

SPOTLIGHT

ON LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

Active Lives Adult Survey
November 2016-17

WELCOME

Around 12 million people – nearly a third of the adult population in England – fall within our broad definition of lower socio-economic groups.

This large group of people is not limited to those facing greater economic disadvantage.

It also includes people and families who sometimes, or often, struggle to make ends meet. It could feature people employed in ‘semi-routine’ jobs, like shop assistants, hairdressers and bus drivers; or people in ‘routine’ jobs, like waiters, cleaners and building labourers.

Although a diverse group, our Active Lives Adult Survey reveals people in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to be inactive.

There isn’t a single reason for this, but this report explores the interaction between being in a lower socio-economic group and other characteristics – disability, ethnicity and age – and the statistics that lie behind them.

This report also examines how we might influence the way audiences within this target population engage in sport and physical activity. For those who deliver sport and physical activity opportunities, this inevitably requires consideration of how best to meet audience needs.

THE HEADLINES

12 MILLION PEOPLE
IN ENGLAND ARE IN A LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP



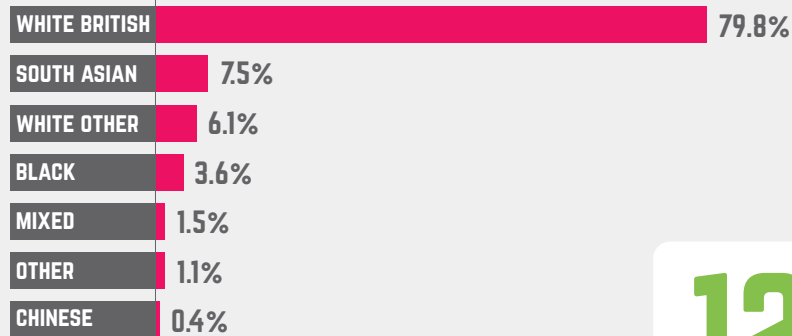
LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS: WHO DOES THIS INCLUDE?

The 12 million people who are in a lower socio-economic group cannot be thought of as one homogenous group of people. It's important to understand the diversity of lower socio-economic groups be it their age, gender, ethnicity or whether or not they have a limiting disability.

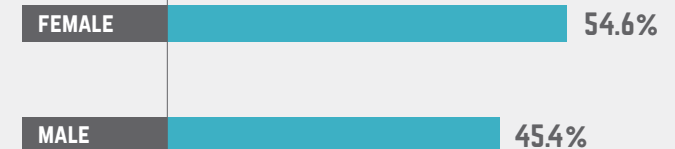
HOW DO WE DEFINE LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS?

We use the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) to collect and define data on socio-economic groups. The 'lower socio-economic groups' are defined as NS-SEC groups six to eight, and include people aged between 16 and 74 who work in semi-routine occupations (such as bus drivers or hairdressers), routine occupations (such as cleaners or waiters) or who have never worked or are long-term unemployed.

ETHNICITY

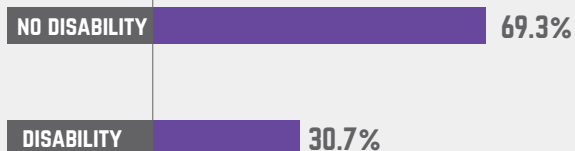


GENDER

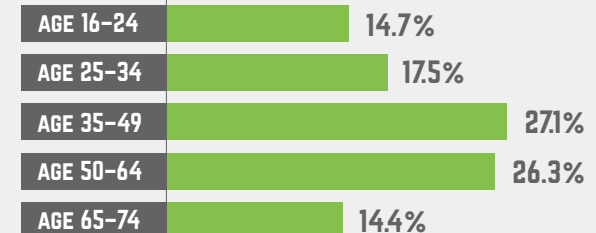


12 MILLION PEOPLE
IN ENGLAND ARE IN A LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP

DISABILITY



AGE



SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS AND INACTIVITY LEVELS

HOW WE COLLECT INFORMATION

As shown by the graph below, inactivity is higher in lower socio-economic groups. Whilst there isn't a single contributing factor behind this trend, this report will now explore the demographics of these groups, and their relationship with inactivity.

INACTIVE (LESS THAN 30 MINUTES A WEEK)



TALKING POINTS

It's important to understand the differing motivations and barriers for specific audiences when it comes to sport and physical activity, rather than a one size fits all approach responding to stereotypes.

We also know that increasing activity levels is more likely to be successful when working with communities to change together as a group, rather than individually, and this should be considered when working with target communities.

LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND DISABILITY

Almost a third of people in lower socio-economic groups (31%) have a long-term limiting disability, compared to 21% of all adults.

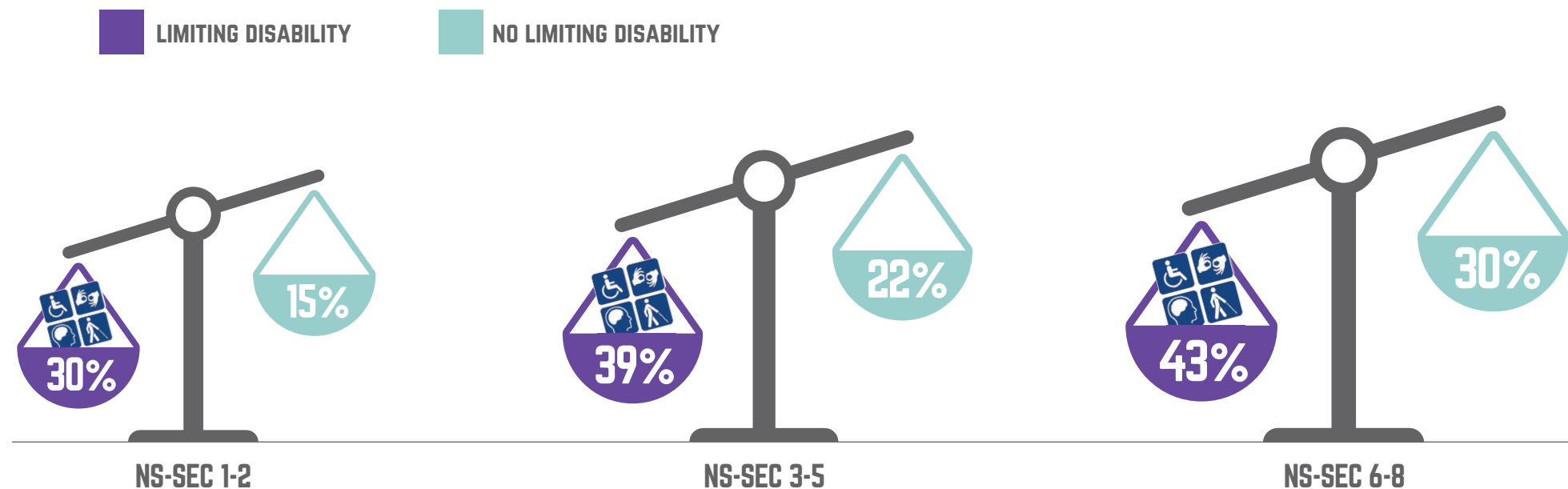
People in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to be inactive, regardless of whether they have a limiting disability or not. However, it would seem having a limiting disability impacts upon inactivity levels, which increase from 30% to 43%.

TALKING POINTS

It's important that the specific requirements of people with a disability are factored in when trying to increase the activity levels of people in lower socio-economic groups. For example, the type and number of impairments.

This is not a unique issue – the implications of having a limiting disability should be considered in all instances. However, if you're seeking to work with lower socio-economic groups to deliver appealing experiences, it's likely that you'll need to understand the impact of having one or more impairment.

HOW A LIMITING DISABILITY AFFECTS INACTIVITY LEVELS BY NS-SEC (AGE 16-74)



LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND ETHNICITY

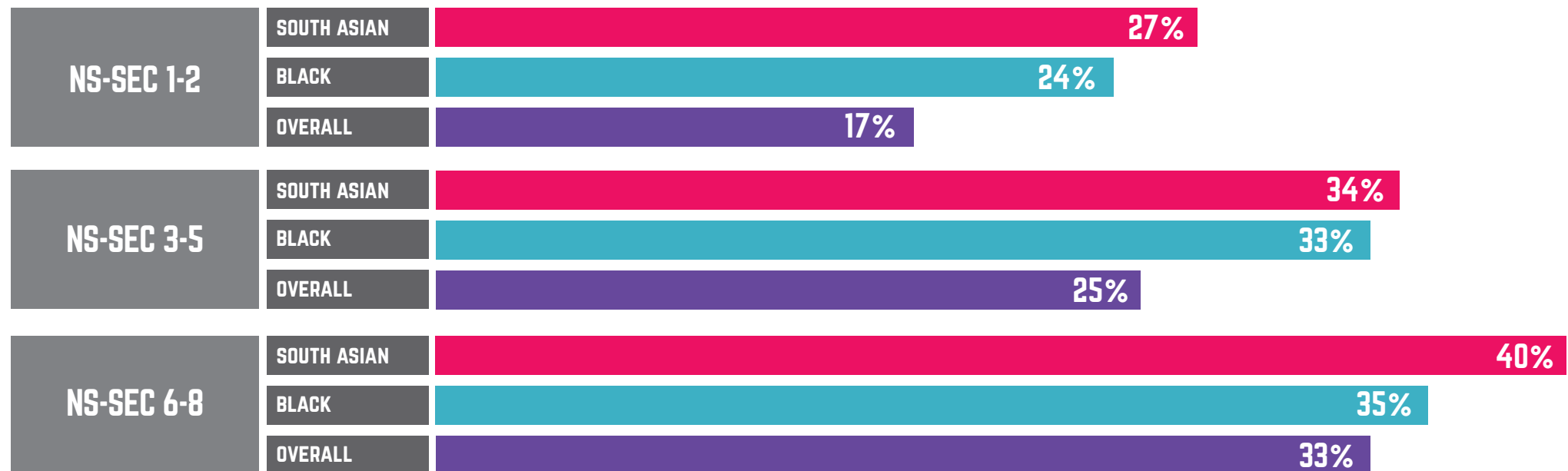
There is a higher proportion of South Asian and black people in lower socio-economic groups than any other ethnic group. They are also more likely to be inactive, regardless of their socio-economic background. However, when you look at both ethnicity and socio-economic group together, there are important differences.

For people who are black, there is no difference in inactivity levels between NS-SEC 3-5 and NS SEC 6-8 – something that’s not the case for all other groups. For South Asian people in NS-SEC 6-8, inactivity levels are particularly high.

TALKING POINTS

The combination of being South Asian and in NS-SEC 6-8 has a particular impact on inactivity. Better understanding the specific social, economic and cultural reasons behind this (and how these differ to people from different ethnic backgrounds) could help to unlock some of the barriers facing people from South Asian backgrounds.

HOW ETHNICITY AFFECTS INACTIVITY LEVELS BY NS-SEC (AGE 16-74)



LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND AGE

There are stark differences in how people of different ages engage with sport and physical activity across the socio-economic groups.

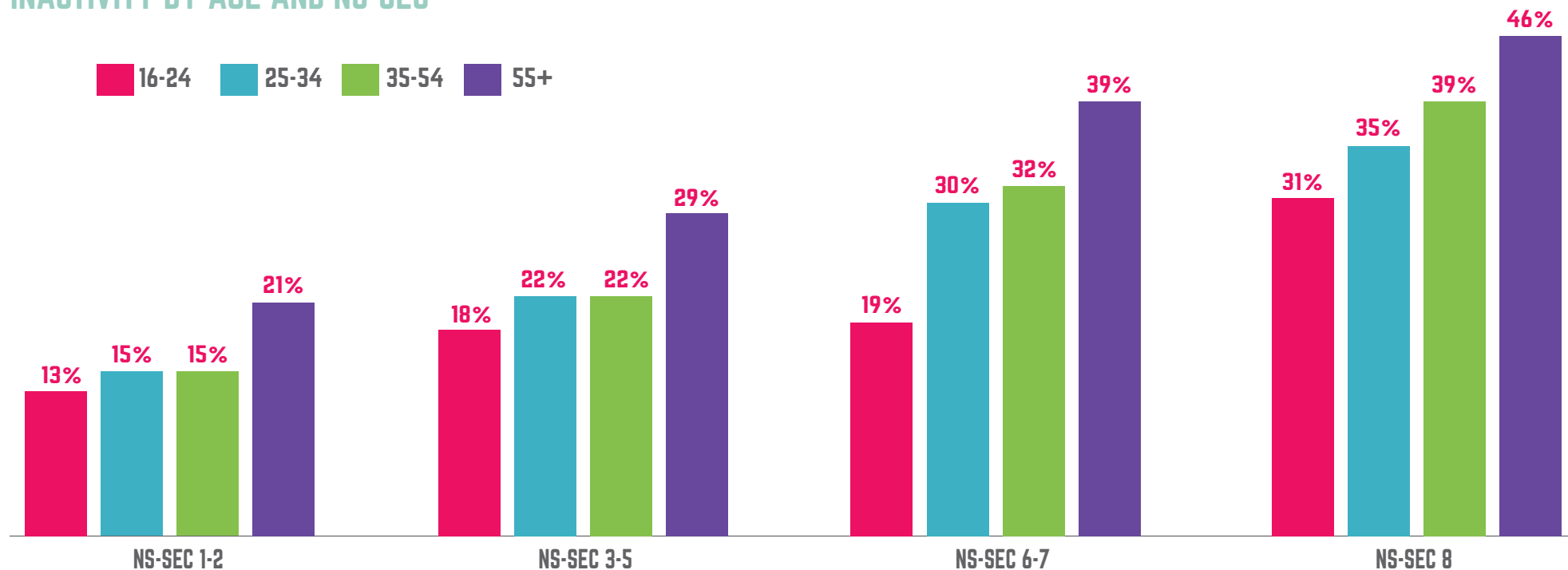
Amongst people in high and middle socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 1-5), there is little difference in the rate of inactivity between the 16-24 age group and the 25-54 age groups. But a look at the lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 6-8) tells a different story. It shows a rise in inactivity levels once you move into the 25-54 age groups. The rate of inactivity amongst 16-24 year olds in NS-SEC 8 is also particularly stark.

TALKING POINTS

Staying active as life changes is key to higher levels of physical and mental health. Whatever the reason for people dropping out of sport and activity, we can see that people in lower socio-economic groups in particular need help to successfully negotiate changes in their lives so they can stay active in a way that's right for them.

This may also require those delivering sport and physical activity opportunities to redesign those experiences to meet the needs of specific target audiences within this diverse population.

INACTIVITY BY AGE AND NS-SEC



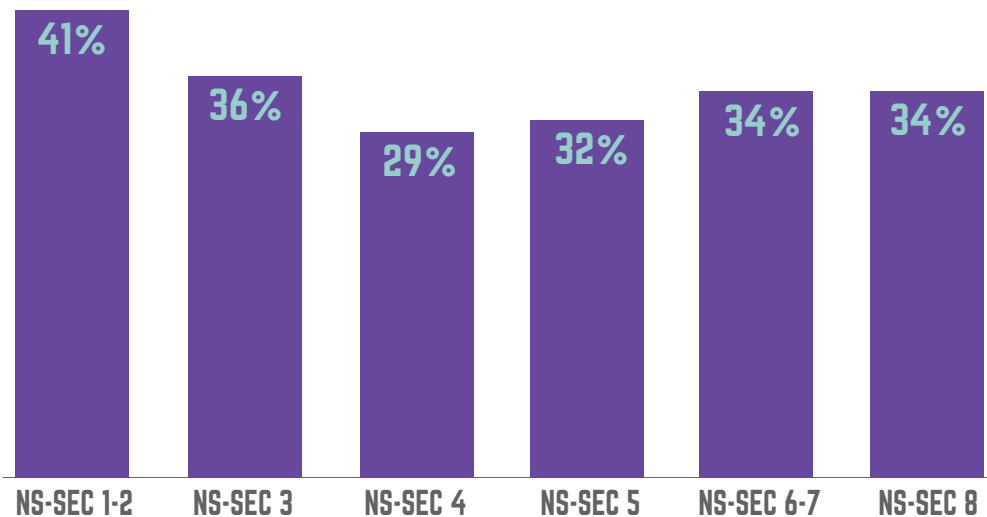
IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE TRAVEL

With most types of activity, participation levels fall as we move from higher to lower socio-economic groups. However active travel, which encompasses walking for travel and cycling for travel, bucks that trend.

If people walk or cycle for travel, they may not choose to do other activities as part of their daily routine. The importance of active travel for lower socio-economic groups is key, as 46% who are active in walking for travel (doing at least 150 minutes of walking for travel a week) only do this activity and thus are entirely dependent on it to be classed as active. Similarly, 21% who are active in cycling for travel only do this activity.

Making active travel more accessible is therefore key to getting those from lower socio-economic groups active, in particular those who face additional barriers to activity. Active travel may also be the key to understanding some of the difficulties to being active through leisure activities, such as reliance on transport inhibiting their access to other activities.

ACTIVE TRAVEL AT LEAST TWICE IN THE LAST 28 DAYS



EVERYDAY JOURNEYS MADE BY BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE, SUCH AS CYCLING TO WORK, OR WALKING TO LOCAL AMENITIES ARE TERMED ACTIVE TRAVEL

TALKING POINTS

Active Travel may not always be a choice for individuals within lower socio-economic groups as other factors may prevent access to other forms of transport. In addition, there may be a poor choice of local services and amenities for people from lower socio-economic groups, providing more reason to walk or cycle further afield. However, active travel can still play an important role in helping these groups to be and stay active.



OF THOSE WALKING FOR TRAVEL FROM LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS, **22%** HAVE A DISABILITY, WHEREAS FOR ALL ADULTS AGED 16-74 WHO WALK FOR TRAVEL, **14%** HAVE A DISABILITY.



12% OF THOSE IN LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS WHO CYCLE FOR TRAVEL HAVE A DISABILITY, WHEREAS FOR ALL ADULTS AGED 16-74 WHO CYCLE FOR TRAVEL, ONLY **7%** HAVE A DISABILITY.

ACTIVITIES COMMON AMONG PEOPLE IN LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS



WALKING IS THE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITY AMONGST LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS, WITH **33%** WALKING FOR LEISURE AND **30%** WALKING FOR TRAVEL. OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE POPULAR AMONGST THESE GROUPS ARE **CYCLING FOR LEISURE**, WITH **11%** OF PEOPLE TAKING PART, AND **RUNNING** WITH **10%** OF PEOPLE TAKING PART.



TAKING PART IN A **FITNESS CLASS** IS A KEY ACTIVITY FOR WOMEN, WITH **13%** OF FEMALES FROM LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS TAKING PART, MAKING IT THE THIRD MOST POPULAR ACTIVITY AMONGST THIS GROUP. HOWEVER, PARTICIPATION IS LOWER FOR THIS GROUP THAN FOR HIGHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS.



SWIMMING IS AN IMPORTANT ACTIVITY IN KEEPING OLDER ADULTS IN LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS ACTIVE. **6%** OF THOSE AGED **55-74** IN THIS GROUP TAKE PART, WHICH IS A SIMILAR RATE TO HIGHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS.



FOOTBALL IS A COMMON ACTIVITY AMONGST THOSE AGED **16-34** IN LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS, WITH **10%** OF THIS GROUP TAKING PART, WHICH IS A SIMILAR RATE TO YOUNG PEOPLE FROM HIGHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS.

FURTHER INSIGHT

As well as relatively high levels of walking and cycling for travel, there are several other activities popular amongst people in lower socio-economic groups. We know that NS-SEC 6-8 is a diverse group of people, so when planning work aimed at increasing activity in this group, it could prove valuable to consider which activities are popular for particular demographics. For example, swimming for older age groups, football for younger age groups and fitness classes for females.

Conversely, some sports such as golf and tennis have lower participation rates among people in lower socio-economic groups compared to the overall adult population aged 16-74. This suggests there may be some real barriers to taking part in these sports. Understanding and breaking these down will be key in helping this group to access these and other activities.

TALKING POINTS

Creating environments that make it easy to walk and cycle is key to helping lower socio-economic groups stay active. There is the potential to learn a lot about the needs and motivations of people in lower socio-economic groups by understanding the high level of walking and cycling for travel. There could be barriers that this group face which might stand in the way of doing another activity. And as important as active travel is, other popular activities can also be a gateway either individually, or in combination, to increasing activity levels.

CONCLUSION

The information in this report shows that lower socio-economic groups consist of a large and diverse population of people – not just limited to those who face extreme disadvantage. Whilst diverse, people in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to be inactive.

Significant numbers of people in lower socio-economic groups have a disability and/or are from South Asian backgrounds, further affecting the likelihood of them being inactive.

To effectively tackle high levels of inactivity, it's important to understand the specific and different needs of people who are in a lower socio-economic group. It's important to look beyond this report and learn from organisations working at a local level, as well as people from lower socio-economic groups themselves, to gain a real understanding of the individual differences within this audience.



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NOTES

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THE DATA INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT CAN
BE FOUND IN OUR PUBLISHED DATA TABLES.