

ACTIVE LIVES ADULT SURVEY

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

Published February 2019



WELCOME

Welcome to an additional Active Lives report. This is not one of our six-monthly overviews of sport and physical activity in England. Instead this report focuses on what drives behaviour.

When looking at the headline Active Lives (Adult) results, it is tempting to conclude that when it comes to sport and physical activity adults fall into one of three behaviours – Active (150+ mins), Fairly Active (30-149mins) or Inactive (less than 30mins). In reality, there are numerous patterns of behaviour which result in an individual being designated into one of those three categories, and if we are to help people become more active we need to better understand those behaviours and what drives them.

When we designed the survey, we included a range of new questions designed specifically to better understand the ways in which different people engage with sport and physical activity, and ultimately why some are more likely to be active than others. In this report, we take you through the approach we have adopted and provide the headline findings from our analysis.

Our intention is to use the findings from this work to produce a market segmentation of adults in England (to be shared this summer) in order to help those working in sport and physical activity increase their understanding of different groups of people, and in turn deliver the ambition of helping more people become and stay active.

Lisa O’Keefe
Insight Director

CONTENTS

■	Headlines	3
■	Background	4
■	Analysis	9
	• Capability	10
	• Opportunity	12
	• Motivations	15
	• Key Drivers	20
	• Habits	21
■	Next steps	23
■	Definitions	24
■	Notes	28
■	Appendix	30

KEY INFORMATION

This report presents data from the Active Lives Adult Survey for the period mid-Nov 2016 to mid-Nov 2017. Data is presented for adults aged 16+ in England.

RELEASE DATES

This release: 28 February 2019

FIND OUT MORE

For further information on the data presented in this report, please visit the Active Lives area of our [website](#).

Understanding activity levels is complex, with many factors contributing to how active a person is. Knowing how many minutes of activity they do per week only provides one piece of the puzzle.

This report represents a key milestone in better understanding these factors.

THE REPORT HAS 4 KEY FINDINGS:

1

The majority of people say they enjoy sport and physical activity and that it is important to be active.

2

However 5.5 million of those who are not currently active, don't feel they have the ability to be physically active.

3

Overall, the biggest driver of activity, is how much they enjoy sport and physical activity.

4

For those who are not currently active, perceived ability is the biggest driver of activity.

These findings will be used to inform a new attitudes-led market segmentation of the nation. More details on our next steps can be found on [page 23](#).

BACKGROUND

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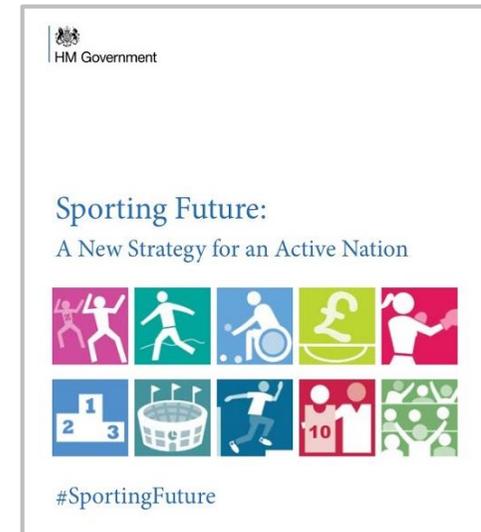
This chapter explains what questions we decided to ask within Active Lives and the behavioural science theory behind them.

CONTEXT

Sporting Future identified that in order to get more people active "sport must become more demand-led, recognising the different motivations, attitudes and lifestyles of its potential customer base".

Our strategy, *Towards an Active Nation*, included a commitment to "use behaviour change principles" to guide decision making.

We therefore included several relevant questions in our survey to provide us with more insight into the behaviours of individuals.



BACKGROUND

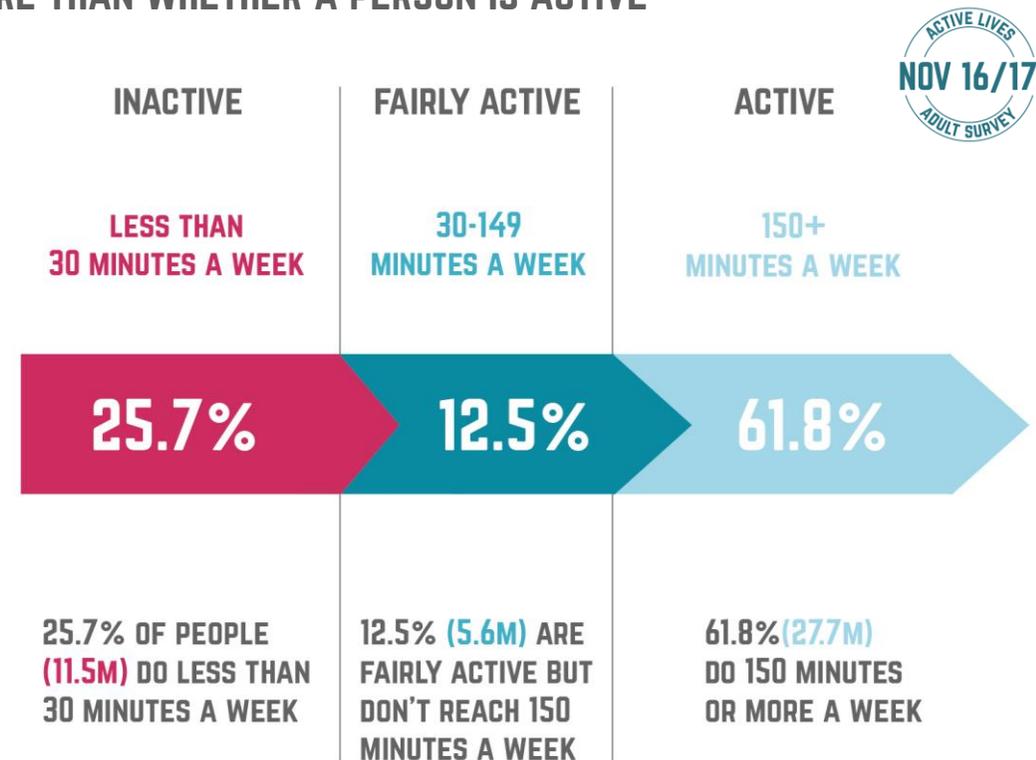
TO CHANGE BEHAVIOUR, WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND MORE THAN WHETHER A PERSON IS ACTIVE

Whilst knowing if someone is active or inactive, and the types of activities in which they take part in is useful, **it doesn't help explain what could be driving their behaviour.**

This work delves under the surface of why different people engage with sport and physical activity in different ways, and ultimately why some are more likely to be active than others.

To ensure the best questions were added to the survey we undertook:

- a literature review
- interviews with academic experts
- focus groups with members of the public.



FINDING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

We knew that different people were likely to have different attitudes towards sport and physical activity depending on how active they are.

We wanted to design questions which looked at two categories of behaviour:

1. THOSE WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY ACTIVE (LESS THAN 150+ MINUTES A WEEK)

- Help understand what factors are underlying this behaviour
- Help understand how likely it is that they will become more active?

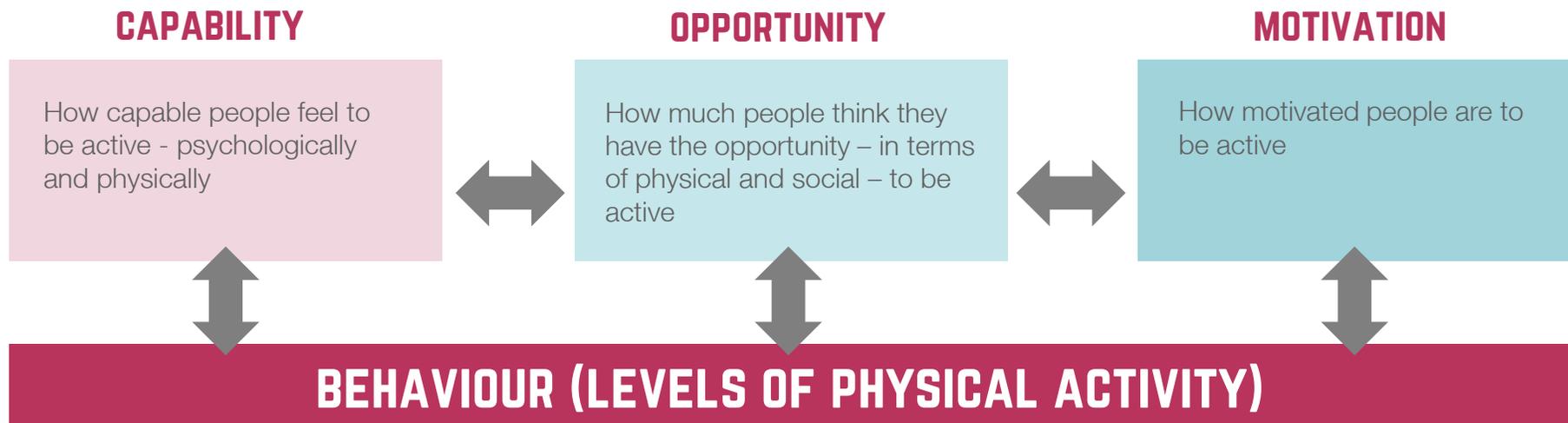
2. THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY ACTIVE (150 MINUTES OR MORE A WEEK)

- Help understand what factors are underlying this behaviour
- Help understand how likely it is that they will stay active?

1. THOSE WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY ACTIVE

The 'COM-B model', developed by Susan Michie, Lou Adams and Robert West, is a way to understand the drivers and context that influences how likely someone is to do something (e.g. become more active).

The model is comprised of interacting components:



For a behaviour to occur, there must be sufficient levels of each component.

Where a behaviour doesn't occur (e.g. inactivity or low activity) – this model can be used as a way to 'diagnose' the missing elements or barriers.

We introduced questions into Active Lives for each element of the COM-B model, see [pages 25 and 26](#) for more details. These questions formed the basis for our drivers analysis (see [page 20](#) for more details).

2. THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY ACTIVE

The strongest indicators of whether someone is likely to remain active are their levels of motivation and the extent of their habit. One of the best known tools to measure habits is the Self-Report Habit Index (SRHI). Developed by Bas Verplanken and Sheina Orbell, SRHI assesses three elements thought to define the strength of habits.

MOTIVATION

- How motivated people are to be active



HABITS

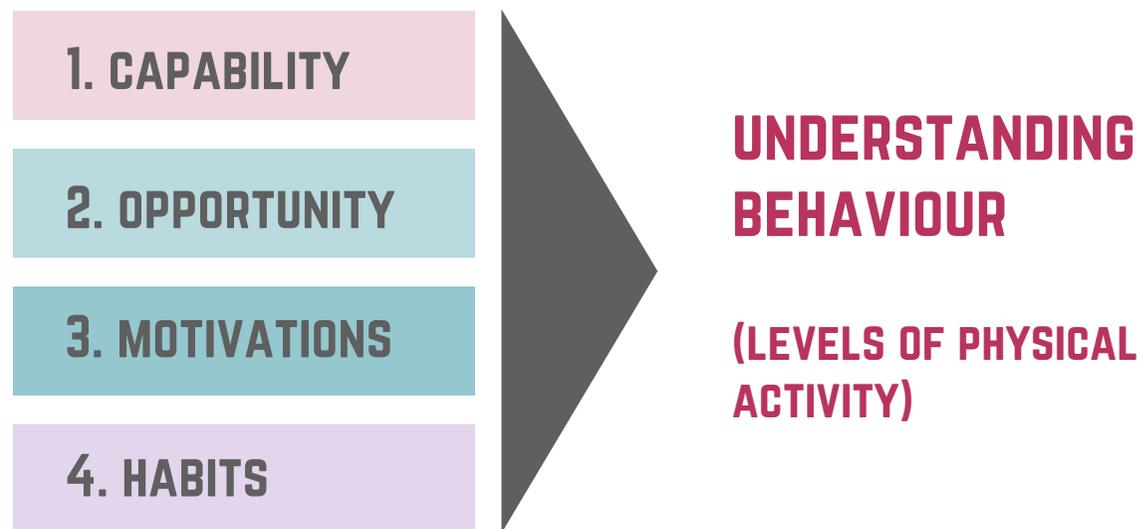
- How frequent an activity is
- How routine an activity is
- Whether doing that activity is part of someone's identity

Alongside new motivation questions, we introduced additional questions into Active Lives to understand each of the three elements of habit. See [page 27](#) for more details.

ANALYSIS

This report includes data gathered from November 2016 to November 2017.

In total, we added **four sets of questions** (details of which can be found on [pages 25 - 27](#)) to Active Lives.



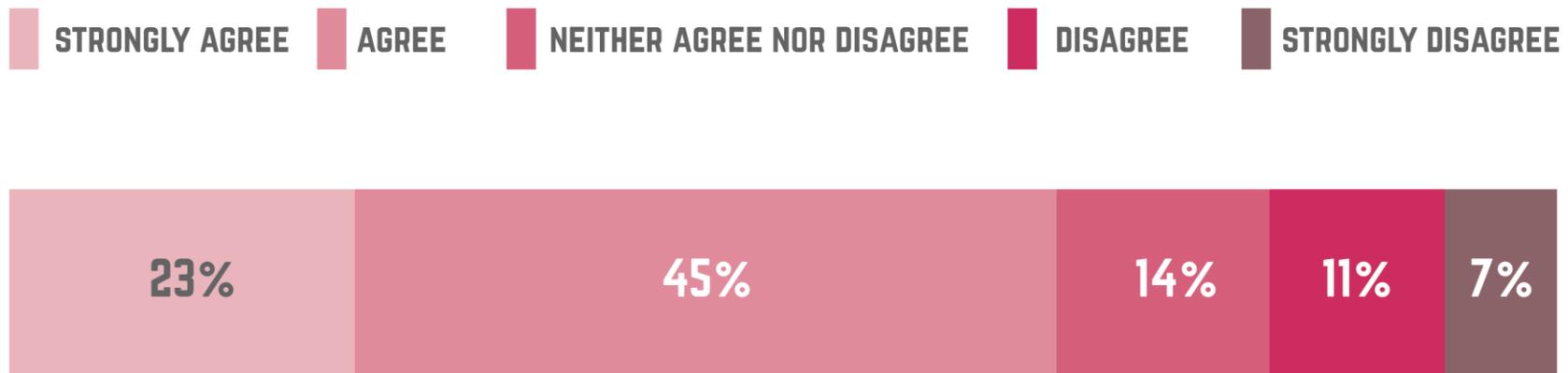
This chapter outlines the findings from the analysis Sport England conducted, including drivers analysis using capability, opportunity and motivation questions.



5.5 MILLION ADULTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY NOT ACTIVE DON'T FEEL THEY HAVE THE ABILITY TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

- Although 68% of adults who are not currently active, agree with the statement: “I feel that I have the ability to be physically active”, 32% don't (around 5.5 million adults).

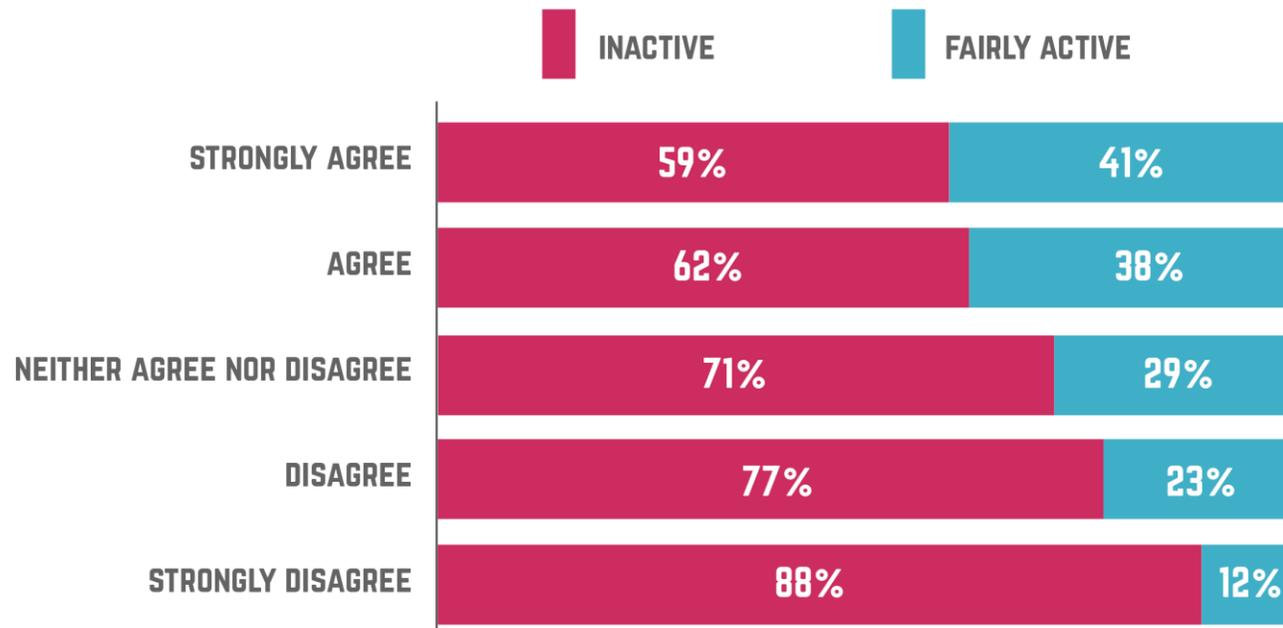
**“I FEEL THAT I HAVE THE ABILITY TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE”
(AMONGST THOSE WHO ARE NOT ACTIVE)**



THERE IS A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE STRENGTH OF PERCEIVED CAPABILITY AND ACTIVITY LEVELS

- 59% of those who “strongly agree” with the statement on ability are inactive, compared to 88% of those who “strongly disagree”.

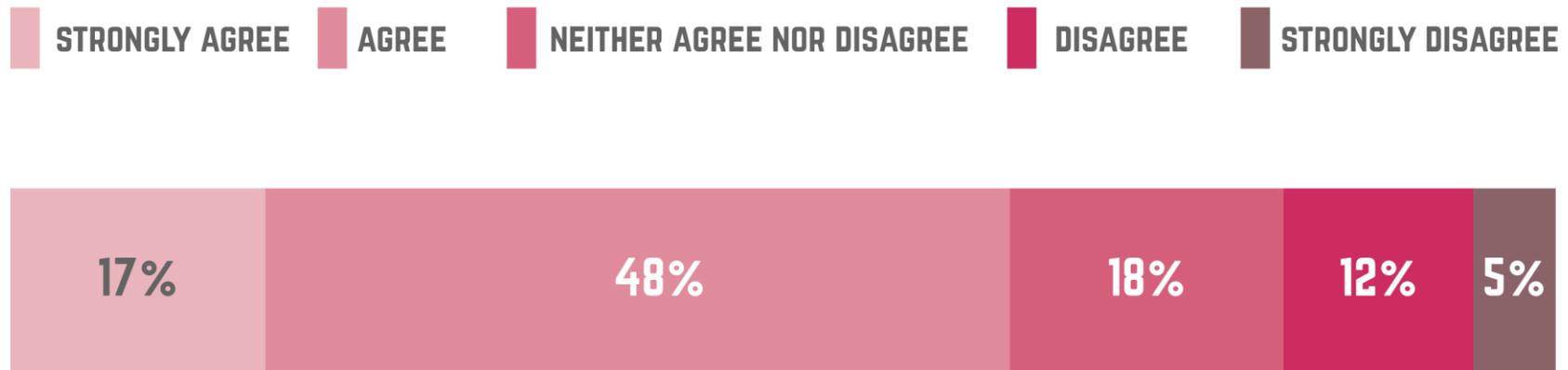
“I FEEL THAT I HAVE THE ABILITY TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE”



5.9 MILLION ADULTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY NOT ACTIVE DON'T FEEL THEY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

- Although 65% of adults who are not currently active, agree with the statement: "I feel that I have the opportunity to be physically active", 35% of them don't (around 5.9 million adults).

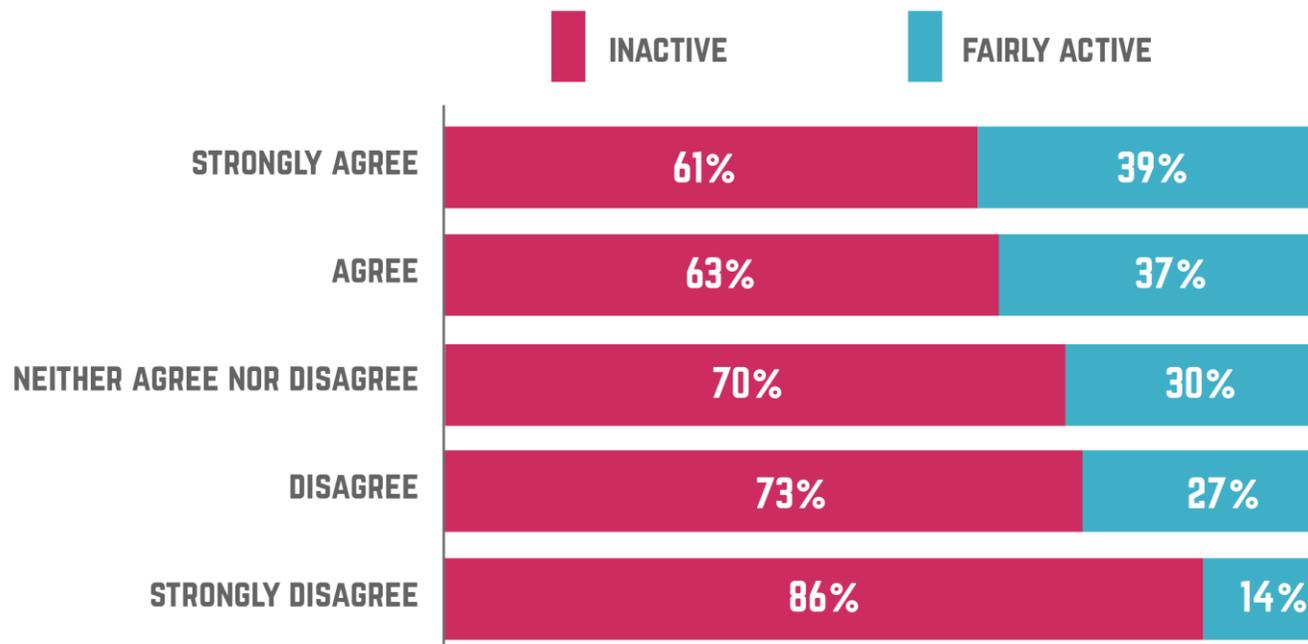
**"I FEEL THAT I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE"
(AMONGST THOSE WHO ARE NOT ACTIVE)**



THERE IS A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE STRENGTH OF PERCEIVED OPPORTUNITY AND ACTIVITY LEVELS

- 61% of those who “strongly agree” with the statement on opportunity are inactive, compared to 86% of those who “strongly disagree”.

“I FEEL THAT I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE”



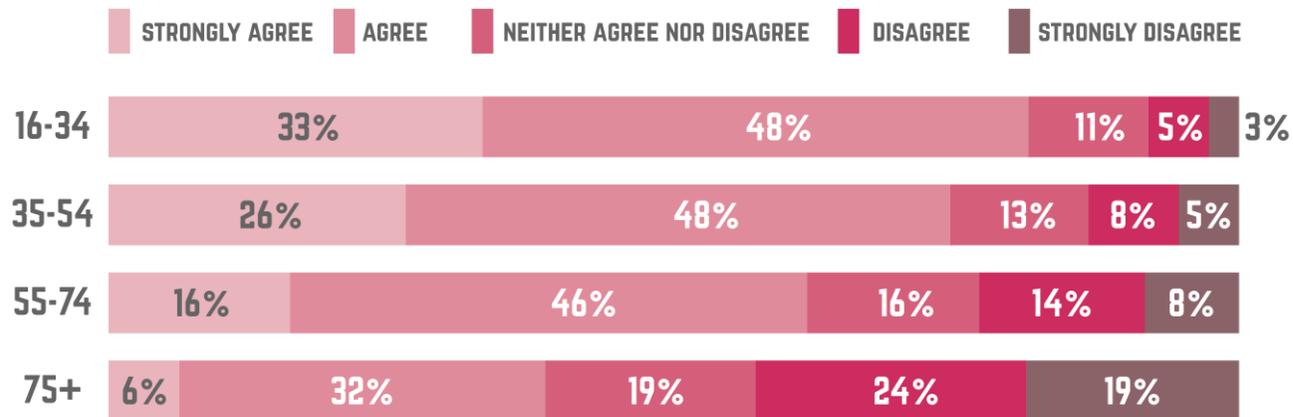
CAPABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY

THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVED CAPABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY ACROSS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

For both perceived capability and opportunity:

- Women are less likely to "strongly agree" than men
- Those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to "agree" than those from higher socio-economic backgrounds
- Students are significantly more likely to agree that they have the ability and opportunity to be active
- Older adults are much less likely than younger people to agree that they have the ability to be physically active

"I FEEL THAT I HAVE THE ABILITY TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE"



THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE SAY THEY ENJOY SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE ACTIVE

- A third of adults strongly agree with the statement: “I find sport / exercise enjoyable and satisfying”, with a further 40% agreeing.
- This pattern is similar for the statement “It's important to me to do sport / exercise regularly”, with 35% strongly agreeing and a further 41% agreeing.

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:



STRONGLY AGREE AGREE NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

I FIND SPORT/EXERCISE ENJOYABLE AND SATISFYING



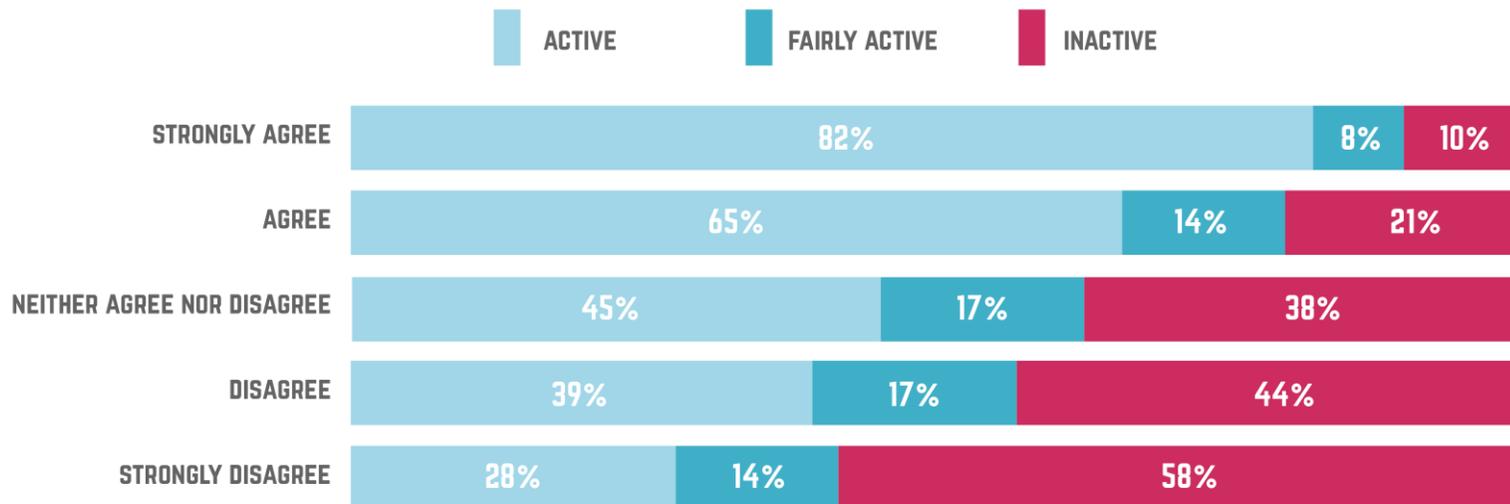
IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME TO DO SPORT/EXERCISE REGULARLY



THERE IS A STRONG POSITIVE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN INTERNAL MOTIVATIONS AND ACTIVITY LEVELS

- The stronger an individual agrees with internal motivation statements (both enjoyment and importance), the more likely they are to be active.
- For example, 82% of those that “strongly agree” they find exercise enjoyable are active, compared to 65% of those who just “agree” with the statement.

“I FIND SPORT/EXERCISE ENJOYABLE AND SATISFYING”



THERE IS A LOWER LEVEL OF AGREEMENT FOR THE EXTERNAL MOTIVATION STATEMENTS

- 20% of adults strongly agree with the statement: “I feel guilty when I don't do sport / exercise”, with a further 36% agreeing to the statement.
- Fewer adults agree with the statement: “I do sport/exercise because I don't want to disappoint other people”, with only 8% strongly agreeing or agreeing to the statement.
- Those who did not agree with any of the first four motivations statements were asked how much they “feel that doing sport / exercise is pointless”. Only 7% strongly agree or agree with this.

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

STRONGLY AGREE
 AGREE
 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
 DISAGREE
 STRONGLY DISAGREE

I FEEL GUILTY WHEN I DON'T DO SPORT/EXERCISE



I DO SPORT/EXERCISE BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO DISAPPOINT OTHER PEOPLE



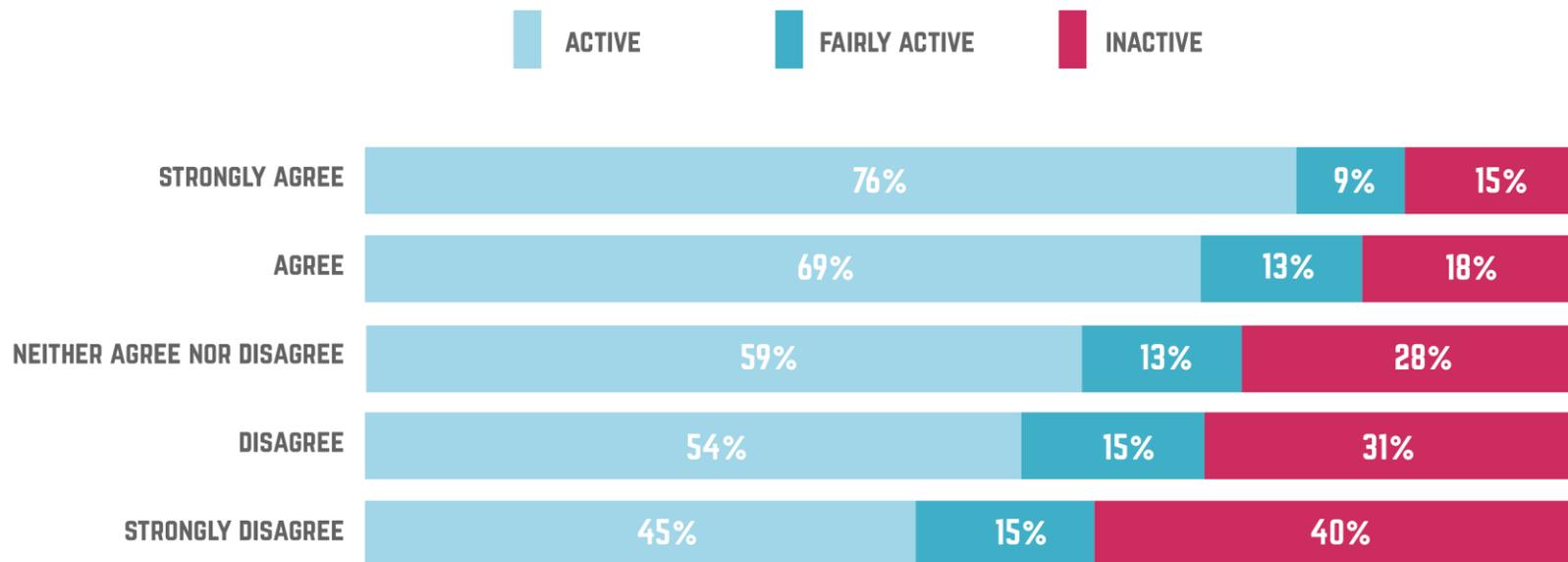
I FEEL THAT DOING SPORT/ EXERCISE IS POINTLESS



THOSE WHO FEEL GUILTY WHEN THEY DON'T EXERCISE ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE ACTIVE

- The stronger an individual agrees with the statement about guilt, the more likely they are to be active.
- However, the association is weaker than the internal motivations of enjoyment and importance.

“I FEEL GUILTY WHEN I DON'T DO SPORT/EXERCISE”

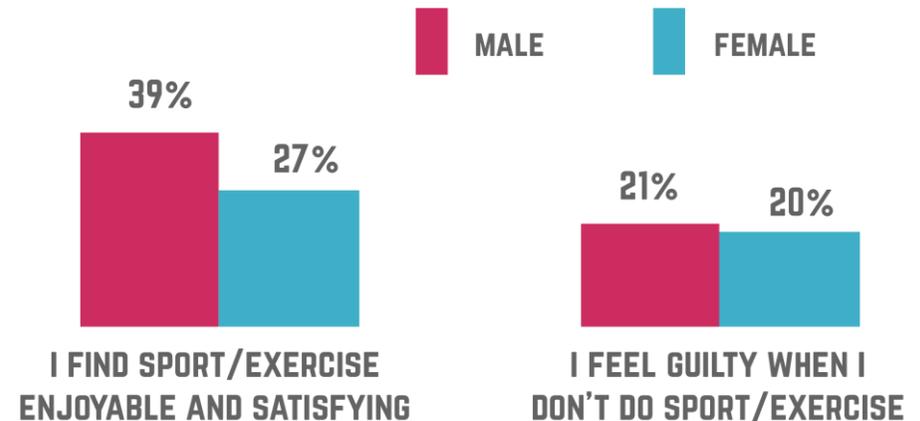


- There is no association between the statement: “I do sport/exercise because I don't want to disappoint other people” and activity levels.

THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN MOTIVATIONS ACROSS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

- Men are more likely than women to “strongly agree” with the statements about enjoyment. There is no difference for the statement about guilt.
- Young people are much more likely to agree with the statement “I feel guilty when I don't do sport/exercise” than older adults, with 25% of those aged 16-24 strongly agreeing with the statement, compared to 16% of those aged 55-74.
- 40% of those from higher socio-economic groups “strongly agree” with the statements “it’s important to me to do sport regularly”, compared to 28% of those from lower socio-economic groups.

PERCENTAGE WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:



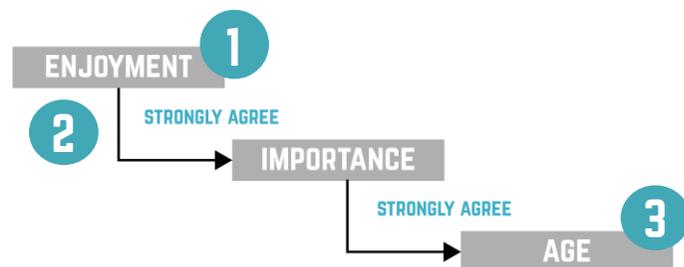
KEY DRIVERS: FINDINGS

Whilst understanding the associations between motivations and activity levels is important, we also wanted to explore what the key drivers of behaviour are. We commissioned Decidedly* to undertake this work, who built drivers models to identify:

- The most important factors in determining how active a person is
- How the different response options within variables relate to physical activity

MODEL ONE: THE TOTAL ADULT POPULATION (INCLUDING ACTIVE AND NOT ACTIVE ADULTS)

- 1 INTERNAL MOTIVATIONS ARE THE BIGGEST DRIVERS OF BEHAVIOUR**
 - Enjoyment is the biggest driver of how active individuals are, followed by Importance.
- 2 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “STRONGLY AGREE” AND OTHER LEVELS OF AGREEMENT IS A MAJOR STEP CHANGE**
 - This highlights the importance of focusing on “strongly agree” vs “not” when understanding behaviour.
- 3 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ARE IMPORTANT, BUT NOT AS KEY AS “ENJOYMENT” OR “IMPORTANCE”**
 - Age and Ethnicity were the most important demographic characteristics driving behaviour.



[LINK TO APPENDIX](#)

MODEL TWO: THOSE WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY ACTIVE

- 1 ABILITY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DRIVER OF BEHAVIOUR**
 - Perceived ability is a bigger driver of behaviour than motivations and perceived opportunity for those who are not active.
- 2 AFTER ABILITY, WORKING STATUS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP ARE KEY DRIVERS FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT ACTIVE**
- 3 ENJOYMENT IS STILL A DRIVER FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT ACTIVE, BUT THE STATEMENTS ON DISAPPOINTMENT AND GUILT ARE ALSO IMPORTANT**



WE ASK THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT HABIT WITHIN THE ACTIVE LIVES SURVEY (WITH A SCALE FROM STRONGLY AGREE TO STRONGLY DISAGREE):

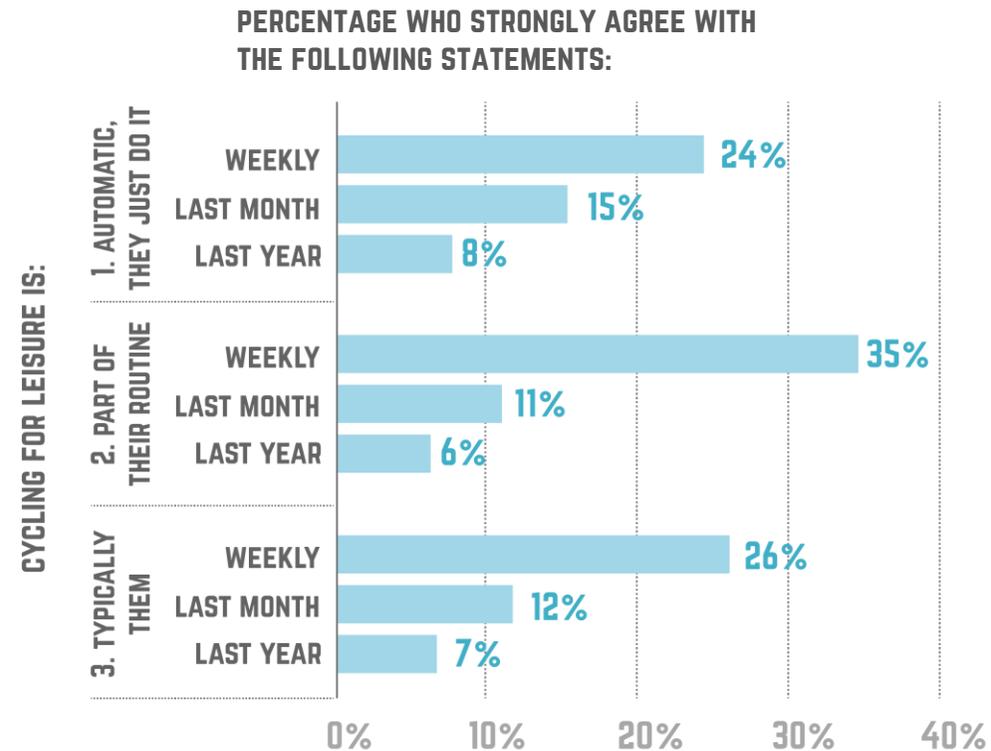
1. Automaticity: “I don’t need to think about whether to do the activity – I just do it.”
2. Regularity: “The activity is part of my routine.”
3. Identity: “The activity is typically me.”

THERE IS A POSITIVE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION AND REPORTED HABIT WITHIN AN ACTIVITY

The majority of activities see the most regular participants (weekly) having stronger habits than the less frequent (last month), who in turn have higher levels than the occasional participants (last year).

For example, the more frequently someone cycles for leisure the stronger their habits are (across all three questions).

Find more information about frequency definitions on [page 24](#).

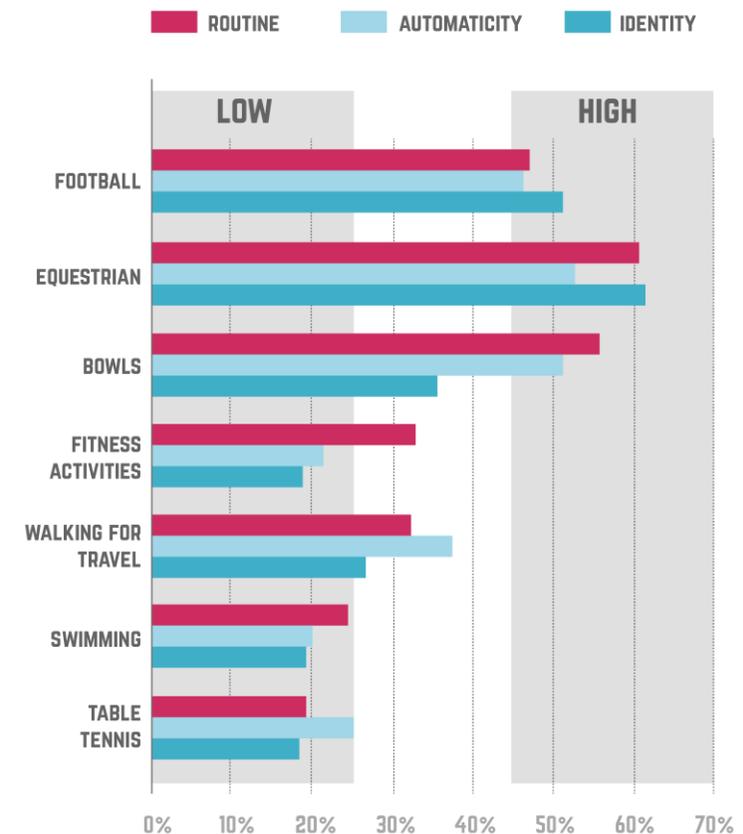


THE NATURE OF HABIT DIFFERS ACROSS ACTIVITIES

Different activities speak to different elements of the habit model:

- Footballers report playing as something that is strongly established in their routine and part of their identity. They also don't see it as something they need to think about doing, it has become automatic. The same is true for those who take part in netball, martial arts or equestrian.
- Whilst part of their identity to some extent, bowlers associate their activity more strongly as being part of their routine. The same applies for tennis and dance.
- People taking part in fitness activities do not associate it strongly with identity but do show a clear sense of routine. The same is true of people who run.
- For those walking for travel their behaviour is automatic and part of their routine but less likely to be part of their identity. This is consistent with those cycling for travel.
- Some of the more leisure oriented activities (such as swimming and tennis) are lower on all elements. This is also true of walking for leisure and cycling for leisure.

STRONGLY AGREE TO HABIT STATEMENT: EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES



MARKET SEGMENTATION

Market segmentation is the process of dividing the population into groups, or segments, based on different characteristics, in this case their attitudes towards sport and physical activity.

NEXT STEPS

Being led by the findings of the drivers analysis presented in this report, we are creating a market segmentation of the adult population of England. This is being built based upon their sport and physical activity behaviours and attitudes, supplemented by wider market insight.

We hope to start sharing resources from this during the summer of 2019.



DEFINITIONS

MODERATE ACTIVITY is defined as activity where you raise your heart rate.

VIGOROUS ACTIVITY is when you're out of breath or are sweating (you may not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for breath).

NS-SEC groups are defined as:

- NS-SEC 1-2: Managerial, administrative and professional occupations (e.g. chief executive, doctor, actor, journalist)
- NS-SEC 3: Intermediate occupations (e.g. auxiliary nurse, secretary)
- NS-SEC 4: Self employed and small employers
- NS-SEC 5: Lower supervisory and technical occupations (e.g. plumber, gardener, train driver)
- NS-SEC 6-7: Semi-routine and routine occupations (e.g. postman, shop assistant, bus driver)
- NS-SEC 8: Long term unemployed or never worked
- NS-SEC 9: Students and other.

COM-B QUESTIONS

For detail of the questions asked please see [pages 25-26](#).

HABIT QUESTIONS.

For detail of the questions asked please see [page 27](#). In this section frequency of participation is defined as:

- Weekly: activity done at least once in the last week at a moderate intensity
- Last month: activity done once in the last 28 days but less than once a week
- Last year: activity done in the last 12 months (but not in the last 28 days)

FINDING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS: THOSE WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY ACTIVE

We introduced questions into Active Lives Adult for each element of the COM-B model.

‘Behaviour’ was already captured by the survey – i.e. how active someone is in terms of what activity they do, and the duration and intensity of that activity.

For the other components we introduced the following questions. Respondents were asked how much they agree with each statement on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

	CAPABILITY	OPPORTUNITY	MOTIVATION
COM-B COMPONENT	How capable people feel to be active - psychologically and physically (e.g. injury, disability or long term health condition, fitness, confidence, etc.)	How much people think they have the opportunity - in terms of physical (e.g. suitable environment, facilities) and social (e.g. social norms, someone to take part with) – to be active.	How motivated people are to be active (over doing another thing or nothing).
ACTIVE LIVES QUESTION ASKED...	“I feel that I have the ability to be physically active”	“I feel that I have the opportunity to be physically active”	(Please see next page)

FINDING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS: THOSE WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY ACTIVE

We designed five questions that would allow us to understand as much about the element of motivation as possible*. The questions below get to different types of internal and external motivations, for example someone may be motivated by enjoyment of an activity, rather than because they feel guilt if they don't do it. Respondents were asked how much they agree with each statement on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

	INTERNAL		EXTERNAL		
MOTIVATION TYPE	1. ENJOYMENT	2. IMPORTANCE	3. GUILT	4. PRESSURE	5. NO MOTIVATION
	Engaging in exercise for fun, pleasure, enjoyment and general satisfaction	Engaging in exercise due to personal values and goals	Engaging in exercise to avoid guilt and shame to boost ego and self-worth	Engaging in exercise only to meet external pressures e.g. from family, friends or sources of authority.	Those who don't agree with any of these motivations, we asked about amotivation.
ACTIVE LIVES QUESTION ASKED...	"I find sport enjoyable and satisfying."	"It's important to me to do sport regularly."	"I feel guilty when I don't do sport."	"I do sport because I don't want to disappoint other people"	"I feel that doing sport is pointless"

*specifically a sub component of Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan

FINDING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS: THOSE WHO ARE ACTIVE

We introduced a question into Active Lives to get to each of the three elements of habit. As habit is more likely to apply to a particular activity than to generally being ‘physically active’, respondents were asked how much they agree with each statement (on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree), in relation to a specific activity they take part in.



NOTES

SAMPLE AND WEIGHTING

THE ACHIEVED SAMPLE was 196,635 (16+).

THE ACTIVE LIVES ADULT SURVEY IS A PUSH-TO-WEB SURVEY carried out by Ipsos MORI. 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. More information on the survey can be found [here](#).

DATA HAVE 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 differences which are statistically significant are reported on as differences in the commentary. Where results are reported as being the same for two groups, this means there is no statistically significant difference.

NOTES

DRIVER ANALYSIS

METHODOLOGY

- The analytical technique used to establish drivers of behaviours is a type of regression tree, which works by creating splits in the predictor variable that most influence behaviour.
- Within each split, further sequential splits are made to increase differentiation on behaviour, creating a laddering effect. We have described each rung on these ladders as Tiers.
- The higher up a variable appears, the more significant it is in indicating a link with behaviour. Whilst the number of times a type of variable appears is important, how early it appears is more significant.
- We have run analysis on both the total sample (those with all activity levels) as well as looking specifically at those who are not reaching the current CMO guidelines (those not reaching 150+ minutes a week of sport or physical exercise).
- We should consider findings as giving us broad indications rather than seeing it as a cause and effect model.

DATA CONSIDERATIONS

The following data considerations impacted how the key drivers analysis ([page 20](#)) were carried out:

1. Respondents who did not answer all the first four motivations questions were removed
2. The sample used was online only (107,469 respondents 16+).
3. The analysis was split between those reaching 150+ minutes of moderate plus activity (active) and those that were not (not active).
4. To help reduce the skew that outliers give, moderate plus minute were capped at 1,680 (4 hours per day, on average).

APPENDIX 1A – ALL ADULTS

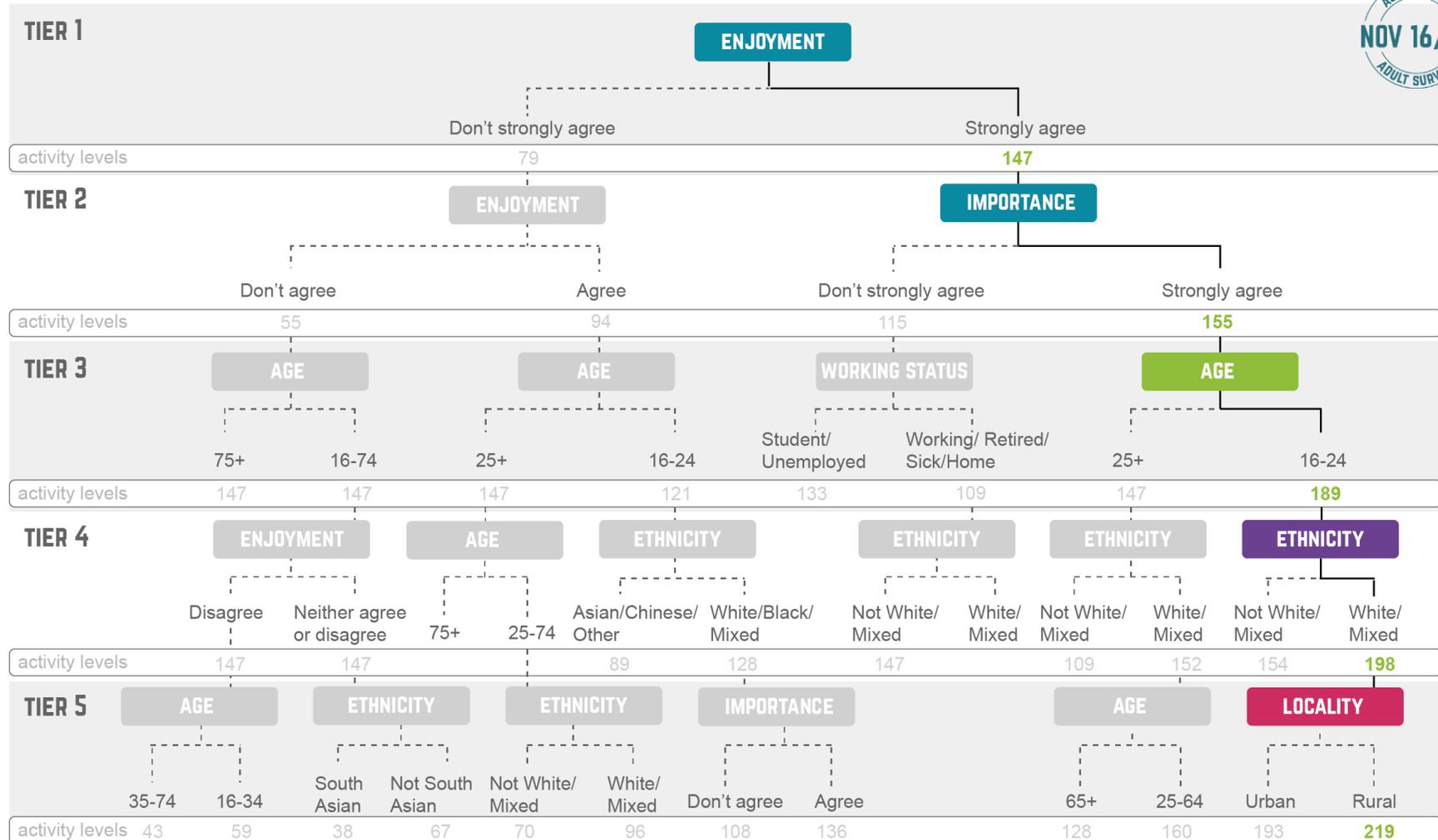
This first model looks at the impact of motivation and socio-demographic factors across all adult respondents (regardless of activity level). Follow the different branches of the model to see how key variables work together to impact activity levels. For example, the highlighted branch shows, for individuals who strongly agree to the statement of enjoyment, the next variable which drives how active individuals are, is whether or not they strongly agree to the importance statement. The full model is on the next page.



MORE

IMPORTANTANCE

LESS



Numbers represent whether activity levels are above or below the average:
 (100) average levels of activity (120+) above average levels of activity (80-) below average levels of activity

APPENDIX 1B – ALL ADULTS

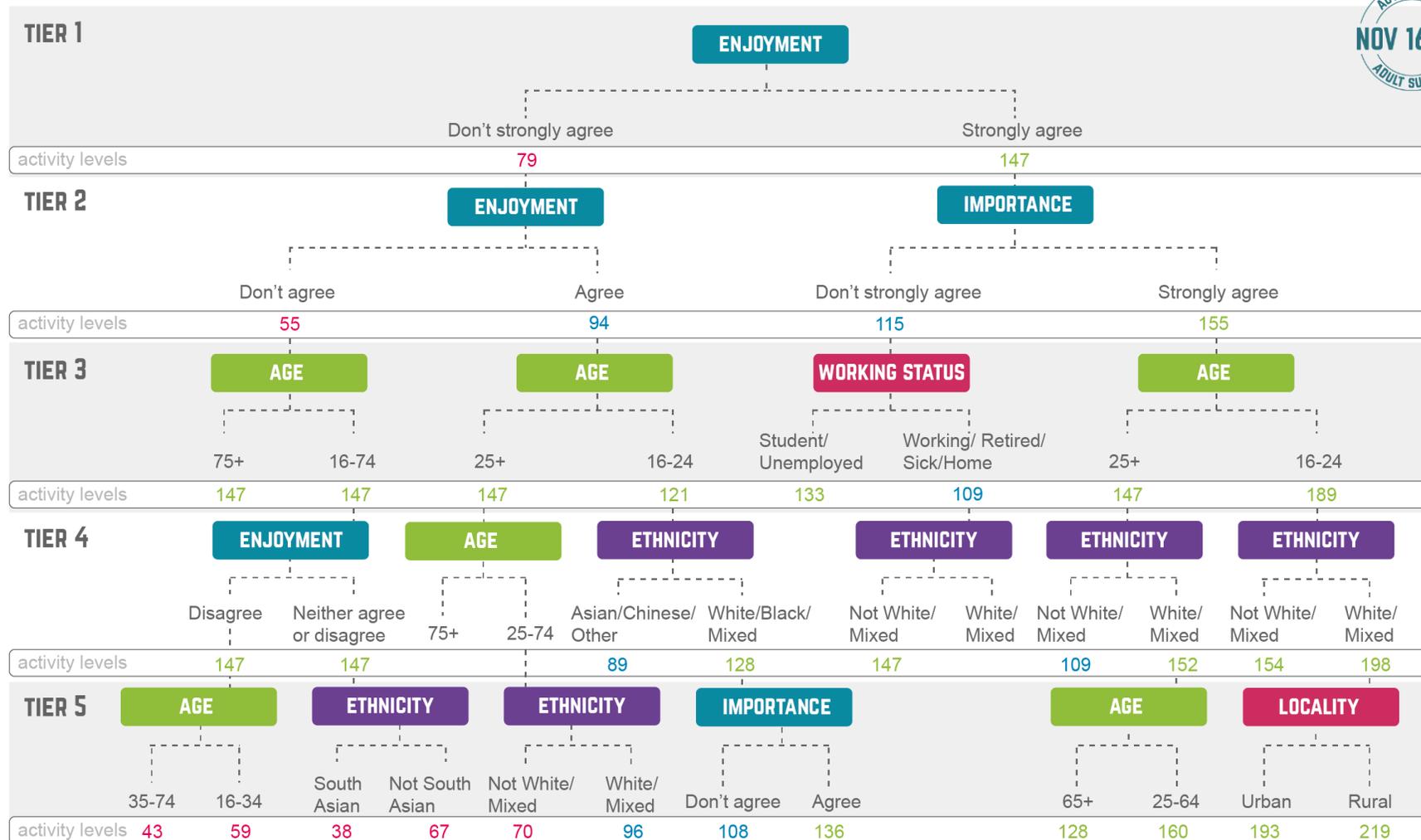
This first model looks at the impact of motivation and socio-demographic factors across all adult respondents (regardless of activity level). Follow the different branches of the model to see how key variables work together to impact activity levels. By looking at the highlighted numbers in brackets you can see which variables make activity levels over or under index. For example, those who strongly agree with the statement of enjoyment have activity levels than over index, compared to those who don't strongly agree.



MORE

IMPORTANTANCE

LESS



Numbers represent whether activity levels are above or below the average:
 (100) average levels of activity (120+) above average levels of activity (80-) below average levels of activity

APPENDIX 2A – ADULTS WHO ARE NOT ACTIVE

This second model builds in perceived capability and opportunity, looking just at those who are not active*. Follow the different branches of the model to see how key variables work together to impact activity levels. For example, the highlighted branch shows, for individuals who agree to the statement of ability, the next variable which drives how active individuals are, is which socio-economic group they are in. The full model is on the next page.

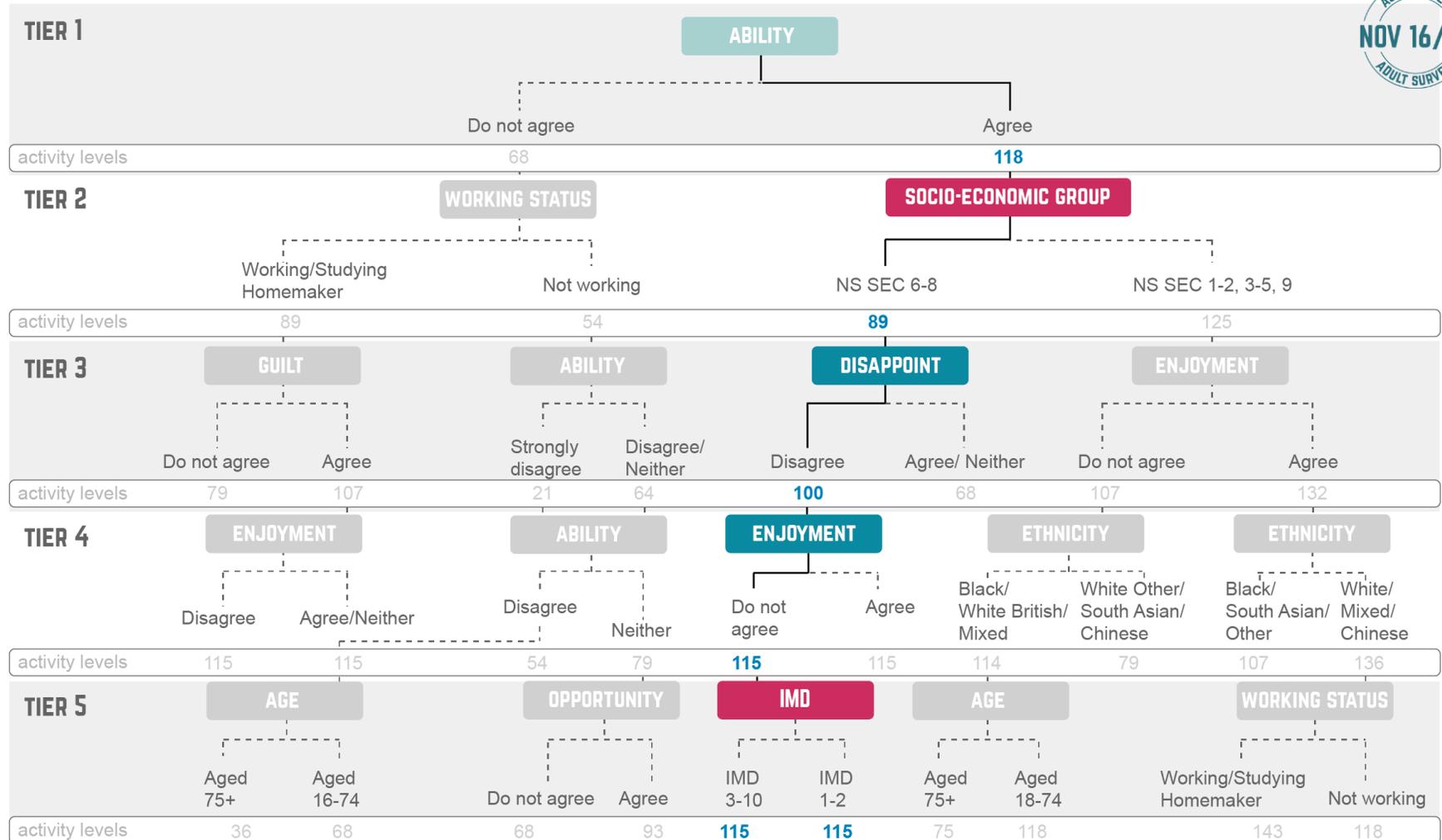
*Questions about perceived ability and opportunity were not asked to adults who are active.



MORE

IMPORTANTANCE

LESS

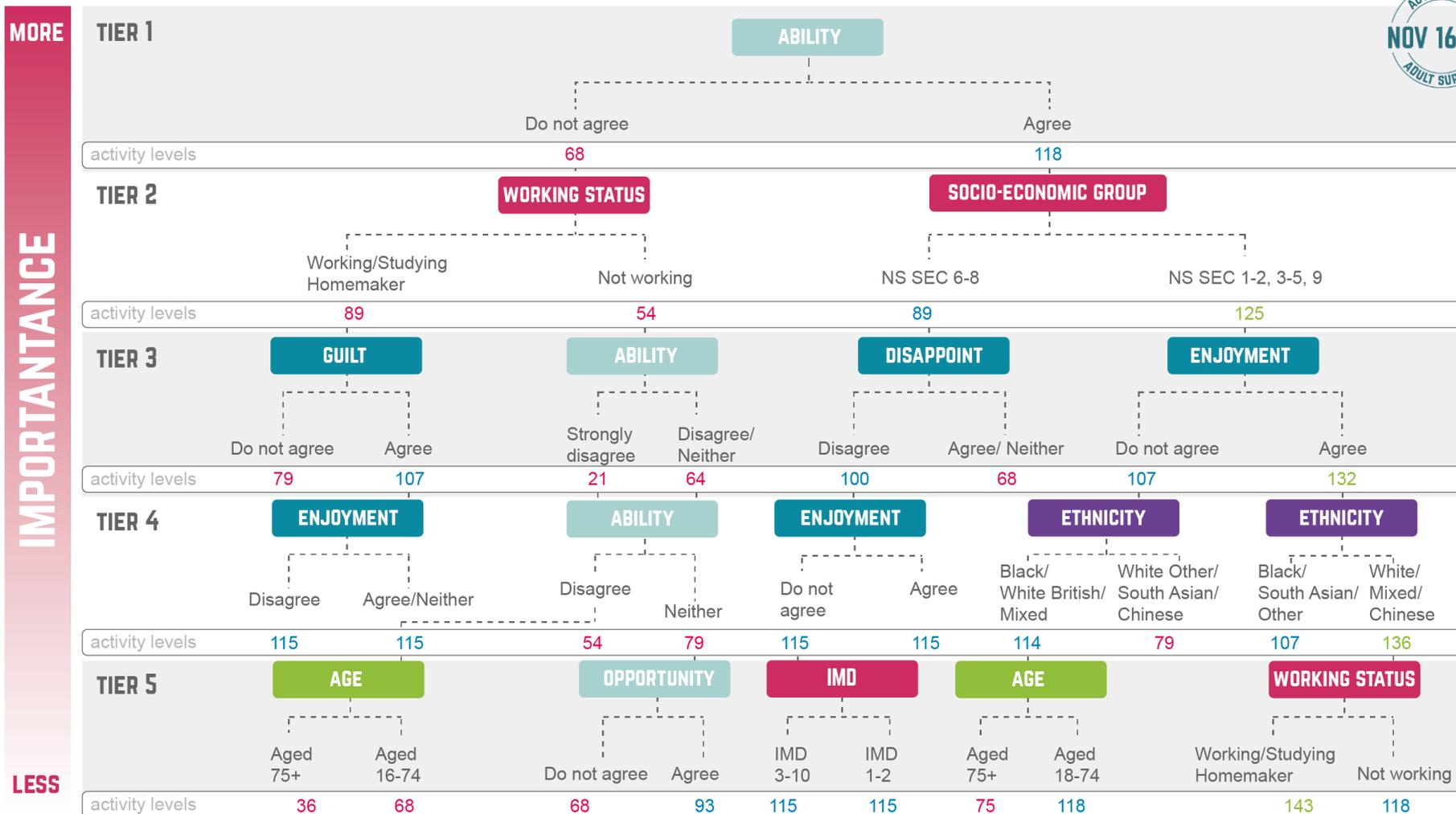


Numbers represent whether activity levels are above or below the average:
 (100) average levels of activity (120+) above average levels of activity (80-) below average levels of activity

APPENDIX 2B – ADULTS WHO ARE NOT ACTIVE

This second model builds in perceived capability and opportunity, looking just at those who are not active*. Follow the different branches of the model to see how key variables work together to impact activity levels.

*Questions about perceived ability and opportunity were not asked to adults who are active.



Numbers represent whether activity levels are above or below the average:
 (100) average levels of activity (120+) above average levels of activity (80-) below average levels of activity