



## **Health and Sport Committee Sport for Everyone survey analysis**

### **Introduction**

In January 2017, the Health and Sport Committee launched a “Sport for Everyone” inquiry with the following remit:

“To consider the degree of progress made in recent years around access to, and participation in, sport in Scotland.

To make recommendations in ensuring that the Commonwealth Games "Active Legacy" aims of increasing access to and participation in sport continue over the medium to long term.”

As part of this inquiry, the Committee agreed to carry out an online survey to gather views on why people do or do not participate in sport or physical activity. The online survey closed on 7 February 2017.

This paper summarises the responses received.

### **What the survey is and is not**

It is important to note that an online survey of this nature is not a scientifically rigorous study of participation rates with weighted samples from the Scottish population. It is a self-selecting sample of participants choosing to respond, and is intended to give a flavour of participation levels and gauge some of the reasons people do and do not participate in sport or physical activity in Scotland.

### **Survey responses**

There were a total of 3,046 completed responses to the survey. A majority of respondents were female (60.6%). The age group with the highest percentage of respondents was 25-44 (39.7%) followed by 45-64 (37.7%), 16-24 (12.3%), 65+ (5.8%) and under 16s (4.5%). Given the different age profile of respondents, there are quite different sample sizes of respondents by age. The difference in responses by age group also tells us something about the age profile of those most likely to respond to a Parliamentary survey or call for evidence, with under 16s and over 65s, on the evidence of this survey, less likely to respond.

Table 1 below also provides a breakdown of survey responses by ethnic background of respondents, and compares this with the most recent census data. As can be seen, those with a white ethnic background are over-represented in the survey as are those responding “mixed/multiple ethnic groups” and “other ethnic group”. Those responding “Asian/Asian British” and “Black/African/Caribbean/Black British” are under-represented in the survey responses relative to the most recent Scottish census.

**Table 1: Responses to survey by Ethnicity**

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Survey responses</b>	<b>Census 2011 returns</b>
<b>White</b>	97.6%	96.0%
<b>Mixed/multiple ethnic groups</b>	1.0%	0.4%
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>	0.7%	2.7%
<b>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British</b>	0.2%	0.7%
<b>Other ethnic group</b>	0.4%	0.3%

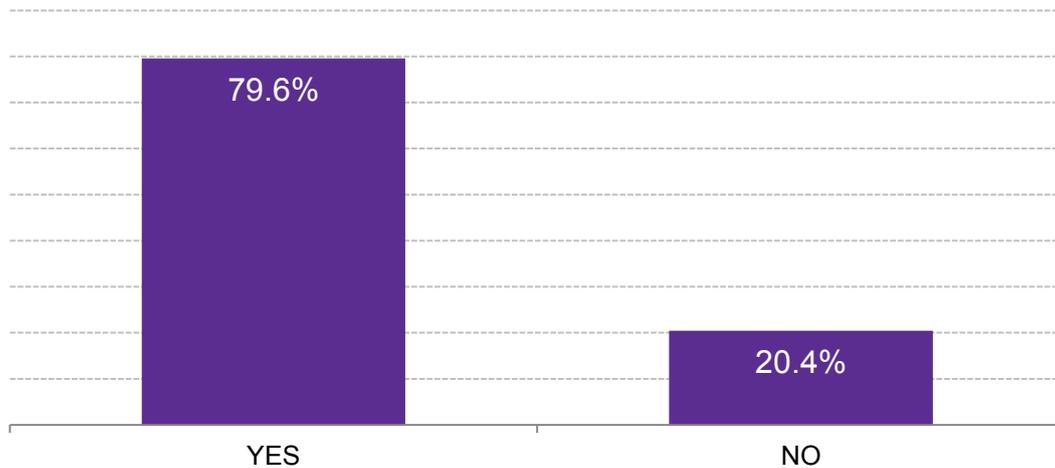
Source: Survey responses and [2011 census](#)

The analysis in this paper will largely focus on age and gender (male/female) due to the low number of responses from minority ethnic groups and the non-binary gender group (5 responses).

### **Question 1 – regular participation in sport and physical exercise**

Responses to the opening question of the survey are as follows.

**Figure 1: Do you currently participate in regular sport and physical activity? Guidelines recommend 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (or a combination) a week. This can be achieved in bouts of 10 minutes.**



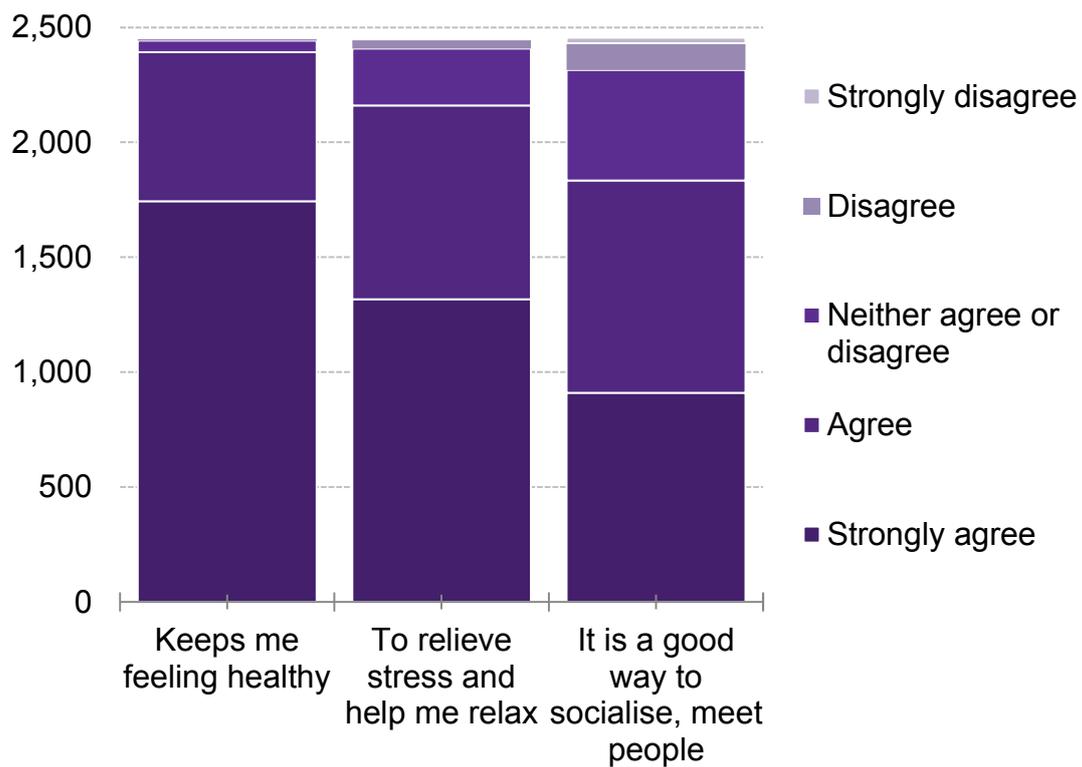
## **Participation**

The vast majority of respondents to the survey said they participated in regular sport and physical activity (nearly 80% or 2,454 respondents) compared with 20% (630 respondents) who did not.

Of those who participate in regular sport and physical activity

- over 97% either agreed or strongly agreed that it “keeps me feeling healthy”
- over 88% either agreed or strongly agreed that it helps “to relieve stress and help me relax”
- nearly 75% either agreed or strongly agreed that “it is a good way to socialise/meet people”

**Figure 2: Why do you participate in regular Sport and physical activity?**



Other common reasons given by respondents for participating in physical activity and sport were as follows:

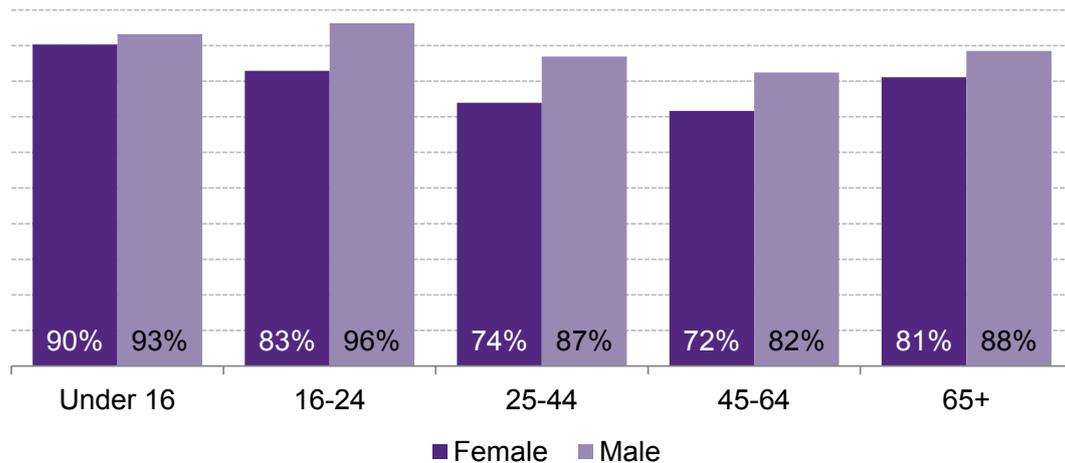
- Enjoyment/fun
- To lose weight
- Improve mental health
- To set good example to children
- To be outdoors, get close to nature
- For competition and challenge
- Cycling as a form of transport and save money
- To get better at a sport, sense of achievement
- Dog walking

**Why do you participate in regular sport and physical activity?**

The following infographic presents the most commonly used words in the free-text responses as to why an individual might participate in sport. The bigger the word, the more often it was used by respondents.

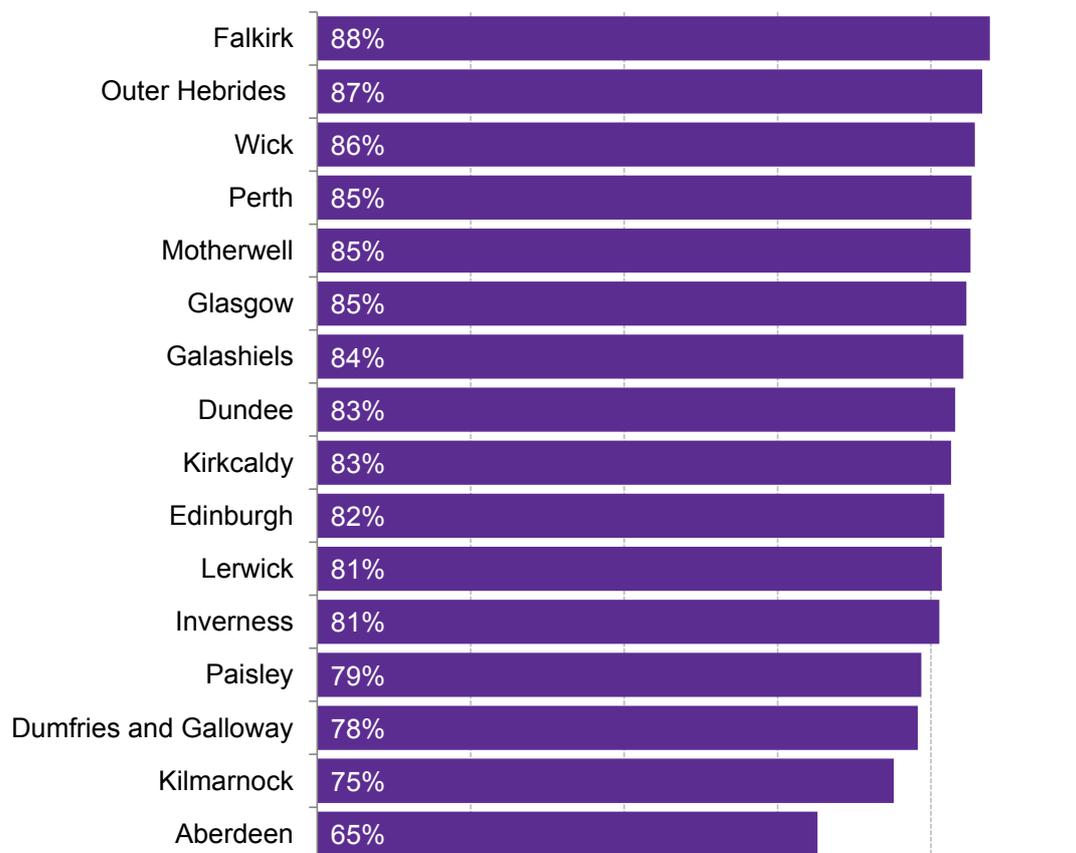


**Figure 3: Male and Female participation rates by age bracket**



Participation levels by postcode area are presented in figure 4. The Falkirk postcode accounted for the highest percentage of respondents saying they participate in regular sport and physical activity. The participation rate from Aberdeen postcode respondents was the lowest by some margin.

**Figure 4: Participation by postcode area**



## Non-participation

A key focus of the Health and Sport Committee inquiry into sport is exploring the reasons why people are not participating in sport and physical activity. As such, much of the questioning in the survey focused on uncovering what some of the barriers to sporting participation are, and what might encourage people to become more active.

Looking in more detail at those responding and saying they do not participate in sport and physical activity reveals interesting differences according to age, sex, ethnicity and location.

For example, as already mentioned nearly 61% of respondents to the survey were female. Of those responding that they do not participate in sport, 73% were female and 25% male (with remainder non-binary or preferring not to answer). This suggests that of those who responded to the survey, females are far more likely than males to not participate in sport or physical activity.

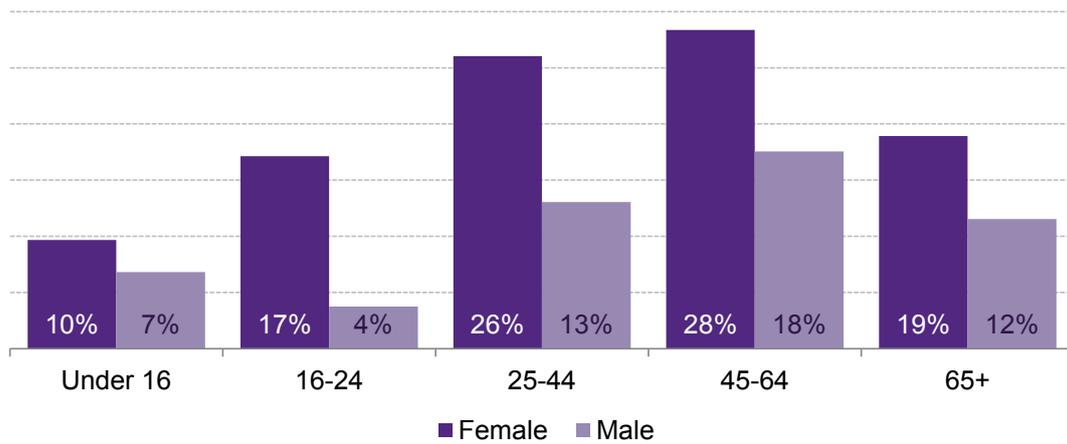
Of all the females responding to the survey, 25% do not participate in sport compared with 13% of all males responding to the survey.

**Figure 5: Percentage of females and males respondents not participating in regular sport and physical exercise**



Figure 6 shows the survey responses on non-participation in regular sport and physical activity by age and gender. This shows that non-participation in regular sport and physical activity is higher among females across all age categories.

**Figure 6: Non-participation by age and gender**



There is also evidence in the responses of differences in non-participation by ethnic groups as figure 7 shows. Non-participation rates among ethnic minority respondents was significantly higher than it was for respondents identifying their ethnic group as white.

**Figure 7: Non-participation by ethnicity**

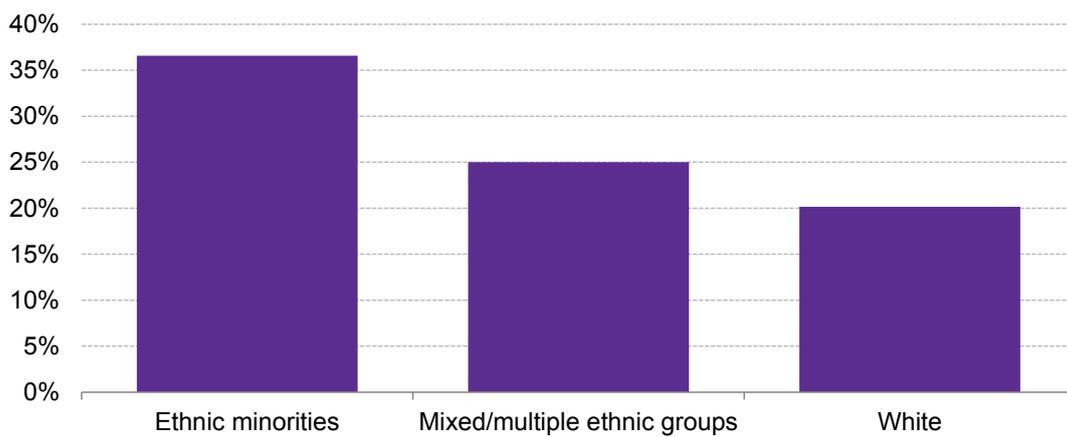
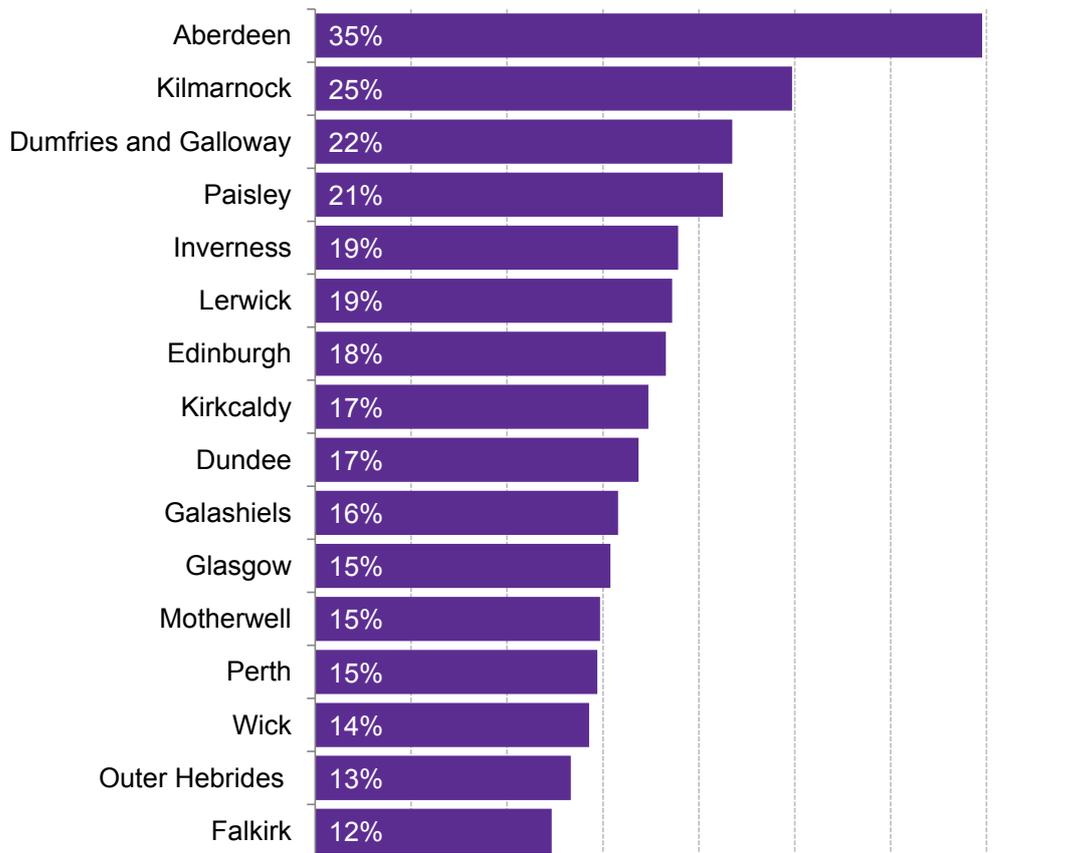


Figure 8 presents the non-participation levels of respondents by postcode. This is the inverse of figure 4 above and shows that non-participation is higher in the Aberdeen and Kilmarnock postcode and lowest in Falkirk and the Outer Hebrides.

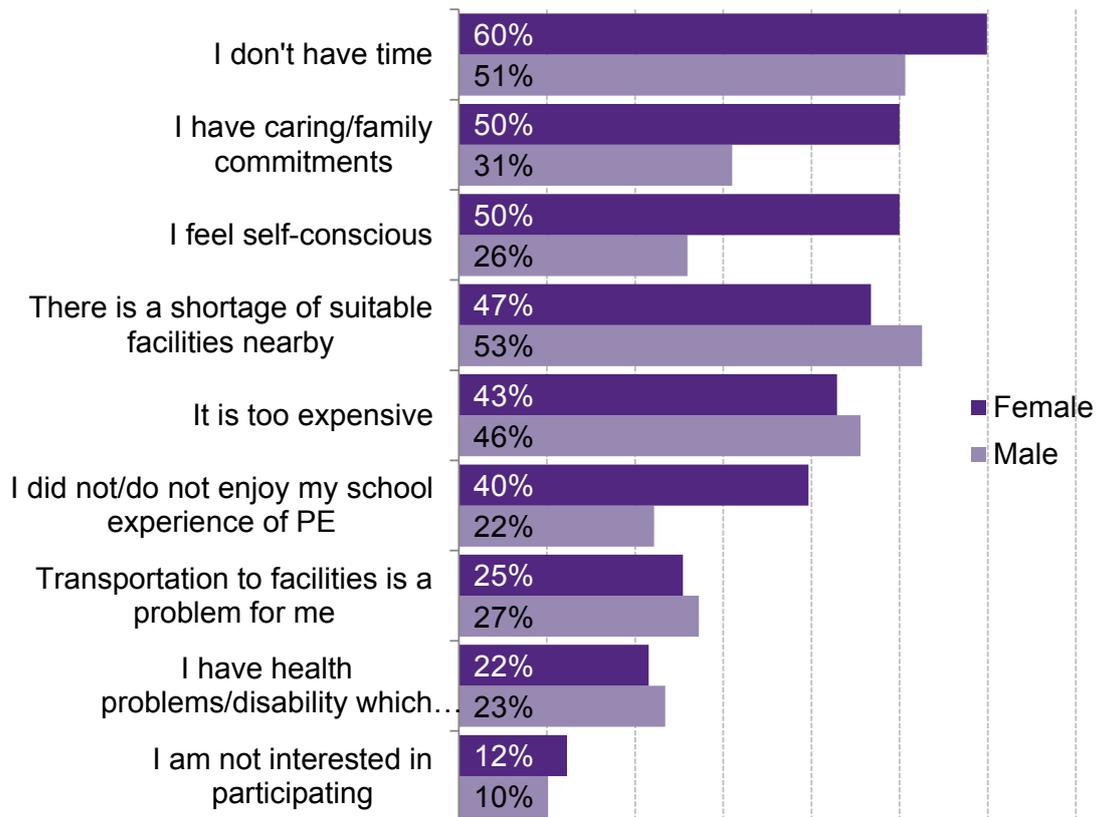
**Figure 8: Non-participation by postcode**



**Why do you not participate in regular sport or physical activity?**

Question 3 of the survey asked respondents why they do not participate in regular sport or physical activity. The following figure lists in order the factors which people agree or strongly agree are behind their non-participation.

**Figure 9: Why do you not participate in regular sport or physical activity? Agree or strongly agree by gender**



- The most common reason given for non-participation in regular sport or physical activity was not having time, with 60% of females and over 50% of male non-participants citing this as a factor.
- Caring or family commitments were a bigger barrier to female non-participants (50%) compared with male non-participants (31%).
- Feelings of self-consciousness and negative experiences of PE in schools were far more significant barriers to females than males.
- Barriers that were more significant for males than females respondents were shortage of nearby facilities, expense, transportation or health problems or disabilities preventing participation. However in all of these examples the gap between male and female respondents was much less significant than the gap cited in the more female orientated barriers listed above.

The following infographic presents the most commonly used words in the free-text responses as to why an individual might not participate in regular sport and physical activity.



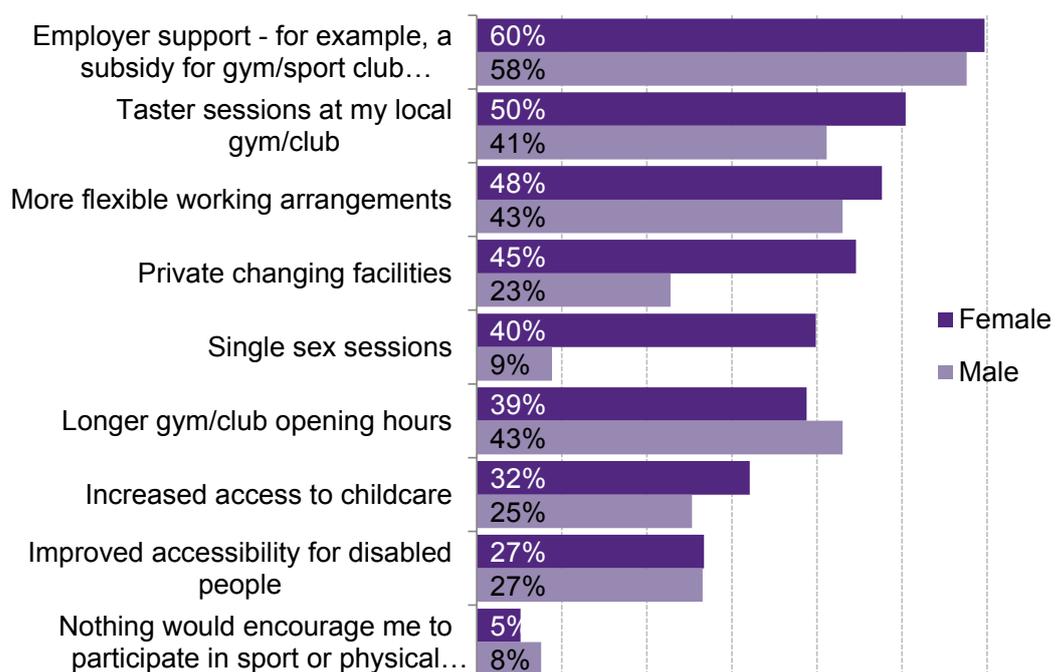
Other common reasons given by respondents for not participating in regular sport and physical activity were as follows

- Poor state of facilities
- Lack of appropriate classes – for example, for beginners, women only, retirees
- Classes over-subscribed
- Too busy
- “Laziness”, lack of motivation
- Gym opening times don’t fit working patterns

### **What might encourage you to participate in sport or physical activity?**

Question 4 of the survey asked what might encourage someone to participate in sport or physical activity. The following figure lists in order the types of initiatives that people agree or strongly agree would encourage them to participate.

**Figure 10: What might encourage you to participate in sport/physical activity? Agree or strongly agree by gender**



- The initiative that respondents felt was most likely to encourage them to participate in sport/physical activity was employer support, for example a subsidised gym or sport club membership.
- The second most popular response was for local gyms and clubs to provide taster sessions for prospective new members
- The fact that “nothing would encourage me to participate in sport and physical activity” was the answer with which fewest people agreed or strongly agreed and with which most people either disagreed or strongly disagreed suggests that non-participants are largely open to persuasion/policy initiatives and not in principle set against participating in sport and physical activity.

There is clear evidence from the responses of gender differences in some of the suggested ways of improving participation levels:

- Provision of “private changing facilities” and “single sex sessions” are far more significant issues for females as opposed to males.
- 45% of female non-participation respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that private changing facilities would encourage them to participate in sport or physical activity, compared with an equivalent figure of 23% in male respondents.
- 40% of female non-participation respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that single sex sessions would encourage them to participate in sport or physical activity compared with an equivalent figure of 9% in male respondents.

The following infographic presents the most commonly used words in the free-text responses as to what might encourage you to participate in regular sport and physical activity.



Other common reasons given by respondents as to what might encourage them to participate in regular sport and physical activity were as follows

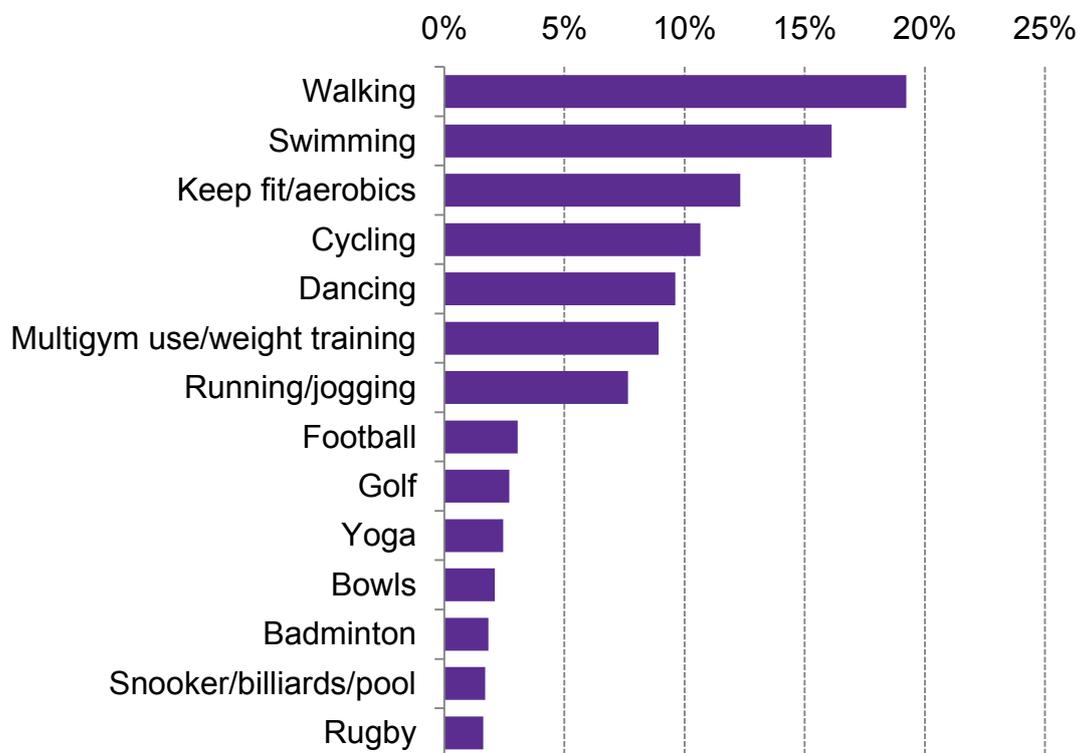
- Cheaper or free activities
- Greater range of options, more classes
- Better infrastructure/facilities
- Classes for beginners
- Classes for overweight people
- Classes for older people
- Classes for people with mental illness
- Shower/changing facilities at work
- Closer facilities
- Better transport links
- More and better cycle paths
- Crèche, childcare facilities at gym

## If you currently don't participate in sport, but would like to, what sport/physical activity are you interested in?

Question 5 asked those who responded that they don't currently participate in regular sport or physical activity, but would like to, what sport/physical activity they are interested in.

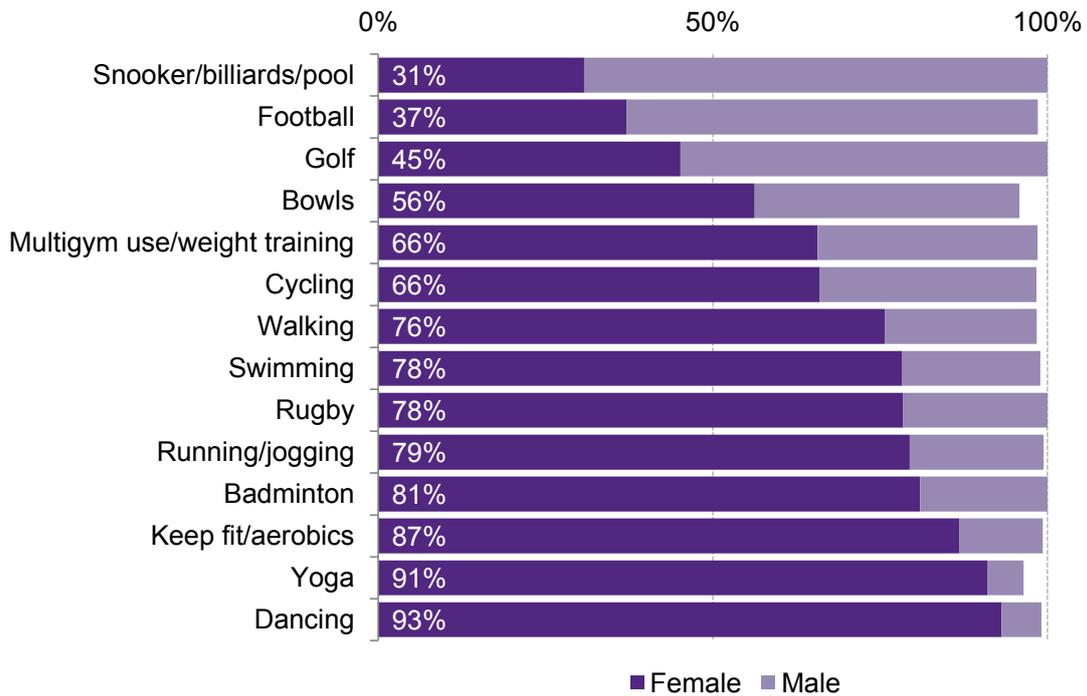
Figure 11 shows the most commonly cited sports. Badminton and yoga were the two most mentioned activities in the "other" free-text response option.

**Figure 11: If you currently don't participate in sport, but would like to, what sport/physical activity are you interested in? Please tick all that apply.**



There was an interesting gender differential in many of the sports ticked by respondents as ones they would be interested in participating in. Dancing, yoga, aerobics and badminton were overwhelmingly favoured by non-participating female respondents, compared with non-participating males having a preference for snooker, football and golf.

**Figure 12: If you currently don't participate in sport, but would like to, what sport/physical activity are you interested in? Responses split by gender**



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**SPICe**

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