

# Residents' views of physical activity (an update since the baseline) and the impact of the cost of living crisis

CFE Research



# Contents

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These slides contain the findings from the Residents' Panel survey conducted in July 2022.

165 residents completed the survey.

The findings cover:

- Residents levels of physical activity
- The impact of the cost of living crisis on physical activity levels
- Residents view of physical activity

Where possible the findings are compared to the baseline survey undertaken in February-March 2020. Some of the residents took part in both surveys but not all.

# Demographic characteristics

# Demographics of respondents on joining the panel

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Age	Number of respondents
16-24	16
25-44	65
45-64	58
65+	26

Gender	Number of respondents
Male	70
Female	95

Ethnicity	Number of respondents
White British	143
All other ethnic groups combined	22

Disability	Number of respondents
No disability, mental health condition or illness	87
Yes, but no substantial impact on daily life	42
Yes, has substantial impact on daily life	34
Prefer not to say	2

Main employment status	Number of respondents
Employee full-time	57
Employee part-time	22
Self-employed	10
Retired	26
Unemployed and seeking work	12
Student	9
Not in work and looking after home or family	13
Long-term sick	15
Other economic activity	1

# Demographics of respondents on joining the panel

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<b>Income</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Low income	79
Other income	72
Unknown	14

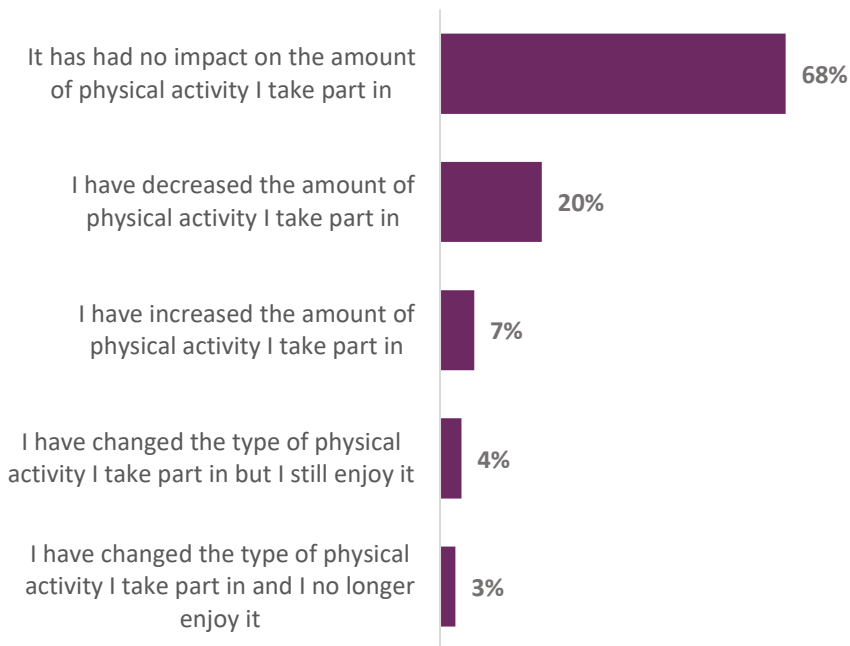
<b>Household composition</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
One or more adults, no children	98
One adult with one or more children aged under 18	17
Two or more adults with one or more children aged under 18	50

<b>In an original Active Communities area</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Yes	59
No	106

<b>Physical activity level when joined the panel</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Physically inactive	41
Physically active at least once a week	124

# Impact of the cost of living crisis on physical activity levels

# What is the impact of the cost of living crisis on physical activity?



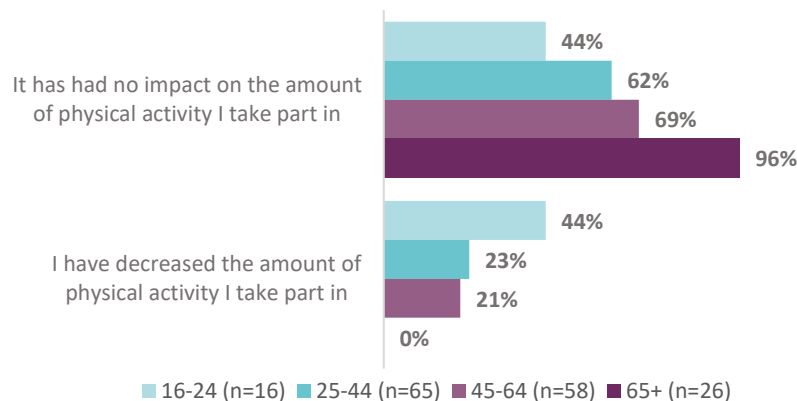
- Almost one-third of residents have been affected by the cost of living crisis and **one in five have decreased their levels of physical activity.**
- **Two thirds** of Doncaster residents report that the cost of living crisis has **not had an impact on their** physical activity levels.
- **7% have increased their physical activity levels** as a result of the cost of living crisis.
- Nearly one in 10 residents have **changed the type of physical activity that they do**, with half saying that they still enjoy it, whereas **the other half no longer enjoy it.** There is a risk that those that do not enjoy it may ultimately stop being active which could further increase the proportion of Doncaster residents that have reduced their physical activity levels as a result of the cost of living crisis.

Q4. Has the increase in the cost of living (e.g. increases in the prices of electricity, gas, food or other essential items) had any of the following impacts on you and the physical activity that you take part in ? (n=165)

# The cost of living crisis has had a greater negative impact on specific residents' physical activity levels

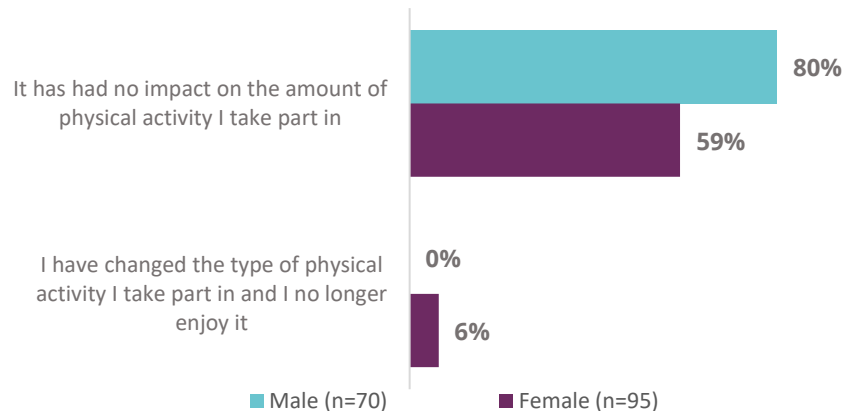
## Age

- A higher proportion of residents aged 16-24 report that they have decreased the amount of physical activity they do.
- A higher proportion of residents aged 65+ report that the cost of living crisis has had no impact on the amount of physical activity they take part in compared with younger residents.



## Gender

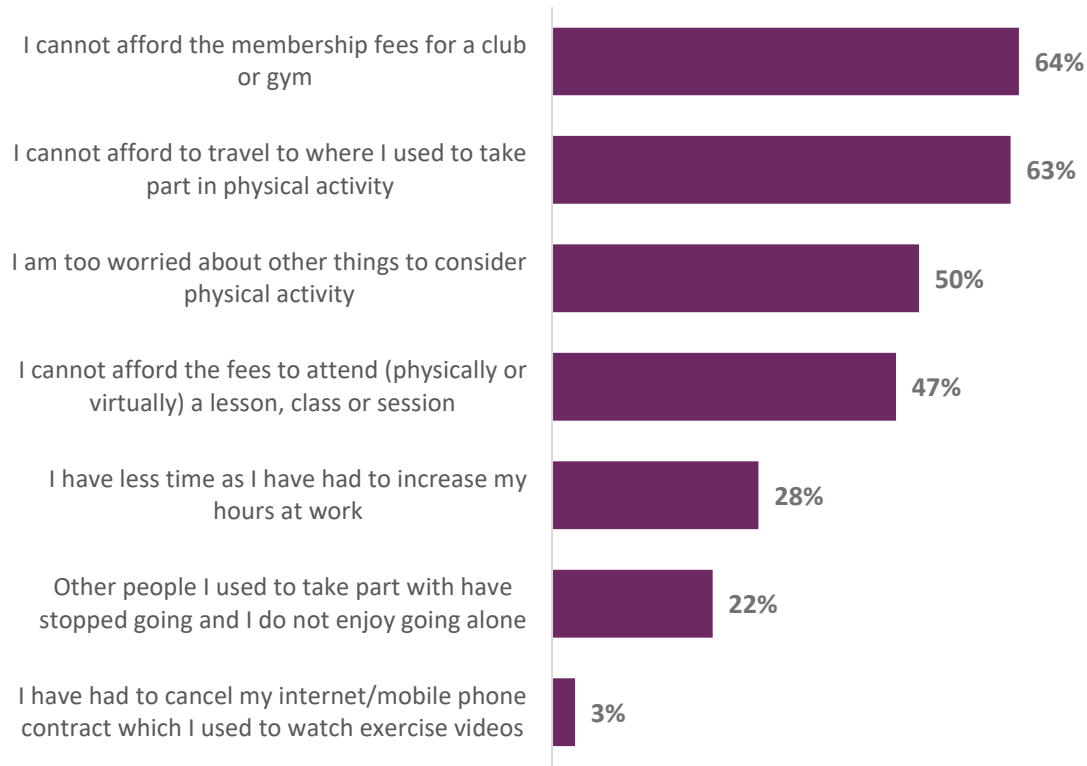
- A higher proportion of males report that the cost of living crisis has had no impact on the amount of physical activity they do.
- Although not commonly reported, more females report changing the type of physical activity they do and they no longer enjoy it.



Q4. Has the increase in the cost of living (e.g. increases in the prices of electricity, gas, food or other essential items) had any of the following impacts on you and the physical activity that you take part in ?



# Why have physical activity levels decreased?



- Nearly two thirds of Doncaster residents that have reduced their levels of physical activity cite that the main reason(s) are that they **cannot afford** the **membership fees** or **travel** costs to attend their physical activity setting. Nearly half also cannot afford the **fees to attend** the sessions.
- Half of those who have reduced their physical activity cite **worry and anxiety** as a key factor for reducing their physical activity.
- Over one-quarter identify that they have had to **increase their working** hours and thus have less time available for physical activity.

# Why have levels increased or activities changed?

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- Those that have undertaken more physical activity as a result of the cost of living crisis commonly cite an **increase in active travel so as not to have to pay for petrol and transport**. Most commonly this involved cycling or walking.
- Two participants identify that they want to be out of the house so that they do not waste money on heating and electricity, and therefore use physical activity as a distraction.

*“As I am rushing to work I have no choice but walk as everything is so expensive.”*

*“I need to walk more places with my children as we can’t afford to get public transportation that much anymore because the rising cost of food and energy etc. It’s fast becoming normal for us to walk 7 miles to get to where we need to get to.”*

*“Don’t want to use much electric or gas, so I go out to do some exercise to keep me occupied”*

- Residents that identify that they have **changed the type of physical activity** have **replaced previous activities with walking** (for one resident this was cycling). It is likely that this change from previous activities (including swimming, gym, exercise classes, PT sessions) to walking represents a **reduction in the intensity of physical activity**. Therefore, it can be inferred that the level of health benefits gained from this type of physical activity may be reduced.
- Although some enjoy the new activity, **for some the change to walking represents a new activity that they ‘just can’t get into’** and is less enjoyable than their previous activities. A couple of participants highlight that existing medical conditions mean they can either do less than they used to or it causes them pain.

*“I am allergic to UVA and UVB rays. Causes debilitating pain and itching and lethargy.”*

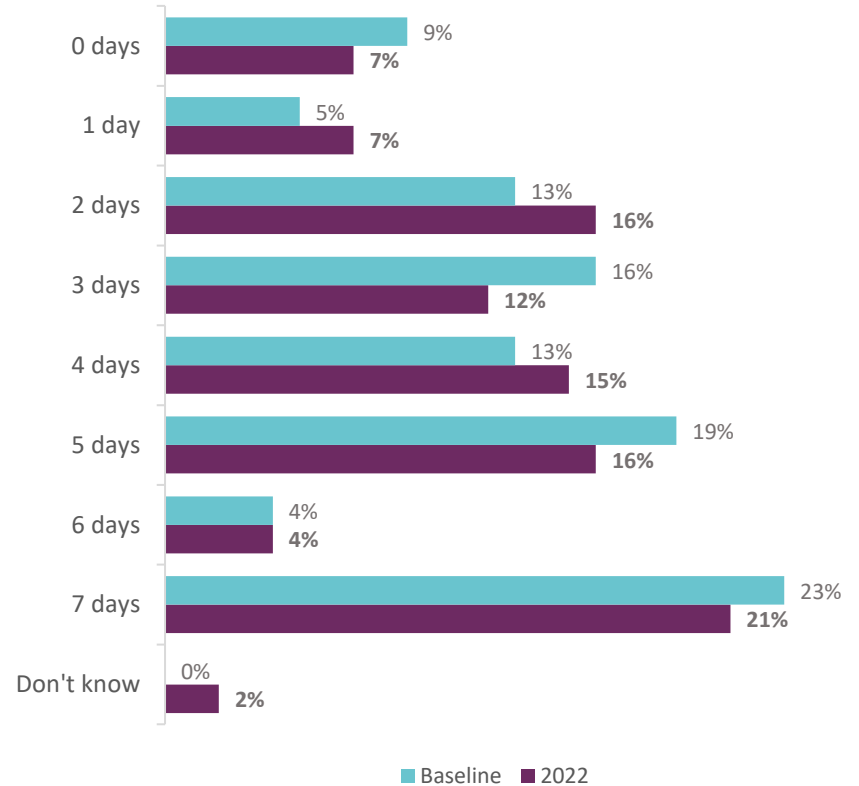
Q6. What is the mean reason(s) you have undertaken more physical activity as a result of the increase in the cost of living? (n=11)

Q7. As a result of the increase in the cost of living, you stated you have changed the type of physical activity you take part in. What physical activity have you stopped and what have you now started? (n=12)

# Physical activity levels

# Residents' physical activity levels

- Only 7% of panellists typically **take part in no physical activity**.
- Positively, these results remain relatively unchanged from the baseline survey undertaken in 2020. It is, however, important to note that this measure is the 'simple' active lives measure and therefore not comparable with national inactivity figures which are calculated more comprehensively.

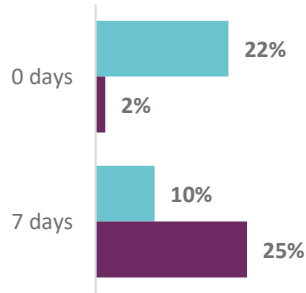


# Residents' differing physical activity levels

Activity rates do not differ significantly for most groups of residents but they did for the following:

## Previous physical activity levels

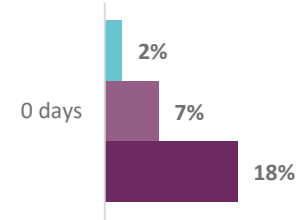
- A higher proportion of residents who were physically inactive upon joining the panel indicate that they do zero days of physical activity.
- A higher proportion of those who were already physically active report undertaking activity on 7 days in a week.



■ Physically inactive at baseline (n=41) ■ Physically active at baseline (n=124)

## Disability, mental health condition or illness

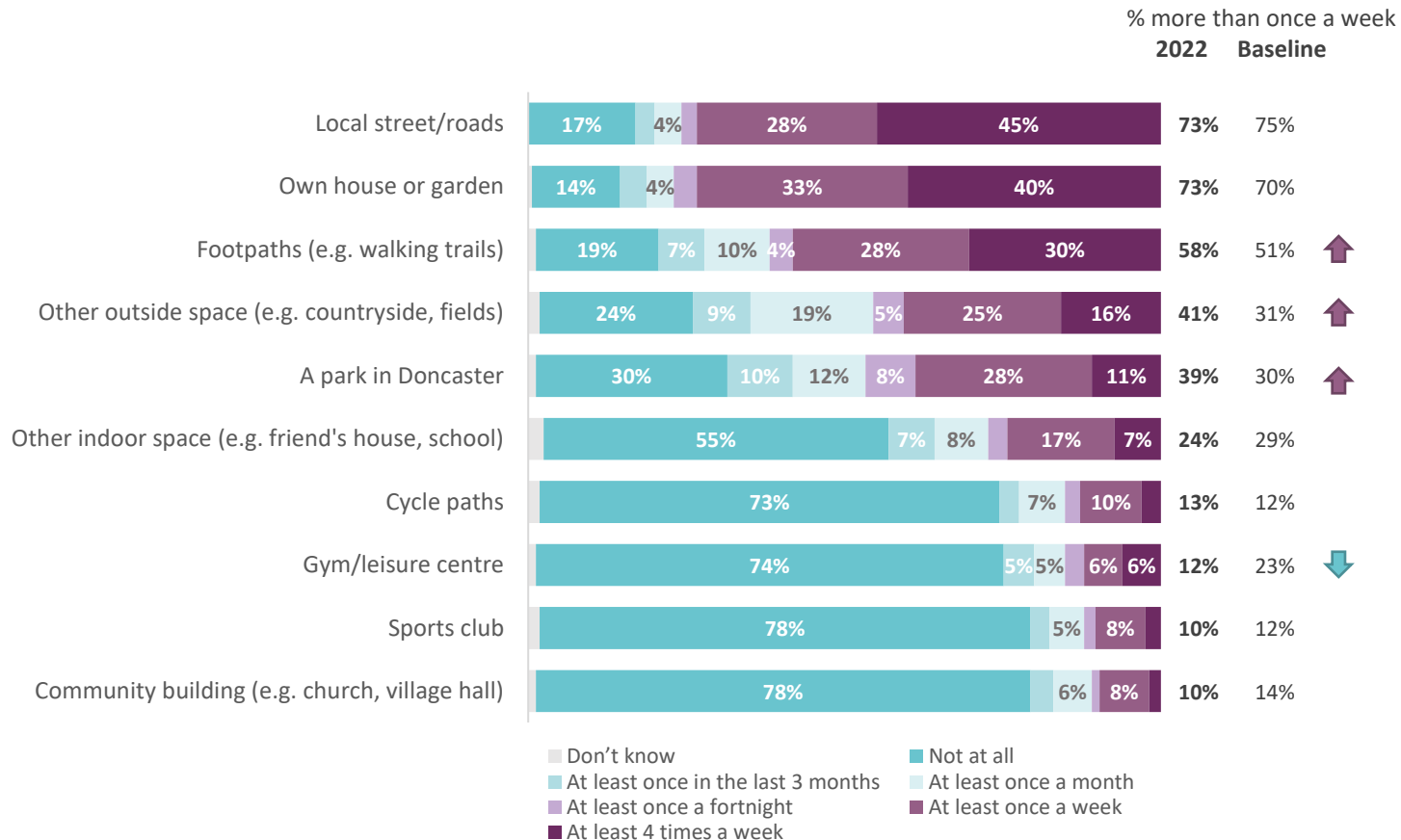
- Residents with a disability, mental health condition or illness that substantially impacts on their daily life more commonly report that they do zero days of physical activity each week.



■ No disability, mental health condition or illness (n=87)  
■ Disability, but no substantial impact on daily life (n=42)  
■ Disability that has substantial impact on daily life (n=34)

Q2. On how many days in a typical week do you do a total of 30 minutes or more of physical activity which is enough to raise your breathing rate? (n=165)

# Where people do physical activity



Q3. In the last three months, how often did you use the following when doing physical activity? (n=165)

# Where people do physical activity

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- The most **popular locations** for people to regularly undertake physical activity are **local streets/roads and a person's own house or garden**, with over seven in ten residents identifying that they participate in physical activity in these locations **at least once a week**.
- The **least popular** locations for physical activity are **community buildings, sports clubs, gyms and leisure centres, and cycle paths**. These are in line with the baseline findings and are areas which require financial investment in either attending a session or requiring equipment.
- Although **gyms and leisure centres** were not one of the most popular locations in 2020 there has been a **decrease in their regular use** from 23% to 12%. As earlier slides suggest, the cost of living crisis is likely an important factor in the reduction of people attending gyms as residents cancel gym memberships and classes alongside the continued impact of COVID-19 on their use.

# Where people do physical activity

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- There has been a **significant increase in the proportion of residents who are using outdoor spaces to undertake physical activity regularly**. The data shows increases in the regular use of footpaths, parks and other outdoor spaces. This could be affected by a range of factors such as:
  - The time of year the survey was undertaken (summer compared to Feb/Mar 2020).
  - COVID-19 motivating individuals to take part in physical activity outside; however, the proportion of residents undertaking physical activity outside in June/July 2020<sup>1</sup> during the first lockdown was lower than this year (with footpaths being used regularly by 49%, parks 22% and other outside spaces by 34% during the first lockdown).
  - The cost of living crisis with residents using gyms and leisure centres less and replacing this with walking (see earlier slides) and outside spaces more.
  - Finally, GDM have undertaken a range of work to try and encourage residents to undertake physical activity outside with a wide range of walking campaigns alongside Doncaster Future Parks starting to engage residents.

Q3. In the last three months, how often did you use the following when doing physical activity? (n=165)

1. CFE Research (2020) Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical activity levels among Doncaster residents



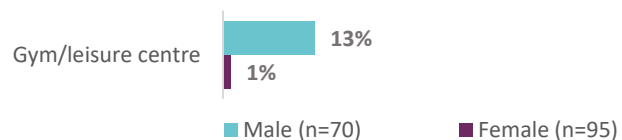
# Differences between where people do physical activity

The places where residents have done physical activity in the last three months differs by their demographic characteristics, as set out in the following slides.

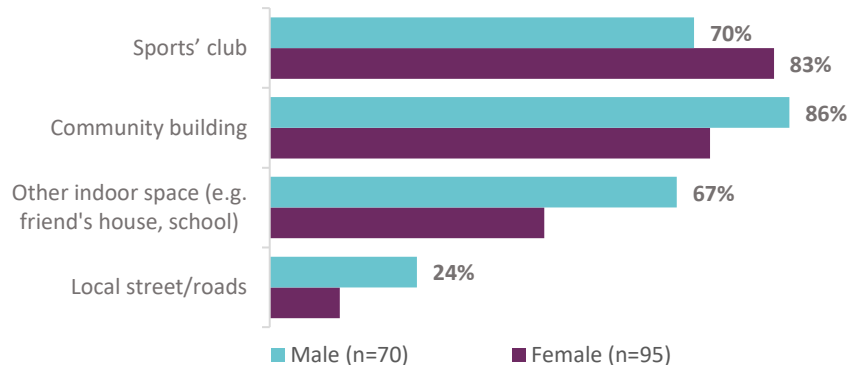
## Gender

- A higher proportion of males (13%) use a gym or leisure centre at least 4 times a week.
- More females do not use a sports club.
- More males do not use:
  - A community building
  - Other indoor space
  - Or local street or road

### Used at least 4 times a week in the last three months



### Not used at all in the last three months



Q3. In the last three months, how often did you use the following when doing physical activity?

# Differences between where people do physical activity

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## Age

- A **higher proportion of residents aged 25+ (78%) have not used a gym or leisure centre** compared with those aged 16-24 (38%).
- A **higher proportion of those aged 25+ (81%) have not attended a sports club** compared with those aged 16-14 (44%).

## Disability, mental health condition or illness

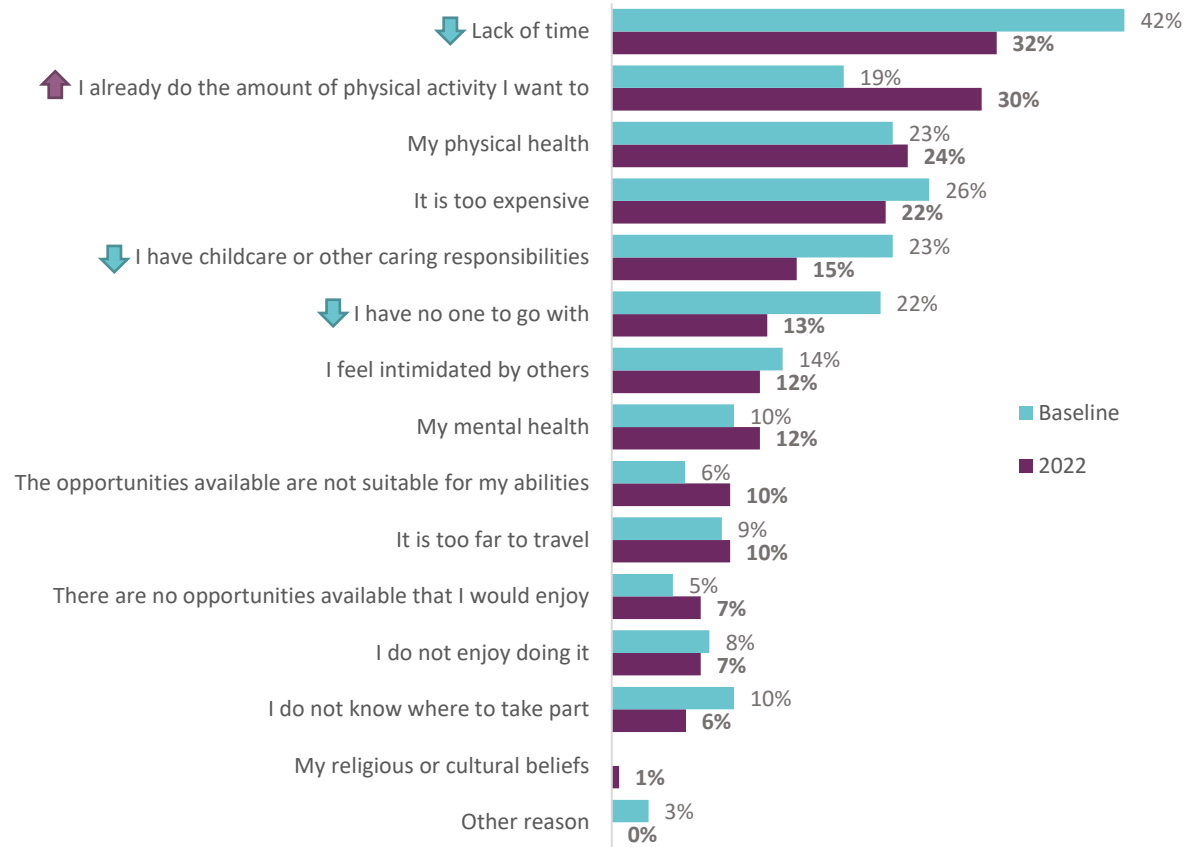
- **More residents with a disability, mental health condition or illness that has a substantial impact on their life (91%) have not used a gym or leisure centre** compared with those without (68%).

## Active community areas

- Although **cycle paths** are not frequently used, a **higher proportion of residents living in active communities areas (83%) have not used a cycle path** compared with those living elsewhere (67%).

# Residents' views on why they do not do more

- A perceived lack of time is still the most common reason for residents not doing more physical activity, however, this has decreased by 10 percentage points from the baseline.
- One in six residents currently state childcare or other caring responsibilities as a factor but this has reduced from nearly one in four at baseline.
- Just over one in ten residents cite having no one to go with as a barrier, which has reduced from over two in ten residents at baseline.
- Encouragingly, three in ten residents already do the amount of physical activity they want to do, which has increased from two in ten at baseline.



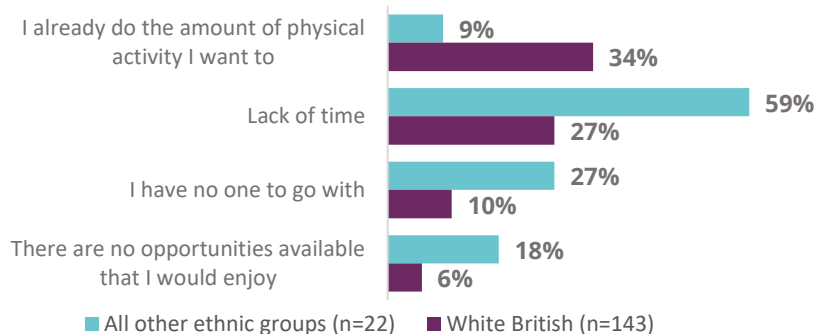
Q9. From the list below, please select the reasons why you do not do more physical activity (n=165)

# Differing residents' views on why they do not do more

The reasons why residents do not do more physical activity differ by their demographic characteristics as set out in the following slides.

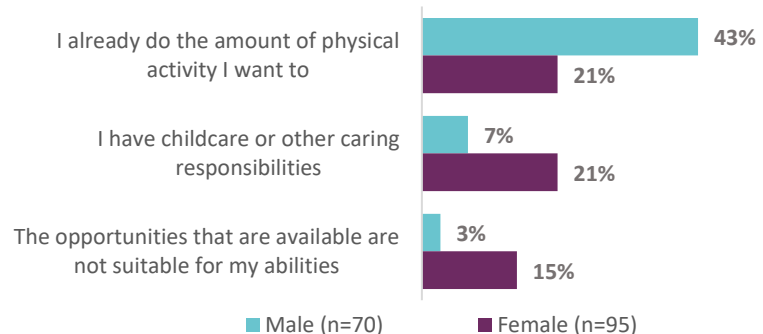
## Ethnicity

- A higher proportion of White British residents already do the amount of physical activity they want to do.
- A higher proportion of residents from all other ethnic groups combined report the following reasons for why they do not do more physical activity:
  - Lack of time
  - Having no one to go with
  - No opportunities available that they would enjoy



## Gender

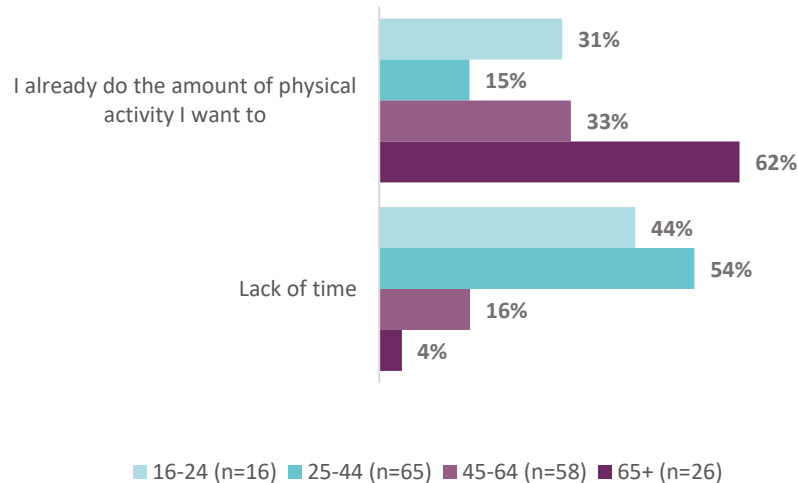
- More male residents already do the amount of physical activity they want to do.
- More female residents state childcare or caring responsibilities, and a lack of opportunities suitable for their abilities are barriers.



# Differing residents' views on why they do not do more

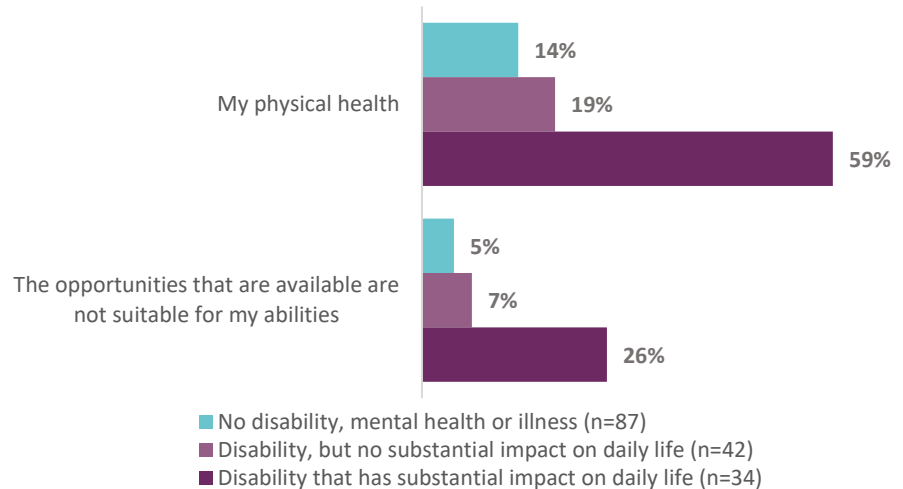
## Age

- Residents aged 65+ are most likely to report that they already do the amount of physical activity that they want to do.
- A higher proportion of those aged 16-24 and 25-44 report that they lack the time to do more physical activity.



## Disability, mental health condition or illness

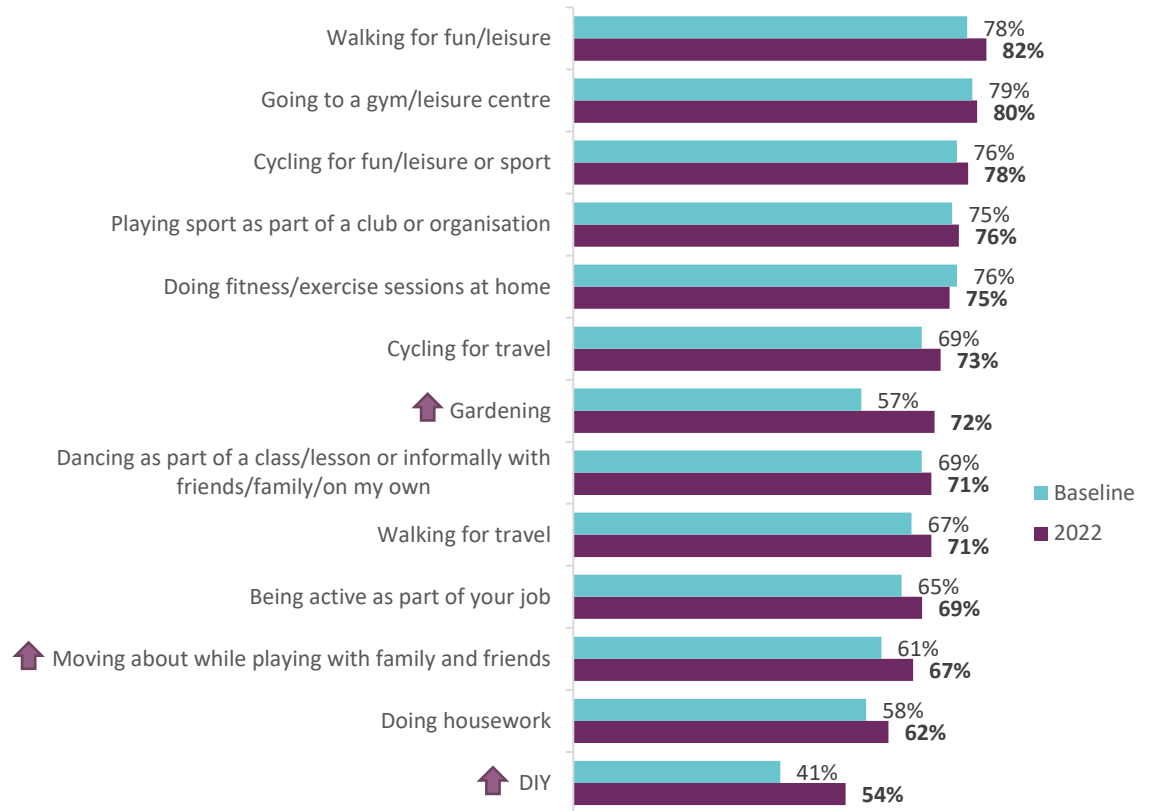
- A higher proportion of residents with a disability, mental health condition or illness that has a substantial impact on their daily lives report that their physical health and a lack of suitable opportunities for their abilities were barriers.



# Perceptions of physical activity

# What do people think physical activity is?

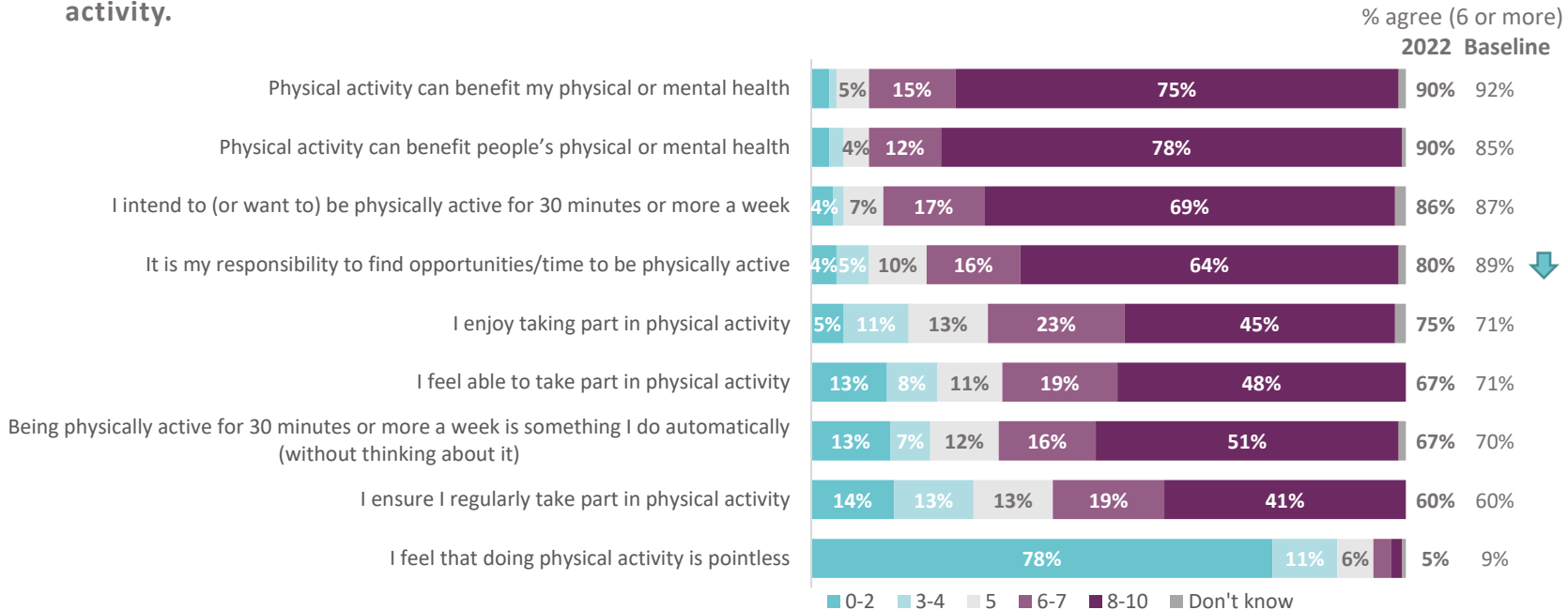
- Residents have a broad view about what constitutes physical activity but even for the most common types of physical activity not everyone agrees. More formal types of physical activity have higher levels of agreement.
- 40% of residents believe all categories are types of physical activity.
- Gardening has seen a large increase since the baseline from 57% to 72% and so has DIY.
- Walking and cycling for fun and leisure are still more commonly seen as physical activity than walking and cycling for travel.



Q1. Which of the following do you consider to be 'physical activity'? (n=165)

# Residents' capabilities, opportunities and motivations for physical activity

- Nine in ten Doncaster residents **believe that physical activity can benefit theirs and others' mental and/or physical health** and they **intend or want to be physically active** for over 30 minutes per week. However, **only 60%** agree (scoring 6 or more) that they **ensure they regularly take part in physical activity**.
- Resident's own capabilities, opportunities and motivations remain relatively unchanged from the baseline position although a slightly lower proportion now feel it is **their responsibility to find opportunities or time for physical activity**.



Q8 & Q11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about physical activity? (n=165)



# Differences in residents' capabilities, opportunities and motivations for physical activity

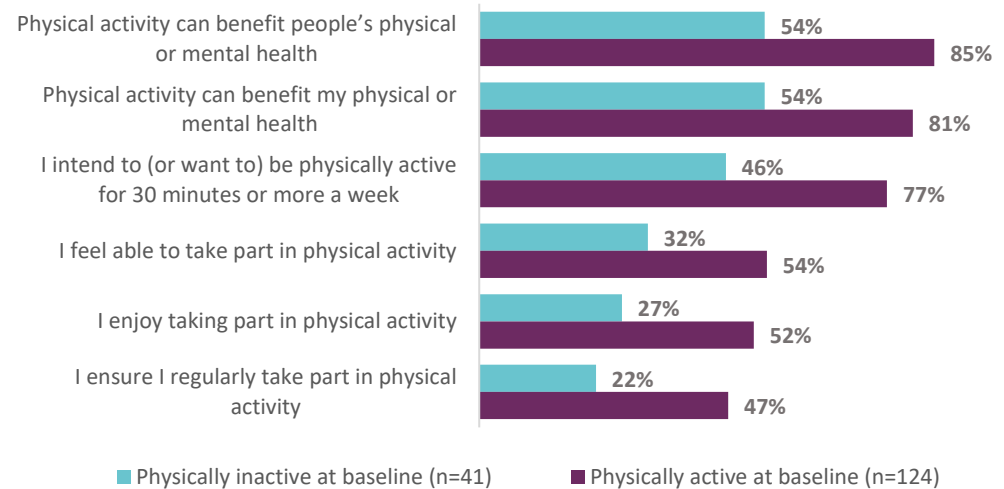
Residents have differing capabilities, opportunities and motivations for physical activity depending on their demographic characteristics, as set out in the following slides.

## Previous physical activity levels

A higher proportion of residents who were physically active at baseline strongly agree (scoring 8-10) that:

- Physical activity can benefit other people's and their own physical and mental health
- They intend to be physically active for 30 minutes or more a week
- They feel able to take part in physical activity
- They enjoy taking part in physical activity
- They ensure they regularly take part in physical activity

## Proportion scoring 8-10 (strongly agree)



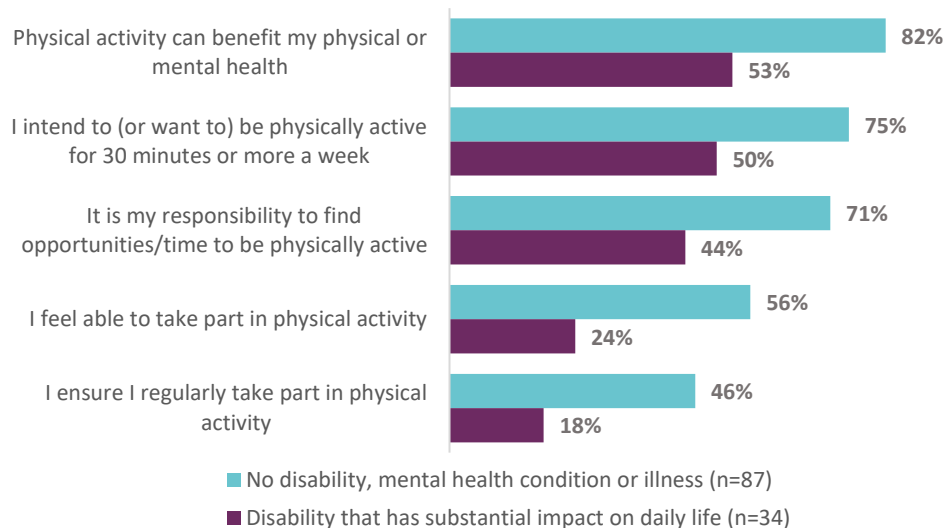
# Differences in residents' capabilities, opportunities and motivations for physical activity

## Disability

A higher proportion of residents with no disability, mental health condition or illness strongly agree (scoring 8-10) that:

- Physical activity can benefit their own physical and mental health
- They intend to be physically active for 30 minutes or more a week
- It is their responsibility to find opportunities/time to be physically active
- They feel able to take part in physical activity
- They ensure they regularly take part in physical activity

## Proportion scoring 8-10 (strongly agree)

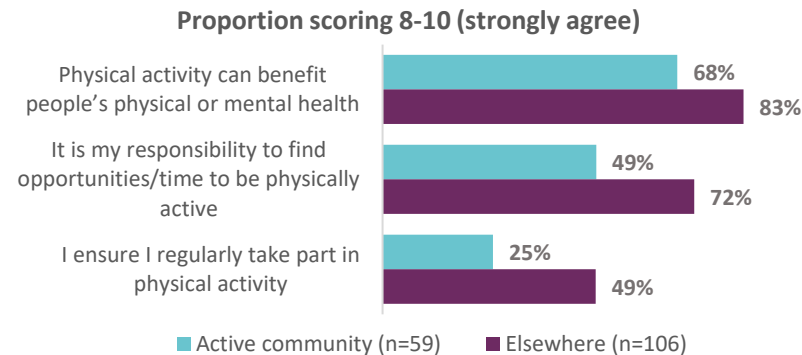


# Differences in residents' capabilities, opportunities and motivations for physical activity

## Active community areas

A higher proportion of residents who live outside of active community areas strongly agree (scoring 8-10) that:

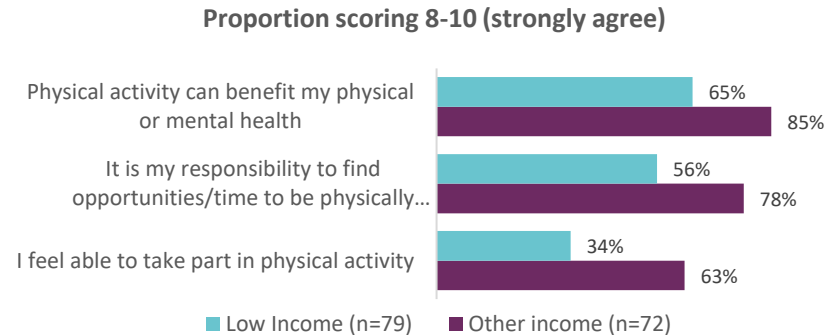
- Physical activity can benefit their own physical and mental health
- It is their responsibility to find opportunities/time to be physically active
- They ensure they regularly take part in physical activity



## Household income

A higher proportion of residents not on a low income strongly agree (scoring 8-10) that:

- Physical activity can benefit their own physical and mental health
- It is their responsibility to find opportunities/time to be physically active
- They feel able to take part in physical activity



# Differences in residents' capabilities, opportunities and motivations for physical activity

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## Gender

- **More males (50%) than females (34%) strongly agree (score 8-10) that they ensure they regularly take part in physical activity.**

## Age

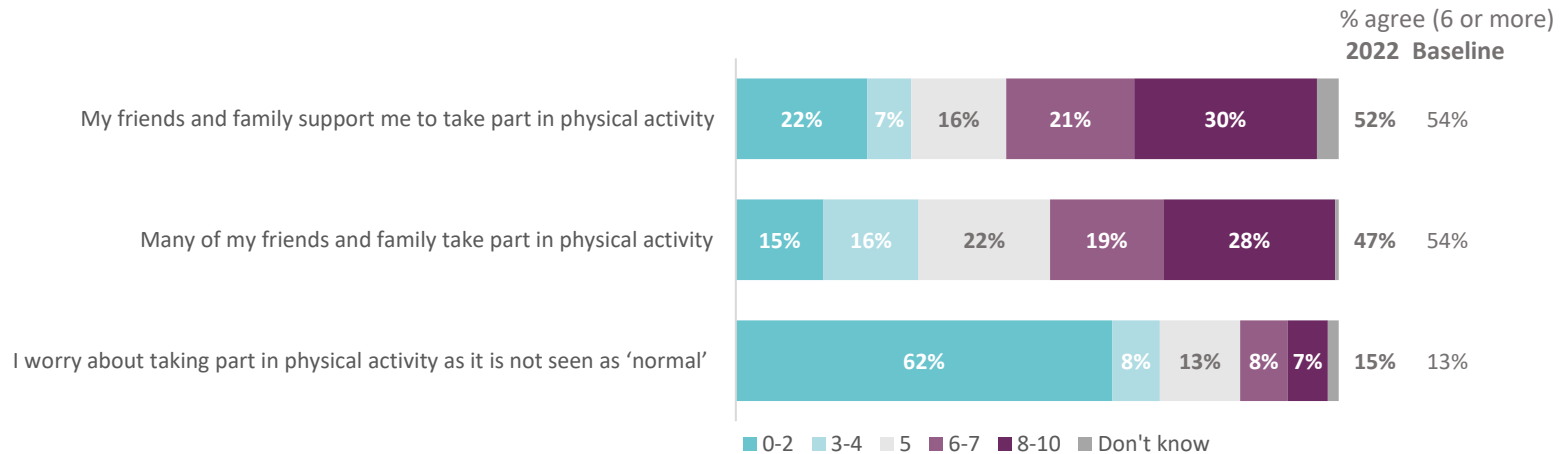
- **A higher proportion of those aged 65+ (92%) strongly disagreed (score 0-2) that they feel doing physical activity is pointless than those aged 16-24 (50%).**

## Ethnicity

- **More White British residents (80%) strongly disagreed (score 0-2) that they feel doing physical activity is pointless residents from all other ethnic groups combined (59%).**

# Other's influences on motivations

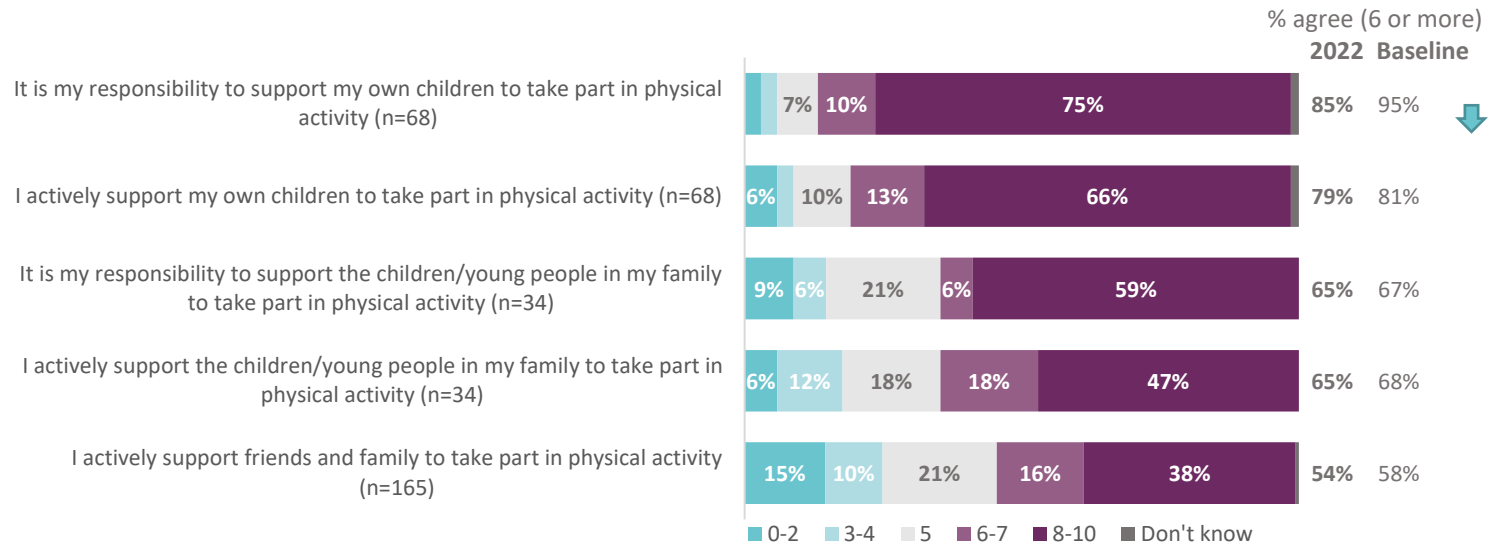
- Nearly two thirds of Doncaster residents **do not worry that taking part in physical activity is not seen as 'normal'**. Whilst this is positive 15% do still agree with this statement.
- Over half of all residents identify that their **friends and family support them** to take part in physical activity and nearly three in five respondents identify that **many of their friends and family take part in physical activity**.



Q11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about physical activity? (n=165)

# Supporting children and family members

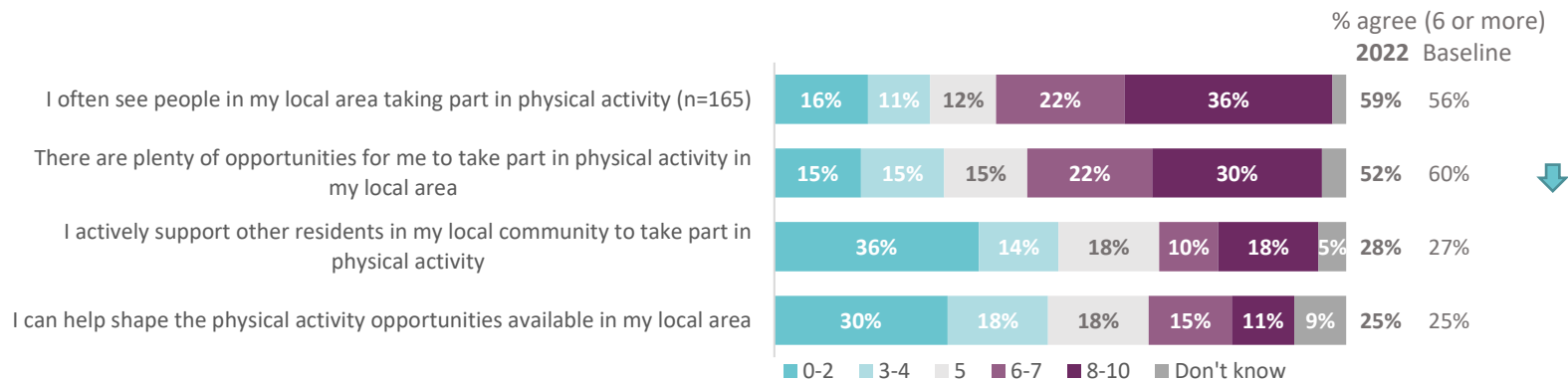
- Over **half** of residents surveyed identify that **they actively support friends and families to be active.**
- Over eight in ten parents state that **it is their responsibility to support their own children to take part in physical activity**, but this has **decreased by ten percentage points since baseline** and **only 79% currently actively support their children to take part in physical activity.**



Q11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about physical activity?

# Perceptions of physical activity in the local area

- Over **half of Doncaster residents** often see other **people taking part in physical activity in their local area**. This has stayed similar to the baseline figures and 27% disagree with this.
- **Only half of all residents identify that they feel that there are plenty of opportunities to be active in their local area**, which may represent a barrier to engaging in physical activity, and this has decreased slightly since the baseline.
- One quarter of residents feel that they can **help shape the physical activity opportunities available in their area, but, importantly, nearly half disagree**. This suggests that many residents do not feel that they have agency or influence in physical activity decision making in their area.



Q8 & Q11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about physical activity? (n=165)

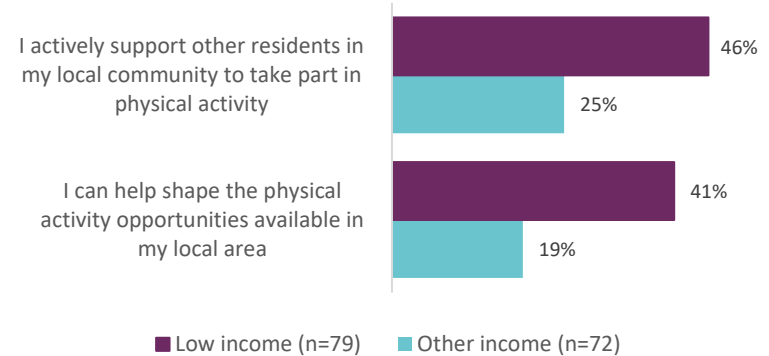
# Differences in residents' perceptions of physical activity in the local area

Residents have different perceptions of physical activity in the local area depending on their demographic characteristics, as set out in the following slides.

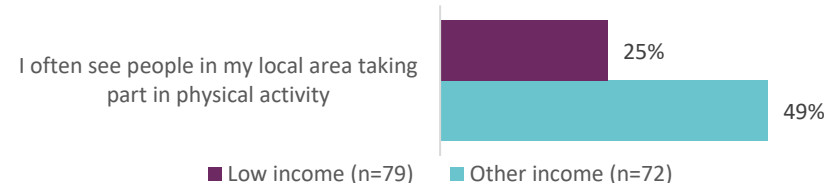
## Household income

- A higher proportion of residents with a low household income strongly disagree (scoring 0-2) that they:
  - Actively support other residents in their local community to take part in physical activity
  - Can help shape the physical activity opportunities in their local area.
- More residents without a low household income strongly agree (scoring 8-10) that they see people being active in their local area.

Proportion scoring 0-2 (strongly disagree)



Proportion scoring 8-10 (strongly agree)





# Differences in residents' perceptions of physical activity in the local area

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## Active community areas

- A higher proportion of residents living in active community areas (25%) strongly disagree (scoring 0-2) that they often see people in their local area taking part in physical activity compared with residents living elsewhere (11%).

## Household composition

- More residents living in a household with one adult with one or more children (35%) strongly disagree (scoring 0-2) that they often see people in their local area taking part in physical activity compared with residents living in a household with two or more adults with one or more children (10%).

## Previous physical activity levels

- A higher proportion of residents who were physically active at baseline strongly agree (35%) (scoring 8-10) that there are plenty of opportunities for them to take part in physical activity in their local area compared with residents who were physically inactive at baseline (12%).

# Key insights

# So, what does this mean?

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- The **number of days on which a person undertakes physical activity** (as measured by the simple active lives question) across the panel **has not significantly changed since the baseline**. Given the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent cost of living crisis, the fact that these figures remain stable is positive. However, we do know that the cost of living crisis is having an impact on levels of activity even if this is not affecting the number of days on which someone is active. **One in five residents have already decreased their physical activity levels** due to the crisis and this could get worse as the crisis continues and bills continue to rise. It has had a **bigger impact on younger people** and **females** who are more likely to decrease their activity levels. A number of residents who have reduced their physical activity as a result of the cost of living crisis have done so due to their levels of anxiety and worry. Despite 90% of residents believing that physical activity can improve their mental health, there appears to be a **disconnect between knowledge of the benefits and applying this to their own situation**.
- The **cost of living crisis has increased activity levels for some** who are doing more walking and cycling as active forms of transport because they cannot afford petrol or bus fares. For those that have had to substitute and change activities, most often they have **replaced going to the gym or doing exercise classes for walking**. This suggests that the replacement activity is of a lower intensity which may have fewer health benefits. Half of those who have changed activities **no longer enjoy the physical activity they are taking part in**. There is a risk that those that do not enjoy it may ultimately stop being active which could further increase the proportion of Doncaster residents that have reduced their physical activity levels as a result of the cost of living crisis.
- Nearly three quarters of residents exercise at least once a week in their own house/garden or on local streets. There has been a **decrease in the regular use of gyms and leisure centres** which may be as a result of the cost of living crisis alongside the continued impact of COVID-19 on their use. There has been a significant **increase in use of outdoor spaces to undertake physical activity regularly**. This could be as a result of a range of factors such as the time of year that the survey was conducted, the cost of living crisis or the work undertaken by the GDM team – and is likely to be a mix of all. GDM have undertaken a range of work to try and encourage residents to undertake physical activity outside with walking campaigns and Doncaster Future Parks starting to engage residents.

# So, what does this mean?

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- The most commonly cited reason for residents **not doing more physical activity is the perceived lack of time**, although this has decreased from the baseline position. This is more prevalent for younger people, who are presumably juggling work and family lives, as well as residents from all other ethnic groups combined. **Only one-third of residents currently do the amount of physical activity they want to do** and is reported more frequently by **male** residents, those **aged 65 or over** and **White British** residents.
- **Most Doncaster residents believe that physical activity can benefit theirs and others' mental and/or physical health** and they intend or want to be physically active for over 30 minutes per week. However not all ensure they regularly take part in physical activity. **Resident's own capabilities, opportunities and motivations remain relatively unchanged from the baseline position** although a **slightly lower proportion now feel it is their responsibility to find opportunities or time for physical activity for themselves or their children**. Alongside this **only four in five parents or guardians support their children to be active** highlighting the important role of parents in children's physical activity levels.
- **Visibility and access to physical activity in local areas is still a challenge** with only just over half of all residents often seeing other people taking part in physical activity in their local area. **Only half** of all residents identify that **there are plenty of opportunities to be active in their local area** and this has **decreased slightly since the baseline**.

# So, what does this mean?

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- The barriers to participation in physical activity and residents' capabilities, opportunities and motivations differ by groups of residents:
  - Those who have a **disability, mental health condition or illness which substantially impacts their life** (compared to those who do not) frequently state they do not do more physical activity because the **opportunities available are not suitable for their needs** and that their **physical health** prevents them. They are also **less likely to state they ensure they regularly take part in physical activity** and **do not feel able to take part**.
  - **Female** residents (when compared with male) are **less likely to ensure they are regularly undertaking physical activity** and stated **childcare or other caring responsibilities** as a barrier.
  - Those **living in active communities** (compared to those living elsewhere) are **less likely to ensure they take part in physical activity regularly, do not always feel it is their responsibility** to find time/opportunities are **less likely to see people taking part in physical activity in their local area**.
  - Those on a **low income** (compared to other residents) are **less likely to say it is their responsibility** to find opportunities or time for physical activity, **less likely to disagree that physical activity is pointless, feel less able to take part** in physical activity and **less likely to often see other people taking part in physical activity in their local area**.
  - Finally, those who are from **all other ethnic groups combined** (compared with White British) are **less likely to disagree that doing physical activity is pointless** and report that a barrier to doing more physical activity is **having no one to go with**.
- These findings reiterate the importance of taking a tailored and local approach to tackling physical inactivity. What may encourage one person to take part in physical activity may not work for another with various capabilities, opportunities and motivations being apparent. For some, these characteristics will also intersect making this even more challenging.