to those without a disability or long-term health condition, who have seen small increases in both overall volunteering and volunteering once a week over the same period.

Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year

Note: Data is only available since Nov 2019-20 for these metrics.



Arrows show change to November 16-17 (seven years ago). No arrows indicates no statistically reportable change

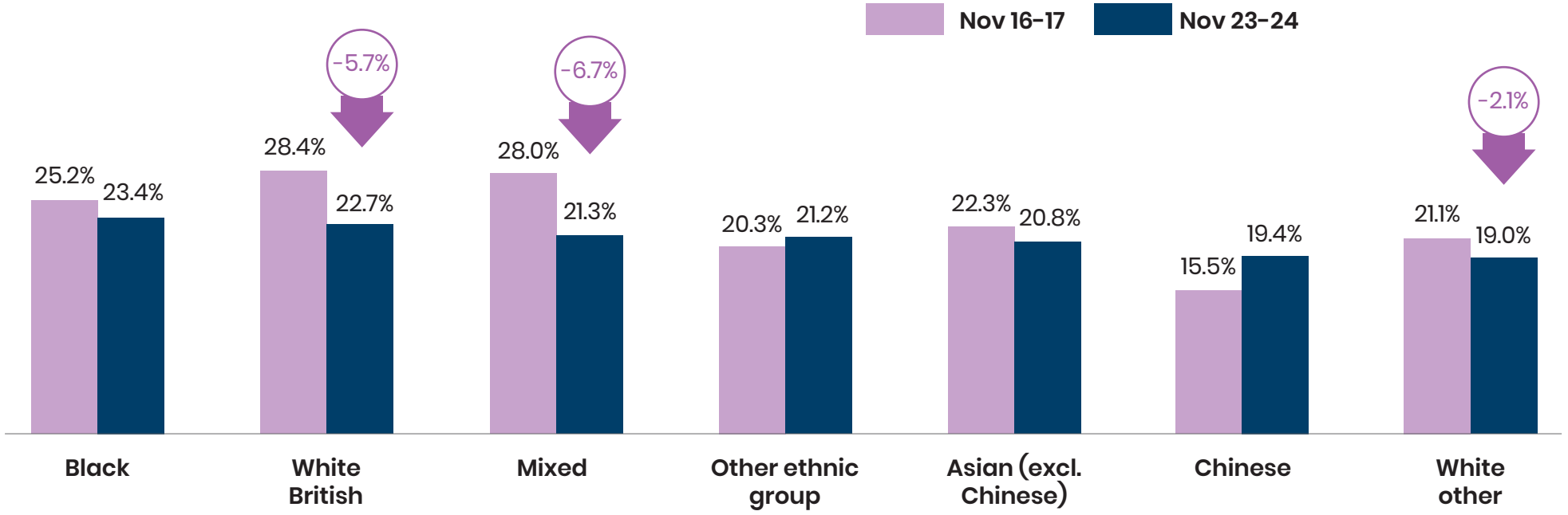
SPORT ENGLAND

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Volunteer levels have dropped the most for White British, White other and adults of mixed ethnicity

White other adults are the least likely to volunteer to support sport and physical activity. Alongside White British and adults with mixed ethnicity, they are the only groups with a long-term statistically reportable drop (compared to Nov 16-17).

Any volunteering in the last 12 months



Link to data tables

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

SPORT ENGLAND

Volunteer levels are lowest for those with two or more characteristics of inequality

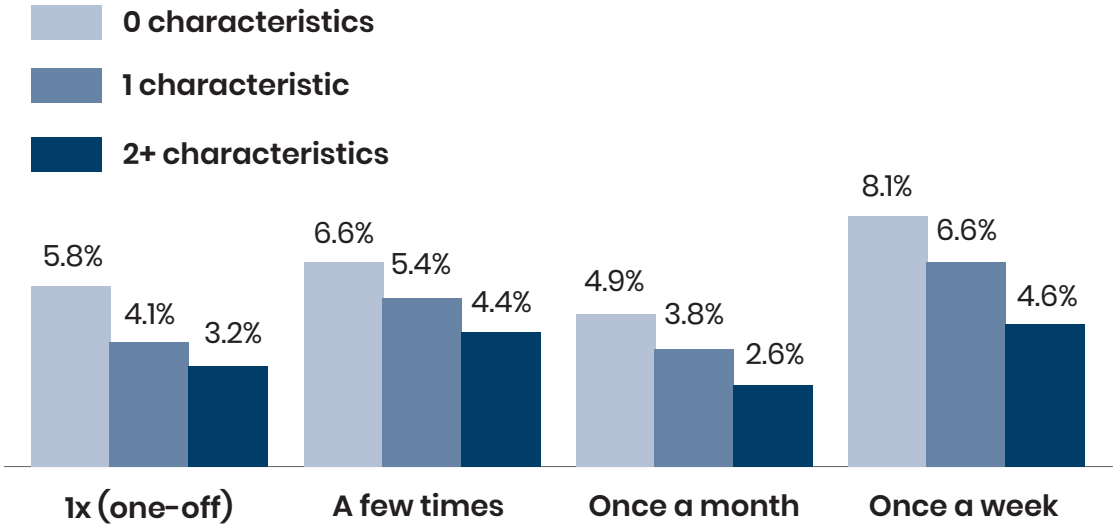
ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Adults with two or more characteristics of inequality are less likely to volunteer (16%) than those with one characteristic (21%), who in turn are less likely to volunteer than those with no characteristics of inequality (26%). The same is true for all frequencies of volunteering.

When looking at those volunteering at least once a week throughout the year, the increase compared to 12 months ago has come from those with no characteristics of inequality. All three groups are up compared to Nov 19-20.

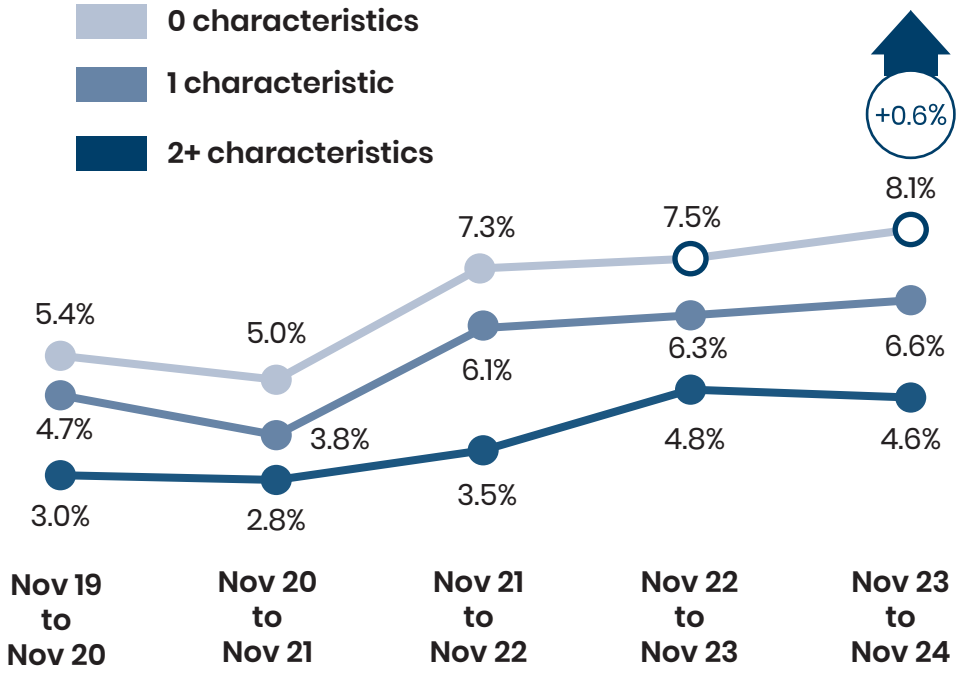
Note: Data is only available since Nov 2019-20 for these metrics.

Frequency of volunteering



Link to data tables

Volunteered at least once a week throughout the year



Outcomes

Definition

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 to which sport and physical activity contributes.

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.

Physical wellbeing	Mental wellbeing	Individual development	Social & community development	Economic development
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 with: • 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 with: • I can achieve most of the goals I set myself. • If I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it.	Agreement with: • 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.

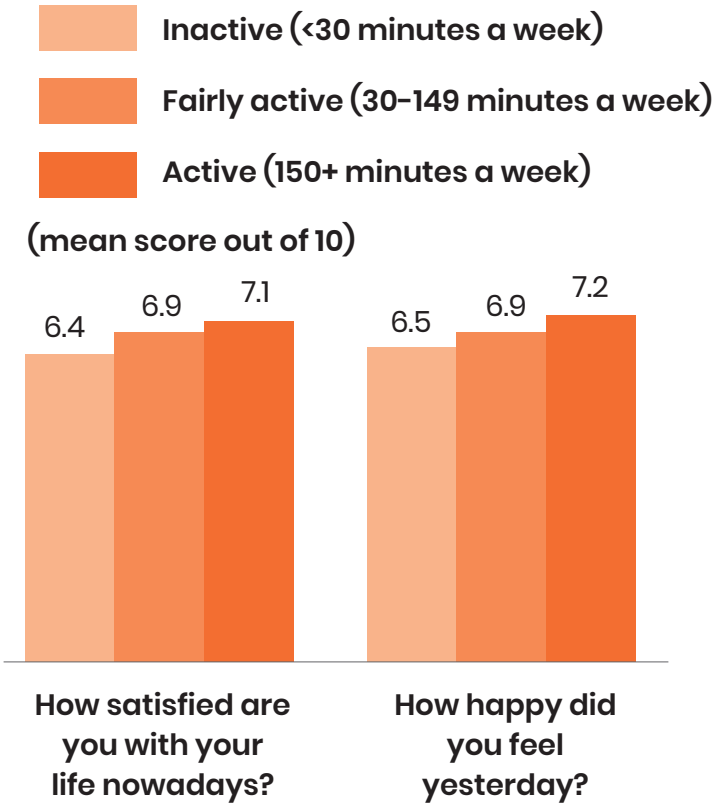
Mental wellbeing

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

SPORT 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.



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.

Link to data tables

Individual development

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

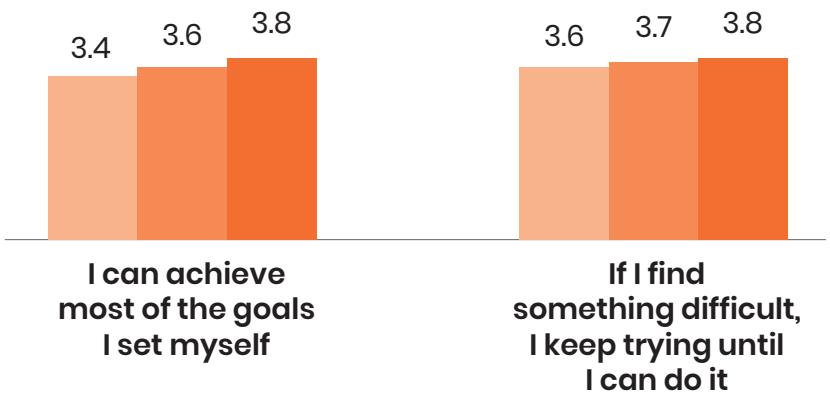
SPORT ENGLAND

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

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

- Inactive (<30 minutes a week)
- Fairly active (30-149 minutes a week)
- Active (150+ minutes a week)

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

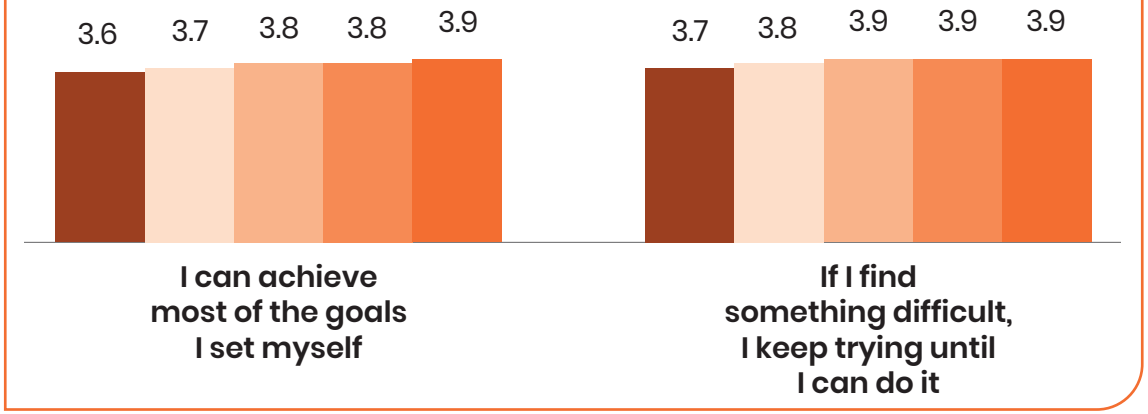


There's a positive association between frequency of volunteering and individual development

Those who volunteer regularly generally have higher scores than those who don't volunteer.

- Not volunteered
- Volunteered 1x (one-off)
- Volunteered a few times
- Volunteered monthly
- Volunteered weekly

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



Link to data tables

Community development

Nov 23-24

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

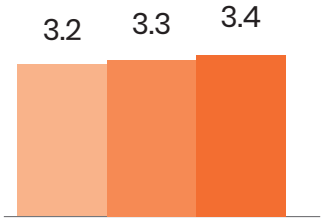
Those who are active have slightly higher social trust and community integration scores than those who are inactive.

Inactive (<30 minutes a week)

Fairly active (30-149 minutes a week)

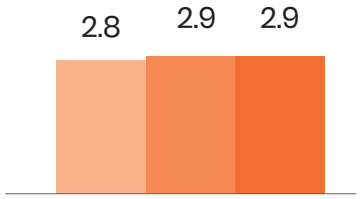
Active (150+ minutes a week)

(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 weak but positive association between volunteering and social and community development

Social trust and community integration scores vary very little by volunteering.

Not volunteered

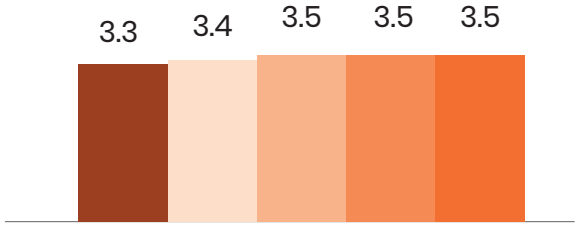
Volunteered 1x (one-off)

Volunteered a few times

Volunteered monthly

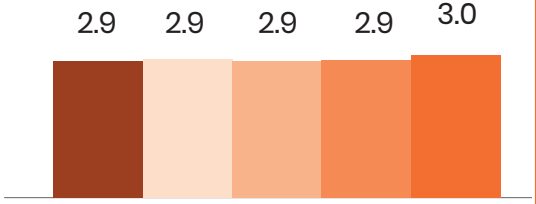
Volunteered weekly

(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

Link to data tables

Attitudes

Definition

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

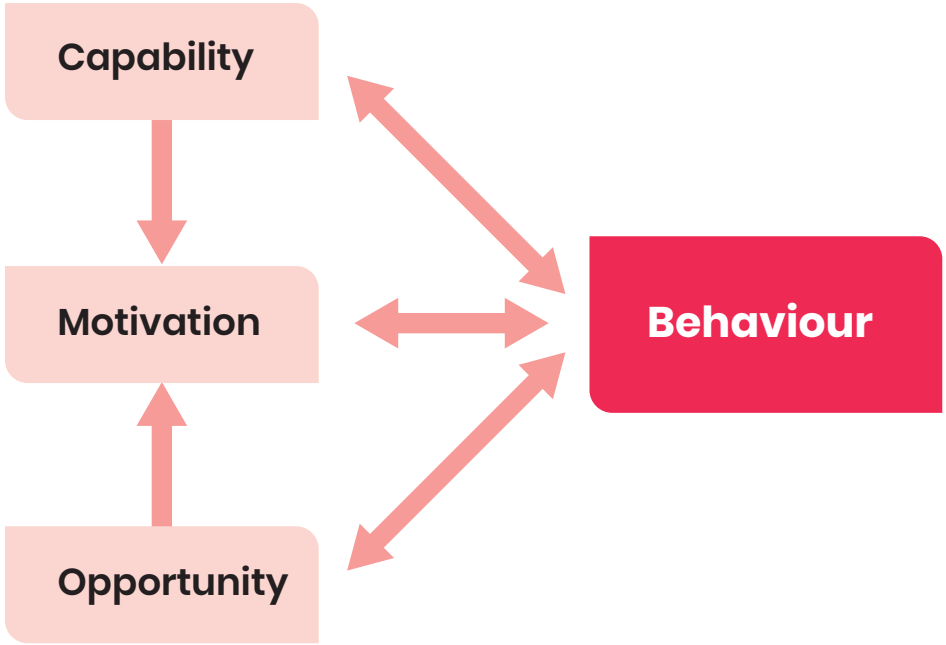
- I find sport/exercise enjoyable and satisfying. Four questions covering motivation are included within the survey; however, just enjoyment is included in this report.

This chapter also presents data on attitudes towards how **inclusive** sport and physical activity is:

- I find the places and environments where I exercise inclusive and welcoming
- I see people who are similar to me at the places and environments where I exercise
- The public places and settings where I'd like to exercise feel safe at the times I'd prefer to use them.

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.



*Susan Michie, Maartje van Straken, Robert West (2011)

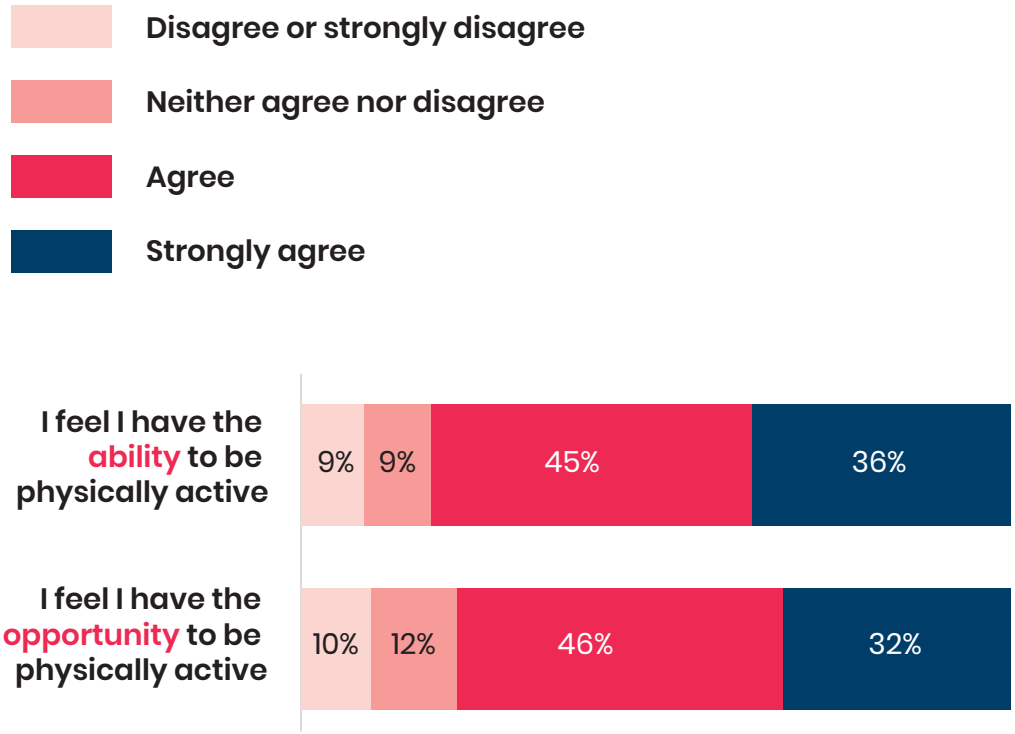
Capability and opportunity

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

Nov 23-24

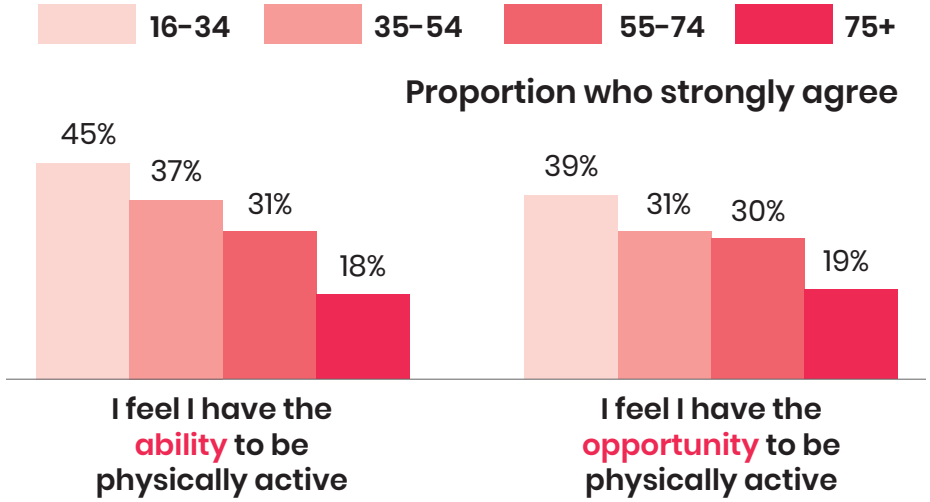
Roughly a third of adults perceive they have the ability or opportunity to be active

The proportion strongly agreeing to both having the ability and the opportunity to be active changes very little over time.



There are some notable differences by key demographic group:

- While likelihood to strongly agree with both statements decreases with age, the gradient is steeper for perceived ability to be active. There is little difference in perceived opportunity to be active between ages 35-54 and 55-74.
- Men are more likely to strongly agree with both measures than women.
- Adults with a disability or long-term health condition are noticably less likely to strongly agree with either statement than those without.
- Black and Mixed adults are the most likely to strongly agree with both statements.
- Likelihood to strongly agree with both statements increases with affluence.



Link to data tables

Enjoyment

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

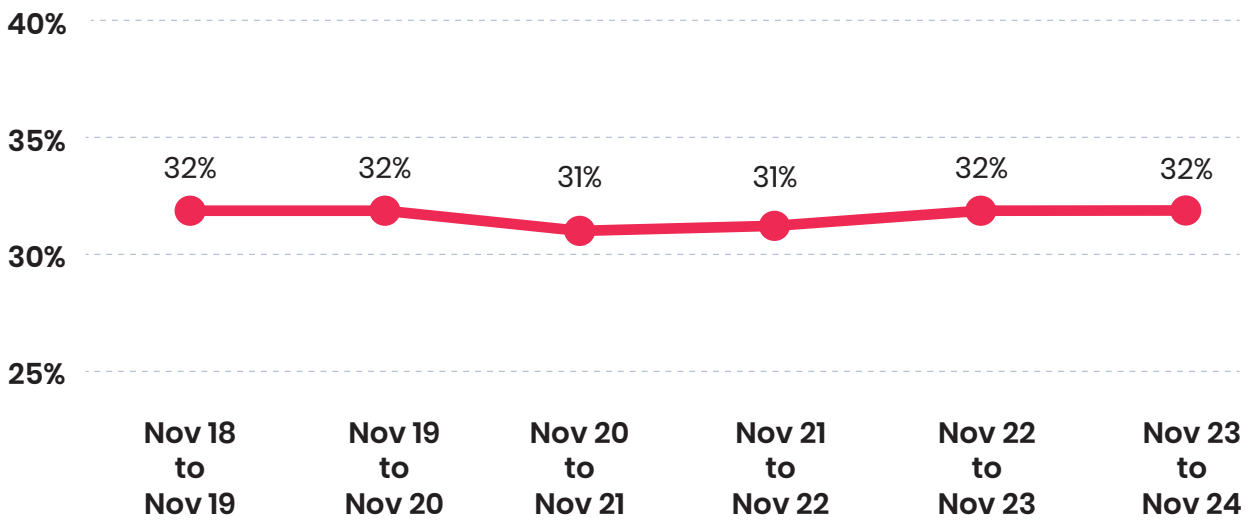
Enjoyment remains unchanged over time

There has been no change in the proportion who strongly agree that they find sport or exercise enjoyable and satisfying, either compared to 12 months ago or November 18-19.

A similar picture is seen across all categories of the agreement scale.

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

I find sport/exercise enjoyable and satisfying
(proportion who strongly agree)



Demographic groups showing changes over time are shown on the subsequent pages; other demographic differences are summarised below:

- Men (38%) are more likely than women (26%) to find sport or exercise enjoyable and satisfying.
- Enjoyment is lowest among White British (30%) and Chinese (32%) adults.

Link to data tables

SPORT ENGLAND

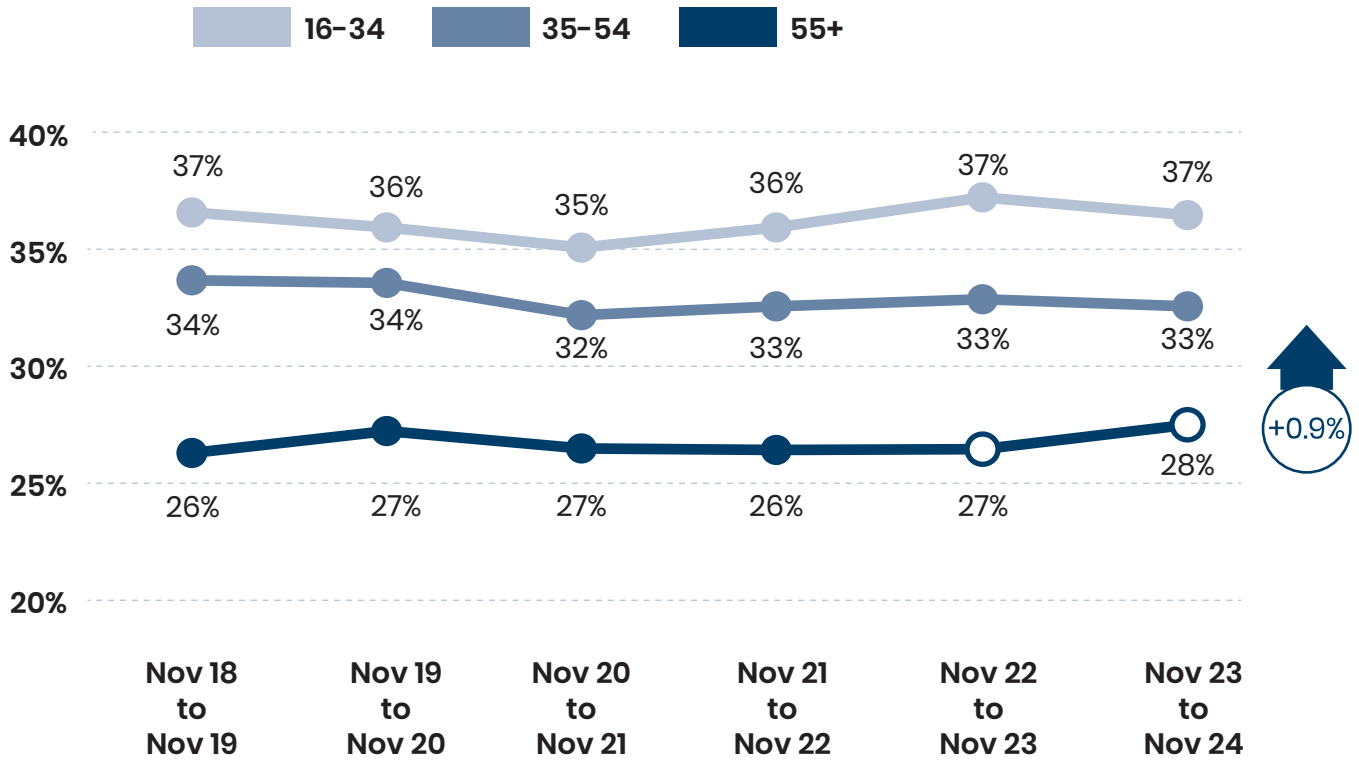
ACTIVE LIVES ADULT SURVEY Nov 23-24

More older adults than before find sport or exercise enjoyable and satisfying

While enjoyment decreases with age, it is older adults who have seen an increase (+0.9%) compared to 12 months ago. In contrast, there is a long-term drop for those aged 35-54, with 1.0% fewer strongly agreeing they find sport or exercise enjoyable and satisfying compared to five years ago (Nov 18-19).

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

I find sport enjoyable and satisfying (proportion who strongly agree)



Link to data tables

SPORT ENGLAND

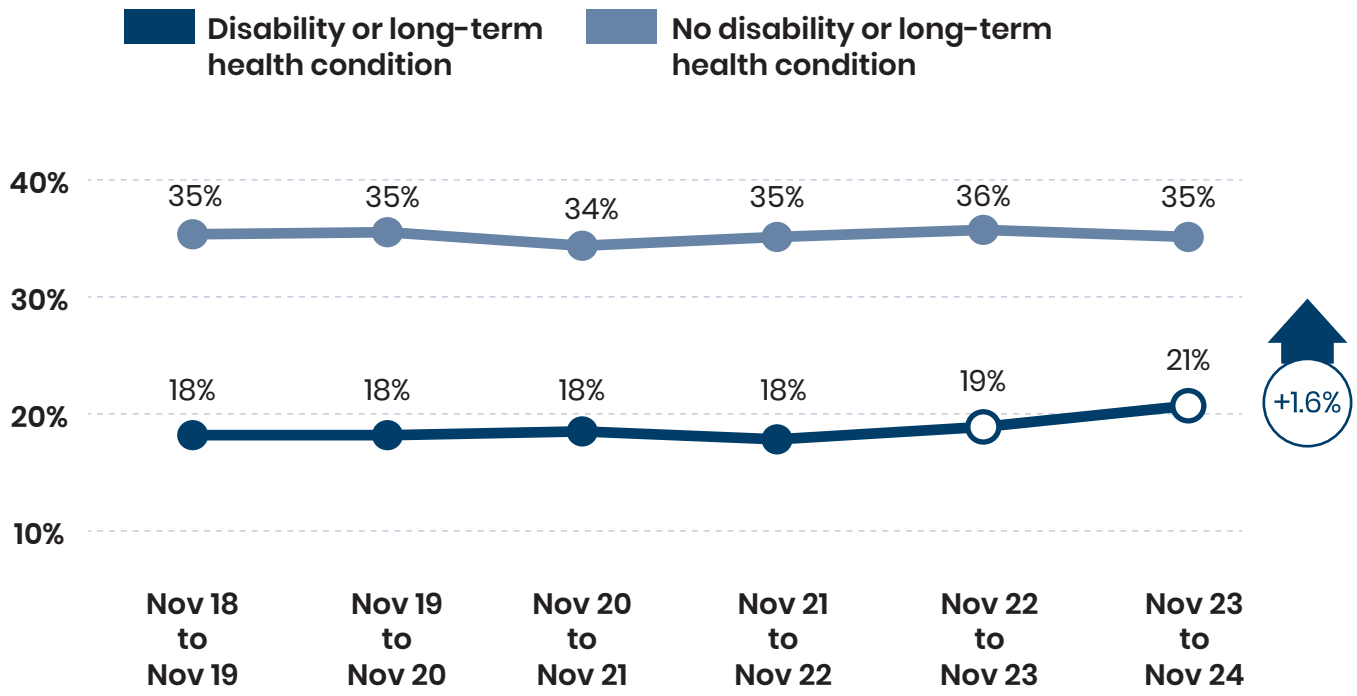
ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Enjoyment has increased among those with a disability or long-term health condition

Adults with a disability or long-term health condition are notably less likely to find sport or exercise enjoyable and satisfying, compared with those without. However, it is those with a disability or long-term health condition that have seen an increase (+1.6%) compared to 12 months ago.

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

I find sport enjoyable and satisfying (proportion who strongly agree)



Link to data tables

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

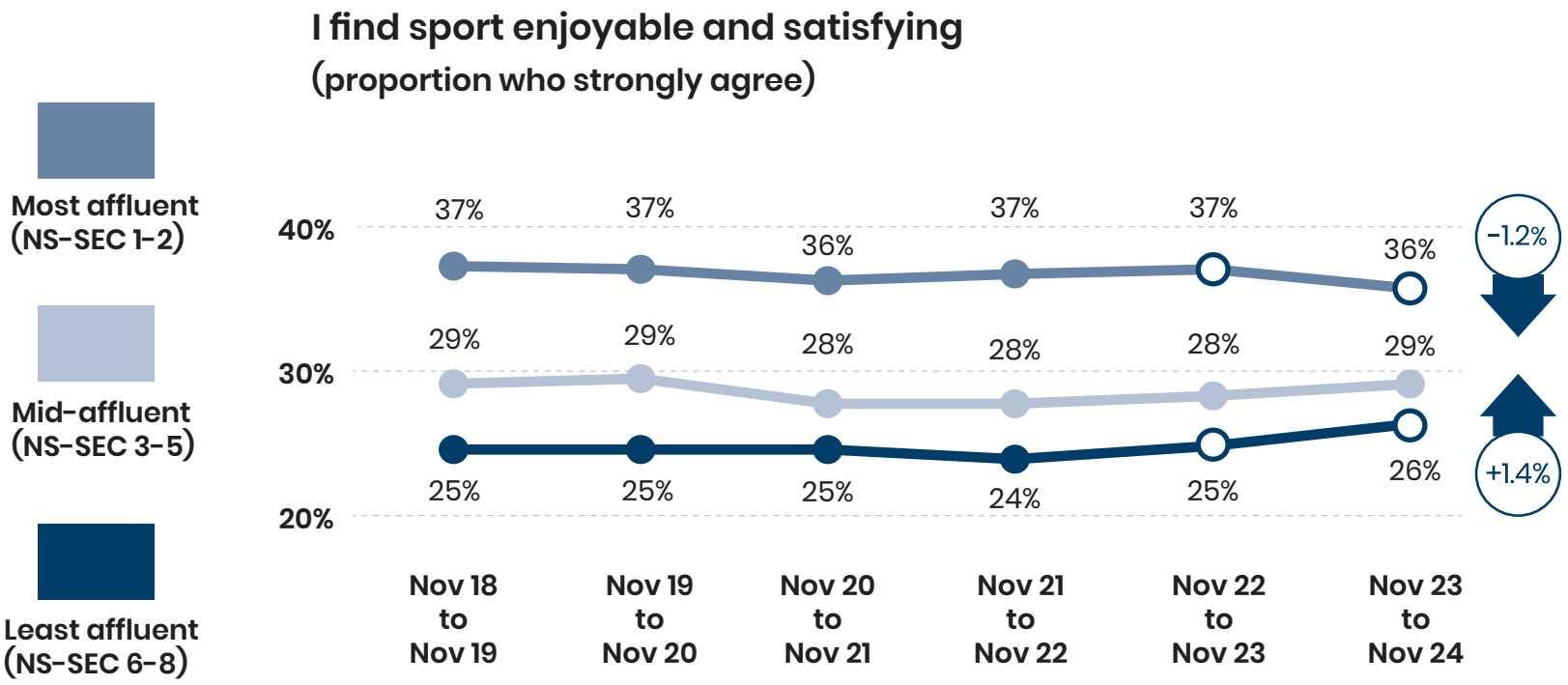
SPORT ENGLAND

The least affluent have seen an increase in enjoyment

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

The least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8) are the least likely to find sport enjoyable and satisfying; however, they have recorded a small increase (1.4%) compared to 12 months ago. In contrast, enjoyment has fallen (-1.2%) over the same period among the most affluent (NS-SEC-1-2).

Enjoyment has also increased among those living in the most deprived places (IMD 1-3), up 1.4% to 29% compared to 12 months ago. There has been no change for those living in the mid- and least deprived places.



Link to data tables

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

SPORT ENGLAND

The gap has narrowed for those finding sport or exercise enjoyable and satisfying, between those with 0 and 2+ characteristics of inequality

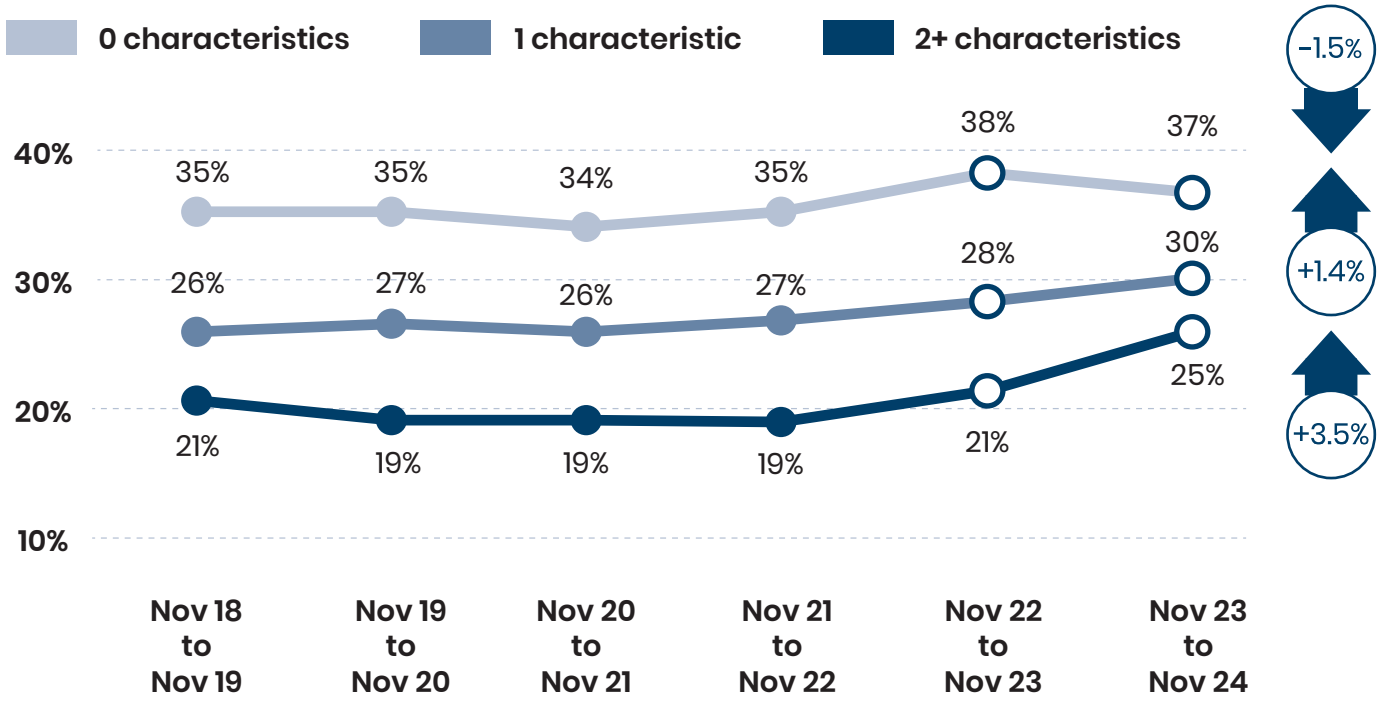
ACTIVE LIVES ADULT SURVEY Nov 23-24

Adults with two or more characteristics of inequality are the least likely to find sport or exercise enjoyable or satisfying, with just 25% strongly agreeing with the statement – compared to 30% of those with one characteristic and 37% with no characteristics of inequality. The gap is, however, narrowing.

The proportion finding sport or exercise enjoyable or satisfying has increased by 3.5% on 12 months ago for those with 2+ characteristics of inequality, compared to a smaller increase of 1.4% for those with one characteristic, while decreasing for those with no characteristics.

All three groups remain up over the last five years (compared to Nov 18-19) but with the greatest increase seen among those with 2+ characteristics of inequality (+4.1%, compared to +1.3% for those with no characteristics).

I find sport enjoyable and satisfying
(proportion who strongly agree)



Link to data tables

Nov 23-24

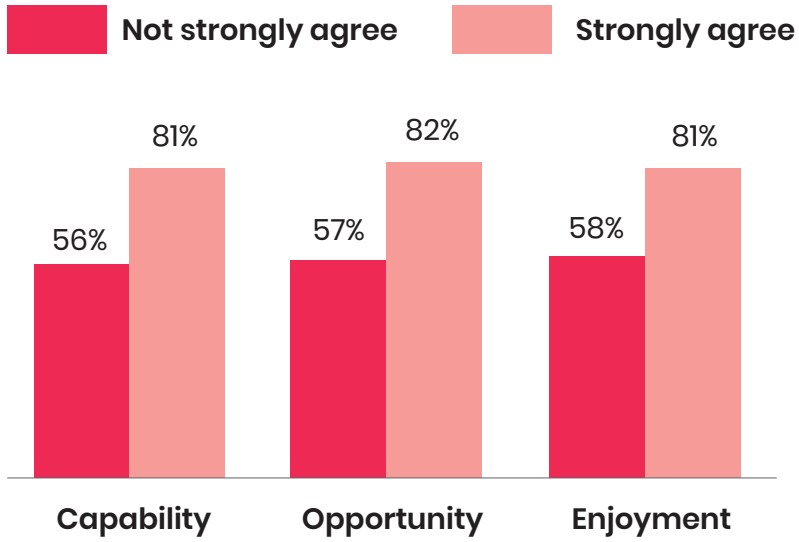
This matters because...

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 with these statements.

This reinforces the importance of the COM-B model in understanding factors influencing activity levels.

Active: 150+ minutes a week

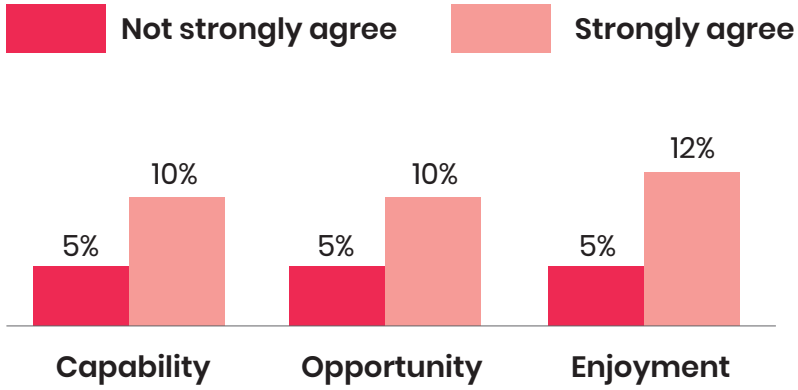


There's a positive association between positive attitudes and volunteering

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 with 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



Link to data tables

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

SPORT ENGLAND

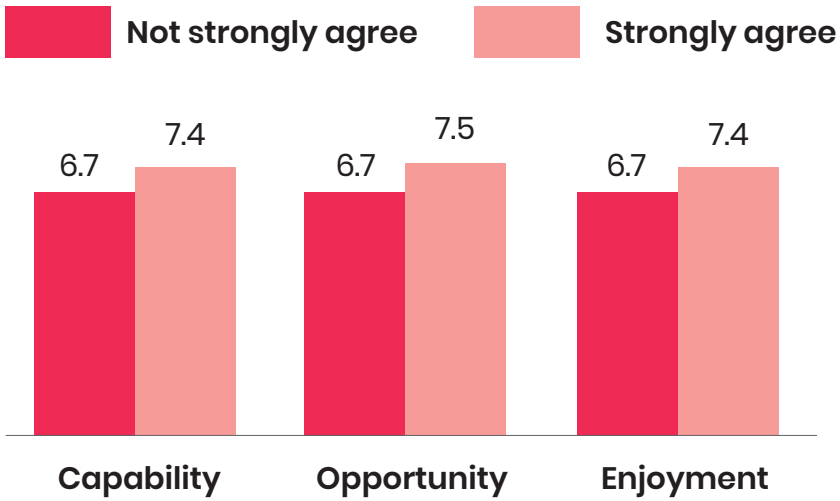
This matters because...

There's a positive association between positive attitudes and wellbeing

Those who strongly agree with each of the attitude statements are more likely to have higher mental wellbeing scores than those who don't strongly agree with these statements.

Positive experiences have benefits for wider wellbeing.

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

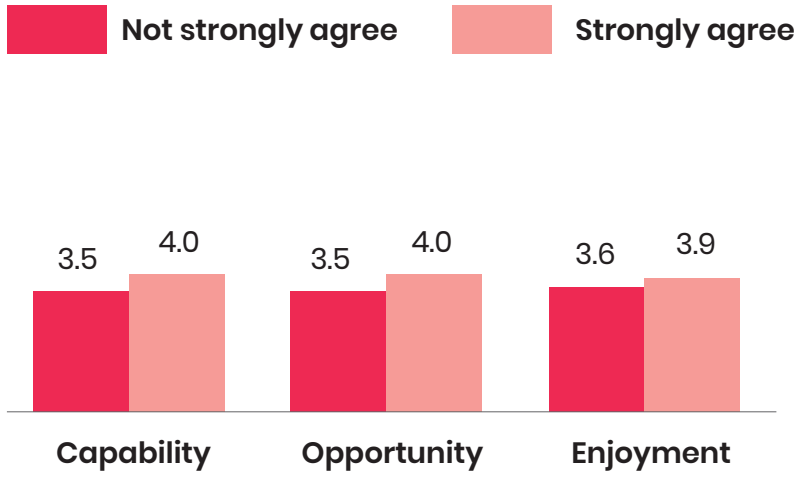


There's a positive association between positive attitudes and individual and community development

Those who strongly agree with each of the attitude statements are more likely to have higher individual development and community development scores than those who don't strongly agree with these statements.

Positive experiences have benefits for wider outcomes.

I can achieve most of the goals I set myself (mean score out of 5)



Link to data tables

Attitudes on inclusivity

Nov 23-24

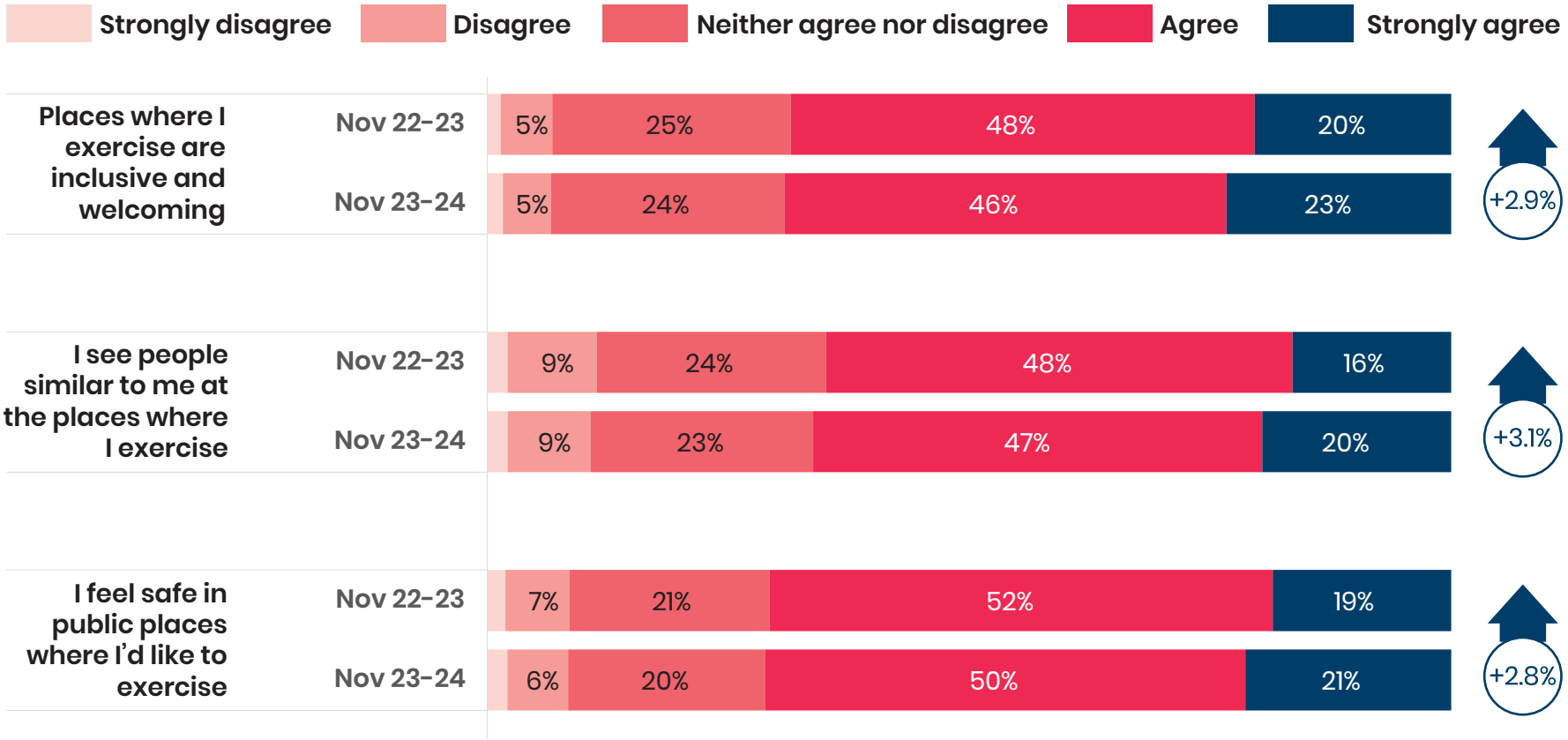
On average, three-quarters of adults either agree or strongly agree that taking part in sport and physical activity is inclusive

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

23% of adults strongly agree that places where they exercise are inclusive and welcoming, up 2.9% compared to 12 months ago. This is coupled with a small decrease in those who agreed (-2.3%).

Similarly, 20% of adults strongly agree that they see people similar to them at the places where they exercise, up 3.1% compared to 12 months ago.

21% of adults strongly agree that they feel safe in the public places where they'd like to exercise, up 2.8% compared to 12 months ago.



Link to data tables

Note: arrows included for 'strongly agree' only; please see the data tables for statistically reportable differences across the other categories.

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

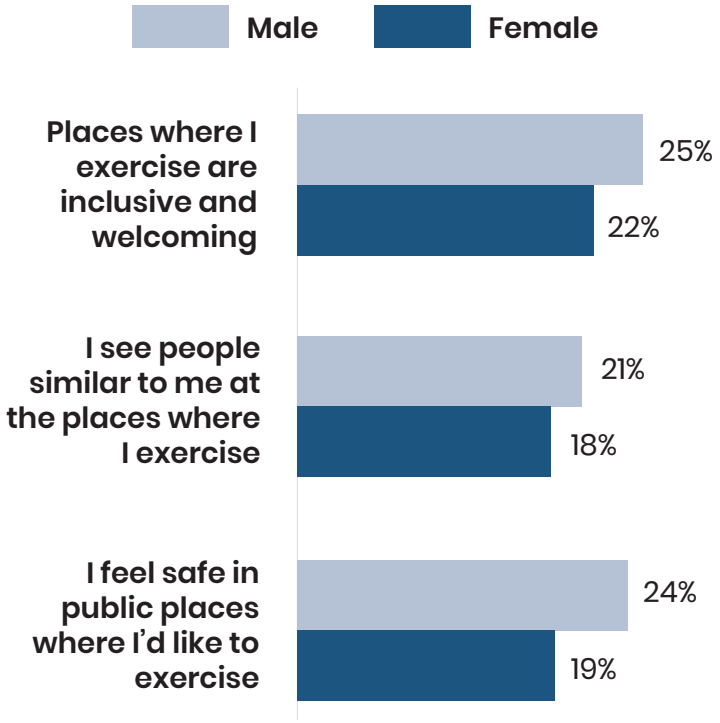
SPORT ENGLAND

ACTIVE LIVES Nov 23-24 ADULT SURVEY

Gender

Men are more likely than women to strongly agree that exercise is inclusive across all three measures. Changes compared to 12 months ago are consistent across both groups, in line with the overall picture.

Proportion who strongly agree



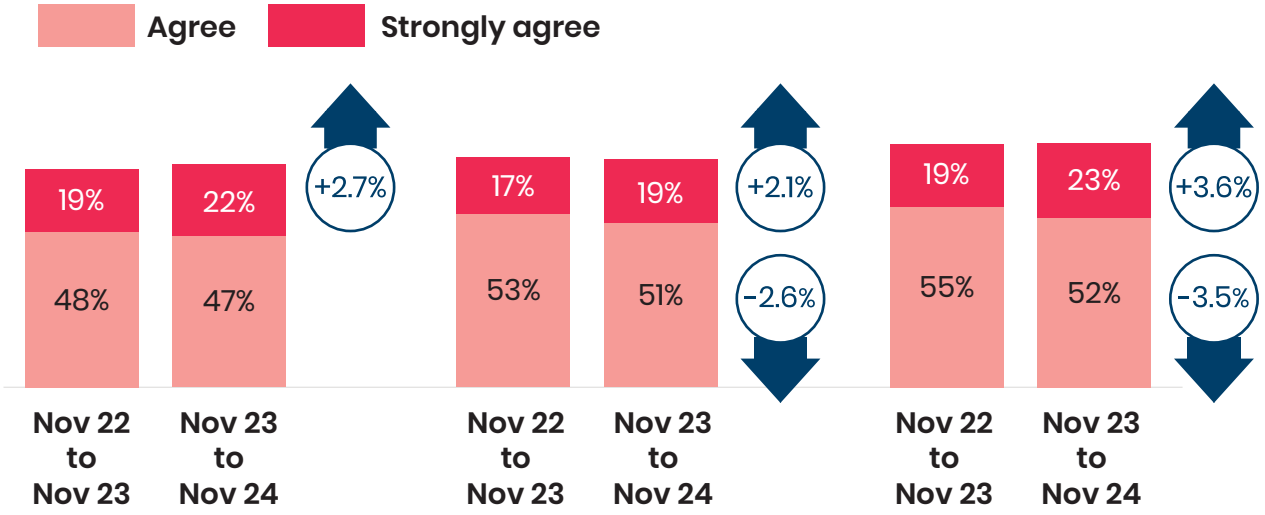
Link to data tables

Age

Adults aged 35-54 are less likely than both older and younger adults to strongly agree that exercise is inclusive across all three measures. Furthermore, they have seen a smaller increase compared to 12 months ago than either of the other age groups.

Despite this, the proportion either agreeing or strongly agreeing is unchanged for both those aged 35-54 and 55+, due to a drop in those agreeing compared to 12 months ago. There is no change in 'agree' for 16-34-year-olds.

I feel safe in public places where I'd like to exercise (proportion who strongly agree)



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

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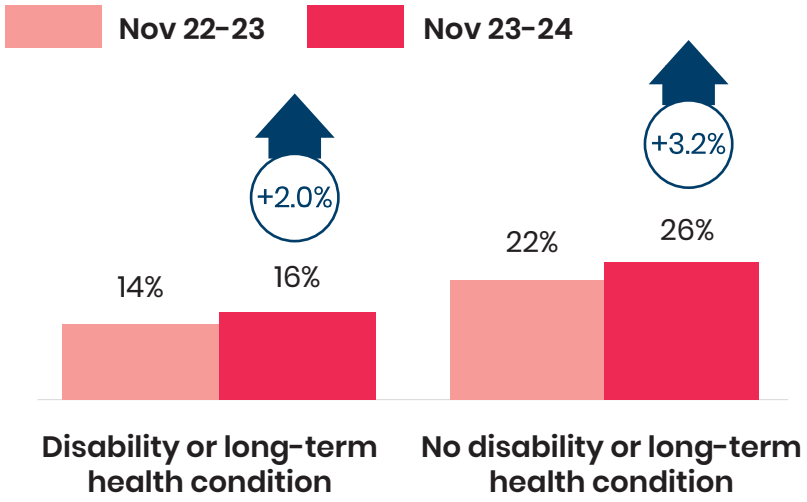
Disability and long-term health conditions

Adults with a disability or long-term health condition are less likely than those without to strongly agree that exercise is inclusive across all three measures. Furthermore, they have seen a smaller increase compared to 12 months ago.

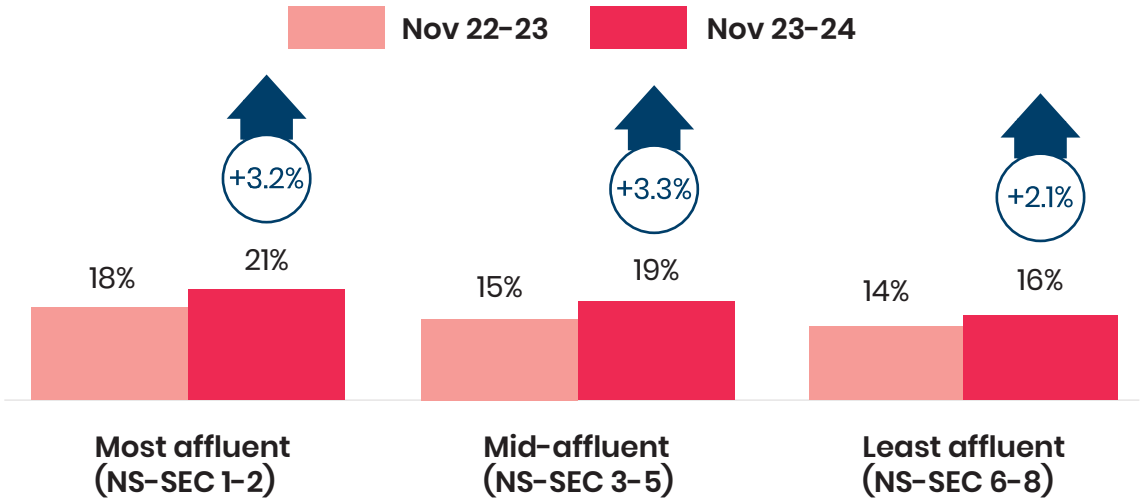
Place where I exercise are inclusive and welcoming (proportion who strongly agree)



Socio-economic group

The least affluent adults (NS-SEC 6-8) are also the least likely to strongly agree that exercise is inclusive across all three measures. Furthermore, they have seen a smaller increase compared to 12 months ago than either other social group.

I see people similar to me at the places where I exercise (proportion who strongly agree)



Link to data tables

Further breakdowns

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.

Local level data

Data for local areas (regions, Active Partnerships and local authorities) are available for the following measures:

- Levels of activity
- Volunteering.

Additional demographic groups

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

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

Definitions

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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. postman, 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.

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 (due to small sample sizes) and can be found in the data tables.

Inequalities. In 2024 we launched the Inequalities Metric, which recognises the intersectionality of individuals' characteristics and aims to create a comprehensive measure of inequalities.

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.

Definitions and notes

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.

Find more information on the survey.

More information on measures and demographics

- 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.

Sample and weighting

The achieved sample was 171,926 (16+).

Data has 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 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 2015-2023. Confidence intervals also apply to these.

More details can be found in the technical note.

Notes

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

More information on measures and demographics

Link to data tables

Data considerations

How we measure change

Active Lives figures are based on the response of 171,926 adults, which we then scale up to provide an England-wide picture. That means there'll 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'.

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.

Capability and opportunity

The questions relating to perceived capability and opportunity were moved below the motivation questions in the November 2023-24 questionnaire. This was to accomodate the addition of a question on confidence, to ensure it did not infuence answers to the motivation questions.

An unexpected impact has been noted as a result of this change on how individuals answer the capabilty and opportunity questions, causing a systematic drop in the proportion strongly agreeing with both statements, which is fully attributable to this and does not represent a real change. As such, comparison with earlier data points should be made with care and are not included in this report. Earlier data can be found in the data tables if required.