

Chapter 8: Active Sport

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8.1 Introduction

This chapter examines participation in active sport. Unless otherwise stated, participation is defined as physical engagement in at least one type of active sport during the past twelve months.²¹

Chapter structure

- Levels of engagement (section 8.2) examines the prevalence of participation, and reports on variations within population sub-groups.
- Levers and Barriers (section 8.3) presents the main reason for participation (levers) and non-participation (barriers), as well as the factors that would encourage more frequent participation.
- Socialisation (section 8.4) explores the relationship between recent participation and participation as a child.
- Other engagement (section 8.5) covers volunteering and online access

8.2 Levels of engagement

The data show that 69²² per cent of all adults had participated in an active sport; equivalent to approximately 27.5 million adults.

Of all adults, the most common type of active sport participated in during the past twelve months was swimming or diving (indoors), followed by health, fitness, gym or conditioning activities (31% and 20% respectively) (Table 8.2.1).

Table 8.2.1: Types of activities

	Percentage	Range (%)
Swimming or diving (indoors)	30.9	30.2-31.5
Health, fitness, gym or conditioning activities	20.4	19.8-20.9
Cycling (not utility)	16.4	15.9-16.9
Swimming or diving (outdoors)	14.2	13.7-14.7
Snooker, pool, billiards (excluding bar billiards)	14.2	13.7-14.7
Tenpin bowling	12.00	11.5-12.5
Keepfit, aerobics, dance exercise	10.9	10.5-11.4
Golf, pitch and putt, putting	10.5	10.1-11.0
Football (including 5 & 6-a-side) (outdoors)	10.3	9.9-10.8
Jogging, cross-country, road running	8.6	8.2-9.0

²¹ See Glossary for the list of activities included.

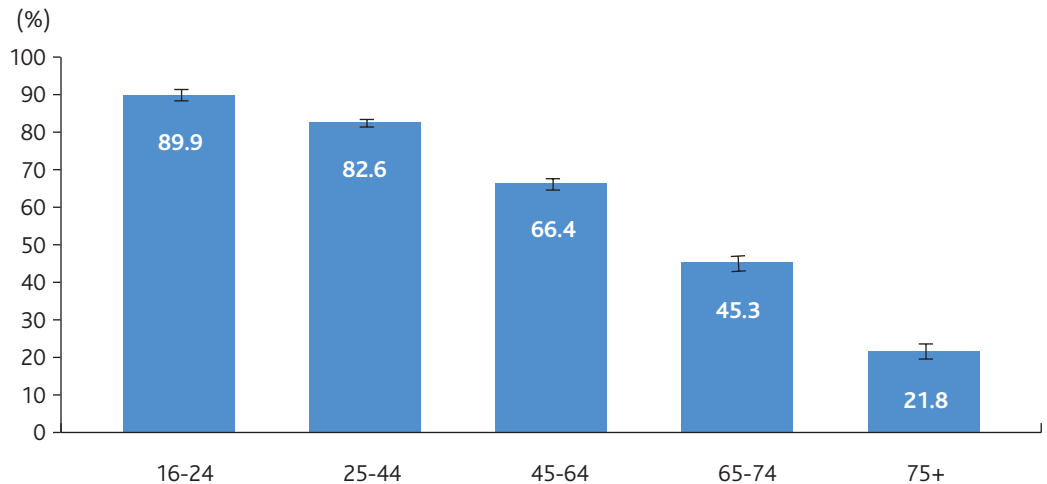
²² See footnote 17.

Demographic variations

AGE (Figure 8.2.2):

- Adults in all age groups had significantly higher rates of participation than each of their elder counterparts.

Figure 8.2.2: Participation by age group



GENDER (Table 8.2.3):

- Males had significantly higher rates of participation than females.

Table 8.2.3: Participation by gender

	Percentage	Range (%)
Male	74.4	73.4-75.3
Female	64.5	63.6-65.4

DISABILITY/ILLNESS (Table 8.2.4):

- Adults with a limiting disability/illness had significantly lower rates of participation than both those with a non-limiting and no disability/illness.
- Adults with a non-limiting disability/illness had significantly lower rates of participation than those with no disability/illness.

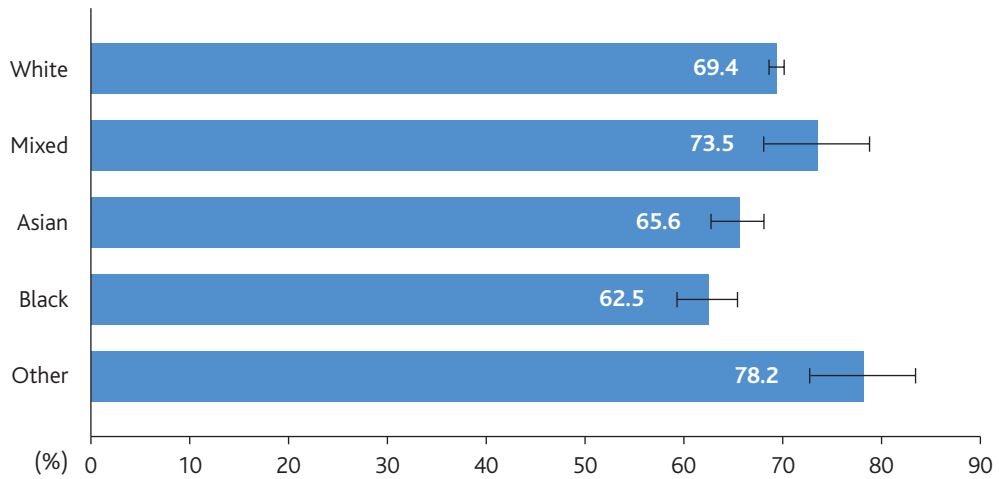
Table 8.2.4: Participation by disability/illness

	Percentage	Range (%)
Limiting disability/illness	45.4	44.0-46.9
Non-limiting disability/illness	69.6	67.2-72.1
No disability/illness	76.5	75.8-77.2

ETHNICITY (Figure 8.2.5):

- Adults from Other ethnic backgrounds had significantly higher rates of participation than all of the remaining ethnic groups, except for those from Mixed ethnic backgrounds.
- Adults from White and Mixed ethnic backgrounds had significantly higher rates of participation than both those from Asian and Black ethnic backgrounds.

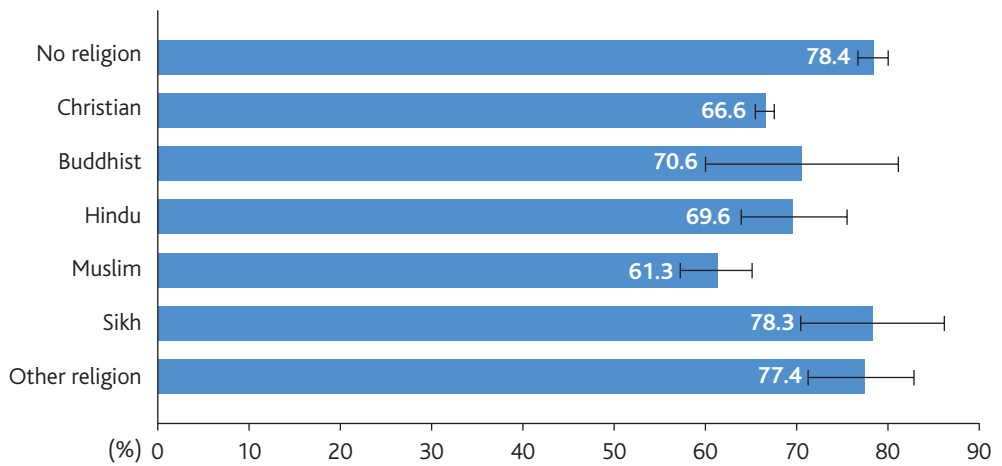
Figure 8.2.5: Participation by ethnicity



RELIGION (Figure 8.2.6):

- Adults who reported their religion as Muslim had significantly lower rates of participation than all of the remaining groups, except for those who reported their religion as Buddhist.
- Adults who reported their religion as Christian had significantly lower rates of participation than those who reported their religion as Sikh or Other, or reported to have no religion.
- Adults who reported to have no religion had significantly higher rates of participation than those who reported their religion as Hindu.

Figure 8.2.6: Participation by religion

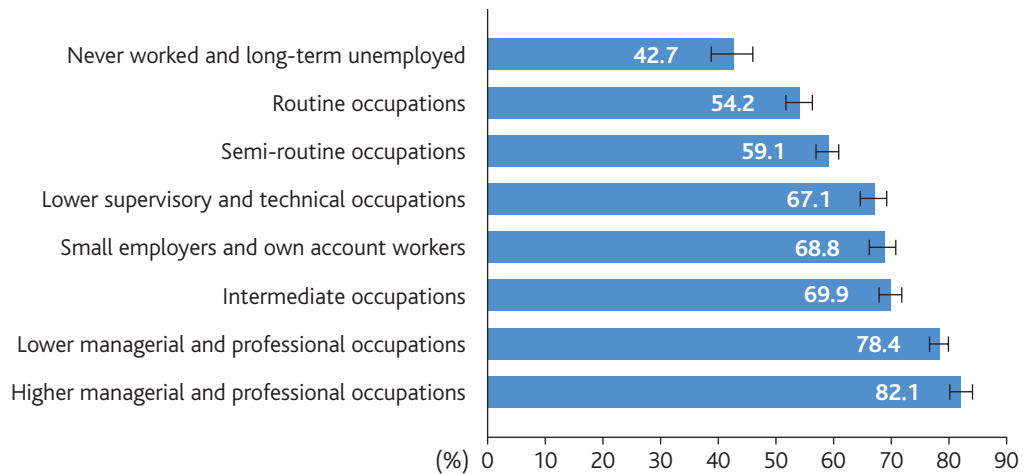


SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP (Figure 8.2.7):

- Adults from higher managerial and professional occupations had significantly higher rates of participation than all other groups.
- Adults from lower managerial and professional occupations had significantly higher rates of participation than all other groups, except for those from higher managerial and professional occupations.
- Adults who have never worked or are long-term unemployed had significantly lower rates of participation than all other groups.

- Adults from semi-routine and routine occupations had significantly lower rates of participation than those from intermediate and lower supervisory and technical occupations and those from small employers.
- Adults from lower supervisory and technical occupations had significantly lower rates of participation than those from intermediate occupations.
- Adults from semi-routine occupations had significantly higher rates of participation than those from routine occupations.

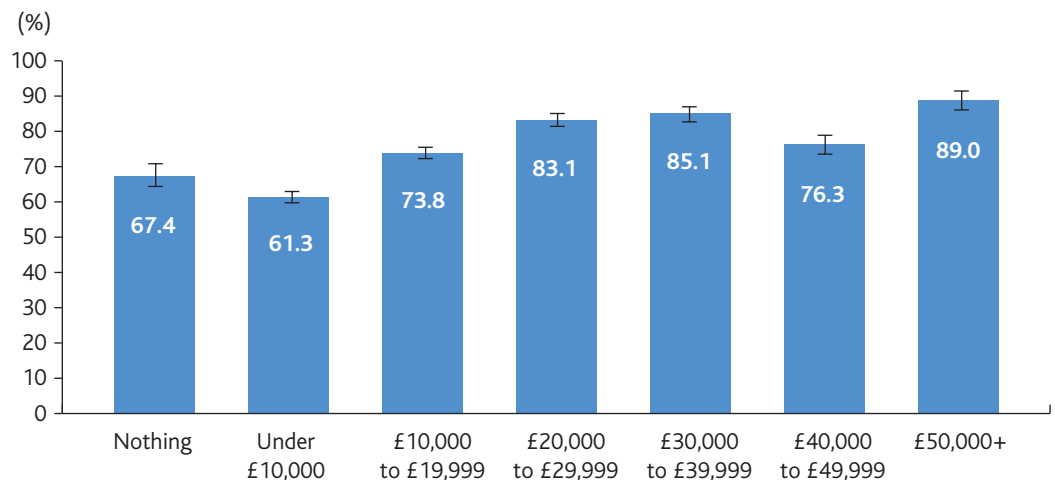
Figure 8.2.7: Participation by socio-economic group



PERSONAL INCOME (Figure 8.2.8):

- Adults earning under £10,000 had significantly lower rates of participation than all other groups.
- Adults earning £50,000 or more had significantly higher rates of participation than all other groups.
- Adults who earn nothing had significantly lower rates of participation than all other groups, except for those in the lowest income group.
- Adults earning between £10,000 and £19,999 and between £40,000 and £49,999 had significantly lower rates of participation than both those who earn between £20,000 and £29,999 and between £30,000 and £39,999.

Figure 8.2.8: Participation by personal income



TENURE (Table 8.2.9):

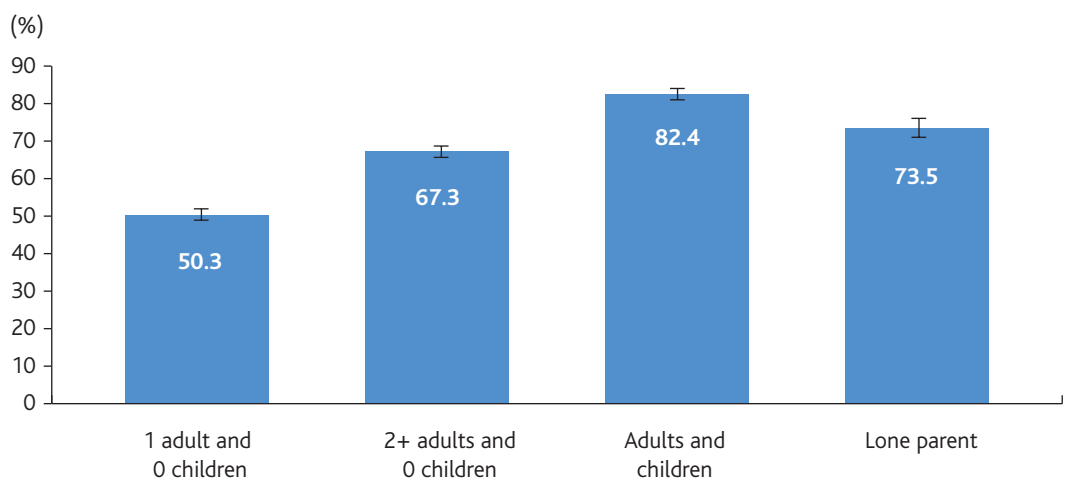
- Adults who rent from the social sector had significantly lower rates of participation than both those who rent from the private sector and owner occupiers.
- Adults who rent from the private sector had significantly higher rates of participation than owner occupiers.

Table 8.2.9: Participation by tenure

	Percentage	Range (%)
Owners	71.3	70.5-72.1
Social rented sector	53.0	51.4-54.6
Private rented sector	78.4	76.7-80.2

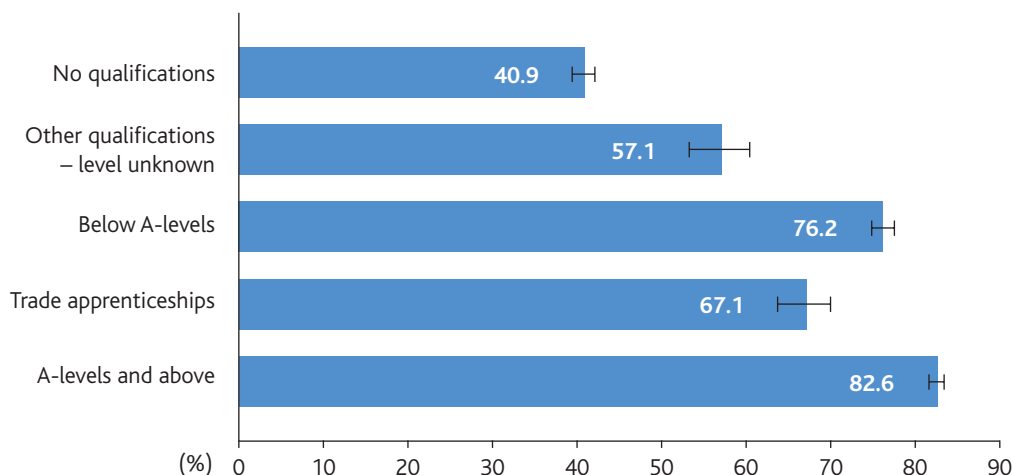
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE (Figure 8.2.10):

- Adults living in single adult households (1 adult and 0 children) had significantly lower rates of participation than all other groups.
- Adults living in households with adults and children had significantly higher rates of participation than all other groups.
- Adults living in lone parent households had significantly higher rates of participation than those living in households with 2+ adults and 0 children.

Figure 8.2.10: Participation by household structure

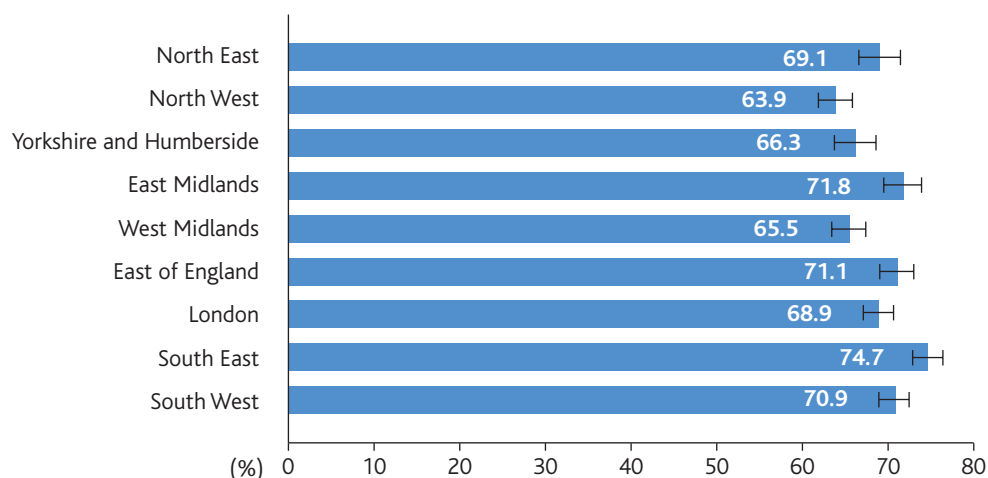
QUALIFICATIONS (Figure 8.2.11):

- Adults with no formal qualifications had significantly lower rates of participation than those with some form of qualification.
- Adults with A-levels or above had significantly higher rates of participation than all other groups.
- Adults with some form of other qualification (the level of which is unknown) had significantly lower rates of participation than both those with trade apprenticeships and below A-level qualifications.
- Adults with trade apprenticeships had significantly lower rates of participation than those with below A-level qualifications.

Figure 8.2.11: Participation by qualifications

GOVERNMENT OFFICE REGION (Figure 8.2.12):

- Adults living in the South East had significantly higher rates of participation than those living in all other English regions.
- Adults living in the North West had significantly lower rates of participation than those living in all other English regions, except for Yorkshire and Humberside and the West Midlands.
- Adults living in the West Midlands had significantly lower rates of participation than those living in all other English regions, except for the North West and Yorkshire and Humberside.
- Adults living in Yorkshire and Humberside had significantly lower rates of participation than those living in the South West, the East of England and the East Midlands.
- Adults living in the East Midlands had significantly higher rates of participation than those living in London.

Figure 8.2.12: Participation by Government Office region

AREA TYPE (Table 8.2.13):

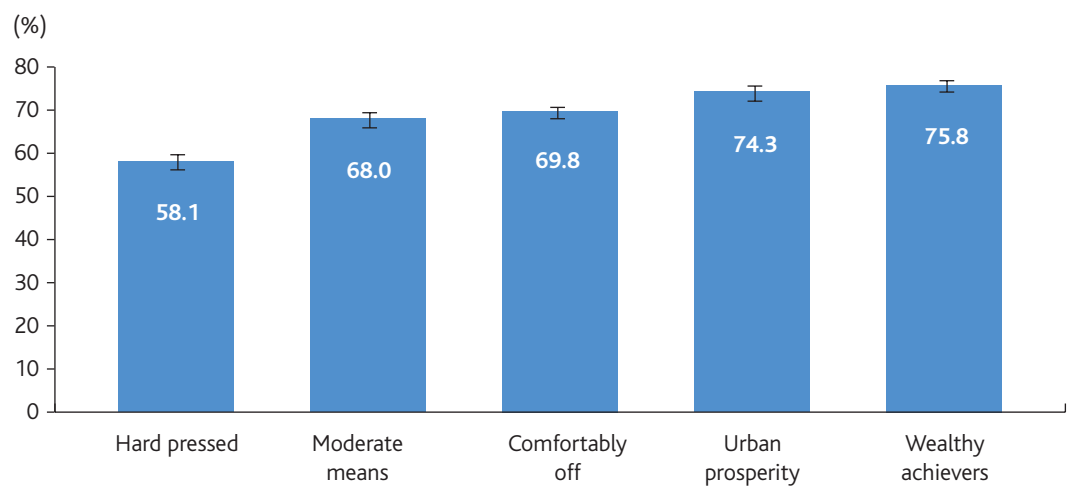
- Adults living in rural areas had significantly higher rates of participation than those living in urban areas.

Table 8.2.13: Participation by area type

	Percentage	Range (%)
Urban	68.9	68.2-69.7
Rural	70.6	69.2-72.1

ACORN CATEGORY (Figure 8.2.14):

- Adults living in 'hard pressed' neighbourhoods had significantly lower rates of participation than those living in all other neighbourhood types.
- Adults living in 'wealthy achievers' and 'urban prosperity' neighbourhoods had significantly higher rates of participation than those living in 'comfortably off' and 'moderate means'.

Figure 8.2.14: Participation by ACORN category

8.3 Levers and Barriers

This section looks at the main reasons given for non-participation and participation in active sports during the past twelve months, and presents the factors that would encourage more frequent participation in the future.

Reasons for non-participation

Of those who had not participated in an active sport during the past twelve months, 'health isn't good enough' was the main reason for non-participation followed by 'not really interested' (47% and 18% respectively) (Table 8.3.1).

Table 8.3.1: Main reason for non-participation

	Percentage	Range (%)
Health isn't good enough	47.0	45.2-48.8
Not really interested	18.4	17.0-19.8
It's difficult to find the time	18.2	16.8-19.5

In addition to the reasons presented above, 3 per cent of non-participants stated that the main barrier to participating in active sports was that they were 'too old', whilst 2 per cent suggested that it was 'cost'.

Reasons for participation

Of those who engaged in an active sport at least once during the past twelve months, 'enjoyment' was the main reason for participation followed by 'to keep fit' (37% and 30% respectively) (Table 8.3.2).

Table 8.3.2: Main reason for participation

	Percentage	Range (%)
Just enjoy it	37.2	36.2-38.1
To keep fit (not just to lose weight)	29.7	28.8-30.6
To take children	9.2	8.6-9.8

Other reasons for participation included 'meeting friends' (9%) and 'to lose weight' (4%).

Factors that would encourage more frequent participation

Being 'less busy' was the main factor that would encourage more frequent participation by those who already engage once a year and said that they would like to do so more often, followed by 'cheaper admission prices' (39% and 11% respectively) (Table 8.3.3).

Table 8.3.3: Main factor that would encourage those who already participate once a year to do so more often

	Percentage	Range (%)
Less busy	39.3	38.2-40.4
Cheaper admission prices	11.0	10.3-11.7
People to go with	8.7	8.1-9.4

Other factors that would encourage more frequent participation included having 'more free time' and 'better playing facilities' (6% and 3% respectively).

8.4 Socialisation

This section explores the relationship between recent participation in active sports and participation as a child.

Under three-quarters (71%) of all adults were encouraged to take part in sports as a child.

Combining the data for recent participation and participation as a child shows that those who were encouraged to take part in sports as a child had significantly higher recent participation rates than those who were not encouraged (76% and 54% respectively).

8.5 Other engagement

This section examines volunteering within the sports sector and contact with sports through the internet.

During the past twelve months 5 per cent of all adults volunteered in the sports sector.

Just over one-quarter (26%) of all adults visited a sport website during the past twelve months.

In total, 72 per cent of all adults had either taken part in an active sport in person or accessed a sport website. Of which, over three-fifths (64%) engaged in person only, one-third (33%) engaged in person and accessed online services, with the remaining small proportion (3%) only using web-based sites (Figure 8.5.1).

Figure 8.5.1: Physical and internet engagement

