
**Provision of tackling racism and racial inequality in sport -
data gathering and analysis services**

FINAL REPORT

Submitted to:

UK Sport (on behalf of the five Sports Councils in the UK)
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Executive Summary

Introduction

UK Sport and the four Home Country Sports Councils (Sport England, **sportscotland**, Sport Wales and Sport Northern Ireland) (the “Collaborators”) are working together to tackle racism and racial inequalities in sport in their home countries and across the UK. To this end, they commissioned the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, to undertake a data gathering and analysis exercise to collate an overview of the disparate data sources that exist across the UK. The overall project also includes a separate, qualitative strand that is seeking to capture the ‘lived experiences’ of people from diverse ethnic communities in accessing, being involved in, and being excluded from sport. We make reference to some early findings emerging from that study at several places in this report.

Methods

The main method used in this report is desk research conducted on data either held by the Collaborators or otherwise available in the public domain. For the most part the data have been reviewed, collated and interpreted. In addition, we have conducted selected bespoke analysis of some data sets provided to us to derive new insights. Whilst every effort has been made to use data that are representative of the UK and its four Home Countries, the reality is that much of what is reported here uses England, or England and Wales combined, as proxies for the UK. This is because the sample sizes of some research from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are low and when coupled with relatively low proportions of ethnically diverse people, there is very little data from which to draw robust conclusions. The lack of such data provides the focus of our recommendations.

Key findings

Ethnicity: The nature of classes and categories used on the Census, means that there is no uniform picture of ethnicity at UK level in our national statistics. By making some compromises to the data, for example by collapsing data into the lowest common denominator, it is possible to construct a high-level view of the ethnic composition of the UK. The largest populations in the UK other than the White British population are Asian / British Asian (6.9%), White Other (4.2%) and Black / Black British (3.0%).

As an overarching point, people from ethnically diverse backgrounds in England are disproportionately more likely to live in areas with higher levels of deprivation than White British people. Whilst the indices of multiple deprivation vary in terms of components and weightings in the other Home Countries, where data permit, there are highly consistent commonalities. Deprivation is negatively associated with participation in sport and physical activity. Consequently, it is helpful to view any inequality in sport within the context of structural inequality in society more generally.

Participation: The data for participation in sport and physical activity point to systemic and longstanding inequalities between different ethnic groups. There is some evidence of the inequalities being apparent in adults and children as well as being present in wider cultural pursuits. These inequalities among adults are apparent in physical activity, specific sports as well as in elite sport. Furthermore, the basic inequalities identified are amplified when we take into account the younger age profile of ethnically diverse groups and in the case of South Asian people (Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) the significantly higher prevalence of males in the

population. Controlling for age and gender as well as more complex multivariate analysis of participation data reveal intersectionality¹ issues that stretch far beyond ethnicity.

The most important unknown is ‘why’ inequalities exist in the sport and physical activity participation rates of White British people and most other ethnic groups. Early findings from the *Lived Experiences* research present a harrowing picture of mistrust, micro-aggressions, ignorance, not being made to feel welcome, and in extreme cases outright hostility. These experiences cannot be collated on large scale questionnaires. Victims of such behaviour need to be allowed to tell their own stories in their own words to people who they trust.

Workforce: Similar to the participation data, the analysis of the workforce in sport reveals inequalities. These are evident at a structural level with Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black people having twice the rate of unemployment than the national average. There are also structural differences in the broad nature of the jobs undertaken by different ethnicities. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black people are overrepresented in lower status occupations and Indian people are overrepresented in professional and managerial roles.

Across the portfolio of jobs in sport measured by Standard Occupational Classification codes, people from ethnically diverse backgrounds account for 7% of the workforce, which is half their incidence in the working population (14%). Codes for employment in the cultural sector are more representative than sport, but with the exception of one, they are under representative of the workforce overall.

Existing data and research show that there is a clear link between playing sport and volunteering. Participants are often motivated to help others in the sport they take part in, motivated by a passion for the sport, and wanting to give their time to help others take part. The inequalities apparent in volunteering in sport on ethnicity grounds appear to be less pronounced when making the contrast between formal² volunteering and informal volunteering. However, at the highest level of formal volunteering on the boards of NGBs representativeness is low but improving with Perret Laver’s 2020 audit showing that of 125 organisations funded by UK Sport and Sport England, 7.9% of board members were from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

In short, and perhaps not surprisingly, the inequalities that are apparent in participation also play out in the professional and volunteer workforces. Little is known about the lived experiences of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds who work professionally in sport or volunteer in sport.

Interventions: In the design of interventions to encourage people from diverse ethnic backgrounds to be more physically active, success depends on much more than the nature of an intervention. Whilst there is considerable merit in insight-led interventions, there is also a need for more fundamental ingredients, including: who delivers the intervention and how it is delivered. People are more likely to respond positively to: people with whom they identify; and, people who they feel that they can trust. This conclusion enables us to see participation and workforce as two sides of the same coin.

Recommendations

The principal observation from this research is that although there are plenty of data sources available, there are limitations to them which hinder progress towards narrowing the

¹ Intersectionality is a term which describes how people have multiple identities such as age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (among many others) which combine to determine how they experience life.

² Formal volunteering refers to volunteers who have a specific, often elected, and long term role such as the treasurer of a sports club. By contrast, informal volunteers tend to ‘help out’ on an occasional basis.

inequalities experienced in participation in sport and physical activity and representation in the workforce by people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. We do not know enough about around one in seven of the UK population and we make nine recommendations to address the issue. The headings for each of the nine recommendations are listed below and are expanded upon in the main report.

1. Further analysis of existing data is required.
2. Greater granularity of data is required.
3. Data on children and young people are particularly important.
4. Intersectionality and deprivation require ongoing research.
5. We don't know enough about 'why?'
6. We need to know more about contexts and latent demand.
7. Workforce data require more in depth analysis.
8. We need to know more about the workforce's lived experiences.
9. We need to do something radically different.

The strategies for sport in the four Home Countries all recognise the wider 'benefits' of sport in terms of social impacts, such as in the case of England: physical and mental wellbeing; and personal and community development. These benefits of sport, physical activity and volunteering should be available to everyone on an equal basis. In this regard, sport has the opportunity to be a significant part of the solution of tackling racism and racial inequality in society more widely.

1. Introduction

UK Sport and the four Home Country Sports Councils (Sport England, **sportscotland**, Sport Wales and Sport Northern Ireland) (the “Collaborators”) are working together to tackle racism and racial inequalities in sport in their home countries and across the UK. To this end, they commissioned the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, to undertake a data gathering and analysis exercise to collate an overview of the disparate data sources that exist across the UK.

This report presents the findings for one of two projects in the Tackling Racism and Racial Inequalities in Sport (TRARIIS) series and is concerned with a review and gap analysis of the available quantitative data, and its use, relating to race and ethnicity in sport. By contrast the second piece of research employs qualitative techniques to obtain rich insight into the lived experiences of how people from ethnically diverse groups experience racism and racial inequality in sport.

The purpose of the research is to provide the Collaborators with an up-to-date and complete picture of access, engagement and exclusion in sport from people from diverse ethnic backgrounds through the lens of race and ethnicity. The specific objectives are outlined below.

- To establish exactly what data are available in each Home Nation and at a UK level to describe the picture of race and ethnicity in each country and the levels of access and engagement in sport. As part of this process we consider the concept of ‘intersectionality’ whereby people are impacted upon by a variety of disadvantages and discriminations simultaneously.
- To analyse the available data and extract what it says, and does not say, in order to identify any gaps in the data within and between Home Countries, as well as across the UK.
- To review data concerning why past programmes have or have not worked to date.

In building the picture of ‘access’ and ‘engagement’ we investigate the two key areas of participation and workforce. For participation, the focus is on providing insight into grassroots sport as well as talent development and high-performance sport. For workforce, we look at both paid employment in the sport industry as well as volunteering. Where possible we provide comparative analysis of workforce data from selected industries where valuable lessons or insights might be drawn.

The report does not stop at describing data and we conclude by offering initial guidance and recommendations to the Collaborators concerning future collection and standardisation of race and ethnicity data.

2. Terminology

During this research Sporting Equals published its [Terminology Resource](#) (February 2021), which provides guidance on the appropriate terminology to use ‘to build confidence in engaging with ethnically diverse communities to allow for respect and relatability’. We have edited the report to be compliant with the Sporting Equals guidance and adopt the term ‘ethnically diverse communities’ with further detail provided as to the communities we are referring to where appropriate.

However, at various point we also use the now outdated expressions such ‘ethnic minorities’ as well as the acronyms ‘BAME’ (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) and BME (Black and Minority Ethnic). Whilst we understand the concerns about the terms ethnic minorities, BAME

and BME as descriptors, we use them as they were used in data sources that predate the Sporting Equals Terminology Resource. Our justification for this approach is to avoid confusion should people wish to revisit our sources and for this reason have persisted with the terminology used in the research cited. We do however support the introduction of more inclusive terms and endeavour to use them when writing in our own words.

This report is concerned with Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport (TRARIIS) and from the outset it is worth clarifying what we understand by some key terms that are used in our analysis and interpretation. We do not claim that these are ‘definitions’, rather they represent what the terms mean to us in the context of this research.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is regarded as being a cultural identity which can be demonstrated by factors such as language, religion, country of birth, nationality, language spoken at home or cultural traditions, all acting in concert. There is no consensus on what constitutes an ethnic group and membership is something that is self-defined and subjectively meaningful to the person concerned. It is accepted that it is possible for a member of one ethnic group to join another ethnic group. Typically, it is ethnicity data which is asked for and reported on large scale national surveys in the UK.

Inequality

Inequality is used in the context of ‘social inequality’ whereby there are differences between groups in society, such as employment rates, and these differences are perceived to be unfair. The term ‘disparity’ is also used interchangeably with inequality. Inequality is often identified by measuring differences between groups in national data, for example, as will be shown later, Pakistani people are overrepresented in the 10% most deprived areas of England.

Race

Race is an important concept because it is one of the nine protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010. Within the Act, race includes (a) colour; (b) nationality; and (c) ethnic or national origins. Race is often regarded as being an unchangeable classification and therefore a member of one race cannot join another race. As the concept of race within the Equality Act 2010 includes ‘ethnic or national origins’ it is easy to see how in practice ethnicity and race are used interchangeably. National surveys in the UK do not measure ‘race’.

Racism

Racism is discrimination whereby certain people are treated worse, excluded, disadvantaged, harassed, bullied, humiliated or degraded because of their race or ethnicity. Under the Equality Act 2010, racism is a crime. Racism can be perpetrated by individuals on other individuals, or by collectives against another racial or ethnic group and this latter instance is widely known as ‘institutional racism’ or ‘systemic racism’. Racism can be overt (e.g., open hostility) as well as covert (e.g., micro-aggressions or unconscious bias). Racism is not measured currently via national surveys and is perhaps best assessed on the basis of people’s lived experiences.

As the majority of this report is based upon evidence from existing sources, the pragmatic approach to terminology is to revert to how words are used in their original contexts. Consequently there will be occasions when terms such ‘ethnicity’ and ‘race’ are used seemingly interchangeably even though conceptually they are different.

3. Methods

The main method used in this report is desk research conducted on data either held by the Collaborators or otherwise available in the public domain. For the most part the data have been reviewed, collated and interpreted. In addition, we have conducted selected bespoke analysis of some data sets provided to us to derive new insights.

To aid the process and to enable the research to be conducted in a spirit of co-creation, relationship managers from SIRC were appointed to UK Sport and each of the Home Country Sports Councils to act as a single point of contact between the research team and the Collaborators. Each Collaborator was provided with a proforma outlining the data required from them regarding national data sets, key research reports focusing on ethnicity, and data relating to the diversity of the workforce at micro scale such as board, staff and other key stakeholders.

This process worked effectively and enabled the research to be undertaken at pace during a tight turnaround period with most people working from home during Coronavirus restrictions.

The rest of this report is structured in the following order:

- [Section 4](#) provides an overview and some contextual analysis of ethnicity in the UK.
- In [section 5](#) we examine participation in sport and physical activity through the lens of ethnicity.
- Our analysis of representation of ethnically diverse people in the sport workforce is presented in [section 6](#).
- In [section 7](#) we look at interventions to increase participation in sport and physical activity and the key learning from them before concluding with recommendations in [section 8](#).

4. Ethnicity in the UK

4.1 UK and the Home Countries

The UK is one of the most ethnically diverse nations in Europe. The most accurate data on the composition of different ethnic groups in the UK is gathered every ten years via the Census. The last Census was in 2011, which is clearly dated and will be updated again in 2021. The Census collects data about ethnicity in different ways in the Home Countries: England and Wales use a five group and 18 categories method; Scotland uses six groups and 19 categories; whilst Northern Ireland uses an 11-category model. A full breakdown of the approach taken by each Home Country is shown in [Appendix 1](#).

The nature of classes and categories used on the Census, means that there is no uniform picture of ethnicity at UK level in our national statistics. Furthermore, the categories used in the 2021 Census will be slightly different to those used in 2011, highlighting the dynamic nature of the notion of ethnicity (and compromising comparability over time). By making some compromises to the data, by collapsing data into the lowest common denominator, it is possible to construct a high-level view of the ethnic composition of the UK in 2011 as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Ethnicity in the UK from the 2011 Census

Ethnic Group	England	Scotland	Wales	N. Ireland	UK Overall
Base n=	53,012,456	5,295,403	3,063,456	1,810,863	63,182,178
White British	79.8	7.9	93.2		72.1
White Irish	1.0	1.0	0.5		0.9
White Other	4.6	3.1	1.9	0.1	4.2
White Scottish		84.0			7.0
White				98.1	2.8
Sub Total (1)	85.4	96.0	95.6	98.2	87.1
Asian / British Asian	7.8	2.7	2.3	1.1	6.9
Black / Black British	3.5	0.7	0.6	0.2	3.0
British Mixed	2.3	0.4	1.0	0.3	2.0
Other	1.0	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.9
Sub Total (2)	14.6	4.0	4.4	1.8	12.9
Overall Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

As shown in Table 4.1, the 2011 Census identifies that 87.1% of the UK population identify as being from a White background and 12.9% identify as being from a non-White background. The UK Government uses the term ‘ethnic minorities’ to refer to all ethnic groups except the White British group. The definition of ethnic minorities, also referred to as BAME and BME, includes White minorities, such as White Other, Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups. It is relatively straightforward to compute the proportion of the population in England and Wales who are from ethnically diverse backgrounds because of the way the data are configured. For England, the proportion of ethnically diverse people is 20.2% (100% - 79.8%) and for Wales the corresponding statistic is 6.8% (100% - 93.2%).

However, for Scotland and Northern Ireland the analysis is not so simple. In Scotland 84% of the population describe themselves as White Scottish and a further 7.9% describe themselves as White British. When looking at the data from a UK perspective it may be acceptable to consider both groups as White British, but from a Scotland perspective this would be unacceptable. Thus, at UK level of analysis, the population of Scotland is 91.9% White British and 8.1% ethnically diverse.

In Northern Ireland the 98.1% of the population who describe themselves as White can be White British, White Northern Irish or White Irish amongst other choices, and there is no means of disaggregating the headline figure to a more granular level for this research. As will be shown later, in the same way that there are problems of consistency when trying to measure ethnicity at UK level, so too there are similar problems when analysing participation in sport and physical activity at any level above that of an individual Home Country.

Sometimes in Government statistics comparisons are made with the White group as a whole, in which case the term 'all other ethnic groups combined' or 'ethnic minorities (excluding White minorities)' is used. If space is limited, or data are suppressed because of small sub sample size, some Government statistics also refer to 'White' and 'Other than White' to make broad comparisons. The pragmatic solution for describing and interpreting data in this report is to use the categories and terminology that are used in the jurisdiction and the research being cited. Most of our data are from England and Wales, which provides a relatively high degree of consistency, but where other data are used, we qualify it accordingly. We therefore focus on the basic principles that apply to people rather than place and assume that issues identified about ethnically diverse in one Home Country are likely to be similar elsewhere.

The largest ethnically diverse populations in the UK are Asian / British Asian (6.9%), White Other (4.2%) and Black / Black British (3.0%) according to the 2011 Census. If we move beyond percentages and look at the absolute number of people from ethnically diverse backgrounds, then those from Asian backgrounds total 4.36 million, those from White Other backgrounds total at least 2.65 million, and those from Black backgrounds total 1.9 million. There is, however, a significant problem with consolidating different ethnicities into single catch-all categories. For example, amongst people described as 'Asian' are people who identify as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, and other Asian backgrounds. These are not homogenous identities and oversimplify many differences in language, religion, and cultural traditions including engagement with sport.

An Office for National Statistics (ONS) report released in 2019³ indicates that the proportion of people from 'Other Than White' backgrounds in the UK had increased by 0.8 percentage points in 2016 using experimental data based on the Annual Population Survey and Mid-Year Estimates. The ONS report is available only in the five-group format and concludes that the Census is the most up to date data available to describe ethnicity at population level in the UK. In the context of sport, Sport England's *Sport for All?*⁴ report projects that ethnically diverse communities will form 29.9% of the population in England by 2031 and 39.2% of the population by 2051.

³ ONS (2019) Research report on population estimates by ethnic group and religion, ONS, UK <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/researchreportonpopulationestimatesbyethnicgroupandreligion/2019-12-04#population-estimates-by-ethnic-group>.

⁴ Sport England (2020) *Sport for All?* Sport England, London, UK.

4.2 Regional ethnicity data

England is the most ethnically diverse of the Home Countries and within England levels of diversity vary considerably by region. The direct comparability of ethnicity data between England and Wales enables us to show the composition of England's nine regions as well as Wales in Table 4.2. Each row will add up to 100% (subject to rounding), which enables us to see that 14.6% of all people in England and Wales live in London and 5.5% live in Wales. When we look at specific ethnic groups we can see that 49.7% of all Bangladeshi people living in England and Wales are located in London and 2.5% are located in the North East. Conditional formatting is used to highlight high scores in green and low scores in red.

London with its high concentration of green cells is home to particularly high proportions of entire ethnic groups in England and Wales. By contrast, the North East, South West and Wales have relatively low levels of diversity and the West Midlands is the only other region in which the proportion of White British people is lower than the region's share of the entire population (9.8% v 10.0%).

Table 4.2: Ethnicity in England's regions and Wales (proportions of all people based on the Census 2011)

Ethnicity	East	East Midlands	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire & The Humber	Wales
All Residents	10.4	8.1	14.6	4.6	12.6	15.4	9.4	10.0	9.4	5.5
Asian	6.6	7.0	35.9	1.8	10.4	10.7	2.5	14.3	9.2	1.7
Bangladeshi	7.4	3.0	49.7	2.5	10.3	6.3	1.9	11.7	5.0	2.4
Chinese	8.5	6.2	31.6	3.6	12.2	13.5	5.7	8.0	7.2	3.5
Indian	6.1	12.0	38.4	1.1	7.6	10.8	2.4	15.5	4.9	1.2
Pakistani	5.9	4.4	19.9	1.8	16.8	8.8	1	20.2	20.1	1.1
Asian other	7.0	4.5	47.7	1.6	5.6	14.3	3.5	9.0	4.8	2
Black	6.3	4.4	58.4	0.7	5.2	7.3	2.7	9.8	4.3	1
Black African	7.1	4.2	58	1.1	6.0	8.8	2.4	6.5	4.7	1.2
Black Caribbean	5.7	4.9	57.9	0.2	3.9	5.8	2.5	14.6	3.9	0.6
Black other	5.0	3.9	60.7	0.4	5.5	5.2	3.6	11.1	3.9	0.9
Mixed	9.2	7.0	33.1	1.8	9.1	13.7	5.9	10.8	6.9	2.6
Mixed White/Asian	9.4	6.3	29.7	2.3	8.9	17.2	6.3	9.5	7.6	2.6
Mixed White/Black African	9.3	5.3	39.5	2.1	11.1	13.8	5.2	5.6	5.6	2.7
Mixed White/Black Caribbean	8.7	9.5	28	1.4	9.2	10.8	6	16.1	7.8	2.6
Mixed other	9.4	5.3	41	1.7	7.9	13.9	5.6	7.4	5.5	2.4
White	11.0	8.4	10.1	5.1	13.2	16.2	10.5	9.6	9.7	6.1
White British	11.0	8.6	8.1	5.4	13.6	16.3	10.8	9.8	10	6.3
White Irish	10.5	5.4	33.1	1.5	12.2	13.9	5.4	10.4	5	2.7
White Gypsy/Traveller	14.2	5.9	14.2	2.9	7.2	25.2	9.8	8.2	7.6	4.8
White other	10.5	5.8	41.6	1.4	6.1	15.3	6.3	5.6	5.2	2.2
Other	5.1	4.6	49.9	2	7.8	9.1	2.8	8.9	7.3	2.7
Arab	5.5	4.8	52.5	1.6	5.9	9.5	3	9.6	5.9	1.7
Any other	4.5	4.2	46.0	2.5	10.6	8.4	2.5	7.8	9.3	4.2

In Scotland 62% of people from ethnically diverse backgrounds (defined as Other Than White) live in four cities (Glasgow 32%, Edinburgh 18%, Aberdeen 8% and Dundee 4%) and the remaining 28 local authority areas have below the national average level of ethnic diversity⁵. In Northern Ireland there are relatively high concentrations (c. 4%) of people from ethnically diverse communities in Belfast South and Belfast East compared with the national average of c. 2%.

4.3 Ethnicity and deprivation

Further insight to the living conditions of ethnically diverse communities can be derived by looking at indices of multiple deprivation (IMD). All of the Home Countries have their own version of an IMD which aims to quantify in a single score a measure for a portfolio of different types of deprivation. In England, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) is a weighted score for deprivation based on seven measures of deprivation as outlined below.

1. Income (22.5% contribution to the overall IMD score)

Measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income. It includes those who are out of work and those who are in work but on low incomes.

2. Employment (22.5%)

Measures the proportion of the working age population (16-64) in a location who are involuntarily excluded from the labour market as a result of unemployment, sickness, disability or caring responsibilities.

3. Education, Skills and Training (13.5%)

Measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population relating to both children and young people and adults.

4. Health and Disability (13.5%)

Measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health.

5. Crime (9.3%)

Measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.

6. Barriers to Housing & Services (9.3%)

Measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. These relate to geographical barriers which relate to the proximity of local services; as well as wider barriers relating to access to housing such as affordability and homelessness.

7. Living Environment (9.3%)

Measures the quality of the local environment from two perspectives. First, the indoor environment is concerned with the quality of housing (e.g. access to central heating); and second, the outdoors environment relates to measures of air quality and the incidence of road traffic accidents.

The importance of indices of deprivation is that they help to contextualise the reality that some people experience numerous forms of inequality in their lives and these inequalities occur simultaneously (i.e., intersectionality). Any inequality in participation in sport and physical activity needs to be seen through the lens of inequality in society more generally. In Table 4.3,

we present the proportion of people in England who live in each of the ten deciles of deprivation ranging from the 10% most deprived to the 10% least deprived areas.

These data are broken down by the 18+1 (where 1 is ‘other’) categories of ethnicity recognised in the 2011 Census. For the first five deciles, which represent above average deprivation, cells are formatted to show high deprivation scores in red and low deprivation scores in green. By contrast, for the top five deciles, or below average deprivation, the formatting is reversed so that red cells show underrepresentation within deciles and green cells show over representation.

Table 4.3: Index of Multiple Deprivation in England by ethnicity [Source: ONS 2020 People living in deprived neighbourhoods]

Ethnicity	10% most deprived	10%-20%	20%-30%	30%-40%	40%-50%	50%-60%	60%-70%	70%-80%	80%-90%	10% least deprived
Asian	15.7	15.1	14.7	12.5	10.0	8.7	7.0	5.9	5.3	5.0
Bangladeshi	19.3	26.3	20.2	11.7	7.2	5.0	3.7	2.7	2.2	1.8
Indian	7.6	11.7	14.0	13.9	11.8	10.9	8.8	7.6	7.0	6.7
Pakistani	31.1	18.6	14.2	10.7	7.6	5.7	4.0	3.3	2.6	2.3
Chinese	8.4	10.6	12.5	12.0	10.0	10.6	9.4	8.8	8.3	9.3
Asian other	9.9	12.5	14.5	13.4	11.9	10.4	8.5	7.1	6.4	5.5
Black	15.2	22.2	20.0	13.3	9.5	6.9	4.6	3.4	2.7	2.0
Black African	15.6	22.8	20.6	12.9	9.0	6.4	4.5	3.4	2.8	2.0
Black Caribbean	14.1	21.0	19.1	13.9	10.5	7.8	5.0	3.6	2.9	2.0
Black other	16.6	22.6	20.0	13.4	9.3	6.8	4.1	3.1	2.3	1.6
Mixed	13.2	14.2	13.4	11.5	9.9	9.1	7.8	7.4	7.0	6.6
Mixed other	10.2	13.4	13.7	11.9	10.5	10.0	8.2	7.9	7.4	6.8
Mixed White/Asian	10.1	10.4	10.8	10.6	9.8	9.9	9.4	9.5	9.4	10.0
Mixed White/Black African	13.7	16.1	15.7	12.4	9.9	8.6	6.9	6.3	5.6	4.8
Mixed White/Black Caribbean	17.4	17.0	14.5	11.5	9.6	8.0	6.6	5.8	5.2	4.5
Other	13.4	15.5	15.5	12.9	9.9	9.0	7.2	6.5	5.6	4.5
Arab	15.5	14.6	14.7	13.0	10.0	8.8	7.4	6.3	5.4	4.4
Any other	11.9	16.2	16.0	12.9	9.9	9.2	7.0	6.6	5.8	4.5
White	9.0	8.9	9.2	9.7	10.1	10.4	10.5	10.7	10.7	10.7
White British	9.1	8.7	8.9	9.5	10.0	10.4	10.6	10.8	10.9	11.0
White Irish	8.1	10.0	11.3	11.3	10.9	10.6	9.6	9.6	9.3	9.1
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	11.7	13.0	13.1	11.1	11.1	10.4	9.0	7.4	7.2	6.0
White other	8.2	12.0	13.3	12.6	10.8	10.5	8.8	8.8	7.9	7.2
All	9.9	10.0	10.2	10.1	10.1	10.1	9.9	10.0	9.9	9.8

A stark finding from Table 4.3 is that 31.1% of all Pakistani people in England live in the 10% most deprived areas of the country. Other notable findings from Table 4.3 are outlined in the bullet point below.

- 66.7% of all Bangladeshi people live in the 30% most deprived areas in England and just 15.4% live in the top five least deprived deciles.
- 65.9% of all Pakistani people live in the 30% most deprived areas in England and just 17.9% live in the top five least deprived deciles.
- Whilst Indian people are more likely to live in deprived areas than White British people, they have more favourable scores than people who identify as Pakistani or Bangladeshi. This finding is a good example to illustrate why it is overly simplistic to assume that these groups in terms of their identities, circumstances and experiences are one and the same.
- 57.4% of all Black people live in the 30% most deprived areas in England and just 19.6% live in the top five least deprived deciles; and
- White British people are overrepresented in the 50% least deprived areas (53.8%) and consequently are underrepresented in the 50% most deprived areas (46.2%).

As an overarching point, people from ethnically diverse backgrounds in England are disproportionately more likely to live in areas with higher levels of deprivation than White British people. Whilst the indices of multiple deprivation vary in terms of components and weightings in the other Home Countries, where data permit there are highly consistent commonalities.

In Wales for example, 35% of people from all Black backgrounds live in the 10% most deprived areas. In Scotland, an Equality and Human Rights Commission report on racial equality⁶ found that ethnically diverse people were nearly four times more likely to be in a household that is overcrowded and up to twice as likely to be living in poverty and experiencing unemployment than White people.

As will be shown later, deprivation is negatively associated with participation in sport and physical activity. Consequently, it is helpful to view any inequality in sport within the context of structural inequality in society more generally. It is to the more focused aspects of sports participation and the workforce in sport to which we now turn.

⁶ [Scotland's Ethnic Minorities face overcrowding, poverty and unemployment, says equality and human rights body | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/ethnic-minorities-face-overcrowding-poverty-and-unemployment-says-equality-and-human-rights-body)

5. Participation in sport and physical activity

5.1 Context

In a similar way to how ethnicity is measured differently in the Home Countries, so too participation in sport and physical activity is measured differently. In England, Sport England commissions the bespoke Active Lives Survey for adults and children, whilst in Wales, Sport Wales commissions the School Sport Survey, which is a children's survey. By contrast, data relating to adults in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are collected on government surveys, namely: Scottish Household Survey (sport and physical activity) and the Scottish Health Survey (physical activity); National Survey for Wales (sport and physical activity); and, in Northern Ireland the Continuous Household Survey (sport) and the Health Survey Northern Ireland (physical activity).

Where participation is reported by ethnicity, because the sub samples are so small for some groups the scores are subject to such high levels of sampling error, it is difficult to diagnose whether a difference is a 'real' difference or the result of sampling error.

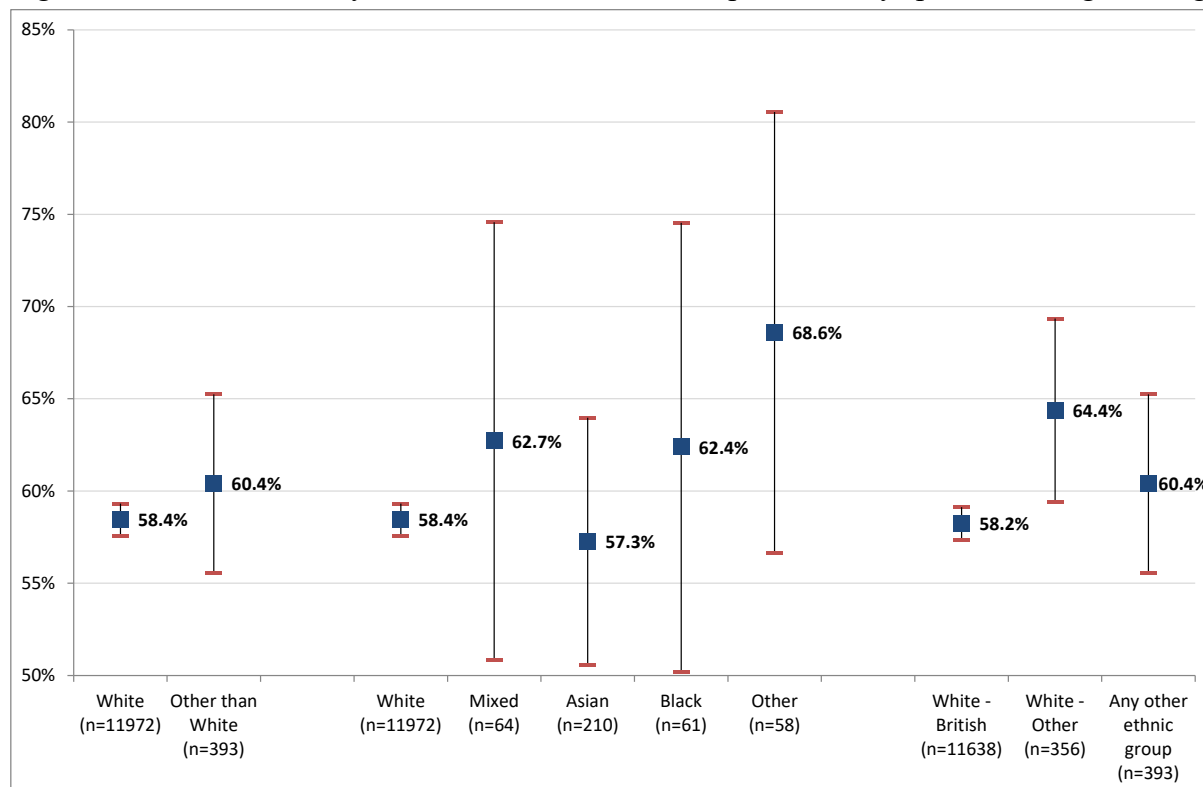
These surveys also employ different definitions of sport and employ different methods to measure physical activity. Thus, in the same way that ethnicity is not measurable by a uniform definition across the UK, so too participation in sport and physical activity will vary by the policy context in each jurisdiction; the sports that are included on a survey, and the precise technique used to measure sport and physical activities.

Because of the relatively small sample sizes of some of these surveys and the relatively low proportion of respondents from ethnically diverse communities, participation by ethnicity is either not reported, or is collapsed into one of two broad categories 'white compared with non-white' or the five broad groups used on the Census in England and Wales. Where participation is reported by ethnicity, because the sub samples are so small for some groups the scores are subject to such high levels of sampling error, it is difficult to diagnose whether a difference is a 'real' difference or the result of sampling error.

For example, in Northern Ireland from a sample of 3,888 respondents to the Health Survey Northern Ireland, 55% were classed as meeting the Chief Medical Officer's recommended levels of physical activity. If 1.8% of the population in Northern Ireland are ethnically diverse, this would equate to 70 respondents. Whilst for the White population the true score would be 55% +/- 1.6, the figure for all ethnically diverse respondents would be 55% +/- 11.3%.

Thus, unless there were huge differences in physical activity levels between the two groups, it would be impossible to tell if any difference was real or the result of sampling error. To illustrate this point with a practical example, Figure 5.1 uses data from the National Survey for Wales to highlight the differing levels of sampling error that are attributable to differing levels of granularity in how ethnicity defined. In Figure 5.1 we employ three levels of granularity: first, 'White' compared with 'Other than White'; second, the five broad groups used on the 2011 Census; and third, our own analysis of a three-category model differentiating between White British and White Other.

Figure 5.1: National Survey for Wales 2019/20 – Participation in any sport including walking



The key point in Figure 5.1 is that because the proportion of people from different ethnic groups in Wales is relatively low, the sampling error attached to sub samples based on ethnicity is high. In the two-category model when we compare 'White' with 'Other than White' we can see that the confidence interval attached to the 11,972 'White' respondents is low (± 0.8), whereas for the 393 'Other than White' respondents the sampling error is relatively high (± 4.2). Thus, because the confidence intervals of the two categories overlap, even in a two-category model, it is not possible to determine whether a difference is real or due to sampling error.

It follows that if we cut the data into finer levels of granularity, then sampling error will increase and further cloud the interpretation of the data. This point is shown in our five-category model in Figure 5.1, in which the data are broken down into the five broad categories used on the 2011 Census. The ethnic group with the largest sub sample is Asian with 210 respondents. Each of the five categories overlaps at some point with the other four categories and based on the precision of the estimates, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that there are no statistically significant differences between the five groups.

Within the broad category of 'Asian' are people who identify as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, and other. These are people with different cultural traditions whose participation in sport and physical activity cannot be assumed to be the same.

If we were to break the data down further into the 18 categories used on the 2011 Census, it is clear that the sampling error attached to each category would increase and thereby compound the problem illustrated with the five-category model. However, whilst collapsing categories to reduce sampling error might be done for statistical expediency, it makes the implicit assumption that the ethnic groups within the category are somehow homogenous. Within the broad category of 'Asian' are people who identify as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, and other. These are people with different cultural traditions whose participation in sport and physical activity cannot be assumed to be the same.

To a greater or lesser extent, the same issues are applicable to data from Northern Ireland and Scotland where there are relatively low proportions of ethnic diversity and national surveys range from 4,000 to 10,000 respondents. There is however considerable potential in the Active Lives Adult Survey with annual waves of around 155,000 and three times the proportion of diverse ethnic groups found in Scotland and Wales. The sampling error attributable to 155,000 respondents is +/- 0.2%. For a specific ethnic group, for example Black / Black British the sampling error would be +/- 1.3%, which is sufficiently low to make meaningful comparisons between groups. Furthermore, in the pooled Active Lives Adult Survey dataset 2016-2018 there are 374,000 cases to work with, although the granularity of the ethnic groups varies from 18 categories for online respondents to seven groups for postal respondents.

5.2 Headline findings

5.2.1 Physical activity and inactivity levels by ethnic group

In England, the most ethnically diverse of the Home Countries, there is strong evidence from the Active Lives Adult Survey (using the 18 ethnicity categories from the online sample) that there are differences between ethnic groups in terms of the proportions who are sufficiently active to meet the Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines of 150+ minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity per week. Table 5.1 illustrates levels of physical activity by the five groups and 18 categories from the 2011 Census drawn from the online sample of Active Lives Adult Survey.

Table 5.1: Adult physical activity levels by ethnicity in England 2016-2018 (ALS pooled data, online sample, %)

Category	Sub Group	Inactive	Fairly Active	Active
	All	25.1	12.3	62.6
White	White British	24.5	12.3	63.2
	Irish	18.3	10.7	71.0
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	33.2	6.6	60.2
	Any other White Background	22.9	11.4	65.7
Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	White and Black Caribbean	23.4	10.7	65.9
	White and Black African	15.7	11.8	72.5
	White and Asian	16.1	9.3	74.6
	Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	18.1	8.3	73.6
Asian / British Asian	Indian	28.5	13.9	57.6
	Pakistani	37.4	13.7	48.9
	Bangladeshi	34.3	16.2	49.5
	Chinese	26.5	13.3	60.2
	Any other Asian / Asian British background	31.8	13.0	55.2
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	African	26.9	14.5	58.6
	Caribbean	27.4	14.3	58.3
	Any other Black / Black British background	20.6	15.4	64.0
Other ethnic group	Arab	35.1	13.2	51.7
	Any other ethnic group	32.2	6.6	61.2

[Source: our alternative presentation of Sport for All? data, page 6]

From a general perspective Table 5.1 presents a divided picture. People from White and Mixed backgrounds typically have above average scores for being active (> 62.6%) and below average

scores for being inactive (< 25.1%) or fairly active (< 12.3%). The only exception to this point is for those classed as Gypsy or Irish Traveller, whose scores are subject to high levels of sampling error.

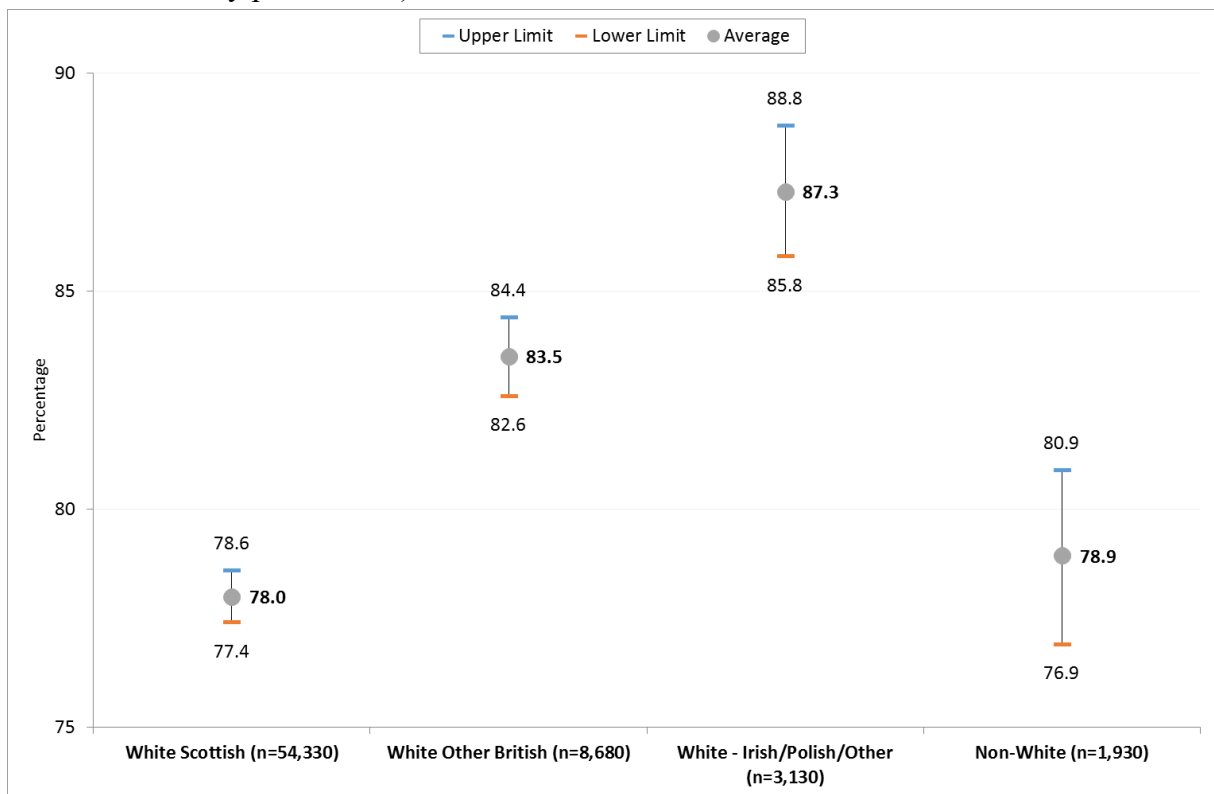
In the lower half of Table 5.1 we see relatively high levels of being inactive or fairly active across virtually all sub-groups. Furthermore, it follows that high inactivity scores will be matched with low activity scores.

A more nuanced view within the Asian / British Asian category shows that Pakistani and Bangladeshi people have the highest levels of inactivity and the lowest levels of activity. By contrast, for people who are Indian and Chinese, whilst their scores for being active are below average, it is to a considerably lesser extent than the Pakistani and Bangladeshi respondents. Below average scores for being physically active are also evident for people who describe their ethnicity as Arab (51.7%) as well as Black African (58.6%) and Black Caribbean (58.3%). Whilst it is possible that some scores for some ethnic groups are subject to relatively high levels of sampling error, our working hypothesis for this finding is that physical activity rates are associated with levels of deprivation (see Table 4.3). We test this theory more fully later (see [section 5.3](#)). However, a simple glance at Table 4.3 indicates that the ethnic groups with below average scores for being active have high incidences of living in more deprived areas.

In Scotland there is an interesting subtlety in the data, which poses a challenge for tackling ethnic or racial inequality in terms of whether it should be addressed at UK level or Home Country level. The majority of people in Scotland (84%) describe themselves as White Scottish, although from a UK perspective this group could be seen as ethnically diverse (7%). Pooled data from the Scottish Household Survey shown in Figure 5.2 reveals that White Scottish people have the lowest participation rate in ‘any sport including walking’ for the four ethnic groups shown. Furthermore, the participation rate of White Scottish people is significantly below that of the White British and Other White groups.

A more nuanced view within the Asian / British Asian category shows that Pakistani and Bangladeshi people have the highest levels of inactivity and the lowest levels of activity.

Figure 5.2: Participation in any sport including walking in Scotland 2013-2019 (Scottish Household Survey pooled data)



The relevance of this below average participation rate is that Public Health Scotland data show that in Scotland people from backgrounds other than White Scottish have better general health than the majority White Scottish population⁷. It is therefore possible that the scope of what is meant by racial inequality in sport and physical activity is broader than originally envisaged.

5.2.2 Sport-specific variations and patterns

When we look at adult participation in specific activities rather than overall physical activity levels, there are noticeable and significant differences on ethnicity grounds as shown in Table 5.2. Because participation in specific sports or activities is lower than for physical activity generally, even the Active Lives Survey pooled data from 2016-2018 have to be collapsed from 18+1 categories to the seven categories shown in Table 5.2. In this collapsing of categories, people who identify as Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi are aggregated into a group called ‘South Asian’ and other Asian respondents appear as ‘Other Ethnic groups’.

⁷ [Ethnic groups and migrants - Population groups - Public Health Scotland](#)

Table 5.2: Adult participation in specific sports and physical activities (ALS, England)

Activities / Sports	White British	White Other	South Asian	Black	Chinese	Mixed	Other Ethnic groups	All
Walking-Leisure	62.0%	59.0%	35.8%	30.9%	45.1%	51.3%	39.7%	58.0%
Walking-Travel	46.2%	56.0%	52.5%	54.7%	57.7%	63.6%	51.9%	47.8%
Cycling-Leisure	15.1%	16.5%	10.4%	11.8%	11.0%	15.9%	11.3%	14.7%
Cycling-Travel	7.3%	12.6%	4.2%	4.0%	7.3%	11.3%	8.0%	7.4%
Running	15.9%	21.4%	15.9%	17.4%	21.6%	23.1%	16.2%	16.3%
Fitness	30.1%	35.8%	29.7%	32.2%	31.5%	40.5%	29.8%	30.4%
Swimming	12.8%	14.0%	7.9%	5.6%	11.0%	12.8%	9.6%	12.1%
Traditional Sport	38.5%	42.0%	32.2%	28.7%	41.3%	44.1%	31.9%	37.8%
Team Sport	6.7%	7.1%	11.2%	11.6%	6.5%	12.3%	9.6%	7.3%
Racket Sport	5.1%	6.0%	7.6%	3.7%	11.4%	6.6%	4.5%	5.4%
Adventure Sport	6.8%	8.5%	3.7%	2.7%	7.5%	6.2%	4.5%	6.5%
Football	4.4%	4.8%	8.1%	7.8%	2.9%	8.0%	6.0%	4.8%

White British and White Other are the only two ethnic groups with above average scores for walking for leisure. Interestingly amongst those groups with low scores for walking for leisure are correspondingly high scores for walking for travel. Cycling participation amongst South Asian and Black respondents is well below average for both leisure and travel purposes. A consistent picture emerges for people who are White Other or Mixed with their participation above average on all measures with the minor exception of Adventure Sport for those from Mixed backgrounds.

Running and fitness show much less variation between ethnic groups. Team sports are relatively popular with South Asian and Black communities notably football as shown in Table 5.3 as well as cricket and basketball (Sport for All?⁸ 2020). Chinese people have a high score for racket sports, notably badminton. These data tell us what activities people do, but they do not tell us about the settings in which people participate or why. Some participation may be linked to cultural preferences and positive choices; however, it would be naïve to generalise. Similarly, some people may engage in certain activities because they feel excluded from others. This type of analysis is more problematic in the data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland because of the relatively small sample sizes of national surveys, the low proportion of respondents from ethnically diverse communities and the low participation rates for specific sports.

When we look at adult participation in specific activities rather than overall physical activity levels, there are noticeable and significant differences on ethnicity grounds.

An emerging theory from the sport volunteering literature⁹ is that people from ethnically diverse backgrounds are underrepresented amongst volunteers, particularly ‘formal’ volunteering, that typically takes place within clubs. As participation and volunteering in sport are linked, it is likely that people from ethnically diverse backgrounds are also underrepresented in some club sports and the *Sport for All?* report identifies golf as a case in

⁸ Sport England (2020) Sport for All?, Sport England, London, UK

⁹ Hylton, K and Lawton, R and Watt, W and Wright, H and Williams, K (2019) *Review of Literature, in The ABC of BAME New, mixed method research into black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and their motivations and barriers to volunteering*. Project Report. Jump Projects

point. Simply because Black and South Asian people take part in team sports such as football and cricket, does not imply that they take part within mainstream club provision. Qualitative evidence from the *Lived Experiences* research accompanying this study reveals seemingly high levels of casual, unaffiliated or ‘shadow’ team sport participation taking place amongst participants from ethnically diverse groups.

By contrast, evidence from Sport England’s National Benchmarking Service¹⁰, consistently shows that people from diverse ethnic backgrounds are significantly overrepresented in the usage statistics of public sport and leisure facilities, notably on ‘dry side’ activities such as going to the gym and exercise classes. Whilst these public facilities struggle to reach people from lower socioeconomic groups, they have an excellent track record in providing access to sport and physical activity for diverse ethnic groups and women.

Specific sports and activities have relatively low participation rates compared with the portfolio of activities that comprise ‘physical activity’ or participation in ‘any sport’. For example, one of the most popular sports in England is swimming with a participation rate of around 11%. Once a sample like Active Lives has been reduced to 11% and then cross tabulated for ethnicity the sampling error becomes too large to make meaningful comparisons. The pooling of data from two years of ALS data has been helpful in increasing sub-sample sizes and reducing sampling error. The problem of looking for real differences is exacerbated in the other Home Countries as survey sample sizes and the proportion of people from ethnically diverse groups are both relatively small which creates high levels of sampling error.

Simply because Black and South Asian people take part in team sports such as football and cricket, does not imply that they take part within mainstream club provision.

5.2.3 Influence of other demographic factors on participation

One structural explanation for differences in participation rates between White British people and other ethnic groups in England is variations in their age and gender profiles. We found that compared with White British people, the age profile of ethnically diverse people is relatively young, typically by 10 years or more in most cases as shown in Table 5.3. In addition, we also found that amongst the South Asian respondents, the proportion of males was considerably above average at 55.4% compared with a mean of 48.7%

¹⁰ Sport Industry Research Centre (2020) National Benchmarking Service 2019 Annual Report, SIRC, Sheffield, UK.

Table 5.3: The age profile of adult ethnic groups in England (ALS 2016-2018 pooled data)

Age Group	White British	White Other	South Asian	Black	Chinese	Mixed	Other Ethnic group	No Response	All
16-19	6.3%	5.8%	14.6%	15.3%	6.9%	20.4%	12.4%	5.9%	7.4%
20-24	5.7%	6.7%	10.4%	8.0%	19.8%	14.6%	7.6%	5.7%	6.4%
25-34	14.4%	32.1%	23.4%	17.2%	29.6%	27.4%	21.4%	16.5%	16.6%
35-44	13.5%	25.7%	23.4%	19.1%	20.2%	17.0%	22.4%	16.4%	15.4%
45-54	17.6%	13.1%	13.8%	20.2%	10.0%	11.3%	16.2%	14.9%	16.9%
55-64	15.7%	7.3%	7.1%	11.0%	7.6%	5.5%	9.0%	12.1%	14.0%
65-74	14.7%	5.4%	3.9%	3.6%	3.9%	2.1%	6.1%	10.2%	12.5%
75+	11.5%	3.6%	2.8%	3.8%	1.7%	1.3%	3.7%	11.4%	9.9%
NR	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%	1.8%	0.3%	0.4%	1.2%	6.9%	0.9%
All	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean Age	49.7	39.6	37.0	39.7	35.8	32.8	40.0	47.9	47.4
% Males	48.3	48.7	55.4	44.7	48.9	45.6	46.4	50.8	48.7

The average age of White British adults in the Active Lives Survey of adults is 49.7 years with above average proportions of people aged 45+ within its population, whereas all other ethnic groups have higher concentrations of adults aged 16-44. Given these findings and the consistent trend seen over many years and many surveys that participation in sport and physical activity declines with age, it is surprising that ethnic groups with a younger age profile, notably South Asian and Black people, have lower scores for being physically active and taking part in the more popular activities. This finding is particularly surprising for South Asian males as men tend to have higher participation rates in sport and physical activity than women.

All things being equal, it would be reasonable to expect on the grounds of age and gender that physical activity and sports participation levels would be relatively higher for younger and more male populations. To illustrate the point, it is possible to control for age and gender to recalculate physical activity participation in minutes using gender and age-adjusted scores. In Table 5.4 we show the raw data for mean levels of physical activity in minutes for all ethnic groups and compute the variance between these and the corresponding score for the White British population. Although the unadjusted variance ranged from -145 to +125 none of these differences are statistically significant. We then took the average amount of physical activity for each ethnic group and applied the ANOVA General Linear Model to derive the gender and age-adjusted mean difference with White British people used as the base case.

Because White British people are typically older than other ethnic groups and marginally less likely to be male than the overall sample, when we control for age and gender their average number of physical activity minutes per week increased from 721 to 744. By contrast, for younger and more male ethnic groups, standardised scores decreased across every group. After making the adjustment for age and gender the mean difference (relative to the White British group) increased considerably for all ethnically diverse groups, except Mixed, with the difference ranging from 92 to 238 minutes per week as also shown in Table 5.4. All of these differences, with the exception of the Mixed category now proved to be statistically significant as indicated by the asterisks in the last column of Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Unadjusted and adjusted mean difference in adults' sport and physical activity duration (ALS pooled data 2016-2018)

Ethnic Group	Unadjusted Mean	Unadjusted Mean Difference to White British	Adjusted Mean	Adjusted Mean Difference to White British
White British	721	----	744	---
White Other	713	8	652	92*
South Asian	605	116	516	227*
Black	627	94	580	163*
Chinese	596	125	505	238*
Mixed	866	-145	757	-14
Other ethnic group	610	111	564	179*
No Response	596	125	610	133*

Table 5.4 highlights that simple bi-variate analysis on its own cannot portray the real disparities that exist between different ethnic groups and it is therefore essential to take into consideration the gender and age distribution of such groups within the population. What is apparent in this case is the intersectionality of age and gender, which needs to be understood and adjusted for to make like with like comparisons.

5.2.4 Inequalities in wider leisure and cultural activities

It is also worth contextualising the inequalities that exist in sport and physical activity by examining whether they are present in other areas of leisure and cultural engagement. The Active Lives Survey includes some broad questions on wider cultural engagement by adults as shown in Table 5.5.

Simple bi-variate analysis on its own cannot portray the real disparities that exist between different ethnic groups.

Table 5.5: Adult participation in wider cultural activity in England by ethnicity (ALS pooled data 2016-2018)

Cultural Activity	White British	White Other	South Asian	Black	Chinese	Mixed	Other	NR	All
Attended a live sports event	36%	29%	20%	24%	18%	32%	22%	26%	33%
Creative/ artistic, craft, theatrical/music activity	36%	38%	22%	28%	35%	43%	29%	31%	34%
Creative, artistic, dance, theatrical or music activity event	54%	54%	31%	41%	47%	57%	37%	42%	52%
Used a public library service	32%	34%	40%	45%	41%	39%	42%	36%	33%
Attended a museum/gallery	47%	58%	33%	30%	56%	54%	43%	42%	46%

With the exception of using a public library (where the difference is -1 percentage point), White British people have above average scores for four of the five cultural activities listed in Table 5.5. South Asian and Black people have well below average scores for spectating at a live sports event, engaging in arts activities and events, and attending a museum or gallery. The only activity in which ethnically diverse groups have a uniformly higher score than White British people is for using a public library service. It is reasonable to surmise that inequalities

evident in sport and physical activity are reflective of inequalities that are replicated in other areas of society generally and engagement in cultural activities and physical activity specifically.

5.2.5 Focus on children and young people

The pattern of inequality in participation in sport and physical activity amongst adults is worth exploring among children and young people to establish whether it is endemic or something which occurs in adulthood. Using data from the Active Lives Children’s Survey, Table 5.6 details physical activity levels amongst children and young people in England aged 5-16. Active and Fairly Active children are formatted from high to low (green is above average and red is below) and Less Active children are reverse formatted from low to high (green is below average and red is above).

Table 5.6: Physical activity in school children aged 5-16 in England (ALS 2018-2019)

	White British	White Other	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	No Response	All
Active	48.4%	48.3%	39.3%	44.1%	48.3%	41.5%	44.2%	46.8%
Fairly Active	24.7%	23.2%	25.7%	22.1%	23.2%	25.8%	20.5%	24.2%
Less Active	26.8%	28.5%	35.1%	33.9%	28.5%	32.7%	35.3%	29.0%
All	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Proportion	63.8%	4.6%	8.5%	4.0%	6.3%	3.8%	9.0%	100.0%

The physical activity guidelines for children are different to adults with the more demanding target to achieve an average of an hour a day over the course of a week. On this criterion around 47.8% of children in England are Active and there are noticeably below average scores for Asian (39.3%), Black (44.2%) and Other (41.5%) children.

In broad terms Table 5.6 replicates the finding in Table 5.1 in which all Asian sub-groups have below average scores for being active. For both Asian and Black children, the overall scores are impacted negatively by the relatively low levels of activity by girls, which reinforces the issue of intersectionality.

An important point to note from Census 2011 data is that amongst children and young people in England the proportion who are from ethnically diverse backgrounds is higher than it is for the population as a whole. In *Sport for All?* Sport England states ‘People from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are a more youthful population’. The finding that the proportion of people from ethnically diverse backgrounds is higher among children than the population as a whole, allied to the presence of inequalities in physical activity participation between ethnic groups, should be seen as a warning sign that requires immediate action. If these inequalities persist into adulthood and are replicated in future generations, then disparity in participation in sport on the basis of ethnicity is more likely to increase than reduce.

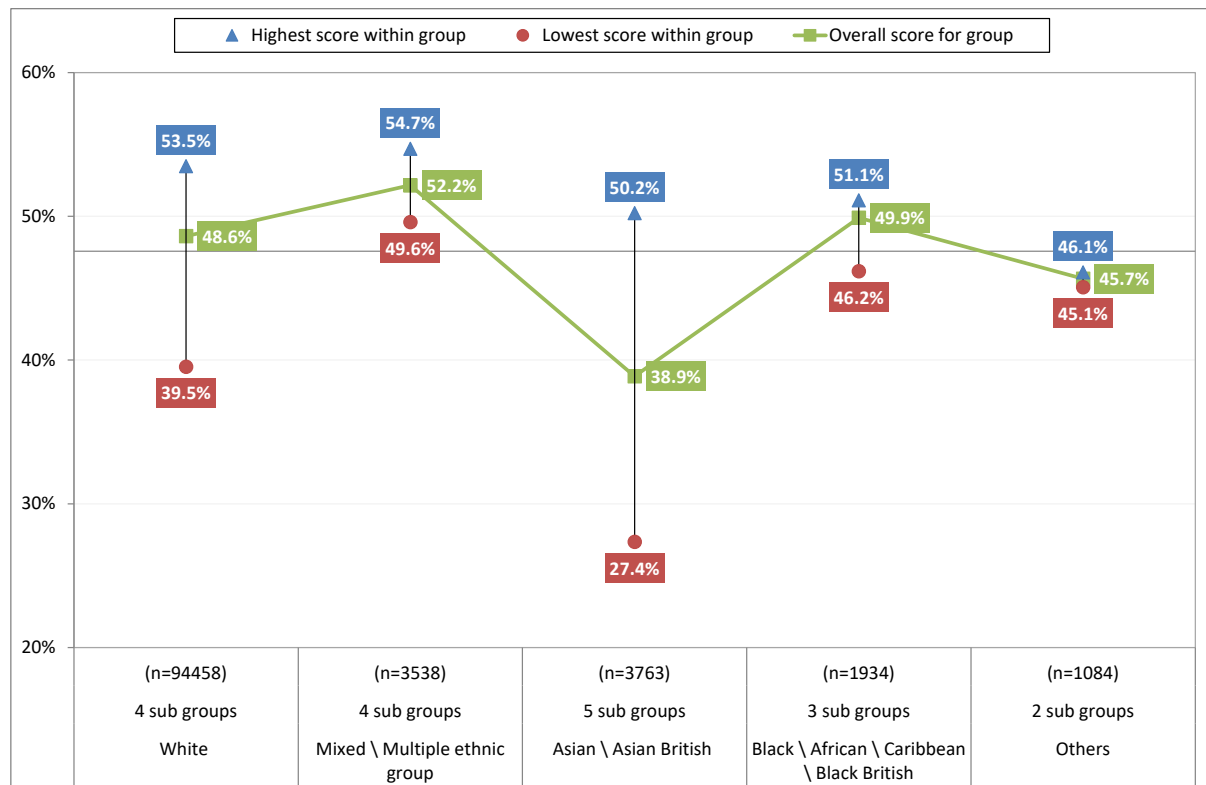
A further subtlety that is apparent amongst ethnically diverse communities is that patterns of behaviour may well vary between generations within the same ethnic group. For example, second and third generations of first generation migrants may well have been born, educated and socialised in the UK and have different attitudes and outlooks compared with their parents and grandparents. The issue of small sample sizes of entire ethnic groups in national surveys has already been documented. A further area of research that needs to occur is inter-generational

...around 47.8% of children in England are Active and there are noticeably below average scores for Asian (39.3%), Black (44.2%) and Other (41.5%) children.

research which requires either much larger samples in national surveys, or bespoke research with specific communities.

In Wales, the School Sport Survey (n= 120,175 in 2018) looks at an inclusive definition of sports participation by asking if children have taken part in any sport such as extracurricular, club or other sport at least once in the last year. This process yields scores of at least 94% and does not discriminate well between different ethnic groups in terms of showing differences. However, when a more demanding threshold known as ‘hooked on sport’ is applied, to denote participation at least three times a week, we find that it is a minority of children who meet the definition and that there is variation by broad ethnic group as shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: School Sport Survey in Wales 2018, % of children ‘hooked on sport’



Because the proportion of children from certain ethnic groups in Wales is relatively small, we have had to collapse the data into broad categories. However, to illustrate the point that there is variation within as well as between groups, we report the group average (green line) as well as the lowest (red box) and the highest (blue box) scores for the sub-groups within each broad category. The key point of note is that Asian / British Asian category has the lowest score for being hooked on sport (38.9%) and within this group the low score of 27.4% is attributable to Bangladeshi children. By contrast the high score of 50.2% is attributable to Indian children. These findings are consistent with Table 5.1 in which Bangladeshi and Pakistani adults in England had the lowest scores for being active and Indian adults had the highest score amongst South Asian populations, albeit below the average for all adults.

5.2.6 Elite / High Performance athletes

Athletes on UK Sport’s World Class Programme (WCP) are sports participants who are recognised as having the potential to reach the Olympic or Paralympic podium either within the current or the next funding cycle. As the UK’s World Class athletes typically start their careers as ordinary sports participants, it is worth examining the extent to which those representing Team GB are representative of the wider society from which they are drawn.

In June 2020, there were 1,019 athletes on the WCP and ethnicity data for 1,013 of them is shown in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: The ethnicity of athletes on the World Class Programme

Broad ethnic group	%
Asian or Asian British	1%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	3%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	6%
White	89%
Other ethnic group	<1%
Total	100%

The data available are presented in five ethnic groups of which the largest group, White (89%) is not broken down further into White British and White Other, which may possibly understate the true degree of ethnic diversity of these athletes. With at least 11% of WCP athletes being from ethnically diverse backgrounds, the picture compares relatively favourably with formal employment in the sport industry, which is covered in Section 6.

The data are also subtly nuanced in the sense that at 3%, athletes identifying as Black / African / Caribbean / Black British, are representative of their incidence in the UK population on the basis of Census 2011 data. By contrast, athletes from a Mixed ethnic background are overrepresented threefold in the data (6% v 2%), whereas those from an Asian / British Asian background are underrepresented sevenfold (1% v 7%) in the data.

if UK Sport and Home Country Sports Councils are going to make requests of those they fund to monitor ethnic diversity, it follows that they should lead by example.

The sports on the Olympic and Paralympic programme are not necessarily representative of all sports and those sports which are contested in the Olympic / Paralympic Games are agreed by the various committees of the International Olympic Committee and not sports bodies in the UK. There will be some sports that are popular amongst certain ethnic groups that do not feature in the Olympic / Paralympic programme, with an obvious case in point for people from Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani backgrounds being cricket.

Below the elite World Class Performance programme are High Performance programmes notably for athletes from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which help to prepare athletes for competition in events at which the Home Countries compete in their own right, such as the Commonwealth Games. Currently ethnicity data on High Performance athletes are not collected routinely in the Home Countries. With ethnically diverse populations ranging from 8.1% in Scotland to 1.9% in Northern Ireland and team sizes at the 2018 Commonwealth Games of 226 and 90 respectively, it would be difficult to draw anything but the most tentative conclusions about representativeness from the data.

World Class Performance and High Performance athletes are supported directly and indirectly by public funding sources such as Exchequer and National Lottery funding. It would therefore be good governance to monitor the extent to which there is equality in the way such funds are used. Furthermore, if UK Sport and Home Country Sports Councils are going to make requests of those they fund to monitor ethnic diversity, it follows that they should lead by example.

5.2.6 Section summary

Thus far the headline findings point to systematic inequalities in the data relating to participation in sport and physical activity between different ethnic groups. There is some evidence of the inequalities being apparent in adults and children as well as being present in wider cultural pursuits. These inequalities among adults are apparent in physical activity, and specific sports as well as in elite sport. Furthermore, the basic inequalities identified are amplified when we take into account the younger age profile of ethnically diverse groups and in the case of South Asian people the significantly higher prevalence of males in the population. What national data sets do not tell us is ‘why’ things are as they are.

Whilst the issue of ‘why’ is the subject of the *Lived Experiences* work, we can still use the data sets to look for lines of enquiry in which questioning might go, to help bring to life the ‘what’ that data sets tell us. In the following section we look for possible explanations by applying some experimental analysis to the issue. First, we explore the association between levels of physical and activity and deprivation; and second, we experiment with some multivariate analysis to establish if there are any hidden factors which provide new insights into participation data.

5.3 Seeking explanations

5.3.1 The role of deprivation

In Table 4.3 we demonstrated how certain ethnic groups were overrepresented in the most deprived areas of England. In Table 5.8 we develop this thinking by looking at the 10% most deprived areas in England and the seven components of deprivation, which we then correlate with physical activity and inactivity rates. The data for overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and its seven components all relate to the 10% most deprived areas of England. The inactivity and activity rates relate to the rates for the entirety of each ethnic group.

What national data sets do not tell us is ‘why’ things are as they are.

As stated in Section 4.3 there are similar measures of multiple deprivation used in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In the cases of Scotland and Wales the broad picture of people from ethnically diverse backgrounds experiencing disproportionately high levels of deprivation is consistent with the findings in England. There are some stark findings concerning the range and extent of deprivation faced by some ethnic groups in England as outlined below.

Pakistani people

People identifying as Pakistani are overrepresented in six of the seven Index of Multiple Deprivation domains with six of the seven domains having red cells, notably for income, employment and living environment. There are also adverse scores for crime and health as well as education. The combination of these factors legislates against being physically active (as will be shown in the next section being active is positively associated with income and employment).

Black people

People from all Black backgrounds are more likely to experience housing deprivation linked to accessibility, affordability and the proximity of local services. There are also above average scores for deprivation relating to income, employment and the likelihood of being a victim of crime.

Bangladeshi people

There is a similarity between the profile of Bangladeshi and Pakistani people but on a less extreme scale. Bangladeshi people also experience relatively high housing deprivation.

Indian people

By contrast to Pakistani and Bangladeshi people, Indian people are largely underrepresented in the 10% most deprived areas. This finding provides further reinforcement to the point that different ethnic groups should not be merged and considered to be a homogenous whole/

When inactivity and activity rates are correlated with the overall IMD score and each of its components, the relationships are what might be expected. That is, inactivity is positively associated with deprivation and activity is negatively associated with it. Correlations shown in bold and italics are statistically significant correlations in the sense that the associations are likely to be real rather than due to chance.

...inactivity is positively associated with deprivation and activity is negatively associated with it.

Inactivity is significantly and positively associated with deprivation linked to education and living environment. By contrast, activity is significantly and negatively associated with overall IMD, and specific deprivation linked to income, crime and living environment. Whilst there is evidence of people from various ethnic groups having above average participation in specific sports, for example Black people in basketball and football, the participation rates for specific sports are low compared with overall physical activity and more granular analysis is difficult in statistical terms.

The finding linking inactivity and deprivation suggests that the inequalities found in sport and physical activity have their roots deeply engrained in wider societal inequalities. Whilst acknowledging the significant amount of sports development work that has taken place over many years with a focus on people from diverse ethnic communities, it may be that unless and until such people have equality in all fundamental aspects of life it is difficult to envisage how the longstanding and stubborn inequality in sport and physical participation can be reduced in isolation.

Beyond analysing the link between activity and deprivation, it is possible to look within data sets such as the Active Lives Survey for additional predictors, or co-variates, of participation and our experimental modelling is presented in the following section.

The finding linking inactivity and deprivation suggests that the inequalities found in sport and physical activity have their roots deeply engrained in wider societal inequalities.

Table 5.8: Activity and deprivation by ethnicity (ALS pooled data / ONS IMD data)

Ethnicity	Inactive	Active	IMD	Income	Employment	Education	Health	Crime	Housing	Living Environment
All			9.9	10.0	9.8	9.8	9.8	10.0	10.6	10.3
Bangladeshi	34.3	49.6	19.3	26.3	14.3	15.4	10.6	19.6	21.5	16.0
Chinese	26.5	60.2	8.4	8.9	7.2	6.1	10.7	14.5	14.1	17.0
Indian	28.5	57.6	7.6	9.8	5.8	7.2	5.5	9.6	19.4	10.9
Pakistani	37.4	48.8	31.1	30.7	21.0	27.4	16.0	21.2	14.7	28.2
Asian other	31.8	55.2	9.9	11.4	8.0	7.8	7.0	12.2	22.0	11.6
Black African	26.9	58.5	15.6	20.2	12.6	9.5	10.6	17.9	32.3	11.7
Black Caribbean	27.4	58.2	14.1	18.2	11.7	7.8	7.8	13.6	29.2	14.0
Black other	20.6	63.9	16.6	21.6	13.5	9.2	9.7	16.4	31.6	13.7
Mixed White/Asian	16.1	74.6	10.1	10.7	8.8	8.7	8.5	11.8	12.7	12.5
Mixed White/Black African	15.7	72.4	13.7	15.5	12.2	10.4	12.0	15.5	19.5	12.2
Mixed White/Black Caribbean	23.4	65.9	17.4	18.8	15.7	14.2	13.8	15.1	14.8	12.2
Mixed other	18.1	73.6	10.2	11.9	9.1	7.9	8.4	12.5	17.8	12.5
White British	24.5	63.2	9.1	8.7	9.6	9.7	9.9	8.9	8.2	9.2
White Irish	18.3	71.0	8.1	8.7	7.6	6.0	8.0	10.6	12.9	11.6
White Gypsy/Traveller	33.2	60.2	11.7	12.2	10.3	13.7	10.1	13.0	16.4	10.6
White other	22.9	65.7	8.2	8.7	6.9	7.7	7.1	12.7	17.5	13.9
Arab	35.1	51.7	15.5	18.3	14.2	9.4	12.3	17.1	21.9	17.2
Any other	32.2	57.1	11.9	14.7	9.6	7.9	8.2	14.4	24.4	13.1
Inactive Correlations			0.46	0.46	0.38	0.49	0.26	0.45	0.17	0.48
Active Correlations			-0.52	-0.56	-0.42	-0.45	-0.26	-0.53	-0.31	-0.52

5.3.2 Multivariate analysis

Using the pooled data set from the Active Lives Surveys of 2016-17 and 2017-18, we found that 248,986 out of 374,264 (66.5%) adults met the criteria for being active by reporting 150 or more minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity per week. At the other end of the continuum, 21.1% of the sample was inactive and 11.5% met the criterion for being fairly active 30-149 minutes per week.

In Table 5.4 above we demonstrated how it was possible to ‘control’ for age and gender and in so doing revealed that racial inequalities are more pronounced than initially meet the eye. This type of analysis can be developed further whereby we build a statistical model that controls for considerably more variables to assess the likelihood, in this case, of a respondent being physically active or inactive. To this end, a binary logistic regression model was constructed based on variables which showed the strongest relationships with activity levels. The predictor variables selected were grouped into five categories as outlined below.

1. Demographics (age and gender, as shown in Table 5.4),
2. Household type (living arrangements and number of children),
3. Health (limiting or non-limiting disability, nine specific disabilities including chronic conditions affecting activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, body mass index group, and pregnancy status),
4. Socioeconomic status (working status, education, occupation, and ethnicity), and
5. Contextual (area lived in, region, survey month and quarter, and IMD decile).

Ultimately we included 25 covariates plus the survey year (total 26 variables) in the logistic regression model and ran four separate binary logistic regression models. The first model was based on all people in the sample and looked at the difference between those who met the sufficiently active criterion and those who did not. This model is arguably the most useful as it highlights the impact of specific ethnic backgrounds on whether or not a person is likely or not to be physically active.

The other models examined three broad ethnic groups namely White Minorities (14954 vs 6960), South Asian (15015 vs 11170), and Black (5254 vs 3918). These three ethnic groups were used because they were the largest groups in the dataset and provided sufficient sample sizes to make robust comparisons, although we acknowledge that aggregation of ethnic groups is not ideal.

The order of influence of each covariate showed wide variations across three ethnically diverse groups compared with All People. For the overall model 25 out of 26 covariates were retained because they proved to be significant. For the three ethnic sub-groups, the number of retained variables was 17 for White Minorities, 15 for South Asian people and 17 for Black people. The full list of variables and their relative importance is shown in Table 5.9 and a full description of the variables and the model is presented in the [Appendix 2](#).

Although this work is experimental, a key point of note and something of an unexpected finding is that the relative importance of the covariates differs considerably for each of the four models constructed. For example, in the overall model education is the most highly ranked covariate; for White Minorities and South Asian people, fruit and vegetable consumption is the most highly ranked covariate; and for Black people it is work

...we demonstrated how it was possible to ‘control’ for age and gender and in so doing revealed that racial inequalities are more pronounced than initially meet the eye.

status. These findings suggest that in the same way that different ethnic groups experience deprivation differently, so too the levers and barriers to being physically active may well be specific to certain ethnic groups.

Among all respondents in the first model, level of education was the most important predictor of being physically active.

Table 5.9: Stepwise Forward Method Selection of Covariates by Ethnic Specific Models

All People	White Minorities	South Asian	Black
1: Education	1: Fruit & Veg	1: Fruit & Veg	1: Work Status
2: Mobility	2: Occupation	2: Work Status	2: Fruit & Veg
3: Fruit & Veg	3: HH living	3: Education	3: HH living
4: Age	4: Education	4: Males	4: BMI
5: Ethnicity	5: Month	5: Age	5: Disable
6: BMI	6: Age	6: BMI	6: Education
7: Month	7: BMI	7: Month	7: Age
8: Pregnancy	8: Mobility	8: HH living	8: IMD deciles
9: Occupation	9: Males	9: IMD deciles	9: Pregnancy
10: Work Status	10: Children	10: Pregnancy	10: Speech
11: HH living	11: IMD deciles	11: Survey Year	11: Month
12: IMD deciles	12: Work Status	12: Memory	12: Occupation
13: Males	13: Behaviour	13: Children	13: Chronic
14: Disable	14: Breathing	14: Occupation	14: Region
15: Region	15: Region	15: Chronic	15: Males
16: Breathing	16: Dexterity		16: Memory
17: Chronic	17: Survey Year		17: Mobility
18: Mental			
19: Dexterity			
20: Survey Year			
21: Rural/Urban			
22: Memory			
23: Children			
24: Behaviour			
25: Hearing			

Among all respondents in the first model, level of education was the most important predictor of being physically active, followed by having a mobility-related disability and then fruit and vegetable consumption. Ethnicity was found to be the fifth most important predictor in explaining the likelihood (or odds) of being sufficiently active. The headline interpretation of Table 5.9 is that ethnicity is one of a series of factors that are associated with explaining whether or not an adult in England is physically active. The finding that so many variables are associated with physical activity highlights the significance of intersectionality whereby a combination of factors acting simultaneously are more likely to explain a phenomenon than one factor in isolation.

The findings for specific variables in the overall logistic regression model are summarised below and where possible linked to existing data about ethnically diverse communities. The technical detail about the model is included in the appendix.

1. Gender and age are significant predictors in explaining being fully active. Males have a 20% higher odds ratio compared with females to be active. As age increases the odds of being active reduces compared with the base case of youngest age group (16-19). For those aged 65+ the odds are lower by 58%. This point is further confirmation of our analysis in Table 5.4, that the younger age structure of people from ethnically diverse communities relative to White British people should result in higher physical activity levels. The fact that this is not the case amplifies the inequality identified.
2. Household type is also a significant predictor of being active. Households having children are 7% less likely to be active than those without a child; and this finding also holds true for a lone parent with children. The Office for National Statistics¹¹ found that the Black ethnic group (3.3% of the population) made up 8.3% of single parent households with dependent children. This finding may help to contextualise in part, why Black adults in England have below average scores for being physically active.
3. Compared with students, those who are working, unemployed, retired and homemakers have lower odds of being active. The lowest odds (by 56%) were found in people not-working due to long-term sickness or disability, and for retired people the odds were lower by 24%. As will be shown later in our analysis of workforce data, people from Pakistani and Black backgrounds experience the highest levels of unemployment. Furthermore, in Table 5.8 the data show how Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black people experience high levels of employment deprivation, which manifests itself as exclusion from employment on the grounds of unemployment, disability, sickness or caring responsibilities.
4. The odds of being active increase with increasing levels of education. Those with the highest educational qualifications are 87% more likely to be active than those with no qualifications. This finding is consistent with Table 5.8 in which inactivity was significantly correlated with deprivation in education, training and skills and this form of deprivation was particularly pronounced amongst people from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Mixed White / Black Caribbean, and Gypsy / Traveller backgrounds.
5. Similar to the level of education, occupation has a significant impact on the likelihood of being active. Those in managerial or professional occupations are 41% more likely to be active compared with those doing semi-routine or unskilled jobs. In [section 6](#) of the report, we will show how Pakistani and Bangladeshi people are more likely to be employed in lower status than higher status occupations – and these are the ethnic groups with the lowest activity rates.
6. Ethnicity on its own is shown to be an important predictor for adults in England being active. Compared with White British people, most ethnically diverse people have lower odds of being active. These range from 22% lower in White Minorities, 35% lower in Black people, 45% in South Asian people, 49% in Chinese people and 42% in other ethnic groups. These inequalities persist despite such groups having a younger age profile than White British people. The finding that the odds ratio for being physically active varies so markedly between ethnic groups (-22% to -49%), suggests that there are other factors at

¹¹ [Families and households - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/ethnicity-facts-figures)

work which might explain the differences. These might include for example, cultural traditions and religious beliefs.

7. Living in a rural area has positive effect on being active with all other location types having lower odds of being active than their rural counterparts. It is notable then, that around 90% of all people from an ethnically diverse background live in urban environments.
8. Deprivation deciles are directly related with being fully active. There is a near perfect progression in the likelihood of being active as levels of deprivation decrease. Those living in the top decile are 27% more likely to be active than those living in the bottom decile. Table 4.3 shows how most ethnic groups are overrepresented in the most deprived areas and underrepresented in the least deprived areas.
9. People having a limiting disability are 19% less likely to be active compared with those without. Among the various types of disability, people with mobility problems are 41% less likely to be active than those without. People with breathing, hearing and memory problems also have lower odds of being active. Table 5.8 shows how people from Pakistani, Mixed / White / Black, and Arab backgrounds experience disproportionately high levels of health deprivation.
10. People who consume fruit and vegetables have considerably higher odds of being active than those who do not. Interestingly there appears to be a ‘dose-response’ relationship whereby the more portions of fruit and vegetables consumed per day the higher the likelihood of being active. Office for National Statistics data¹² (quoting the 2017/18 Active Lives Survey) notes that 56% of White British people achieve the recommendation of ‘5-a-day’ and that this score is higher than any other ethnic group. The lowest scores were found amongst Black people (44%) and Asian people (47%). There is no implication that healthy eating causes participation in physical activity, rather there is a significant association. It is possible that intermediate factors are at work such as health literacy and awareness of what constitutes a ‘health lifestyle’ and this is a direction for future research.
11. People whose Body Mass Index is above or below the ‘healthy’ score have lower odds of being active and this finding is particularly pronounced among morbidly obese people who are 42% less likely to be active. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence¹³ states “the relationship between ethnicity and obesity is complex” and it would therefore be inappropriate to draw simplistic conclusions from the data for this study.
12. Finally, pregnancy negatively affects the likelihood of being active with pregnant women 49% less likely to be active than women who are not pregnant.

The logistic regression model is largely confirmatory of patterns that have been seen before in other contexts. However, like the analysis of deprivation, they point to the impact of wider societal issues which are not easily addressed in the short term.

The logistic regression model is largely confirmatory of patterns that have been seen before in other contexts. However, like the analysis of deprivation they point to the impact of wider societal issues which are not easily addressed in the short term. For example, a person’s level of education, could impact on the nature of their employment, which will in turn impact upon their income and, potentially, where they live. These factors in turn may well impact upon whether they are physically active – a point which reinforces the concept of intersectionality.

¹² [Healthy eating among adults - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/ethnicity-facts-figures)

¹³ [bmi-and-waist-circumference-black-and-minority-ethnic-groups-draft-guidance2 \(nice.org.uk\)](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/2017/01/12/bmi-and-waist-circumference-black-and-minority-ethnic-groups-draft-guidance2)

5.4 Participation conclusion

5.4.1 What do we know?

There is considerable variation in the availability and scale of data relating to participation in sport and physical activity across the UK. In addition, the opportunity to link this data to possible explanatory factors such as deprivation and participation in alternative leisure and cultural pursuits is also limited. These issues are particularly evident in the data sets relating to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. To illustrate the variability of data across the UK, Table 5.10 presents an overview of what is available and how it can be used.

Table 5.10: Data overview for the UK and Home Countries

Evidence	UK	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
National level data sets (adults)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Granularity to measure participation by ethnicity	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
National level data sets (children)	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Granularity to measure participation by ethnicity	n/a	✓	n/a	✓	✗
Ethnicity data on other cultural or leisure pursuits in the same source	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Ethnicity data on elite or high performance athletes	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Measures of multiple deprivation	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

Data on participation in sport and physical activity consistently demonstrate that people from ethnically diverse communities tend to have lower participation rates than White British people. The data available at various national levels are uniformly of high quality and are often regarded as ‘official statistics’. However, despite the quality of survey design and data collection, in the national surveys from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the sub sample sizes of ethnically diverse respondents are insufficient to do more detailed granular analysis. By contrast, the data from England in the Active Lives Survey, with its large sample size, does provide a basis for more in-depth examination, notably the pooled data sets of 2016-2018.

Data for broad measures of engagement in sports and physical such as being sufficiently active; taking part in recreational walking; or taking part in any form of sport, tend to have relatively high participation rates from which it is possible to identify differences between and within different ethnic groups. For specific sports, even relatively popular ones suffer from low participation rates leading to small sub-samples, which prevent meaningful comparisons between ethnic groups.

It is consistently found that participation in sport and physical activity varies by ethnicity. The gradient between White British people and other ethnic groups is masked by the finding that people from ethnically diverse backgrounds have a younger age profile and in the case of South Asian people there is a higher proportion of men. All things being equal, these factors would suggest that the participation rates of ethnically diverse groups should be higher. Controlling for age and gender as well as more complex multivariate analysis reveal that intersectionality issues that stretch far beyond ethnicity are evident.

The inequalities seen in sport and physical activity are to a greater extent replicated in other cultural pursuits such as taking part in arts and cultural activities. This point reinforces the notion that sport is a microcosm that reflects wider societal inequalities as demonstrated by our analysis of deprivation in Tables 4.3 and 5.8. The data from children’s participation indicates that the gradients or inequalities identified in adults are apparent in children too.

Table 5.11 provides a summary of the major data sources held by the Collaborators or otherwise publicly available. There would be some merit in commissioning research into the Understanding Society data set for various reasons. These include: it is a high quality data set supported by the Economic and Social Research Council; the large sample size of c. 100,000; the use of booster samples for people from some ethnically diverse groups; it provides full UK coverage; the data are longitudinal; and there is a physical activity / exercise module every two years. Although this analysis would be useful at UK level, it would be unlikely to provide a more detailed picture of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland because of the relatively small sub samples for each nation as well as the low proportion of ethnically diverse people within these sub samples.

Table 5.11: Quantitative data sets in the UK

United Kingdom: Quantitative data sets			
The 2011 Census (n= 60,040,000); Understanding Society (n= c. 100,000); UK Time Use Survey (n=4,800)			
England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Active Lives Survey (n= c. 155,000 p.a.; pooled data 374,264)	National Survey for Wales (n= c. 12,000)	Scottish Household Survey (n= 9,640)	Continuous Household Survey (n= 4,000)
Taking Part Survey (n= c. 10,000)	School Sport in Wales Survey (n= c.120,000)	Scottish Health Survey (n= c. 10,400)	Sport and Physical Activity Survey (SAPAS) (n= 4,653)
Health Survey for England (n= 6,892)		Young People in Scotland Survey (n= 1,500)	Children’s School Sport & Physical Activity (CSSPA) survey

Whilst the data does not provide explanations as to why the observed inequalities exist, we offer two suggestions. First, inequality in sport and physical activity is a function of wider societal issues such as deprivation in all of its forms. Second, there may be additional factors specific to sport which provide the conditions for racism and other forms of discrimination to manifest themselves, the result being that people are prevented from participating who would otherwise like to do so. These are the issues which need to be explored as we move from ‘what’ to ‘why’.

5.4.2 What do we not know?

At a high level we know that inequalities exist and that they are associated statistically and significantly with numerous other covariates. However, these are associations and not causes. The longitudinal nature of the Understanding Society data set provides an opportunity for cost effective exploration of some causal relationships, without the need for additional primary research.

The most important unknown is ‘why’ inequalities exist in the sport and physical activity participation rates of White British people and most other ethnic groups. Early findings from the *Lived Experiences* research present a harrowing picture of mistrust, micro-aggressions, ignorance, not being made to feel welcome, and in extreme cases outright hostility. These experiences cannot be collated on large scale questionnaires. Victims of such behaviour need to be allowed to tell their own stories in their own words to people who they trust.

There is little data relating to the contexts in which people from ethnically diverse groups experience sport and physical activity. It is possible to tick a box on a survey to say that you have played football at least twice in the last 28 days. However, the experience of participation may vary considerably. Why is it that people from ethnically diverse groups play unaffiliated sport and feel the need to establish their own leagues? Similarly, why are such groups overrepresented in the usage figures of local authority sport and leisure centres yet seem to be underrepresented in more formal club and league structures?

We do not know about demand for sport that exists, but which is not currently realised (latent demand). Insight to address this issue is required to establish whether people from ethnically diverse backgrounds would like to participate more in sport and physical activity, or whether they have different tastes and preferences. This type of analysis might go some way towards explaining whether gradients in participation between different ethnic groups are the result of exclusion, or the result of different tastes and preferences.

We now proceed to examine the workforce in sport to test for similar issues.

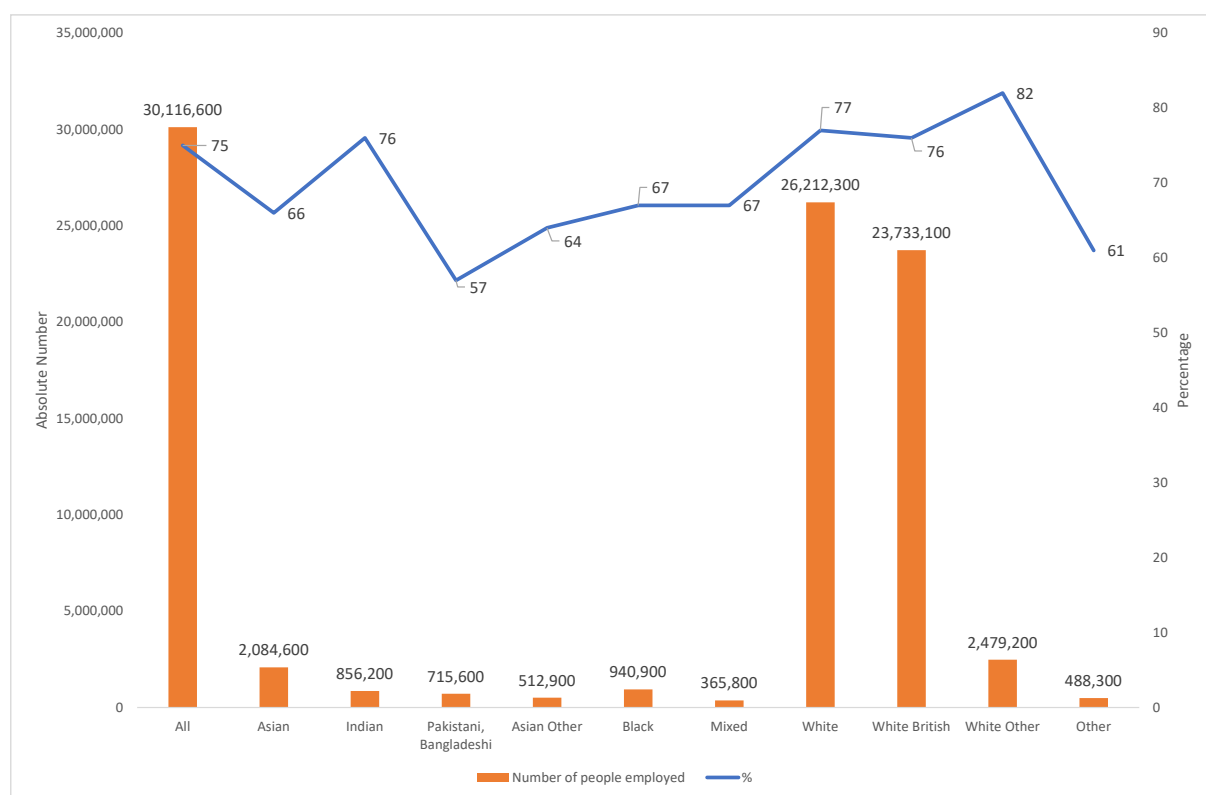
6. Workforce

This section considers the workforce in sport and physical activity from two perspectives: first, the workforce as defined by paid employment; and second, volunteers in sport. To put the paid employment workforce into a wider context, we start with a high-level overview of employment, unemployment, and the broad nature of employment by ethnicity.

6.1 Employment and unemployment

Using data from the 2018 Annual Population Survey (APS), Figure 6.1 shows the proportion of people aged 16-64 who were in employment, by ethnicity in the UK. The APS is a continuous household survey, covering the UK, with the aim of providing estimates between censuses of main social and labour market variables at a local area level. It has a sample size of around 320,000.

Figure 6.1: Employment by ethnicity APS 2018



Beyond the headline figure of 75% of the population between 16 and 64 being in employment, the blue line shows considerable disparity between employment levels by ethnicity. Pakistani and Bangladeshi people have the lowest rate of employment (57%), with Black and Mixed people also below average at 67%.

These figures in and of themselves do not signify inequality because other factors might explain them such as the prevalence of being in education, or culturally specific traditions. Therefore, a first step at looking for evidence of racial inequality would be to look at rates of unemployment in the economy – that is the proportion of people who are actively looking for work but who are not in a job. Again, using the Annual Population Survey from 2018 the data broken down by ethnicity is shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Unemployment by ethnicity APS 2018

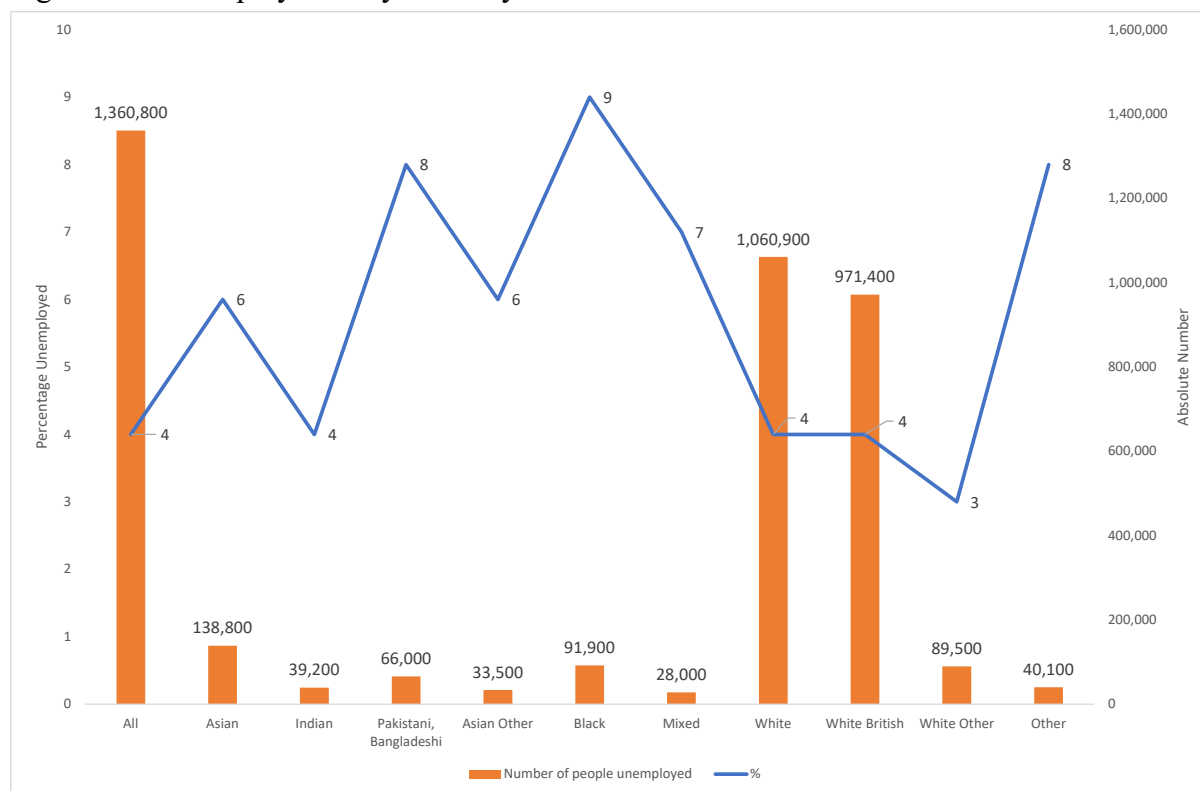


Figure 6.2 confirms that in addition to Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black people having the lowest rates of employment (Figure 6.1) they also experience the highest levels of unemployment that were at least twice the national average at the time. It is therefore reasonable to conclude, that there is *prima facie* evidence of inequality in the UK’s employment statistics on ethnicity grounds.

More recent data from the House of Common Library¹⁴ looking at the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic shows that the UK unemployment rate was 5.0% in July-September 2020. The rate was 4.5% for people from any White ethnic background compared with 8.5% for people from non-White backgrounds, although there was substantial variation between different Black and Asian ethnic groups.

People from White (4.5%) and Chinese (4.8%) ethnic backgrounds had the lowest unemployment rates, and people from Black (11.6%) and Pakistani (11.1%) ethnic backgrounds had the highest rates in July-September 2020. These data indicate that the immediate impact of Covid-19 has been to exacerbate existing inequalities seen in unemployment statistics.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude, that there is *prima facie* evidence of inequality in the UK’s employment statistics on ethnicity grounds.

¹⁴ House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper 6385, 20th November 2020

6.2 Measuring type of employment

There are two techniques which are used to measure the scale and nature of the workforce in UK national statistics. The first is to examine employment on the basis of the industry in which an employee works using what are known as Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. These SIC codes are taken from the National System of Accounts which are derived from international standards that enable the economies of different nations to be compared with each other.

Employment data for SIC codes are provided by the Labour Force Survey, which surveys 40,000 households and around 100,000 people. As there are 616 SIC codes and 18 recognised ethnic groups in England and Wales, the data relating to ethnicity within SIC codes is too small and too unreliable to be published.

The second method looks at the nature of the work that employees do within their jobs in terms of the qualifications and skills that are necessary to perform a particular role. These are known as Standard Occupational Classifications (SOC) codes. Data concerning SOC codes are collected from individuals via the Annual Population Survey. The survey sample is around 340,000 respondents and the number of SOC codes (or unit groups) is 369 which collapse into nine high-level categories. With a much larger sample size and far fewer sub-categories there is scope to analyse SOC codes by ethnicity.

The down-side however, is that as the granularity of SOCs increases from 9 to 369, the ethnicity data become less useful,

The nine high-level overview categories provide the basis for looking at the paid employment workforce in 10 of the 18 categories used on the Census. The down-side however, is that as the granularity of SOCs increases from 9 to 369, the ethnicity data become less useful, such that data are reported at the two-category level of 'White British' and 'ethnic minorities' only.

Using the top nine levels of SOC data, there is evidence of noticeable variations in the nature of the work that people from different ethnicities undertake in their professional lives as shown in Table 6.1. The key points from Table 6.1 are outlined below.

- Indian people are heavily overrepresented in Professional roles and have average representation as Managers, Directors and Senior Officials – a job type in which all other ethnic groups are underrepresented. In all other categories, Indian people are underrepresented.
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers are overrepresented in Sales and Customer Service, Process, Plant and Machine Operative, and Elementary roles; and are underrepresented in all other roles, notably as Managers and Professionals.
- Black people are overrepresented in Caring, Leisure and Other Services and Elementary roles and have less than half the average representation as Managers, Directors and Senior Officials.

Table 6.1 is presented by five broad ethnic groups: Asian; Black; Mixed; White; and Other. Within these categories Asian is sub-analysed by Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi combined, as well as Asian Other. Similarly, the White category is sub analysed by White British and White Other groups. The contrast between the type of occupations that Indian people undertake compared with Pakistani and Bangladeshi people, is yet further evidence of why data should not be aggregated for statistical expediency. To a lesser extent, but one which reinforces the point, there are differences in occupation type between people from White British and White Other backgrounds.

Table 6.1: Employment by high-level Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) categories, 2018 Annual Population Survey

Occupation	All	Asian	Indian	Pakistani, Bangladeshi	Asian Other	Black	Mixed	White	White British	White Other	Other
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	11	10	11	8	9	5	9	11	11	10	10
Professional	21	27	33	18	29	21	23	20	20	21	21
Associate Professional and Technical	15	12	14	10	11	12	19	15	15	13	12
Administrative and Secretarial	10	9	9	8	9	9	9	10	11	8	7
Skilled Trades	10	6	5	7	6	6	6	11	11	10	10
Caring, Leisure and Other Service	9	8	7	8	9	18	9	9	9	7	9
Sales and Customer Service	8	10	7	14	9	7	9	7	8	5	7
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	6	9	5	15	5	7	5	6	6	10	8
Elementary*	10	11	9	12	12	16	12	10	10	15	15

* Elementary occupations consist mainly of simple and routine tasks which require the use of hand-held tools and often some physical effort.

6.3 The size of the workforce in sport

There are various estimates of the size of the workforce in sport, which have different methodologies and different uses. The significance of the sport industry in economic terms is measured by using a Sport Satellite Account (SSA), which has been compiled by, or on behalf of DCMS, since 2004. Employment in sport has been reported via the SSA as growing from 592,000 (2.5% of the workforce) in 2005 to 1,185,000 (3.7% of the workforce) in 2016.

It is evident that the workforce in sport varies by how it is defined and can be argued to range from 415,000 to 1,185,000 depending on the definition used.

However, even within the SSA data there are three definitions of the size of the sport workforce. Research using the SSA methodology makes the distinction between 'statistical', 'narrow' and 'broad' definitions of sport as outlined in the Vilnius Definition of sport. These three definitions refer to the sport-related economic activities that can be identified explicitly in the national statistics using sport-specific SIC codes ('statistical'); the economic activities required to play sport such as equipment manufacture found in other SIC codes ('narrow'); and the economic activities that use sport as an input in the production process such as newspaper production in yet more SIC codes ('broad'). If the broad definition of the sport workforce is 1,185,000, then the statistical definition is around 415,000 (c. 35%) and the narrow definition is around 853,000 (c. 72%). There is no publicly available data on the extent to which ethnically diverse people make up the workforce using these SSA definitions, which themselves are based on SIC codes.

Recently, the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) commissioned Emsi¹⁵ to analyse the UK sport and physical activity workforce. Their estimate for the number of jobs was 585,000 based on a combination of: sport-related SOC codes; SIC codes; workers who have no official workplace (freelancers); and others defined as volunteers who work full time (page 31). The only data within these components that have data on ethnicity are those based on SOC codes and the Emsi report made the observations quoted below.

While professional sport players differ, other professional [employee] roles typically are held by fewer ethnic minority employees and fewer migrant employees than the national labour market averages.

In terms of ethnicity overall the professional [sport and physical activity] workforce is less ethnically diverse than the wider workforce in the UK economy: 7 per cent of employees with professional roles as their primary occupations were minority ethnic compared to 12 per cent more generally.

... the sport and physical activity professional activity is not especially representative of wider society: it is heavily biased towards a younger and more male workforce, as well as generally having fewer minority ethnic employees.

It is evident that the workforce in sport varies by how it is defined and can be argued to range from 415,000 to 1,185,000 depending on the definition used in the SSA and with the Emsi definition (585,000) being towards the bottom end of the range. Because of the complexities of the workforce data and the range of sources, it is challenging to interrogate fully all of the information. For the purposes of this research, we have analysed the data sets which most clearly define the ethnicity of the sport workforce and this is the subject of the next section.

¹⁵ CIMSPA (2020), CIMSPA 2020 workforce insight report: Understanding the size and impact of the UK Sport and Physical Activity Workforce, Emsi, Basingstoke, UK.

6.4 Workforce paid employment by ethnicity

There are five sport-specific SOC codes identified in the overall list of 369 SOC codes and their broad details are outlined in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Sport-related employment from SOC codes, 2018 Annual Population Survey

Standard Occupational Classification	White British	Ethnic Minorities	Total	Ethnic Minority %
Sports coaches, instructors and officials	91,467	5,076	96,543	5%
Leisure and sports managers	56,081	3,378	59,459	6%
Sports and leisure assistants	60,400	3,701	64,101	6%
Sports players	12,485	1,325	13,810	10%
Fitness instructors	60,709	7,448	68,157	11%
Totals	281,142	20,928	302,070	7%

The five sport-specific SOC codes account for 302,070 jobs, which equates to just over 1% of the UK workforce. The overall proportion of the workforce who are from ethnically diverse communities is 14% and this provides a useful benchmark against which to review the data in Table 6.2. These data are collated at UK level and we are not aware of more granular data being available at Home Country level

The five sport-specific SOC codes account for 302,070 jobs, which equates to just over 1% of the UK workforce.

Across the portfolio of jobs in sport measured by the SOC codes, people from ethnically diverse backgrounds account for 7% of the workforce, which is half their incidence in the working population (14%). Of particular note are the codes for Sport Coaches, Instructors and Officials (5%) and Leisure and Sport Managers (6%), which show less than half the level of

representation of ethnically diverse employees than their incidence in the working population. By contrast, in the smallest category, sports players, the representation of ethnically diverse workers is 10% which the CIMSPA report by Emsi notes is attributable to relatively high number of people from Black backgrounds being represented in the figures.

Whilst noticeably more representative than the other sport SOC codes, 10% is still under representative of society more widely. Taken at face value the data indicate that there is underrepresentation and therefore inequality in the sport workforce. As with the participation data, national data sets can tell us ‘what’ but do not explain ‘why’. There is an imperative therefore for further investigation by leaders within the sport industry to establish whether there are issues within career pathways and the extent to which the sports sector is appealing and accessible to a wide variety of people.

One way of obtaining some further insight into the issue is to benchmark the sport workforce data against the other SOC codes to see whether sport employment is an isolated case or part of a bigger picture of structural inequality. We analysed all 369 SOC codes to establish the proportion of workers in each code who were from ethnically diverse backgrounds. These were then sorted in ascending order and allocated to deciles of roughly 37 occupations each to look at the degree of diversity in the entire workforce.

Taken at face value the data indicate that there is underrepresentation and therefore inequality in the sport workforce.

An alternative way of interpreting the data would be to say that people from ethnically diverse backgrounds are underrepresented in around 70% of all SOC codes

We contextualise the findings of Table 6.2 by benchmarking the sport-related codes by deciles and against other occupations, notably those that fall within the cultural sector. This wider comparison is presented in Table 6.3, where the sport codes are highlighted in bold and those for the wider cultural sector are italicised. Deciles that are under

representative of the workforce are coloured red, the first decile that is representative is coloured amber, and the three over representative deciles are coloured green. A key finding is that it is not until we reach the 8th decile that we find a job type in which ethnically diverse people achieve a score of 14%, which is representative of their incidence in the working population.

With a score of 14.3%, the SOC code for authors, writers and translators, is the only one in the cultural sector which has a representative score. An alternative way of interpreting the data would be to say that people from ethnically diverse backgrounds are underrepresented in around 70% of all SOC codes and achieve representation and over representation in

30% of SOC codes. This interpretation is consistent with Table 6.1 above which shows that different ethnic groups tend to be clustered in particular types of employment. Whilst different roles have different demands and comparisons can be somewhat contrived, the essential point is that just like our analysis of participation, the inequalities found in the workforce data are not specific to sport and point to structural inequalities in society more widely.

the inequalities found in the workforce data are not specific to sport and point to structural inequalities in society more widely.

Table 6.3: The representativeness of selected Standard Occupational Classifications by ethnicity and decile

Standard Occupation Classification	Workers	Ethnic Minorities %	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Animal care services occupations	83,756	1.1%	●									
Sports coaches, instructors and officials	96,543	5.3%	●									
Leisure and sports managers	59,459	5.7%		●								
Sports and leisure assistants	64,101	5.8%		●								
<i>Artists</i>	60,116	5.9%		●								
Quantity surveyors	54,273	7.0%			●							
Bar staff	204,042	7.2%			●							
Architects	54,850	8.4%				●						
Sports players	13,810	9.6%					●					
<i>Actors, entertainers and presenters</i>	54,060	10.6%						●				
Fitness instructors	68,157	10.9%						●				
<i>Arts officers, producers and directors</i>	99,646	11.2%						●				
Leisure and theme park attendants	34,695	11.8%						●				
<i>Musicians</i>	53,706	12.1%							●			
<i>Dancers and choreographers</i>	22,554	12.3%							●			
<i>Authors, writers and translators</i>	90,573	14.3%								●		
Solicitors	122,158	15.2%								●		
Chartered and certified accountants	185,161	17.0%									●	
Waiters and waitresses	268,464	17.4%									●	
Dental practitioners	41,006	34.9%										●

[Source: 2018 Annual Population Survey]

Note to interpreting the table: in the ‘Sports coaches, instructors and officials’ SOC code there are 96,543 workers, of whom 5.3% (5,117) are labelled as being ‘ethnic minorities’. Relative to all 369 SOC codes, this score of 5.3% places the ‘Sports coaches, instructors and officials’ SOC code in the 10% least ethnically diverse decile. By contrast, Dental Practitioners with 34.9% of workers being ethnically diverse is located in the most diverse decile.

6.4.1 Evidence of workforce related racism and racial inequality

The finding that all five sport-related SOC codes are under representative of ethnically diverse communities indicates the need for a similar investigation to the *Lived Experiences* research with workers in the sport sector. The lack of diversity within the sport workforce is supported objectively by the available evidence. What is less clear however are explanations as to whether the determining factors are attributable to exclusion (racism) or to tastes and preferences as to sectors where ethnically diverse people choose to work.

There is evidence of underrepresentation, racism and racial inequality at more granular levels of analysis, notably in professional football in England

There is evidence of underrepresentation, racism and racial inequality at more granular levels of analysis, notably in professional football in England. In 2014, the Sports People's Think Tank and the Fare Network¹⁶ published research on the representation of ethnically diverse groups in coaching in elite football in England, and found that despite the overrepresentation of ethnically diverse people in playing football, there was unexplained underrepresentation in management and coaching that could be attributed to four discriminatory factors:

- Access to and experiences of high level coach education courses;
- Over-reliance on networks-based methods of coach recruitment;
- Experiences of racism and stereotypes; and,
- Lack of BAME coach role models and continued under-representation.

In an update three years later Bradbury¹⁷ found that coaches from ethnically diverse groups were 4.6% of the coaching workforce in professional football despite being 25% of the playing base and 14% of the wider working population. The issues identified by in English football were also found to be prevalent in France and the Netherlands when Bradbury¹⁸ (2016) extended his work internationally.

The findings of relating to racism are not confined to elite level football and in 2021, a survey by the Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA) found that 38% of cricketers from ethnically diverse backgrounds had either experienced or witnessed racism¹⁹. Examples of racism were encountered from other players (often disguised as 'banter') as well as from supporters, notably via social media.

Whilst employment in professional sport is a high profile context in which to highlight issues of inequality and racism, the reality is that employment in professional sport is a relatively niche area of the sport industry and there are many more employees and freelancers in lower profile grassroots areas of the industry. These sectors do not receive the same attention as professional sport and the extent of racism is therefore less well researched. There is some

¹⁶ Ethnic minorities and coaching in elite level football in England: A call to action A report and recommendations from the Sports People's Think Tank in association with the Fare network and the University of Loughborough (2014).

¹⁷ Bradbury, Steven. 2019. "Ethnic Minority Coaches in Elite Football in England: 2017 Update: A Report from the Sport People's Think Tank in Association with the Fare Network and the Loughborough University".

¹⁸ Bradbury, S., van Sterkenburg, J. and Mignon, P. (2016) The under-representation and experiences of elite level minority coaches in professional football in England, France and the Netherlands, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Volume: 53 issue: 3, pages 313-334, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690216656807>

¹⁹ [Racism in cricket: 14 BAME players report racism in cricket survey - BBC Sport](#)

evidence of ethnically diverse coaches experiencing racism in amateur football and indeed other grassroots sports (see Bradbury²⁰, Lusted and van Sterkenburg, 2020).

The research efforts cited above are good examples of how the lived experiences of people can provide further clarity as to whether underrepresentation in certain sections of the workforce is the result of discrimination or the result of positive choices made on the basis of personal tastes and preferences.

We propose that the level of inequality in the sport sector's paid workforce is even greater than the inequality in participation and therefore warrants further investigation.

We know that ethnically diverse communities are underrepresented in participation data for sport and physical activity. In Table 5.8 the greatest disparity between White British people (63.2% active) and another ethnic group is with those who identify as Pakistani (48.8% active). In other words, people in the Pakistani ethnic group have a score for being physically active that is 77% of that for White British people. By contrast, in the workforce data shown in Table 6.2, the sport-related SOC codes show that 7% of the workforce is ethnically diverse, which is around 50% of the level of diversity found throughout the entire workforce. We propose that the level of inequality in the sport sector's paid workforce is even greater than the inequality in participation and therefore warrants further investigation.

6.4.2 Challenges collecting ethnicity data

Collecting accurate data to describe the representativeness of a workforce is not straightforward. As part of this research the Collaborators were invited to complete a proforma asking for data on the ethnic composition of their own boards and staff. For small cohorts there is the problem of individuals being identifiable by their answers. Whenever requests for information are made to staff teams there will be a degree of non-engagement.

One of the more successful returns was made by UK Sport as shown in Table 6.4 below, which is based on responses from 130 out of 141 staff (92%).

Table 6.4: The ethnicity of UK Sport's staff (Aug 2020)

Broad ethnic group	%
Asian British	4%
Asian Other	2%
Black British	7%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	2%
White British	81%
White other	5%
Total	100%

Overall, 86% of UK Sport's staff is described as White British or White other, with the remaining 14% drawn from other ethnic groups. This latter figure is precisely in line with the breakdown of the working population discussed below Table 6.2 and would place UK Sport in the 8th decile, or top 30%, of representativeness in Table 6.3 and subject to only minor variation had there been a 100% response rate. According to the latest available data for **sportscotland** (2018) and Sport Wales (2020), the percentage of ethnically diverse staff in these organisations

²⁰ Bradbury, S., Lusted, J. and van Sterkenburg, J. (2020) 'Race', Ethnicity and Racism in Sports Coaching (Routledge Critical Perspectives on Equality and Social Justice in Sport and Leisure), Routledge, UK.

is less than 4%. For Sport England, the Diversity Action Plan 2017-2022 details that 8% of staff identify as ‘BAME’.

By contrast, data relating to staff at the English Institute of Sport (EIS) illustrate the problems when describing relatively small populations. The headline finding from August 2020 is that of 391 staff, 122 (31%) did not declare an answer and of those that did 96% are described as White (258) and 4% (11) as BAME. Although there is detail on the precise ethnic groups that the 11 staff describe themselves as belonging to, there is the possibility that some individuals could be identifiable. Assuming the 96% v 4% split in the EIS staff to be accurate, it would indicate that staff from the EIS are less representative than the SOC code for Sports coaches, instructors and officials, which is the least representative of the sport SOC codes. The EIS representativeness score would therefore be in the bottom decile (least representative) of Table 6.3. The key point in contrasting the UK Sport data with EIS data is that the quality of data varies for each contributor and the categories used do not permit meaningful like for like comparisons.

Addressing this issue with robust research conducted at granular level, would be an excellent demonstration of leadership by CIMSPA.

A useful start to understanding the diversity of the workforce in sport would be to examine the ethnicity data of members of the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA). The CIMSPA website provides details of some 14,620 professionals spread across 19 different categories of membership, of which 7,102 (49%) are described as Personal Trainer Practitioners. At the time of this research, CIMSPA did not have data on the ethnic diversity of its membership. Addressing this issue with robust research conducted at granular level, would be an excellent demonstration of leadership by CIMSPA.

6.5 Workforce – volunteers

Volunteers have been described as the ‘life blood’ of British sport enabling community sport to take place formally and informally at all levels of ability and in all settings. Secondary analysis of the Active Lives Adult Survey for Sport England in 2017²¹ revealed that there was a statistically positive association between physical activity levels and the four ONS subjective wellbeing measures of life satisfaction, happiness, feeling worthwhile and anxiety. Furthermore, for those who volunteered as well as participated in sport, the scores for these measures were even more positive. Sport depends on volunteers and volunteers derive benefits such as increased subjective wellbeing and self-efficacy as well as having enhanced trust in their local communities. It therefore follows that all people should have the opportunity to reap the benefits of volunteering.

In England, the Active Lives Adult Survey asks respondents if they have volunteered during the last 12 months in a range of different tasks such as raising funds, arranging transport, coaching/instructing, refereeing/umpiring or undertaking administrative work for sport and physical activity. The threshold for being classified as a volunteer in Active Lives is to have taken part in a volunteering role to support sport/physical activity on two or more days in the last year. This does not mean the people who volunteer informally or only once per year are not volunteers, it is simply the case that the two days’ criterion is what is used as the measure of volunteering in the Government’s strategy for sport, *Sporting Future*. Volunteering questions are included in surveys in other Home Countries, but the relatively small sample

²¹ Sport England (2014) The clear link between being active and mental wellbeing.

sizes, the low proportions of ethnically diverse respondents, and the low proportion of volunteers precludes more detailed analysis.

According to pooled Active Lives data from 2016-2018 about one quarter (26.4%) of adults in England did some volunteering linked to sport and physical activity and 12.3% met the threshold to be described as a volunteer as shown in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Volunteering in sport and physical activity in England (Active Lives 2016-2018 pooled data)

Volunteering	White British	White Other	South Asian	Black	Chinese	Mixed	Other Ethnic groups	No Response	All
0 days	72.5%	79.4%	78.2%	74.9%	84.0%	71.9%	81.1%	76.1%	73.6%
1 day	14.5%	12.3%	12.6%	14.5%	10.2%	14.4%	11.6%	13.5%	14.1%
≥2 days	13.0%	8.3%	9.2%	10.7%	5.8%	13.7%	7.3%	10.4%	12.3%

Across the seven ethnic groups, White British people (13.0%) engaged in significantly more volunteering than all other ethnic groups except Mixed (13.7%). These findings reflect the fact that much of sport and physical activity relies on a process of self-help whereby those who take part also volunteer as part of a co-production process. It is perhaps not surprising then that the variation in the ethnicity of volunteers broadly reflects the variation in the ethnicity of participants. This point can be perhaps appreciated by looking beyond sport to other interests such as religious activities. The NCVO study *Time Well Spent*²² (2020) found that people from ethnically diverse groups were nearly twice as likely (19% v 10%) to volunteer for religious activities than White people and according to the UK Household Longitudinal Study²³ people from faiths other than Christianity have above average participation rates for attending religious services or meetings.

Although people from diverse ethnic groups are underrepresented amongst volunteers, so too are people from lower socio-economic groups, inactive people and disabled people

The issue of intersectionality, discussed earlier in the context of participation, is also relevant to volunteering. Although people from diverse ethnic groups are underrepresented amongst volunteers, so too are people from lower socio-economic groups, inactive people and disabled people and it is likely that there is overlap between these and ethnically diverse communities (see *The ABC of BAME*²⁴ 2018 report).

Volunteering covers a wide range of contributions to sport and physical activity such as being a formally elected committee member of a club to occasionally helping out on an *ad hoc* basis. There is greater granularity in the roles and responsibilities taken on by volunteers in the Active Lives data and these are worthy of further investigation to see if there are any differences between formal and informal roles by ethnicity. In all volunteering, *The ABC of BAME* notes that there is a considerable gap between White people who volunteer and ethnically diverse people who volunteer. However, the gap is more pronounced for formal volunteering (24 percentage points) than informal volunteering (18 percentage points).

²² [NCVO - Time well spent: A national survey on the volunteering experience](#)

²³ [Exploring religion in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁴ [The-ABC-of-BAME-Jump-Report-10.01.18-1.pdf \(leedsbeckett.ac.uk\)](#)

When adopting the inclusive definition of coaching, inequalities between White and ethnically diverse respondents disappear

A helpful pointer in this direction in sport can be found in the work of UK Coaching, which in its surveys of 2017 and 2019 found that 22% and 18% of people who had done some form of coaching described themselves as BAME. These figures are significantly higher than the proportion of ethnically diverse people found in the population and workforce at large. Furthermore,

they confound the results of the SOC code analysis presented earlier and UK Coaching's pre 2017 research which tended to show that people from ethnically diverse communities were underrepresented amongst coaches. The explanation for these apparent anomalies lies in the definition of coaching applied with the post 2017 data adopting an 'inclusive' definition of coaching:

“Coaching, instruction, training or tuition in ANY sport or physical activity. This can include any environment, such as formal sports club settings as well as informal community settings. It can include any sport or physical activity, including recreational or competitive sport, exercise, fitness, gym, dance, etc.”

When asked to describe their role in the 2017 and 2019 surveys, the most commonly cited answer was 'Helper' at 25% and 22% respectively. When adopting the inclusive definition of coaching, inequalities between White and ethnically diverse respondents disappear and contrast favourably with the under representation of ethnically diverse communities in the paid workforce data. It is worth noting that 21% of coaches in the sample were 'paid only' coaches and a further 16% were 'paid and volunteer' coaches. Respondents of this type would not be included in the analysis of coaches in Active Lives as the definition of volunteering used requires respondents to be not paid or to receive out of pocket expenses only. Furthermore, the threshold for inclusion in the UK Coaching survey is implicitly a minimum of one occasion, whereas in Active Lives the threshold is two days. However, the differences between definitions, roles and intensity provide fertile territory for further analysis.

This finding helps to drive another line of enquiry which explores whether informality and helping out are levelling roles and formal roles are where there is more pronounced inequality, for example in administrative and leadership positions. In its 2019 National Governing Bodies Benchmarking Survey Report²⁵, accountants Haysmacintyre found that amongst 24 NGBs from across the UK, the proportion of board members from ethnically diverse backgrounds was 4% - less than one third of their incidence in the wider population. Furthermore, this figure (based on Nov 2018 data) had remained static since 2016. In its 2020 review, which was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, across 15 responding NGBs, the ethnic diversity of boards was found to be 5%. By contrast, the Haysmacintyre data show that since 2016 the proportion of women on NGB boards had increased from 30% to 39%.

In 2020, Perrett Laver²⁶ an international executive recruitment firm, surveyed 125 sports organisations funded by either Sport England or UK Sport to establish the diversity of their boards. Online surveys were completed by 925 respondents, which revealed that 7.9% of respondents identified as 'BME'. This larger more inclusive view of board level volunteering paints a more

Online surveys were completed by 925 respondents, which revealed that 7.9% of respondents identified as 'BME'.

²⁵ Haysmacintyre (2020) National Governing Bodies Benchmarking Survey Report (2019) Haysmacintyre, London UK.

²⁶ Perrett Laver (2021) Diversity in Sport Governance Survey, Sport England / UK Sport. London, UK.

positive picture than the Haysmacintyre research, but even at 7.9% ethnically diverse board members of funded partners are well below their incidence in the population.

There is an emerging hypothesis that volunteering broadly mirrors participation; and that the widest inequalities exist in formal roles relative to informal 'helping out' roles.

The headline findings of the Perrett Laver report are nuanced by the proportions of ethnically diverse board members found in different types of funded organisations. Beyond the headline figure of 7.9% for all the surveyed organisations, National Governing Bodies had a score of 6.5%; whereas for Active Partnerships and Other organisations, the scores were 9.3% and 11.5% respectively. These findings support the notion that people from ethnically diverse

communities experience the greatest inequality related to volunteering in the 'formal' volunteering domain. Furthermore, a new line of enquiry to be explored is whether there is also inequality in the prestige of volunteering opportunities open to ethnically diverse people, with National Governing Bodies being less diverse than Active Partnerships and other funded sport organisations.

Overall, a key gap in our knowledge about the nature of volunteers lies in the complexity, formality and prestige of roles. There is an emerging hypothesis that volunteering broadly mirrors participation; and that the widest inequalities exist in formal roles relative to informal 'helping out' roles.

6.6 Workforce conclusion

6.6.1 What do we know?

The workforce data relating to sport and ethnicity from the Labour Force Survey and the Annual Population Survey are high quality data collated by the Office for National Statistics. The high number of SIC codes and SOC codes as well as the sample size of each survey, prevent all but the most cursory analysis of ethnic diversity.

Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black people are overrepresented in lower status occupations and Indian people are overrepresented in professional and managerial roles.

Similar to the participation data, the analysis of the workforce in sport reveals inequalities. These are evident at a structural level with Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black people having twice the rate of unemployment than the national average. There are also structural differences in the broad nature of the jobs undertaken by different ethnicities. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black people are overrepresented in lower status occupations and Indian people are overrepresented in professional and managerial roles.

The five sport-related SOC codes are under representative of ethnically diverse communities, notably the two codes for coaches and managers. Codes for employment in the cultural sector are more representative than sport, but with the exception of one, they are under representative of the workforce overall.

Volunteering in sport and physical activity at a general level is largely reflective of participation and the self-help nature of volunteering as part of a co-production process. The inequalities apparent in volunteering in sport on ethnicity grounds appear to be less pronounced when making the contrast between formal volunteering and informal volunteering. However, at the highest level of formal volunteering on the boards of publicly funded sport organisations representativeness is below average, with the most recent data from the Perrett Laver showing 7.9% of respondents from 125 sports organisations were ethnically diverse. The evidence also

indicates a difference in levels of ethnic diversity by type of organisation, with National Governing Bodies having the lowest levels of diversity within the sample.

In short, and perhaps not surprisingly, the inequalities that are apparent in participation also play out in the professional and volunteer workforces. The paucity of data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is such that we have had to use data from England as a proxy for the UK. This situation should act as a call to action in these nations to improve their understanding of the organisations that they fund specifically, and workforce in sport more generally.

in broad terms we know
'what' but we do not know
'why'

6.6.2 What do we not know?

As with the participation data, in broad terms we know 'what' but we do not know 'why'. Why for example are people from ethnically diverse communities underrepresented in 70% of SOC codes? Is this a form of proactive career choice or is it a form of exclusion and marginalisation?

Why has the Covid-19 pandemic seemingly magnified the inequalities that exist in unemployment statistics, with people from ethnically diverse groups disproportionately and negatively affected by increased unemployment?

The definition of the workforce in sport both in terms of employees and volunteers varies according to the context in which the industry is described. For paid employment estimates of the workforce vary by whether we use Satellite Account methods, or methods based on SIC and SOC codes. Either way accurate granular data on the ethnic composition of the sport workforce is rudimentary. For volunteering, the low proportion of the population who meet the definition of volunteering prevents more detailed analysis by specific ethnic groups. There are quick wins to be had by further analysis of the types of volunteering roles undertaken by ethnically diverse populations in the Active Lives Survey data in England.

Little is known about the lived experiences of people from ethnically diverse backgrounds who work professionally in sport. Why are they underrepresented in management and leadership roles?

Little is also known about the lived experiences of people from ethnically diverse backgrounds who volunteer, who have been lost to volunteering, or who have never had the opportunity to volunteer in sport. Of particular note is the low representation of ethnically diverse groups in formal volunteering roles and high profile roles such as the board of National Governing Bodies of sport. Whilst there is evidence of improvement in the Perret Laver data (7.9%) compared with previous studies (4%-5%), ethnically diverse people remain underrepresented on the boards of sports organisations in England and by implication throughout the UK.

Addressing this issue of representativeness of ethnic diversity on boards has the potential benefit of improving decision making in the future

Addressing this issue of representativeness of ethnic diversity on boards has the potential benefit of improving decision making in the future by being inclusive of a wider range of views and experiences.

7 Interventions

7.1 The longstanding nature of inequality in sport on ethnicity grounds

Prior to concluding with our recommendations, we make a brief analysis of interventions that have been employed in the past to increase participation in sport and physical activity by people from ethnically diverse groups. We preface this analysis by acknowledging that racial inequality in sport has been a longstanding issue. In England between 1976 and 1996 the General Household Survey consistently showed that ethnically diverse had lower participation rates in sport than White British people. This pattern was repeated between 2005/6 and 2015/16 during the Active People Survey era and is prevalent today in the Active Lives Survey era. To a lesser extent the same observations are likely to hold for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Regardless of the definitions of sport and the reference period for recalling participation, the disparity in participation between White British people and people from ethnically diverse backgrounds has been stubborn with no sign of significant change at national level. All four Home Country Sports Councils have at various points carried out research into sports participation by ethnically diverse and other underrepresented groups as shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Key research into sport participation and ethnicity

England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Sport for All? (2020)	Understanding participation and non-participation in sport amongst Black and minority ethnic groups in Wales (2015)	Equality and Sport Research (2016)	Grassroots sport in Northern Ireland: A summary of participation and potential challenges (2012)

Considerable effort and investment have been made to address inequalities but there is little evidence of the cumulative effect of these interventions having a positive measurable effect that can be attributed to any particular intervention. We therefore look to previous interventions for principles and apparent success factors that might help to convert policy objectives to bring about positive change to fruition. Examples of successful and unsuccessful interventions are drawn from national level and regional level as well as sport specific examples.

7.2 National level

In the lead up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the *Free Swimming* legacy programme was launched in 2008 to provide free access to swimming for children aged under 16 and adults aged 60+. The rationale for the scheme was that it would remove the barrier of price and release latent demand. After a review of the programme's efficacy, it was stopped in 2010 on the grounds that it was not cost effective. *Free Swimming* was a well-meaning intervention but in retrospect it would have done little for people from ethnically diverse groups, not least of all because their participation in swimming is lower than it is for White British people. Simply making swimming free does not overcome issues linked to some cultural traditions such as the need for women-only sessions supervised by female staff. Providing free swimming is also not an effective strategy in and of itself to change people's tastes and preferences. Someone who is inactive is not likely to be drawn to swimming (or any sport) just because there is no direct cost attached to it. It is more likely that the offer to swim for free would appeal to existing or lapsed swimmers.

There is also evidence that children from ethnically diverse groups leave primary school with lower levels of swimming ability than their White British peers²⁷. The overall effect of these issues is that a blanket offer like *Free Swimming* would inadvertently exclude some people from ethnically diverse groups because they would be less able to access the offer than White British people and hence reinforce or indeed increase inequalities.

By contrast, Sport England's award winning *This Girl Can* campaign is a good example of how positive portrayal of ethnically diverse women taking part in sport and physical activity can be used as a lever to bring about positive change. The headline campaign was applied to swimming as *This Girl Can Swim* and was delivered on the basis of insight obtained from women about barriers to participation in swimming and how they would like their experience to be tailored. The headline outcome across the programme was that women attending the programme were more ethnically diverse (28%) than the population of England as a whole (20%, see Table 4.1). The key learning point here is the importance of customer-led insight to shape an offer and is consistent with a conclusion made by Sporting Equals²⁸ in its research into South Asian women:

Moving forward, local authorities need to engage providers of sports and physical activity to help make provision more universally accessible, as well as working with local communities to better understand what factors need to be considered in the design of female-only provision.

7.3 Regional level

At the start of the century, Sport England pioneered the concept of Sport Action Zones (SAZs) as a method to increase sports participation in deprived communities notably amongst women, people from lower socio-economic groups, older people and ethnically diverse communities. Before and after community surveys were conducted by a national market research agency in 2001/2 and four years later in 2005/6. Two locations, Barrow in Furness and Liverpool recorded significant increases in participation at community level. However, none of the four locations in which surveying was carried out recorded a significant change in the participation rates of people from diverse ethnic groups. In retrospect, the key learning point from SAZs is that effective reach into ethnically diverse communities requires bespoke, culturally appropriate work rather than a one-size fits all approach predicated on the basis that a 'rising tide lifts all boats'. This point also resonates with one of the conclusions drawn in the report '*Understanding participation and non-participation in sport amongst Black and minority ethnic groups in Wales*', which stated that:

One of the key principles of community development is knowing the communities well and understanding their needs; not just their sporting needs because if their other needs (e.g. employment, income, housing) are not addressed their participation in sport is likely to be compromised.

More recently (2021) Public Health England²⁹ has entered the debate on inequalities in physical activity participation and concludes that a key finding "highlights the necessity for programmes to be commissioned which work for ethnicities at a local level".

The Pilot Community Sport Programme in Northern Ireland³⁰, whilst not explicitly focused on participation in sport by people from ethnically diverse communities, identified the issue of trust as being a key ingredient in engaging effectively with disadvantaged and marginalised communities. The issue of trust is also an important early finding from the *Lived Experiences*

²⁷ [BBC NEWS | Education | Action urged on school swimming](#)

²⁸ Sporting Equals (2018) Research report into South Asian women and inactivity, Sporting Equals, Solihull, UK

²⁹ [Understanding and addressing inequalities in physical activity \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

³⁰ Sport Northern Ireland (2007) Pilot Community Sport Programme – Final Evaluation, Sport NI, Belfast, UK.

research conducted in parallel with this report. In particular, numerous respondents report the longstanding mistrust they have of the sporting infrastructure and establishment in the UK based on their prior experiences. They consider the building of trust to be a prerequisite to achieve reductions in the inequalities that are apparent in the sport and physical activity participation rates of people from ethnically diverse communities.

7.4 Sport-specific intervention

The recent *Run Birmingham*³¹ project proved to be a positive learning experience for engaging people from diverse ethnic backgrounds in running. A particularly notable achievement by the ‘activators’ was working with the Saheli women’s group and taking them on a journey from being non-runners to completing the Great Birmingham Run half marathon. A critical success factor in this project was what became known as ‘sons and daughters of the area’. The activators were for the most part from ethnically diverse backgrounds themselves, were local and were well integrated into their local communities such that participants described them as being ‘someone like me’. The employment of activators from ethnically diverse backgrounds was instrumental in Run Birmingham reaching ethnically diverse participants who totalled at least 34% of the 67,000 unique participants over the three years of the project. The key ingredients to their success were local knowledge and community trust. Working through an existing network (the Saheli women’s project) a female activator already known to the group was able to motivate them to take part in physical activity. At first, this involved walking, which progressed to brisk walking and then jogging. As confidence grew the group progressed from Couch to 5k; 5k and 10k runs, before finally completing a half marathon.

The evaluation reports states:

Involvement in the running group has represented a "complete life change" for many women. Prior to involvement, some of the women "had no concept of exercise" in terms of what it could offer them or how they could get involved. The group has broken down barriers around Muslim women taking part in running and has also encouraged involvement from a variety of other ethnic groups. It has been slow progress, but momentum has grown over time.

Some of the women who took part in the group said:

I feel part of a sisterhood where we support and motivate each other. I actually enjoy running and being part of Naseem's [the activator] gang has really brought me along. I also feel really healthy and inspired to reduce my BMI to its normal level. I want to help others get into walking/running too.

Everyone is there for everyone regardless of nationality, race or religion. Everyone is just a runner and we all have fun and support each other when we need it. Fitness is just the end result. The friendships become deep.

7.5 Key lessons

In the design of interventions to encourage people from ethnically diverse backgrounds to be more physically active, success depends on much more than the nature of an intervention. Whilst there is considerable merit in insight-led interventions, there is also a need for more fundamental ingredients, including: who delivers the intervention and how it is delivered. People are more likely to respond positively to: people with whom they identify (as in the case of Run Birmingham); and people who they feel that they can trust. This conclusion enables us to see participation and workforce as two sides of the same coin.

³¹ Sport Industry Research Centre (2020) Run Birmingham Final Evaluation, SIRC, Sheffield UK

8 Recommendations

The principal observation from this research is that although there are plenty of data sources available, there are limitations to them which hinder progress towards narrowing the inequalities experienced by ethnically diverse communities in sport and physical activity participation, volunteering in sport, and representation in the sport sector workforce. Owing to limitations of the data we have used England or England and Wales combines as proxies for the UK for much of our analysis. This approach is pragmatic but not ideal and highlights a need for more robust data in all four Home Countries to help understand and address the inequalities experienced by ethnically diverse populations in sport and physical activity. In short, we do not know enough about around one in seven of the UK population and we make the recommendations below to address the issue.

1. Further analysis of existing data is required.

There are high quality data sources that have not been investigated fully, notably the longitudinal study Understanding Society, which is distinguished by being at UK level, longitudinal, and addresses low sub-sample sizes amongst ethnically diverse groups by employing booster samples. For existing data sets in the four Home Countries, Sport England has demonstrated how it is possible to generate additional insights by pooling data from different years to create larger sub-samples of ethnically diverse respondents. The finding that the age and gender structure of ethnically diverse groups is very different to that of White British people calls for more sophisticated analysis controlling for these variables. Taken to its logical conclusion there is a need for systematic multi-variate analysis of data sets as our experimental analysis shows that covariates of physical activity vary markedly between different ethnic groups. Furthermore, when we control for the age and gender structures of ethnically diverse populations, the inequalities we see at an aggregate level are magnified. Future research should acknowledge these structural differences and report the true scale of inequality.

2. Greater granularity of data is required.

There are considerable differences in participation and workforce characteristics between and within ethnic groups. The label ‘South Asian’ for example is not helpful as it is clear that people from Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian backgrounds have different rates of participation in sport and physical activity; different preferences for sports and cultural activities; and radically different profiles in their workforce characteristics. They, and other groups, should not be treated as a homogenous population. When designing surveys, considerable thought should be given to how questions of ethnicity are posed, for example in 5 groups or 18 categories (as in England and Wales), or indeed both. Commissioners of research should think ahead so that if data pooling is possible, then the opportunity for more granular analysis is built in to the research design. Furthermore, given the problems of small sub-samples and high degrees of sampling error, Consideration should be given to the use of booster samples for ethnically diverse groups. Where this might prove difficult, for example in probability sampling studies, an alternative bespoke surveying approach should be adopted in order to produce statistically robust samples of specific ethnically diverse groups that are comparable across different groups.

3. Data on children and young people are particularly important.

The Active Lives data for adults and children indicates that in England, young people are more ethnically diverse than adults and the issues that we see now in underrepresentation are likely to be perpetuated or even exacerbated in years to come as these children become adults. Data pooling, longitudinal surveys, and multi-variate

analysis of datasets relating to young people are important tools to help improve our understanding of these groups.

4. Intersectionality and deprivation require ongoing research.

The finding that participation in sport and physical activity is correlated with deprivation, which in turn is correlated with ethnicity requires further research to understand these issues more thoroughly. This type of work will help to unravel whether inequalities in participation and the workforce are peculiar to sport or representative of wider societal inequalities.

5. We don't know enough about 'why?'

Although there are gaps in knowledge relating to quantitative data, there is much less qualitative data about the lived experiences of people from ethnically diverse populations in both participation and the workforce. We do not know for example whether variations in participation and the workforce are the consequences of exclusion and marginalisation or proactive choices made on the basis of individual tastes and cultural preferences. Research with ethnically diverse groups by ethnically diverse research professionals should help to tease out the opinions and attitudes in an authentic and trusting manner to improve future strategy and interventions.

6. We need to know more about contexts and latent demand.

There is emerging evidence that people from ethnically diverse groups experience sport and physical activity differently to White British people. Ethnically diverse populations are more likely to use public sport and leisure facilities; less likely to belong to clubs; and, seemingly more likely to take part in unaffiliated sport. We don't know why this is the case or whether there is pent up latent demand that could be released if the correct conditions were created.

7. Workforce data require more in depth analysis.

The definitions of the sport and physical activity workforce via SIC codes, SOC codes and Satellite Accounts provides only a limited coverage of the sector and the level of granularity relating to ethnicity is limited. Organisations such as the Collaborators, and CIMSPA have an important leadership role to play. This should start by leading from the front by collating and publishing data about their own workforces and membership in a consistent manner. This example should be made a requirement of any bodies that they fund, such that annual monitoring of for example the NGB workforce and membership is seen as an integral part of good governance.

8. We need to know more about the workforce's lived experiences.

People from ethnically diverse communities are underrepresented in the workforce and within the workforce are particularly underrepresented in leadership and management roles. Whilst there is evidence of recent improvement in the ethnic diversity of the boards of funded sports organisations, low representation is particularly pronounced on the boards of National Governing Bodies of sport. We need to know from those within the industry in their own words what the barriers to market entry and progression are. These issues are equally applicable to the volunteer workforce.

9. We need to do something radically different.

The issue of racial inequality in sport has been documented over many years and there have been numerous initiatives to address it and yet stubborn social gradients remain. What this research shows is that the issues are complex and probably deeply engrained in what have become societal norms. Unless there is commitment to act decisively and

systemically, there is the danger that ‘if you do what you’ve always done, then you will get what you’ve got’ – that is, persistent inequalities.

The Collaborators should see this report as an opportunity and not a threat. The current Government strategy for sport recognises the social impact that sport can have on our physical and mental wellbeing; and our personal and community development. These benefits of sport, physical activity and volunteering should be available to everyone on an equal basis. In this regard, sport has the opportunity to be a significant part of the solution of tackling racism and racial inequality in society more widely.

8.1 Footnote

Prior to the final draft of this report the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities³² published its final report, which received a controversial reception in some quarters. Our analysis of the differences between different ethnic groups supports the Commission’s view that the term ‘BAME’ does not work.

A press release made by the Commission post-publication in response to some reactions to the report clarifies its position by saying “we did not find conclusive evidence that it [racism] exists in the areas we examined”. Although our research found evidence of inequality, the national level data we examined did not provide evidence of racism. However, the data sources used were not concerned with identifying racism. We know from the parallel *Lived Experiences* study that many contributors reported examples of overt and covert racism. We qualify our own research therefore by reciting the aphorism that “the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence”.

Simon Shibli
Anil Gumber
Girish Ramchandani
20th April 2021

³² [Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities)

Appendix 1: Measuring ethnicity in the UK by Home Country

Group	Sub-Category	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
A White	English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	✓		✓	
	Irish	✓	✓	✓	
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	✓		✓	
	Any other White Background	✓	✓	✓	
	Scottish		✓		
	Other British		✓		
	Gypsy / Traveller		✓		
	Polish		✓		
	White				✓
	Irish Traveller				✓
B Mixed / multiple	White and Black Caribbean	✓		✓	
	White and Black African	✓		✓	
	White and Asian	✓		✓	
	Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	✓		✓	
	Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups		✓		
	Mixed ethnic group				✓
C Asian / British Asian; Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	Indian	✓		✓	✓
	Pakistani	✓		✓	✓
	Bangladeshi	✓		✓	✓
	Chinese	✓		✓	
	Any other Asian background	✓		✓	
	Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British		✓		
	Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British		✓		
	Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British		✓		
	Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British		✓		
	Other		✓		
D Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	African	✓		✓	
	Caribbean	✓		✓	
	Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	✓		✓	
D African	African, African Scottish or African British		✓		
	Other		✓		
	Black Caribbean				✓
	Black African				✓
	Black Other				✓
E Caribbean or Black	Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British		✓		
	Black, Black Scottish or Black British		✓		
	Other		✓		
E Other ethnic group	Arab	✓		✓	
	Any other ethnic group	✓		✓	✓
E Other ethnic group	Arab, Arab Scottish, Arab British		✓		
	Other		✓		
	Number of Sub Categories Used	18	19	18	10

Appendix 2: Logistic regression models

Covariates of Being Fully Active among Aged 16 & over by Broad Ethnic Group (Logistic Regression Model)

Variables	category	N	%	All (248984 vs 125280)		White Minorities (14954 vs 6960)		South Asian (15015 vs 11170)		Black (5254 vs 3918)		
				Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	
Activity Status (Minutes per week)	Nothing	Nothing										
	Inactive	0-29.99		42924	11.5%	2213	10.1%	4713	18.0%	1653	18.0%	
	Fairly Active	30-149.99		39502	10.6%	2394	10.9%	2827	10.8%	914	10.0%	
	Active	150 & more		42854	11.4%	2353	10.7%	3630	13.9%	1351	14.7%	
Demographic	Gender	Female & other	210191	55.9	Base							
		Male	165981	44.1	0.000	1.199	0.000	1.334	0.000	1.737	0.019	1.197
	Age	16-19	10678	2.8	Base							
		20-24	12733	3.4	0.000	0.892	0.000	0.589	0.000	0.754	0.000	0.576
		25-34	46933	12.5	0.000	0.756	0.000	0.444	0.000	0.594	0.002	0.683
		35-44	58508	15.6	0.000	0.756	0.000	0.429	0.000	0.659	0.000	0.546
		45-54	64132	17.0	0.000	0.708	0.000	0.418	0.000	0.520	0.000	0.496
		55-64	71395	19.0	0.000	0.558	0.000	0.390	0.000	0.502	0.000	0.433
		65-74	71446	19.0	0.000	0.417	0.000	0.270	0.000	0.340	0.028	0.641
		75+	37129	9.9	0.058	0.215	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.237	0.999	NC
	NR	3218	0.9	0.000	0.443	0.000	0.305	0.102	0.744	0.000	0.361	
Household Type	No. of Children	None	262833	69.9	Base							
		1	43336	11.5	0.000	0.931	0.000	0.643	0.131	0.934	0.069	0.867
		2	38810	10.3	0.000	0.925	0.000	0.695	0.752	0.985	0.113	0.871
		3 or more	11833	3.1	0.004	0.933	0.000	0.583	0.837	0.988	0.730	1.035
		NR	19360	5.1	0.012	0.944	0.000	0.634	0.000	1.344	0.542	0.921
	Living Arrangement	Single person	75443	20.1	Base							
		Lone parent with children	18443	4.9	0.000	0.916	0.114	0.864	0.101	0.868	0.792	0.974
		Couple only	122198	32.5	0.006	1.036	0.000	0.836	0.698	0.974	0.001	1.423
		Couple with children	63578	16.9	0.000	0.885	0.564	0.953	0.000	0.759	0.144	0.850

		Couple with adult children	24295	6.5	0.000	1.072	0.451	0.936	0.669	1.034	0.431	1.101	
		Living with parents	19530	5.2	0.154	1.026	0.821	1.020	0.787	0.984	0.335	1.098	
		Other/Complex	14996	4.0	0.000	0.934	0.003	0.792	0.213	0.921	0.262	0.891	
		NR	37689	10.0	0.000	0.804	0.002	0.770	0.000	0.736	0.000	0.649	
Socio-Economic Status	Work Status	Working FT	141752	37.7	0.000	0.653	0.006	0.751	0.000	0.763	0.027	0.759	
		Working PT	60602	16.1	0.000	0.745	0.113	0.836	0.003	0.788	0.086	0.798	
		Unemployed	9586	2.5	0.000	0.663	0.757	0.965	0.000	0.704	0.794	0.969	
		Retired	110044	29.3	0.000	0.763	0.733	0.954	0.237	0.875	0.000	0.396	
		Homemaker	12626	3.4	0.000	0.760	0.480	0.913	0.051	0.857	0.074	0.726	
		Not working-LTC/disable	9049	2.4	0.000	0.443	0.000	0.437	0.000	0.441	0.000	0.392	
		Student	13872	3.7	Base								
		Other	9887	2.6	0.000	0.726	0.810	0.965	0.005	0.732	0.329	0.834	
		NR	8754	2.3	0.000	0.719	0.155	0.801	0.001	0.634	0.293	0.811	
	Education level	Level 4 or above	183120	48.7	0.000	1.867	0.000	1.818	0.000	1.826	0.000	1.620	
		Level 3	54324	14.4	0.000	1.538	0.000	1.441	0.000	1.415	0.001	1.513	
		Level 2	63566	16.9	0.000	1.372	0.000	1.464	0.000	1.309	0.221	1.155	
		Level 1 and below	8454	2.2	0.000	1.155	0.019	1.356	0.061	1.176	0.485	0.896	
		Another qualification	19440	5.2	0.000	1.322	0.006	1.272	0.000	1.406	0.210	1.205	
		No qualifications	33494	8.9	Base								
		NR	13774	3.7	0.000	1.094	0.258	1.141	0.000	1.434	0.999	1.000	
	Occupation	Managerial, admin, professional	183263	48.7	0.000	1.412	0.000	1.598	0.069	1.089	0.005	1.255	
		Intermediate	37805	10.0	0.000	1.147	0.006	1.201	0.017	1.152	0.985	0.998	
		Self employed & small employers	24074	6.4	0.000	1.131	0.000	1.279	0.397	0.950	0.837	0.974	
		Lower supervisory & technical	25445	6.8	0.000	1.171	0.041	1.154	0.647	1.036	0.092	0.804	
		Semi-routine and routine occupations	35674	9.5	Base								
		Unempl & Student	32772	8.7	0.039	1.040	0.840	1.017	0.050	0.895	0.115	0.852	
		Outside Labour force	37139	9.9	0.800	1.228	1.000	NC	NC		0.999	0.000	
	Ethnicity	White British	313256	83.3	Base								
		White Other	19852	5.3	0.000	0.776							
		South Asian	14937	4.0	0.000	0.551							
		Black	5487	1.5	0.000	0.647							
Chinese		1952	0.5	0.000	0.507								
Mixed		4072	1.1	0.477	0.979								
Other ethnic grp		2749	0.7	0.000	0.583								

		NR	13867	3.7	0.000	0.741						
Contextual	Living area	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	49499	13.2	Base							
		Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	42244	11.2	0.008	0.956	0.430	1.076	0.310	0.839	0.933	1.026
		Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	54652	14.5	0.057	0.968	0.629	0.957	0.538	1.101	0.396	0.785
		Urban with City and Town	109450	29.1	0.000	0.934	0.708	0.971	0.997	1.001	0.643	0.884
		Urban with Minor Conurbation	14930	4.0	0.371	0.978	0.682	1.053	0.827	0.964	0.156	0.648
		Urban with Major Conurbation	105397	28.0	0.000	0.910	0.675	0.963	0.242	1.188	0.521	0.838
		Region	East Midlands	43711	11.6	0.140	0.971	0.431	0.934	0.000	1.358	0.043
	East		49515	13.2	0.000	0.937	0.946	1.005	0.139	1.108	0.734	1.041
	London		35682	9.5	Base							
	North East		16190	4.3	0.000	0.927	0.714	0.954	0.510	0.921	0.063	0.605
	North West		54566	14.5	0.511	0.990	0.398	1.055	0.119	1.082	0.336	0.911
	South East		69963	18.6	0.458	1.013	0.059	1.139	0.004	1.197	0.701	1.049
	South West		42174	11.2	0.000	1.075	0.064	1.173	0.321	1.105	0.690	1.084
	West Midlands		35630	9.5	0.001	0.944	0.017	1.182	0.838	0.991	0.030	0.834
	Yorkshire		28741	7.6	0.003	0.948	0.403	0.933	0.011	1.151	0.818	0.972
	Survey Month/Wave	Nov	25993	6.9	Base							
		Dec	32208	8.6	0.000	0.694	0.000	0.720	0.000	0.708	0.212	0.868
		Jan	28206	7.5	0.000	0.586	0.000	0.734	0.000	0.733	0.281	0.890
		Feb	33385	8.9	0.000	0.595	0.000	0.656	0.000	0.724	0.000	0.623
		Mar	33610	8.9	0.000	0.644	0.000	0.698	0.000	0.712	0.009	0.735
		Apr	30641	8.1	0.000	0.711	0.003	0.797	0.000	0.738	0.001	0.678
		May	32439	8.6	0.000	0.861	0.002	0.786	0.180	0.913	0.556	1.069
		Jun	30522	8.1	0.183	0.975	0.237	1.100	0.173	0.913	0.101	0.831
		Jul	23907	6.4	0.468	0.986	0.097	1.141	0.038	0.872	0.049	0.811
		Aug	33115	8.8	0.001	0.942	0.563	0.956	0.529	1.044	0.037	0.792
	Sep	36195	9.6	0.000	0.848	0.964	0.996	0.012	0.844	0.183	0.858	

		Oct	35951	9.6	0.000	0.822	0.920	0.992	0.005	0.832	0.053	0.809
IMD deciles		Least deprived decile	37724	10.0	0.000	1.276	0.017	1.217	0.001	1.305	0.000	2.152
		Second least deprived decile	37690	10.0	0.000	1.204	0.038	1.174	0.000	1.323	0.341	1.154
		Third least deprived decile	37660	10.0	0.000	1.196	0.105	1.131	0.565	1.042	0.226	1.210
		Fourth least deprived decile	37601	10.0	0.000	1.183	0.013	1.200	0.000	1.303	0.070	1.336
		Fifth least deprived decile	37790	10.0	0.000	1.157	0.695	1.026	0.023	1.152	0.007	1.418
		Fifth most deprived decile	37668	10.0	0.000	1.112	0.573	1.037	0.534	1.037	0.027	1.280
		Fourth most deprived decile	37636	10.0	0.000	1.123	0.080	1.115	0.064	1.097	0.009	1.262
		Third most deprived decile	37588	10.0	0.005	1.044	0.248	0.936	0.915	0.995	0.000	1.339
		Second most deprived decile	37370	9.9	0.041	1.031	0.748	0.983	0.009	1.113	0.739	0.980
		Most deprived decile	37445	10.0	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health	Disability	Limiting disability	63151	16.8	0.000	0.817	0.084	0.868	0.010	0.840	0.000	0.572
		Non-Limiting	60308	16.0	0.826	1.002	0.700	1.019	0.024	1.111	0.049	0.861
		No disability	231673	61.6	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		NR/NA	21040	5.6	0.000	0.888	0.259	0.913	0.763	0.982	0.587	1.058
	Chronic	0	352571	93.7	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		1	23601	6.3	0.000	0.856	0.663	0.957	0.254	1.110	0.003	0.645
	Mobility	0	337176	89.6	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		1	38996	10.4	0.000	0.589	0.060	0.828	0.089	0.857	0.061	0.757
	Dexterity	0	364297	96.8	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		1	11875	3.2	0.000	1.221	0.018	0.724	0.026	1.428	0.494	0.854
	Mental	0	358396	95.3	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		1	17776	4.7	0.002	0.929	0.259	1.128	0.073	1.206	0.180	1.258
	Breathing	0	356945	94.9	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		1	19227	5.1	0.000	0.887	0.008	0.740	0.360	1.096	0.367	1.153
	Memory	0	366529	97.4	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		1	9643	2.6	0.000	0.876	0.171	0.812	0.000	0.574	0.086	1.395

Hearing	0	365173	97.1	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1	10999	2.9	0.000	1.131	0.503	0.901	0.303	1.164	0.213	1.327
Speech	0	373952	99.4	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1	2220	0.6	0.634	0.978	0.490	1.187	0.163	0.719	0.000	3.967
Behaviour	0	371309	98.7	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1	4863	1.3	0.000	1.126	0.000	2.238	0.187	1.238	0.725	1.099
Fruit-Veg portions	0	8737	2.3	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1 to 2	43419	11.5	0.000	1.290	0.016	1.313	0.284	1.090	0.064	1.250
	3 to 4	94549	25.1	0.000	1.786	0.000	1.921	0.000	1.484	0.001	1.478
	5 to 6	110585	29.4	0.000	2.442	0.000	2.651	0.000	2.133	0.000	2.426
	7 to 8	63051	16.8	0.000	3.005	0.000	3.365	0.000	2.874	0.000	2.055
	9+	41732	11.1	0.000	3.310	0.000	3.822	0.000	2.782	0.000	2.637
	NR	14099	3.7	0.000	1.239	0.000	1.603	0.033	1.203	0.129	1.220
Body Mass Index	Underweight	7045	1.9	0.000	0.740	0.052	0.825	0.036	0.867	0.017	0.664
	Healthy	152074	40.4	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Overweight	111951	29.8	0.001	0.969	0.090	0.936	0.093	1.063	0.583	0.963
	Obese	49847	13.3	0.000	0.765	0.011	0.871	0.000	0.750	0.005	0.806
	Morbidly obese	5159	1.4	0.000	0.575	0.000	0.490	0.000	0.384	0.010	0.653
	NR	50096	13.3	0.000	0.631	0.000	0.725	0.000	0.782	0.000	0.603
Pregnancy	Not	147619	39.2	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Pregnant	2684	0.7	0.000	0.511	0.076	0.802	0.000	0.568	0.027	0.591
	NA	225869	60.0	0.000	1.087	0.344	0.942	0.001	0.841	0.026	1.189
Survey Year	2016-17	196425	52.2	Base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2017-18	179747	47.8	0.000	1.044	0.011	1.081	0.000	1.133	0.459	1.035
Constant				0.000	1.444	0.003	1.942	0.862	0.965	0.039	2.111

NR- Not reported, NA-Not applicable. NR & NA cases are included in the model in order not to lose several respondents from the model. However, if that sub-category is found significance, this is not considered for interpretation in results. Yellow highlights base category of the variable and green indicates significance at p<.05 or p<.01 or p<.001.