Children and Young People Investment Fund

Survey response analysis

Summary

Active Sussex distributes funding from Sport England to support children and young people (CYP) to be more physically active. The aim of the CYP Investment Fund is to target groups most at risk of low activity levels.

Thank you to all the activity providers whose efforts helped many children and young people to return to being active following the challenging period of pandemic restrictions.

Summary

This report highlights both the successes, and challenges.

As with the findings of the previous report, we see projects were only able to recruit from a priority group if they had a specific focus on that group.

This was particularly notable for gender. Being ‘open to all’ will not reduce inequalities - a targeted approach is needed. In the next phase of this fund, providers will be asked to have a clear, targeted focus on one priority group as the most effective way to support children and young people into activity.

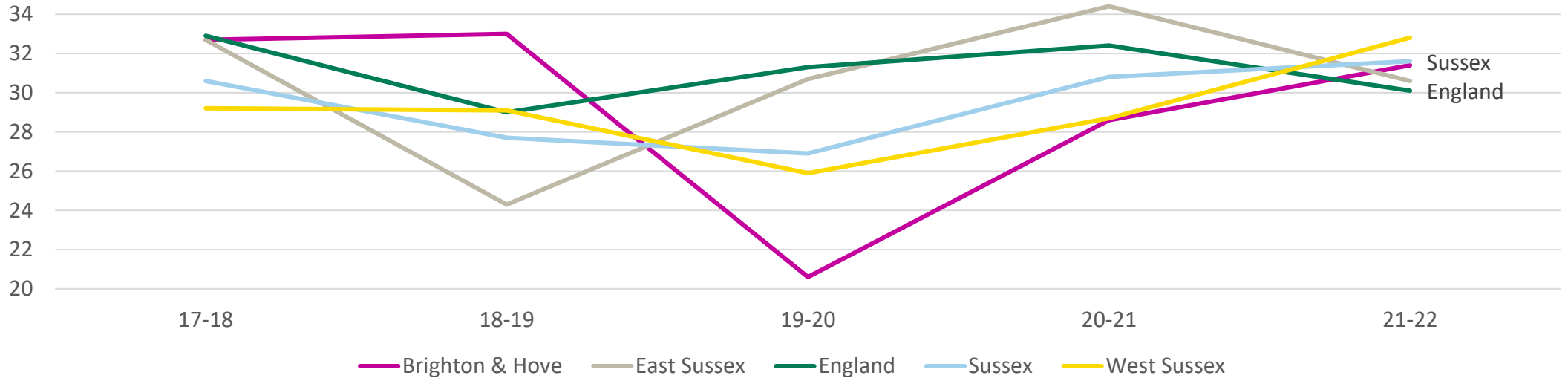
Contents

	Slide
Background	5-6
Priority groups	7
Demographic Analysis	8
Gender	10
Low affluence families	11-12
Disability	13-15
Black and South Asian children	16-17
Age ranges	18-20
Findings	21
Levels of physical activity	22-23
Time changes	24-27
Opinions	28-30
Successes & Areas of Improvement	31-32
Recommendations	33-34

Background

The Chief Medical Officer advises that children and young people do an average of an hour of activity per day. Those who meet this recommendation are categorised as ‘Active’, those who do 30-59 mins ‘Fairly active’, and those who do less ‘Less active’.

On aggregate, those marked as ‘Less active’ in the Active Lives Survey have been lower in Sussex compared to English figures. However, last year’s survey shows this has changed, and Sussex now has higher rates of ‘Less Active’ CYP than the English average.



Aims of the Children and Young People Investment Fund

The aim of the Children & Young People Investment Fund is to make it easier for young people to get active – and stay active.

The projects provide opportunities to take part regularly in sport and activity through the creation of enjoyable, appealing and convenient opportunities for young people that are based around their needs. The clubs have helped thousands of young people get active and our support to the programme will continue under Sport England's strategy 'Uniting the movement'.

"I have really enjoyed the skateboarding lessons and I hope it continues soon!"

Priority groups

Four main groups are highlighted as being at risk of lower activity levels in the Active Lives Survey. Many individuals will experience intersectional characteristics.

These groups have been marked as a priority for investment, with the proportion of funding allocated somewhat relative to their population size in Sussex.

	Less active rates
Black ethnic background	38.1%
Asian (excluding Chinese) ethnic background	34.8%
Most deprived places (IDACI 1-3)	34.3%
Difficulty learning or understanding new things	31.5%
Girls	30.5%
Disability or LT Limiting Health Condition	30.5%
Average Less active rate	30.1%

Demographic Analysis

By looking at the demographic characteristics we can see that the partners performed very well when targeting groups most at risk of low activity levels. This aligned with the priorities that coordinators committed to during the application stage.

We had greater representation of children with Black or Black British heritage, higher rates of Girls vs Boys overall, and higher representation in the less affluent areas when compared to the Sussex population.
We also saw good representation from those experiencing difficulties with their physical, mental or emotional health.

	Priority	Not a priority
Black or South Asian heritage	14	54
Girls or young women	39	29
Living in less affluent areas	57	11
Living with learning disabilities	26	42
Living with physical disabilities	11	57
Young people at risk of crime	25	43
Young people with mental health conditions	32	36

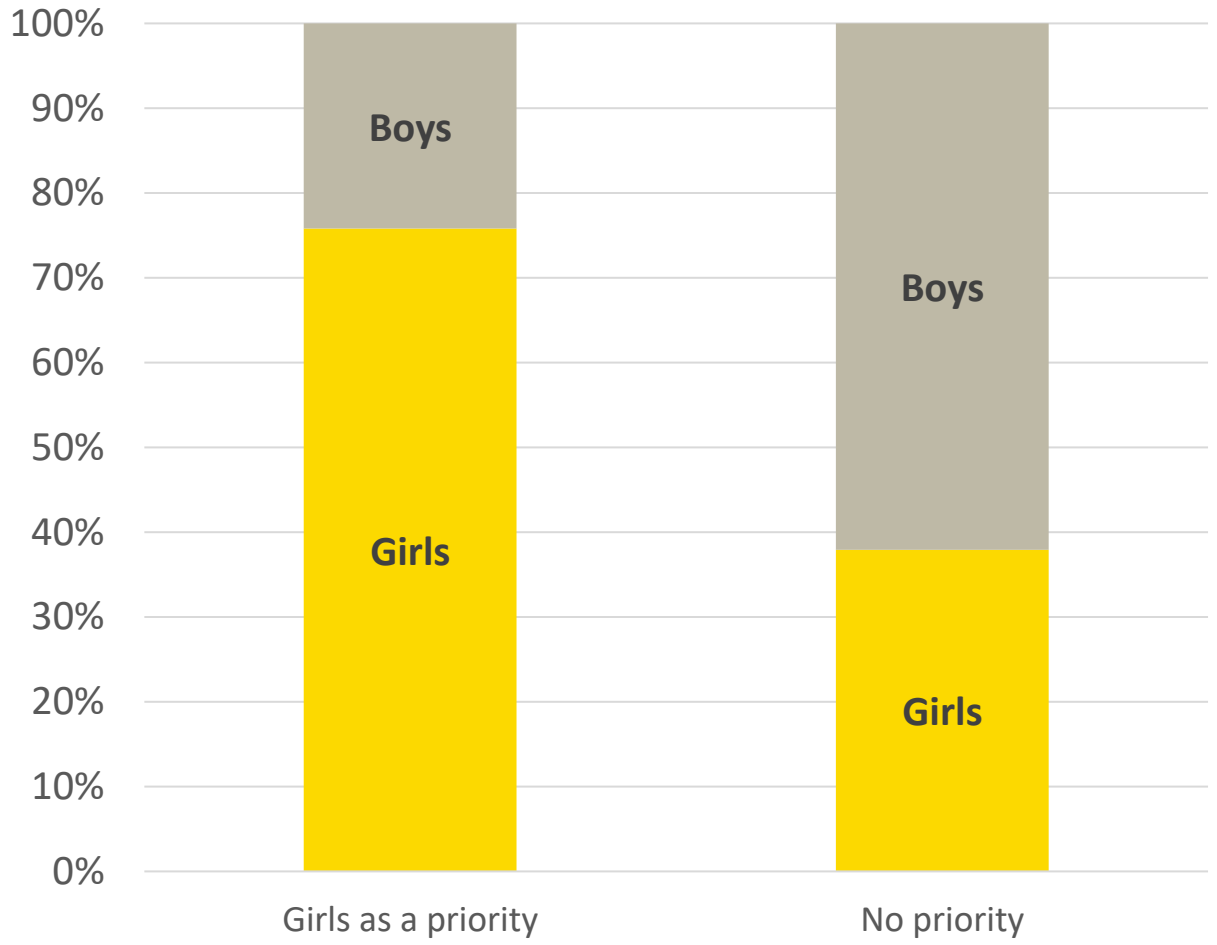
Gender as a priority

There was a total of 39 projects that prioritised Girls. There was a higher percentage of girls overall (54% vs 45% for boys).

The chart opposite shows that projects which prioritised girls had ratios of 20 girls for every 7 boys. This compares to projects that did not prioritise boys, where the ratio was 7 girls for every 12 boys.

In projects where girls were not targeted, boys made up the majority. In projects where girls were targeted, they made up the majority.

This shows the importance of committing to a targeted approach to get more girls active.

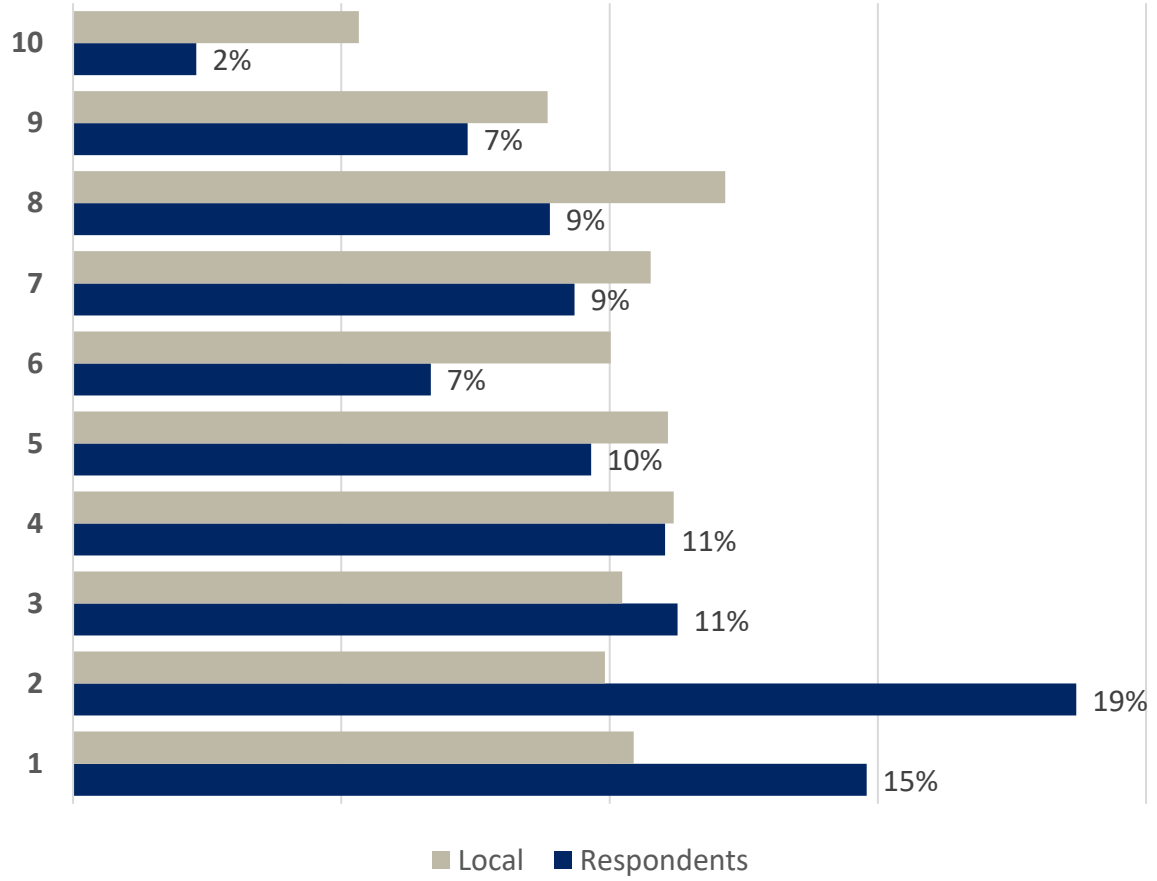


Low affluence families

There was a total of 57 projects that prioritised children from low affluence families.

Activities were very successful in engaging children and young people from the poorest areas in Sussex. We see greater representation in the surveys from poorer areas when we compare this to the Sussex population.

The chart shows poorer areas (deciles 1-3 at the bottom of the chart) had a higher percentage of respondents (blue) compared to the Sussex population figures (grey).

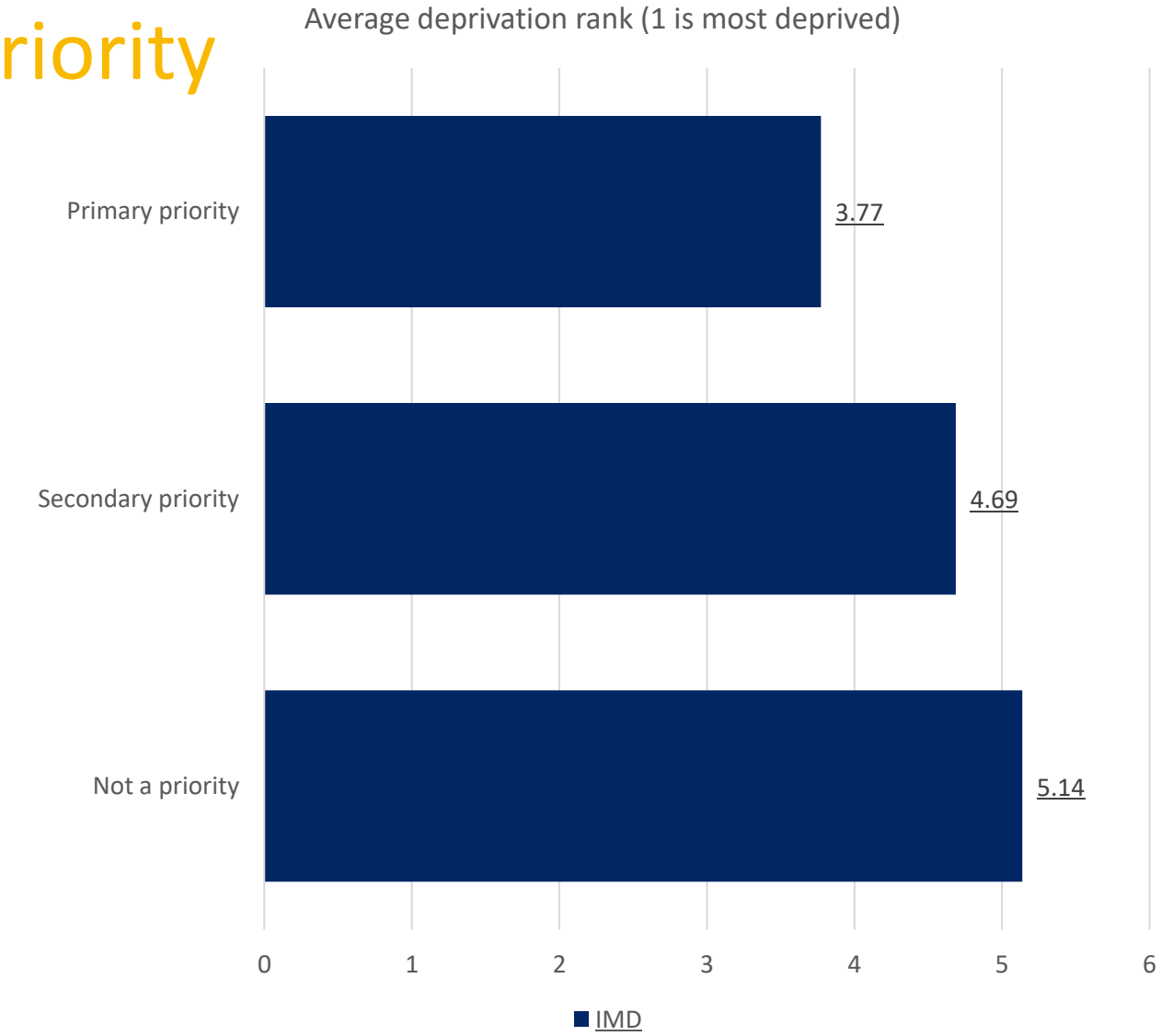


Low affluence families as a priority

Further analysis allows us to compare both Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD 2019) and the Income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI 2015).

The chart shows a strong correlation for projects that chose children & young people from deprived areas as a priority group and better engagement in poorer neighbourhoods. We see a lower average IMD rank of 3.77 (1 is most deprived) in the applications that marked this is a priority. And a higher average (5.14) in those that did not choose affluence as a priority. The same correlation exists for IDACI.

This shows the importance of committing to a targeted approach to get priority groups active.



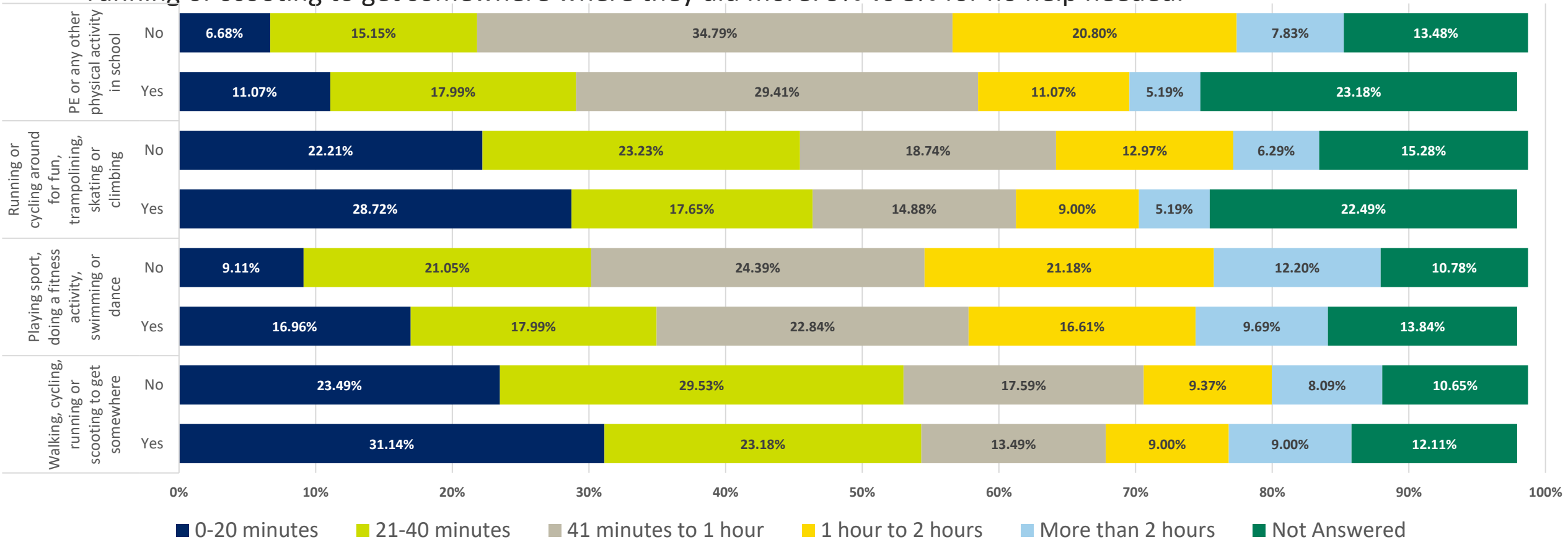
Disability

Comparing the rates of condition types and the effect of each impairment on activity is challenging both nationally and locally.
Despite pilot attempts, it has not been possible to include pupils in special schools in the Active Lives Survey Children and Young People. This means their conditions and activity rates are underreported.

Participants with learning difficulties in activities funded by Active Sussex are sometimes unable to complete a survey, but in most cases their carer can complete it, or we receive summary data on participant numbers by health condition and disability type.

“Help needed” compared to activity levels

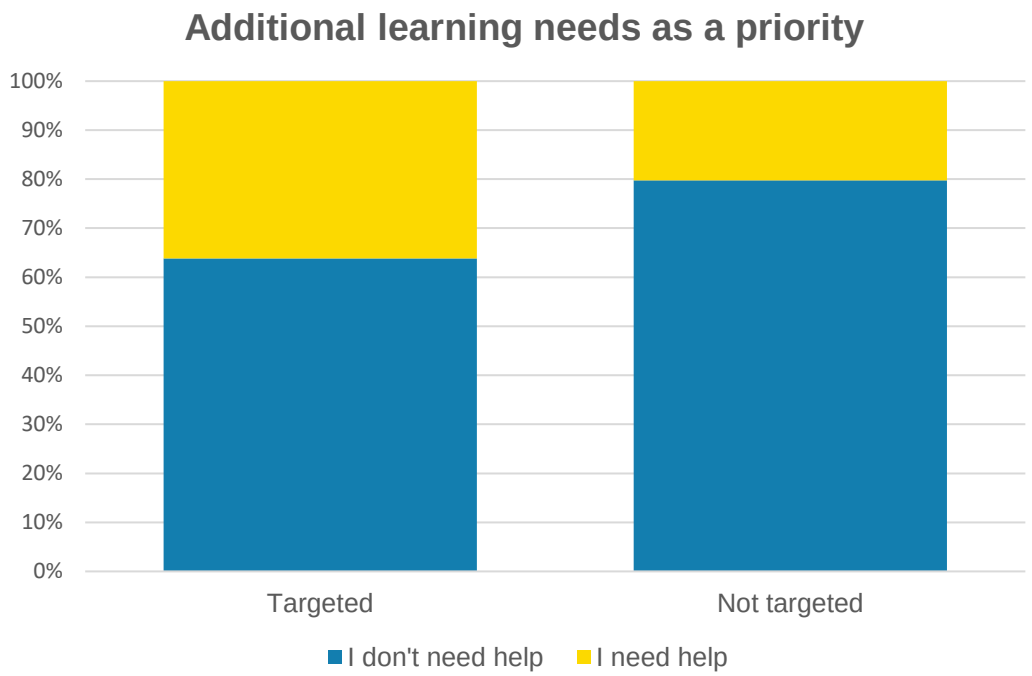
For this evaluation, we asked respondents if they needed any extra help with a range of life skills. Those that said they needed extra help (marked as “Yes” below) were more likely to do shorter periods of activity (0-20 minutes). At the opposite end of the spectrum, they were less likely to do activity for more than 2 hours. Apart from Walking, cycling, running or scooting to get somewhere where they did more: 9% vs 8% for no help needed.

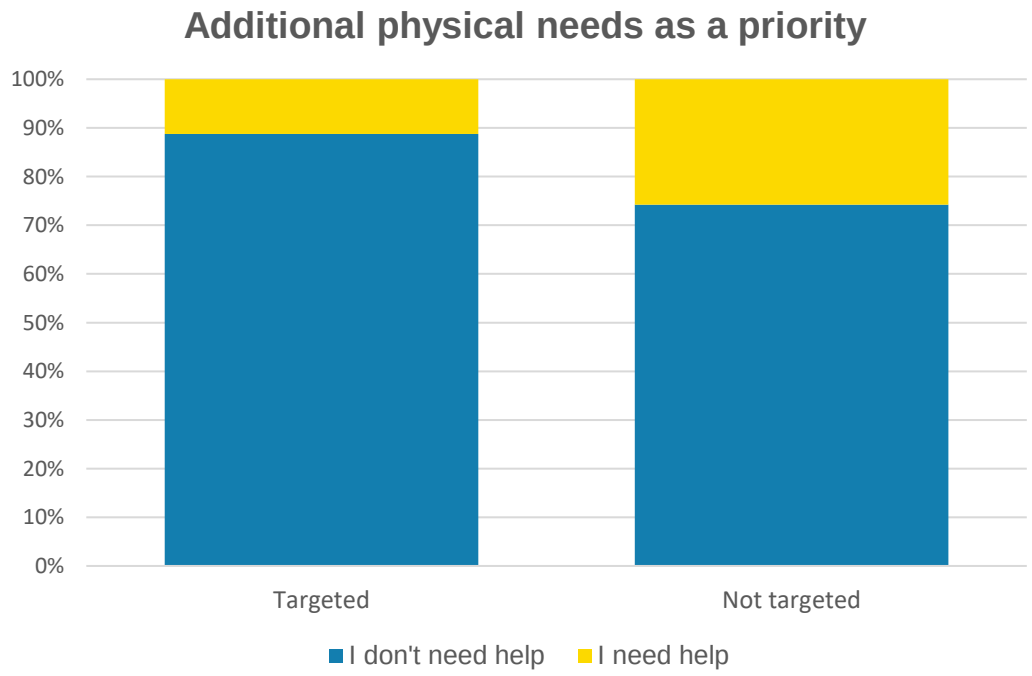


Disability as a targeted priority

By looking at the correlation of the projects that selected for additional needs as priority groups we can see that those intending to target learning needs had higher levels of those requiring help than those not prioritising this group.

However, in the projects targeting those with additional physical needs we see a higher percentage needed help in the non-targeted groups.

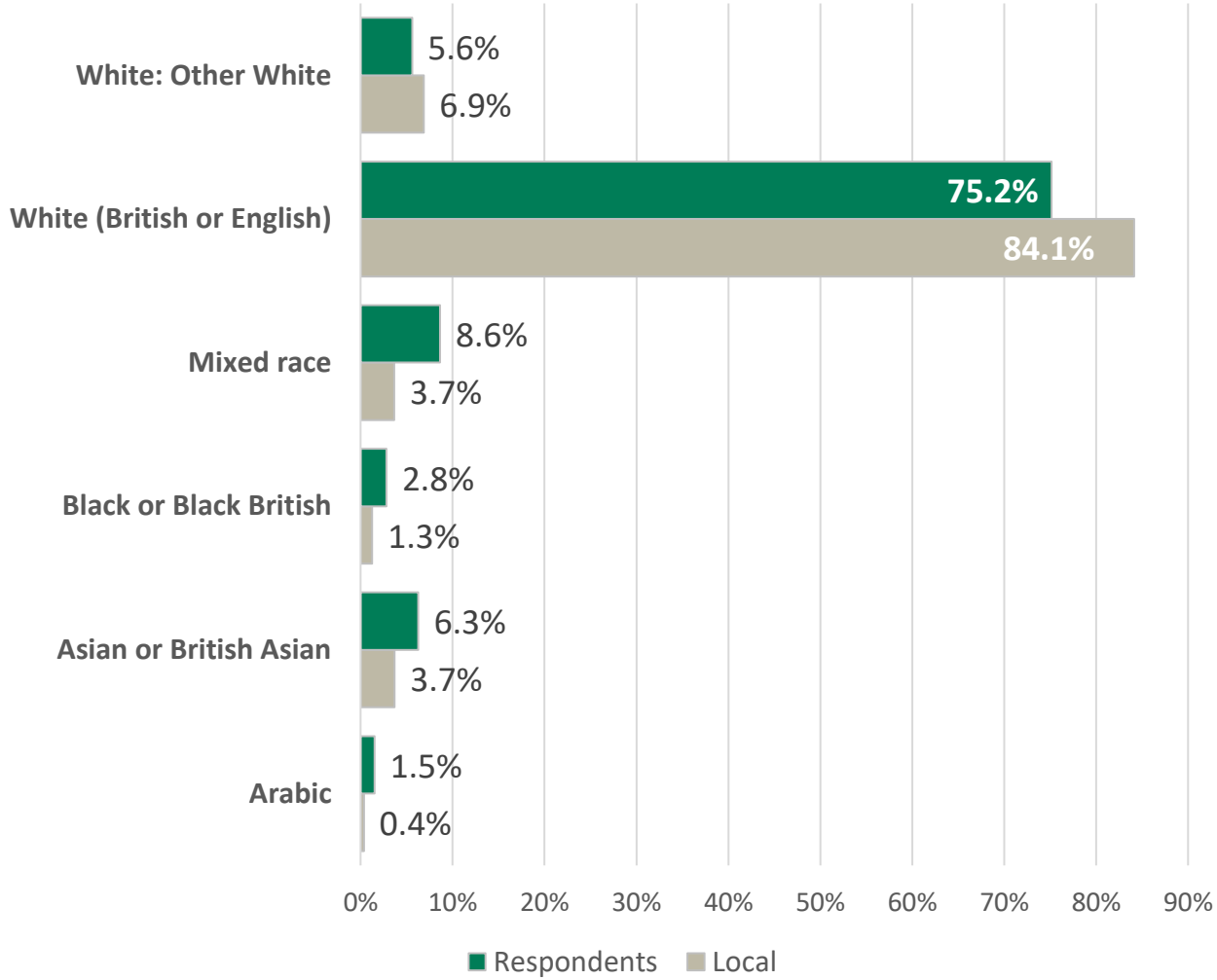




Black and South Asian children

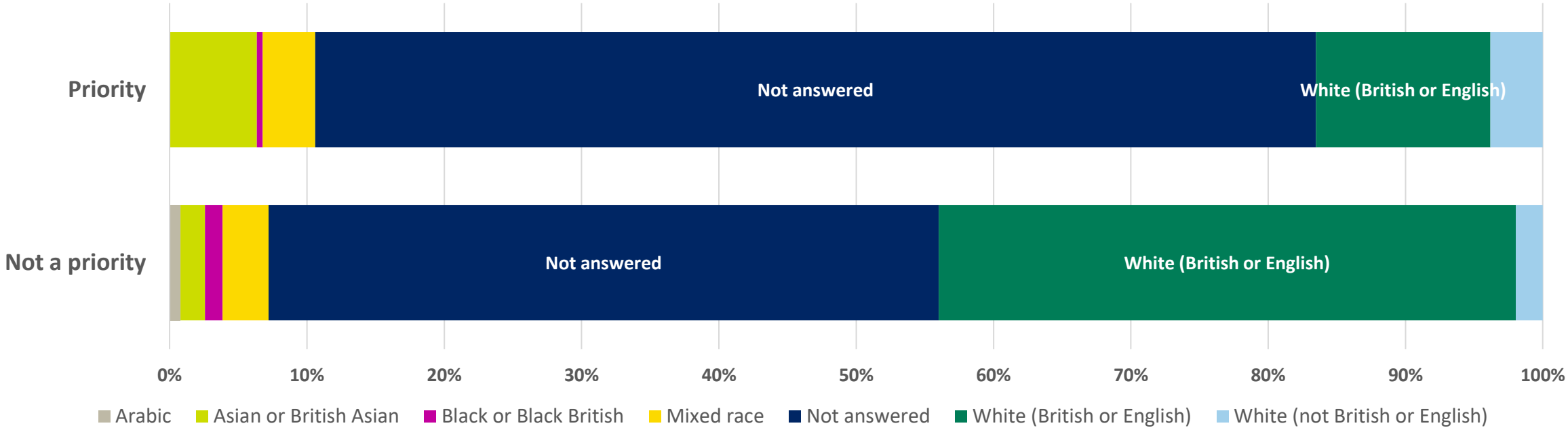
The Active Lives data shows that in the CYP population Ethnic groups at risk of low activity are often from a Black or Asian heritage.

This chart helps us look at the Ethnicity of those that engaged in activity (green), when compared to the Sussex population (grey). The data shows there were more than twice as many people with a Black Heritage or from a Mixed race background in the funded activities when compared to the Sussex population. Similar higher rates were seen from children and young people with an Asian heritage.



Black and South Asian children as a targeted priority

There were 14 projects that chose their priority group as Black and South Asian children.
Almost half of the respondents did not answer this question, so analysis is far less accurate than other protected characteristics. This makes it difficult to draw solid conclusions, but we are still able to see the previous patterns repeated. Those that made Black and South Asian CYP a priority were much better at engaging those at higher risk of low activity.



Age Ranges

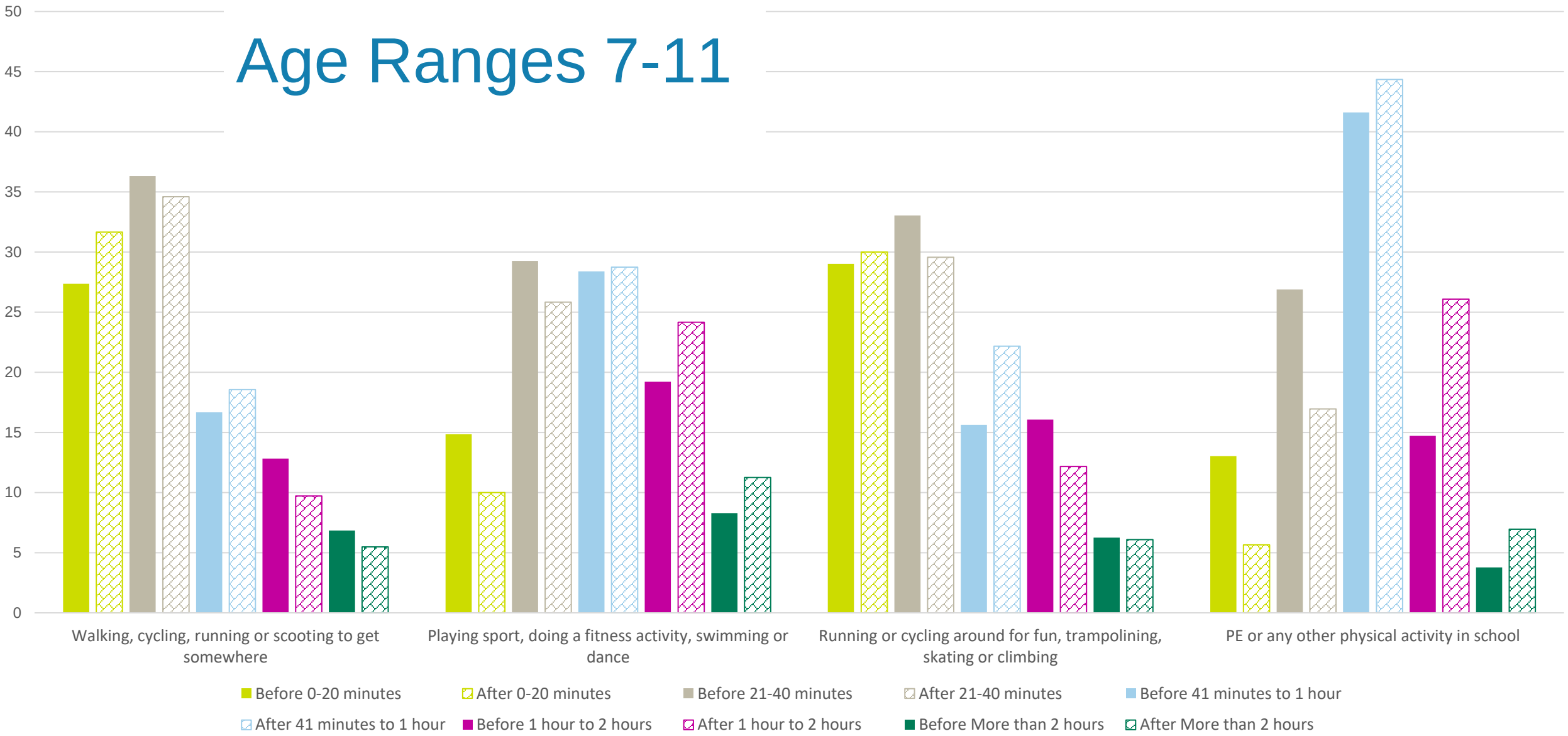
As with a few of the previous data analysis, the before and after activity adjusted for age range is a complicated picture. However, it is possible to draw a few simple overarching conclusions.

For both groups, shorter periods of activities (0-20 / 21-40 minutes) had a smaller representation in the after data. Conversely, longer periods of activity (41 minutes to 1 hour / 1 to 2 hours / 2 hours +) were better represented in the after data.

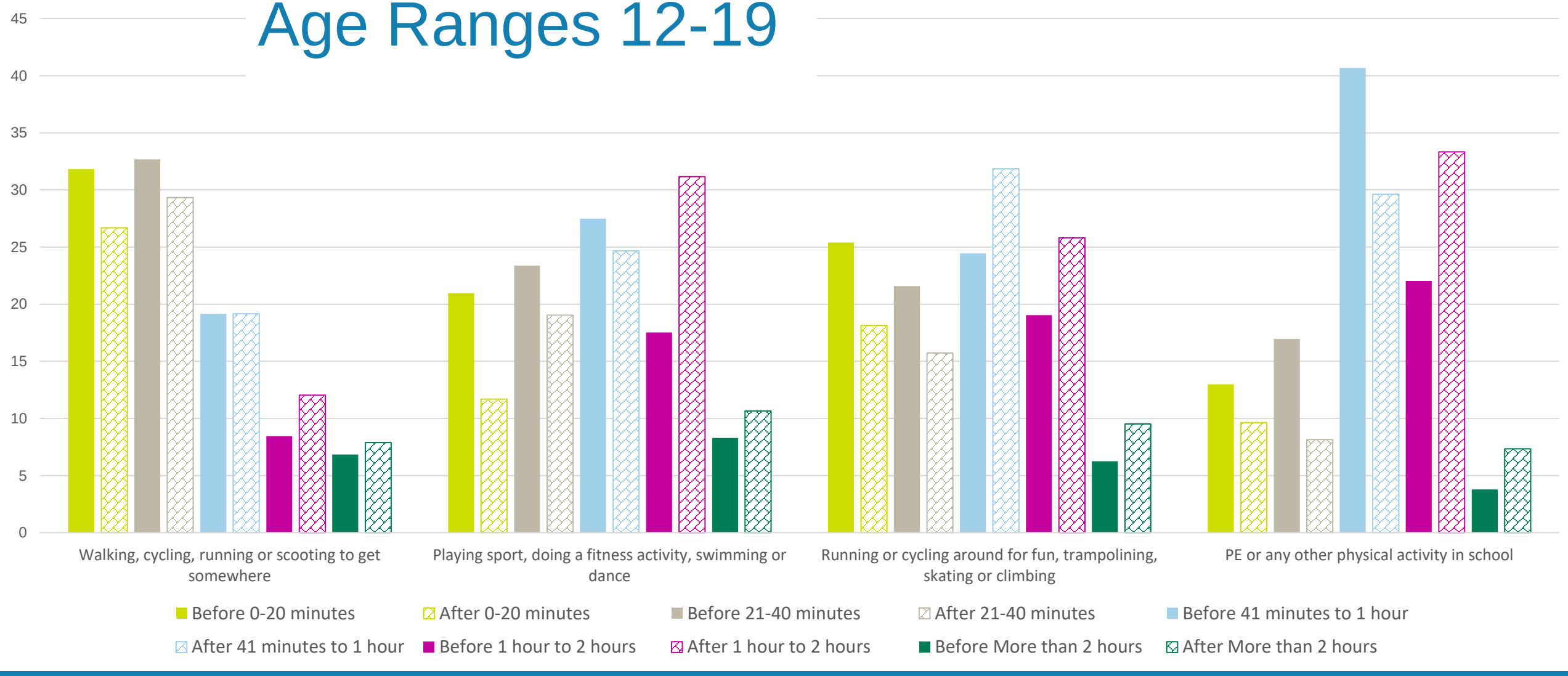
The changes were bigger and more consistent for the older age group (12-19) when compared to the 7–11-year-olds. The biggest increase was seen in the "1 – 2 hours" in the activities grouped as "Playing sport, doing a fitness activity, swimming or dance" for Ages 12-19. Which went up 13%. Activity in ages 7-11 increased the most for "Playing sport, doing a fitness activity, swimming or dance". And for 12-19 year olds, the biggest overall activity change was seen in "Running or cycling around for fun, trampolining, skating or climbing"

Nb: The number of responses for children under 7 was too small to do any analysis.

Age Ranges 7-11



Age Ranges 12-19



Findings

Did these children become more physically active overall?

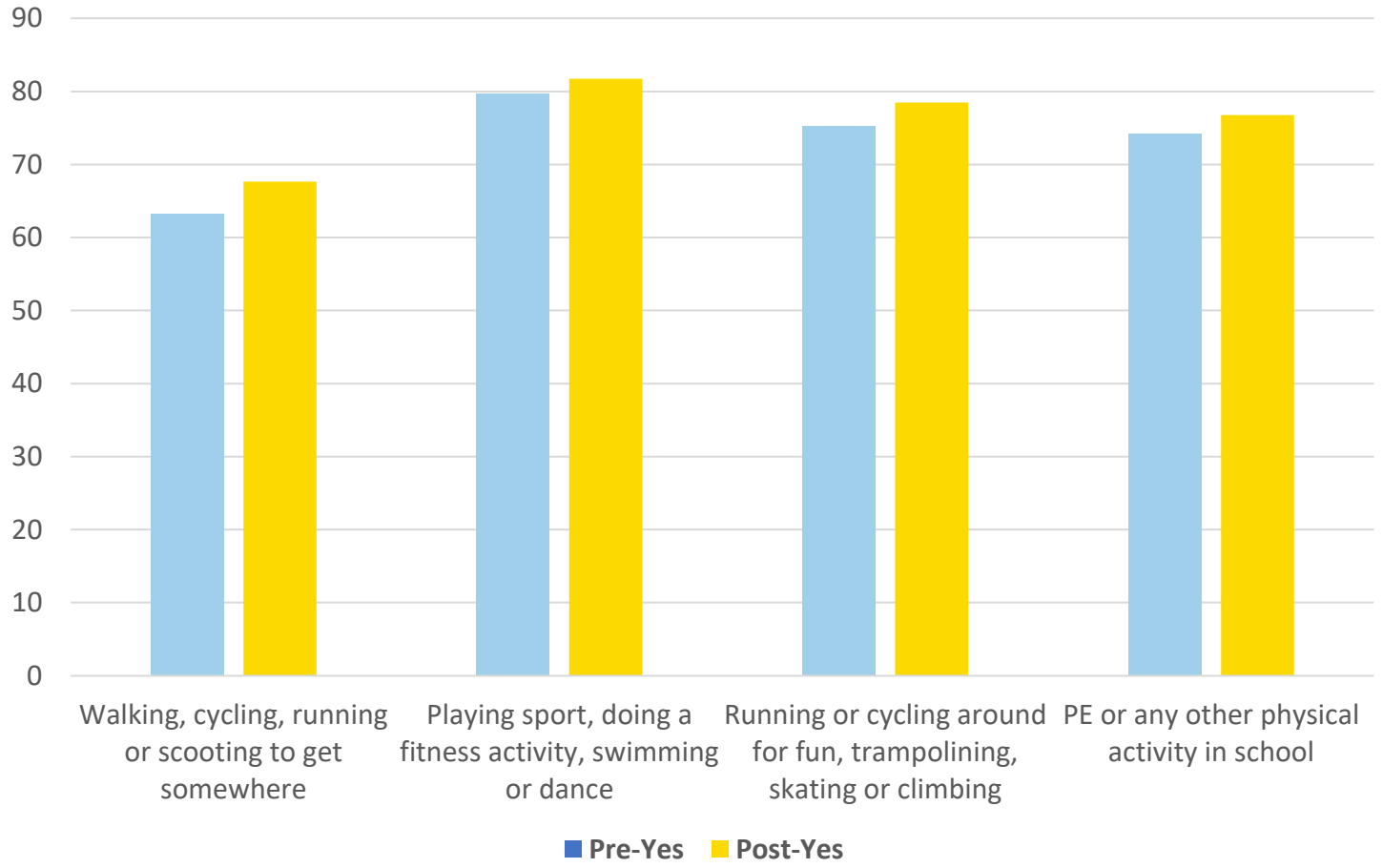
On average, survey respondents reported better activity levels after the programme. With the largest changes being seen with improving the percentage of Children and young people doing activities more than once a week. This went up from 55% to 59%. Those doing activities around once a week went up from 21% to 22%.

On the other end of the scale, those that went from “Never” doing activities went down from 9% to 6%.

	% before	% after	Difference
More than once a week	54.8	59.0	+4.2
Around once a week	21.7	22.7	+1
Around once a fortnight	5.2	5.6	+0.4
Around once a month	3.1	3.1	=
Less than once a month	4.4	3.7	-0.7
Never	9.0	6.0	-3.0

And does the effort you put into this activity make you breathe faster or make you hot and tired?

We can see increases in people's' responses to breathing faster and becoming more hot and tired.
Causal links are not clear. But we can theorise that this is potentially because they are working harder with longer periods of exercise when compared to the start of the projects (as demonstrated in the data in the next few slides).



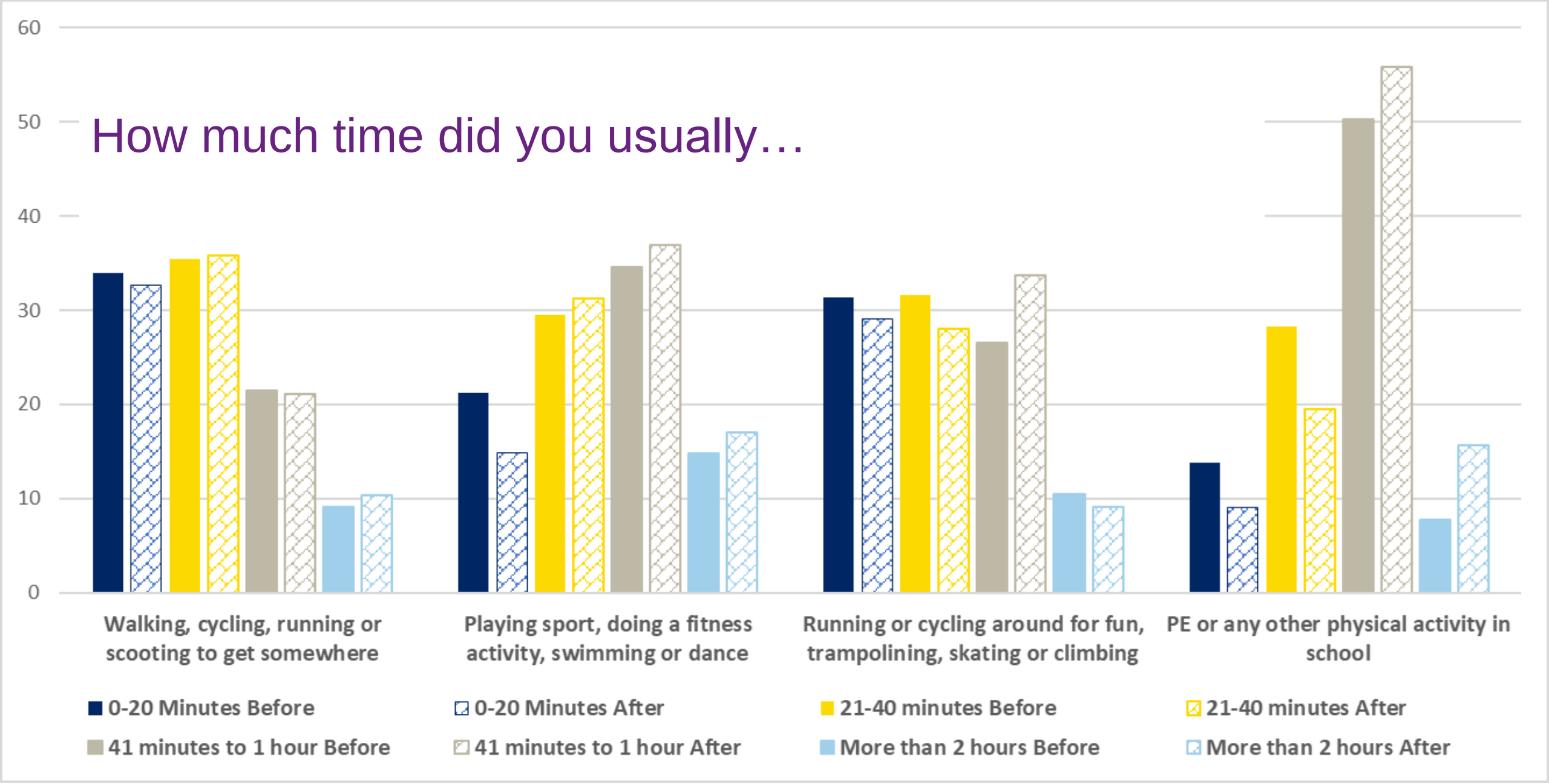
How much time did you usually…

There is a complex story to be told with the data collected from asking how much time respondents spent on different activities. The differences between the before and after surveys are very small. But we can distinctly see the positive outcome that on average, longer periods of activity increased, and the shorter periods declined.

The table on the next page shows

- The only consistent pattern was the percentage of children and young people doing activities for between 0-20 minutes going down for all options (down 4%).
- “21-40 minutes” went down 3%
- The biggest increase was seen in the “41 minutes to 1 hour” category. This went up from 33% to 37% of respondents.
- “More than 2 hours” went up 2.5%.

How much time did you usually…

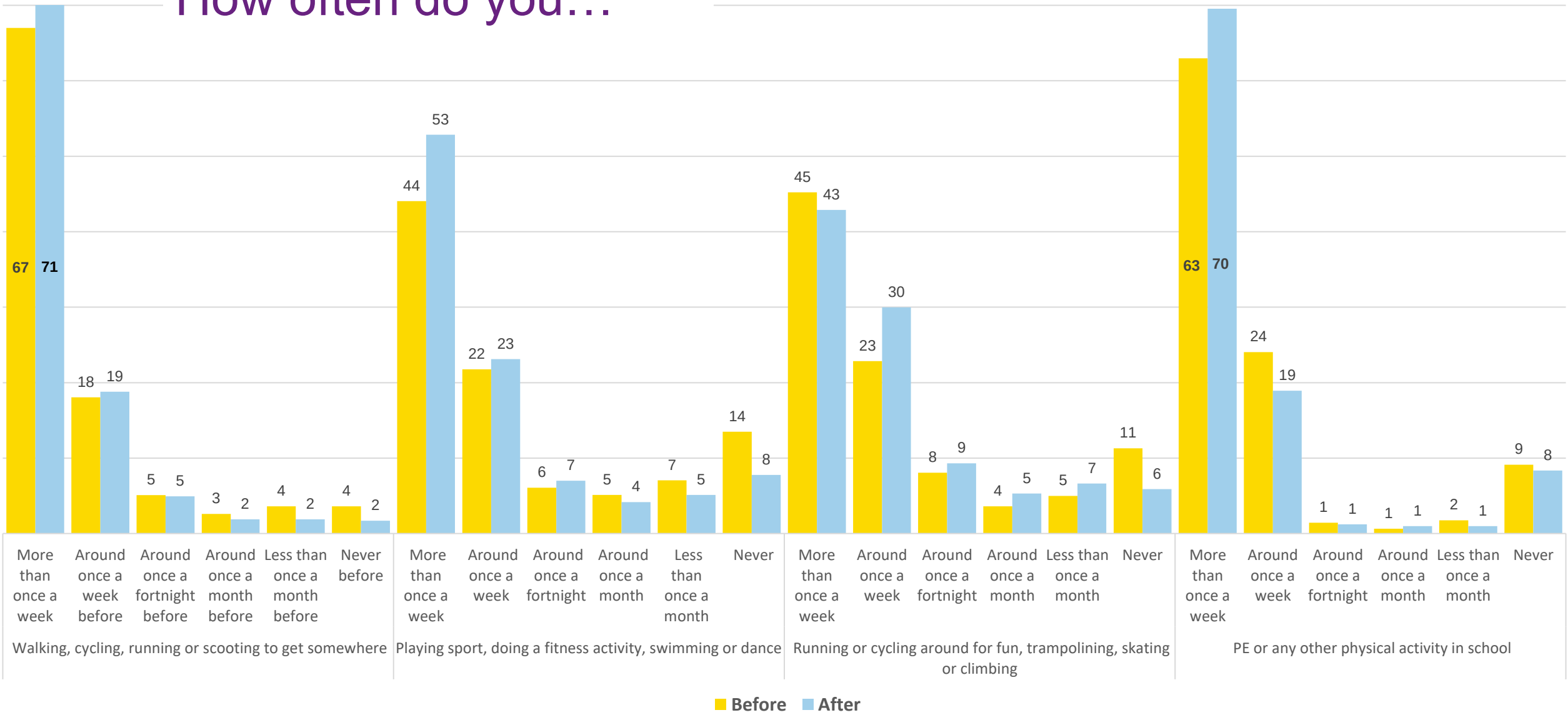


How often do you usually…

There is also a complex story to be told with the data collected from asking how often respondents spent on different activities. The positives can be seen that all activities reduced the number of times people chose “Never” as a response, averaging 4% less overall. The biggest increases were generally seen in the “More than once a week” responses. With playing sport, doing a fitness activity, swimming or dance” increasing 9%. And “PE or any other physical activity in school” increasing 7%.

Although cycling frequency went down slightly in the “More than once a week” choice, (2%) it went up considerably in the “Around once a week choice” (7%).

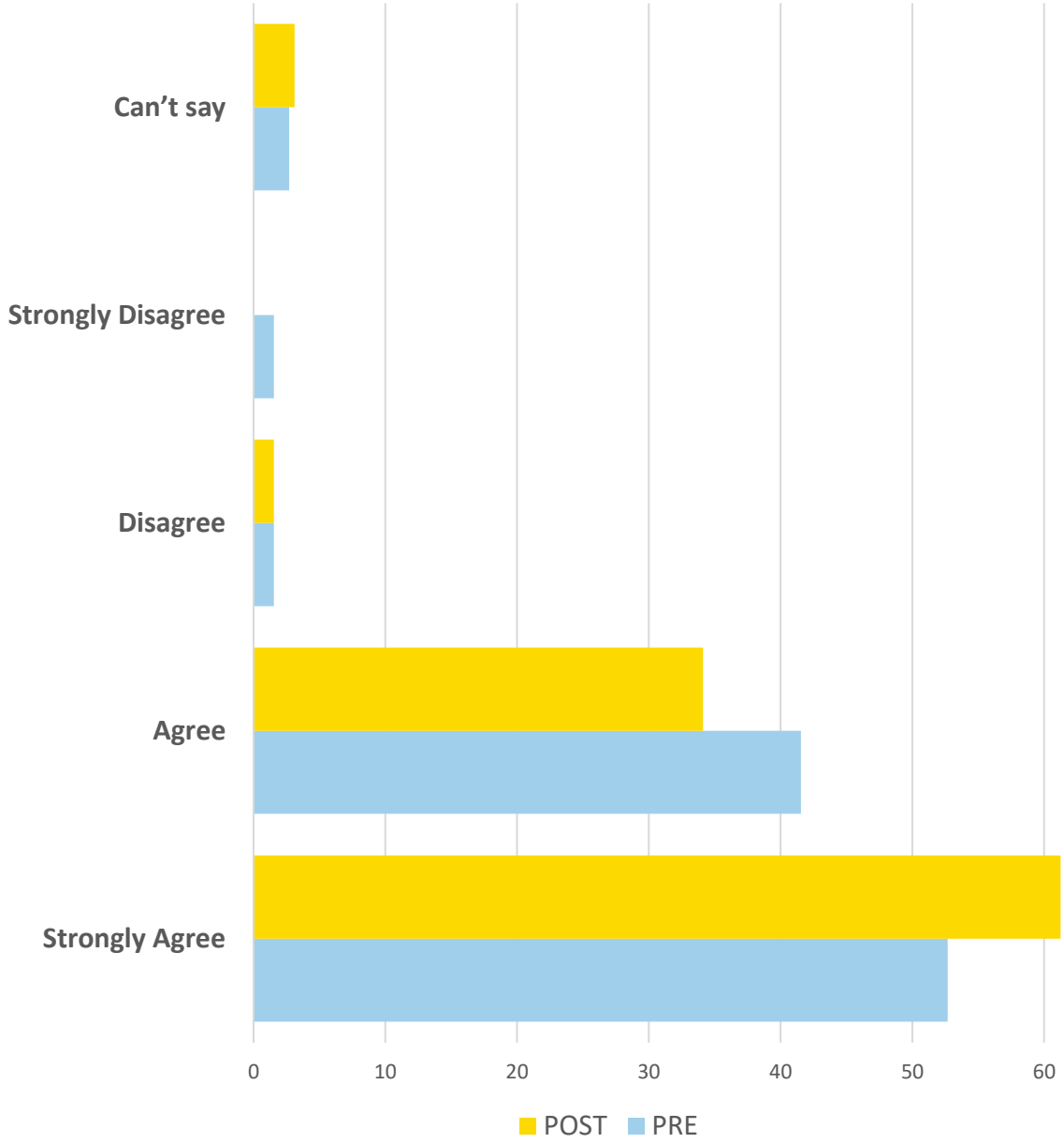
How often do you…



Unchanged opinions or knowledge

We know from previous research that there is a high level of understanding of the benefits of physical activity.
Responses to this survey reinforce this. With 95% of respondents understanding why exercise and **sports are good for them**. The combined percentage that agreed with the statement "I understand why exercise and sports are good for me" was relatively unchanged at the end of the funding (94% vs 95%).

This is shown in the chart opposite.

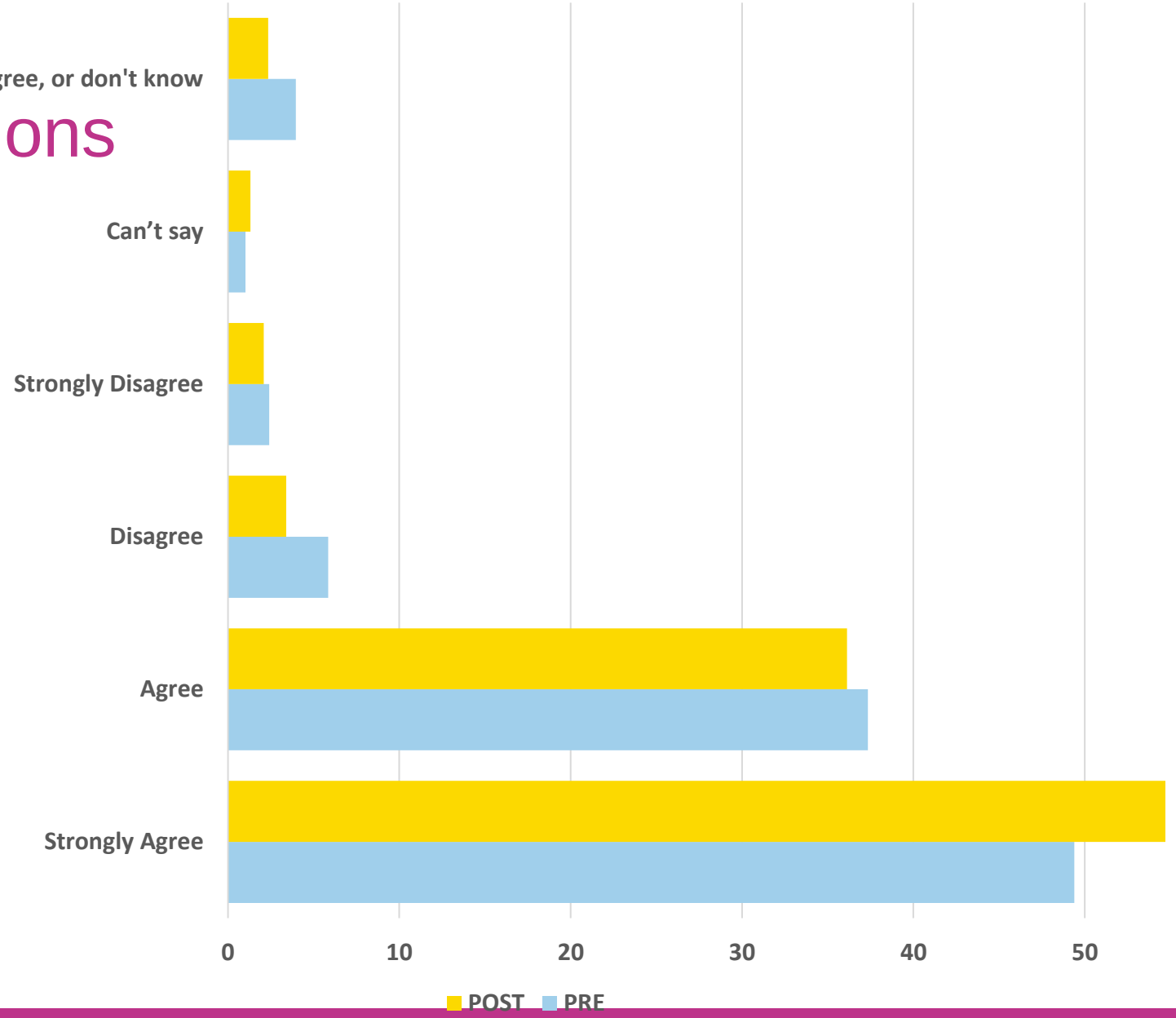


Little or no change in opinions

We saw a small improvement in positive opinions to the question “**I enjoy exercise and sports**”. It rose slightly by 4% overall. Most of this change is accounted for in those that responded “strongly agree”. A positive proportional change was seen from those that disagree with this statement. This is shown in the chart opposite.

There were no significant changes in the percentage of participants who said they exercised to **feel fit** and healthy.

The percentage of Children and Young people reporting they didn’t have enough **energy** stayed roughly the same. Although proportionally the group that strongly agreed went up (1.6% to 4.4%).

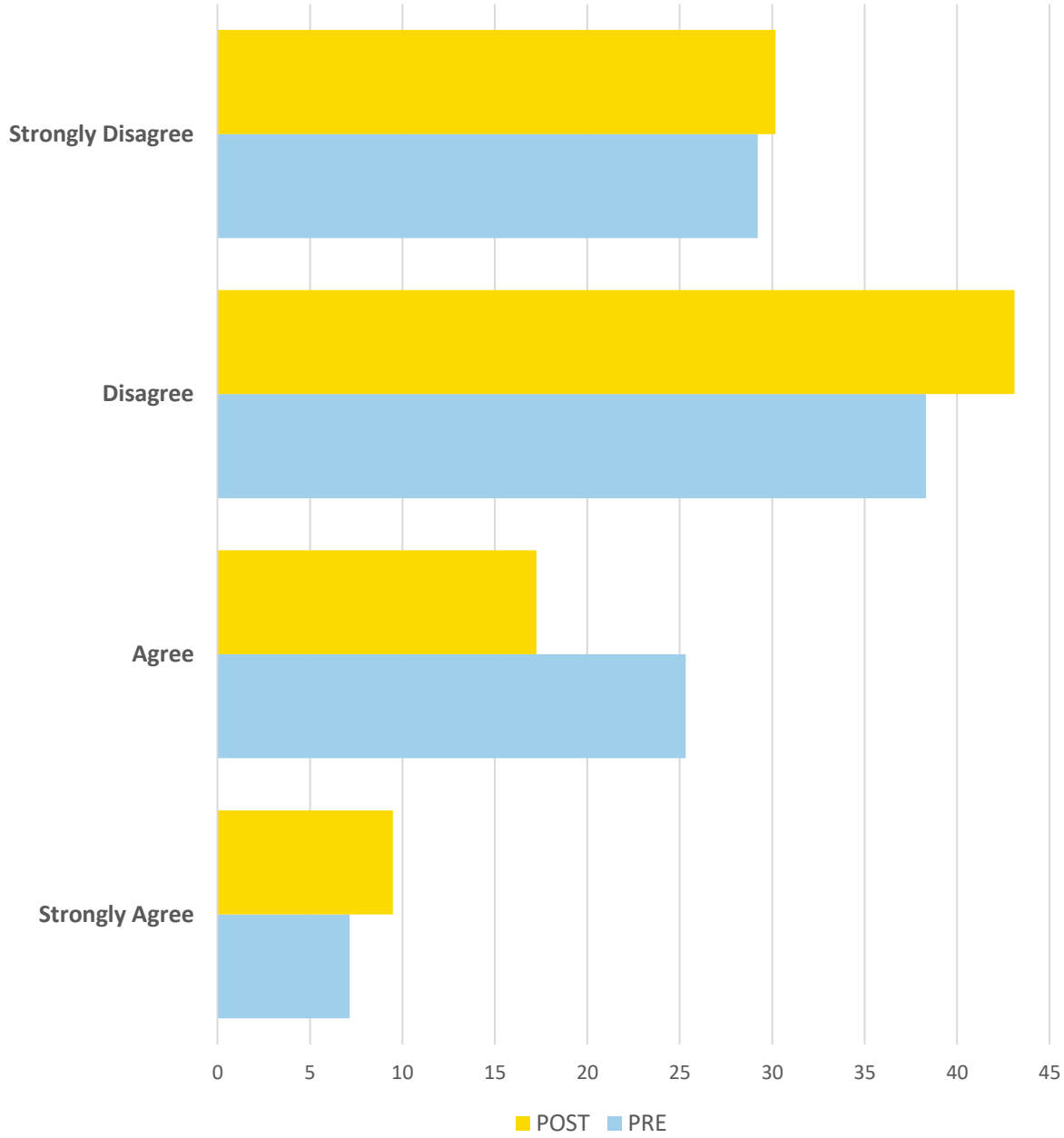


Biggest changes

Barriers

Respondents that said they found sport too **serious or competitive** reduced from a third, to a fifth. The large reduction in people finding sport too competitive allows us to suggest that the sessions overall did place this as a priority.

Those that in some way agreed they **felt judged** by others when exercising or playing sports went down overall from 33% to 27%. Good news also comes from those feeling less judged (up from 67% to 73%). The data does show there was an increase in those that strongly agreed to feeling judged, it was just balanced out by those that said they felt less judged on average. As shown opposite.



Successes

The biggest success as demonstrated in the data is around **confidence**. The percentage of respondents that strongly agreed they feel confident to be active in their own way went up from 30% to 36% when the activities had finished. The group that either disagreed or strongly disagreed saw some of the biggest reductions overall, from 13% before, to only 7% after. *“I would like to do more swimming and other things where people aren't watching you. I hate PE at school because I find it hard to keep up sometimes”*

The large reduction in people finding sport too **competitive** allows us to suggest that the sessions overall were not focusing on competition as a priority. “I enjoy Rewilding as we run, climb and play, it is not competitive, just lots of fun”

A massive majority of participants reported improved **enjoyment** in sport and exercise. Both the outcomes above are connected to this outcome. There were many comments made by people that were themed around enjoyment. and “I love doing karate, as well as exercise I have made friends.” / “I think being active is important for me and I enjoy it” / “I do lots of exercise for my own enjoyment and enjoy doing so”

Areas of improvement

A small area for consideration is around the increase in the group that responded as strongly agreeing to feeling **judged** by others when exercising or playing sport. Although only a small percentage of overall responses were in this category (average of 8%), it did go up by a third%. It is important to recognise this narrative continues for some participants and could be a determining factor on whether they continue to engage on projects.

Those that strongly agreed to the statement I don't have enough **energy** to exercise or play sport saw the largest relative increase (up from 1.6% to 4.4%) – two and a half times larger. A relaxed approach to the physical demands of activities should help put children and young people at ease when considering what the activity demands from them.

Like the small group dynamic of the above, the actual numbers are small, but these experiences are reflected in people's motivations and attitudes towards sport. Linked to this area, it is important to emphasise that feeling tired after a session is to be celebrated; it demonstrates the hard work, commitment that young people can be proud of.

Recommendations

Targeting priority audiences

We can see from the demographic profiles that on the whole applications that choose priority groups have better representation within their cohorts.

We recommend that delivery partners continue to choose to focus projects on core priority audience. This is particularly important for groups focusing on those with additional physical needs, and Children from a Black background as these were the groups that didn't see a positive correlation with targeting.

Suitability

Session should continue to consider the needs or abilities of Children and Young people. The data that shows us those needing additional help are overall more likely to do shorter periods of exercise. If sessions are longer, walking or cycling can often be better suited to these audiences.

Recommendations

Positive messaging

Using this insight from the question “I exercise to feel fit and healthy” and “I understand why exercise and sports are good for me” marketing materials should not emphasise the health benefits of the activities. There is a high level of knowledge, and low motivation to exercise for health.

The large reduction in people finding sport too competitive allows us to suggest that the sessions overall did not place this as a priority.

Instead, marketing materials should continue to emphasise how fun sessions are, and how they are an opportunity to be social (either with families or friends). Finding out what participants enjoy in their sessions will be very helpful to inform structure of sessions going forward.

Contact Us

Sign up to our newsletters to keep up-to-date with all the news and funding opportunities.

Follow us on Social Media

Get in touch

Active Sussex, Sussex Innovation Centre, Science Park Square, University of Sussex, Falmer, East Sussex, BN1 9SB

Website: www.activesussex.org
Email: info@activesussex.org

Active Sussex is the brand name of the Sussex County Sports Partnership Trust, a company limited by guarantee. Company No. 6166961. Charity Registration No. 1122082