

Women's participation in sport and physical activity

Trends (2005-06 to 2011-12)

Source: Active People Survey (APS), Sport England

Women's sport participation

Participation trends: The proportion of women taking part in sport has increased over the last year. Since 2005-06, the proportions of women taking part in sport and exercise at least once a week and at least three times a week have fluctuated, but are currently at all time highs. (See Note 1 for the definition of sport used in this analysis.)

The gap between men and women: The gap between men and women has closed over the past year, however, the gap is still larger than in 2005-06.

Popular sports: Swimming, athletics and cycling are the top three 'sports' that women take part in on a weekly basis; the gym, Zumba and aerobics are the top three non sporting activities that women do each week.

Latent demand: For the past two years the proportion of women who want to do more sport/physical activity has increased and is currently at its highest level since records began.

Age: Over the past year every age group has seen increases in participation. The long-term trend is positive for all age groups except for 16-24 year-old women and women over the age of 65.

Ethnicity: While white women are more active than BME women, participation among BME women is currently at an all time high, and so are closing the gap.

Disability: Participation among disabled women is currently as high as it has ever been, however, it is still half that of non-disabled women.

Social Grade: Over the past year, there has been an increase in weekly participation among women from both the higher and lower social grades.

Region: All regions have seen an increase in female participation over the last year. Since 2005-06 all regions except London have seen an increase in female participation.

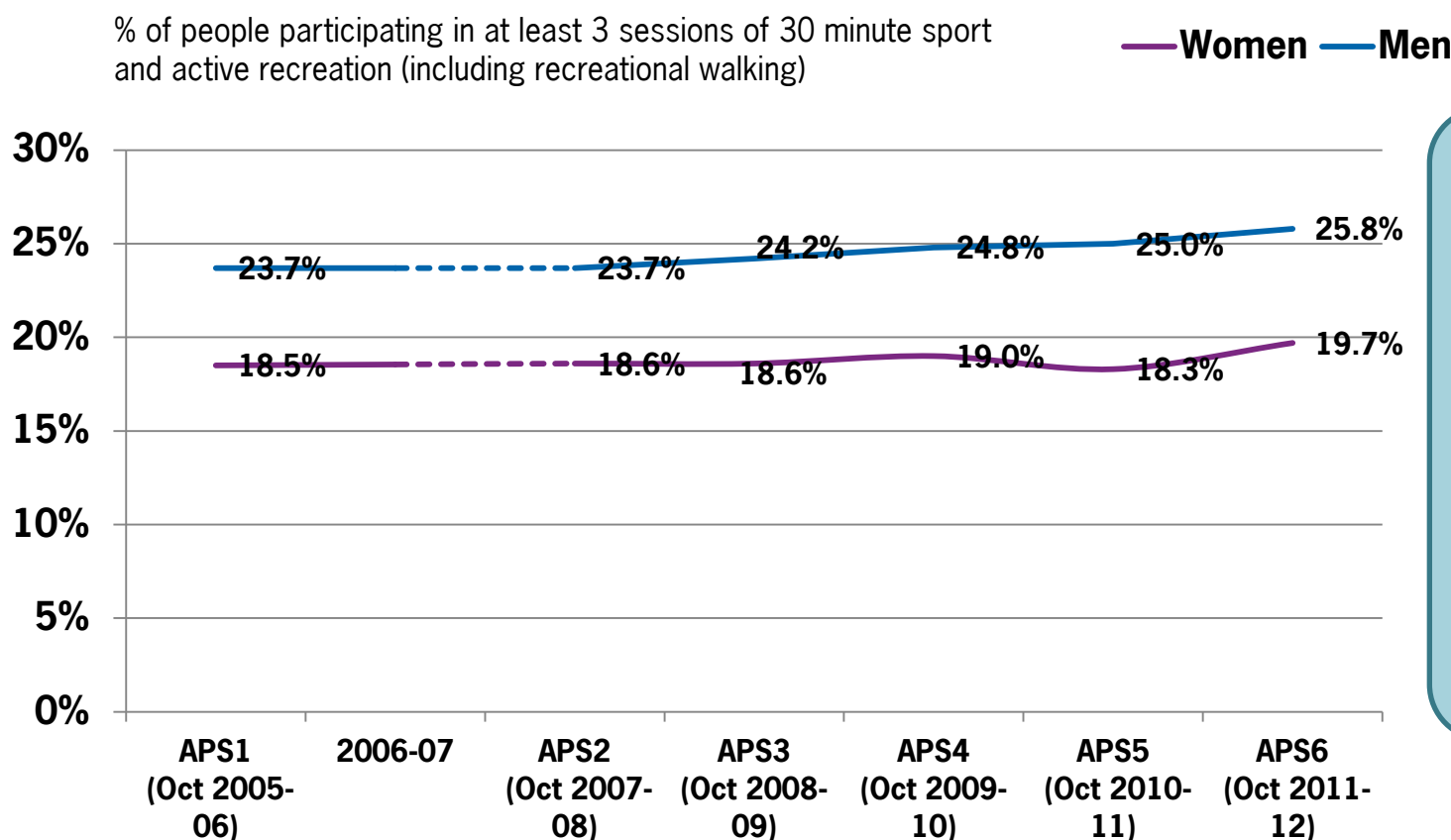
Overall participation trends

Sport and active recreation (includes walking)

The Chief Medical Officer recommends that people take part in 30 minutes of activity at least 5 times a week at moderate intensity. Of these, sport and active recreation (including recreational walking) should make up 3 of the 5 times. (gardening/housework can make up the other two if done at a moderate intensity).

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Both male and female participation has increased since records began, albeit more for men than for women, so the gap between them has grown.



There are
1.0 million
more men
than women
taking part
in sport and
active
recreation at
least three
times a week

Base: All respondents

Sources: Department of Health. (2004) At Least Five a Week. Evidence of the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health. A report from the Chief Medical Officer; Sport England Active People Survey; National Statistics population estimates (2011)

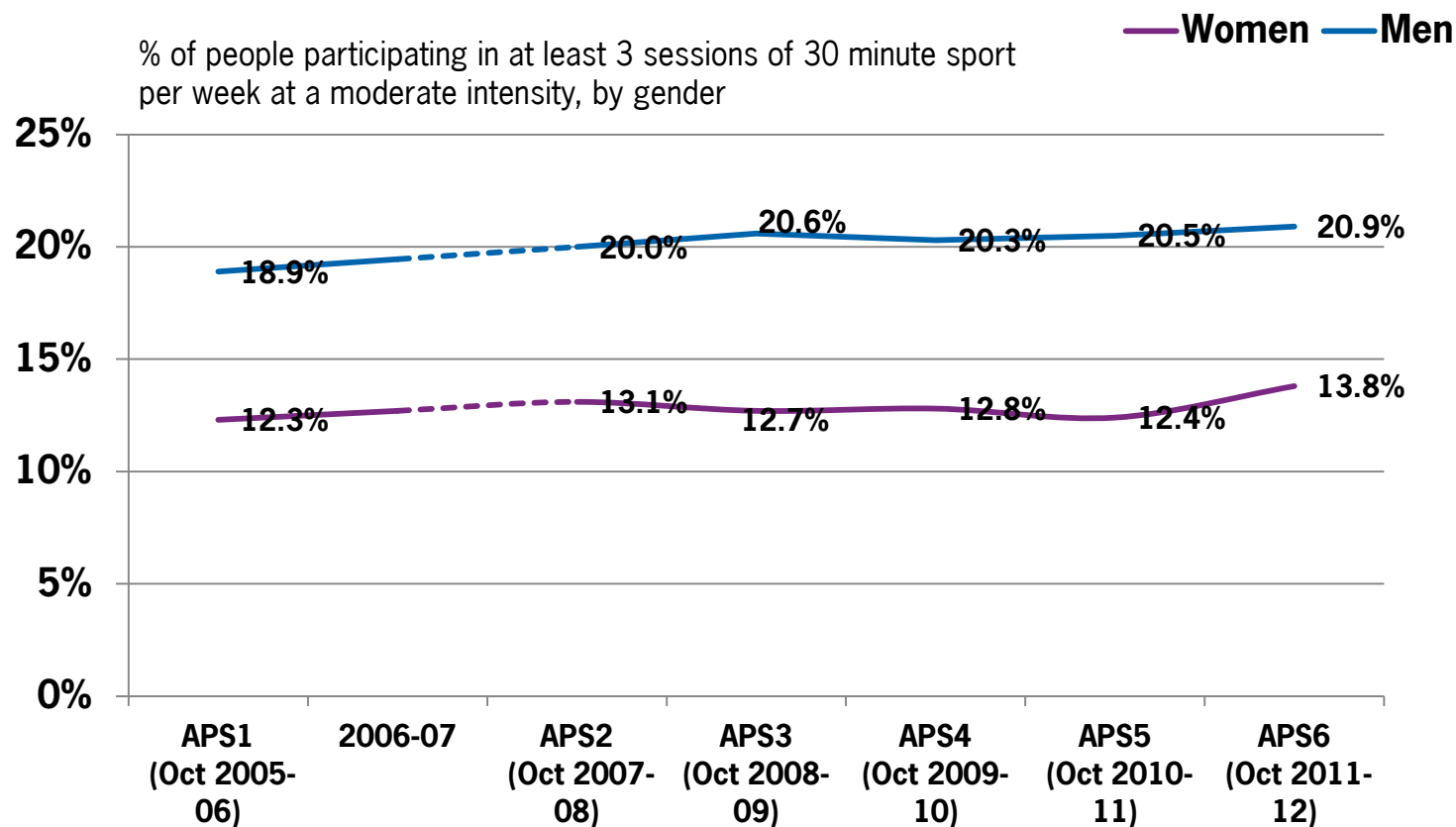
See Note 1

The dedicated participant

Around 3.1 million women take part in sport at least three times a week. At 13.8%, this is the highest rate since records began.

This is around 373,000 more women compared with last year and around 487,000 more than in 2005-06.

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There are
1.3 million
more men
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taking part
in sport at
least three
times a
week

Base: All respondents.

Sources: Sport England Active People Survey; National Statistics population estimates (2005, 2010 and 2011)

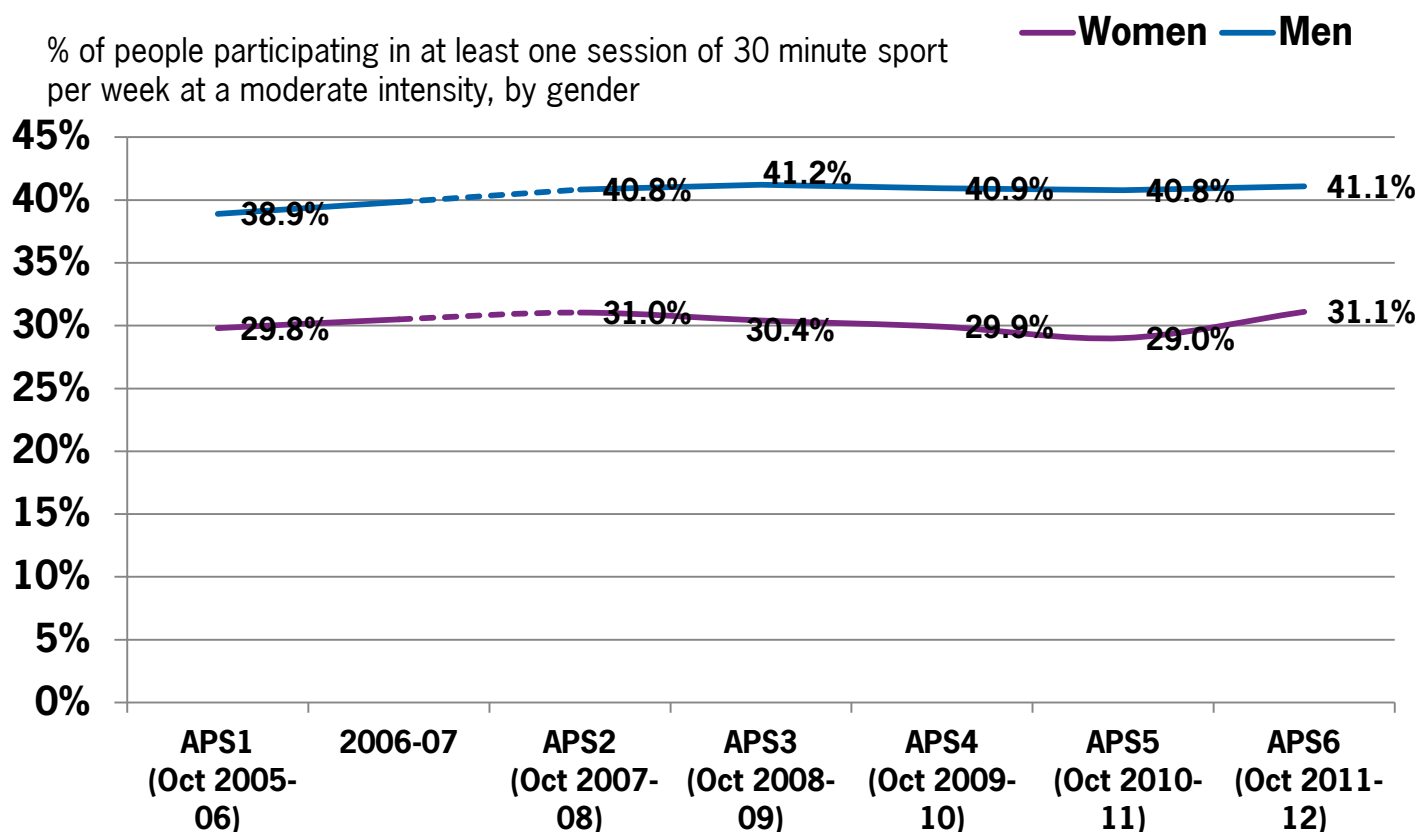
See Note 1

The regular participant

There are 6.9 million women taking part in sport at least once a week. This is 626,000 more women compared with in 2005-06 and 579,000 more than last year.

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While the gap between male and female participation has closed in the last year, it is still larger than in 2005-06.



There are
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women
taking part
in sport at
least once
a week

Base: All respondents.

Sources: Sport England' Active People Survey; National Statistics population estimates (2005, 2010 and 2011)

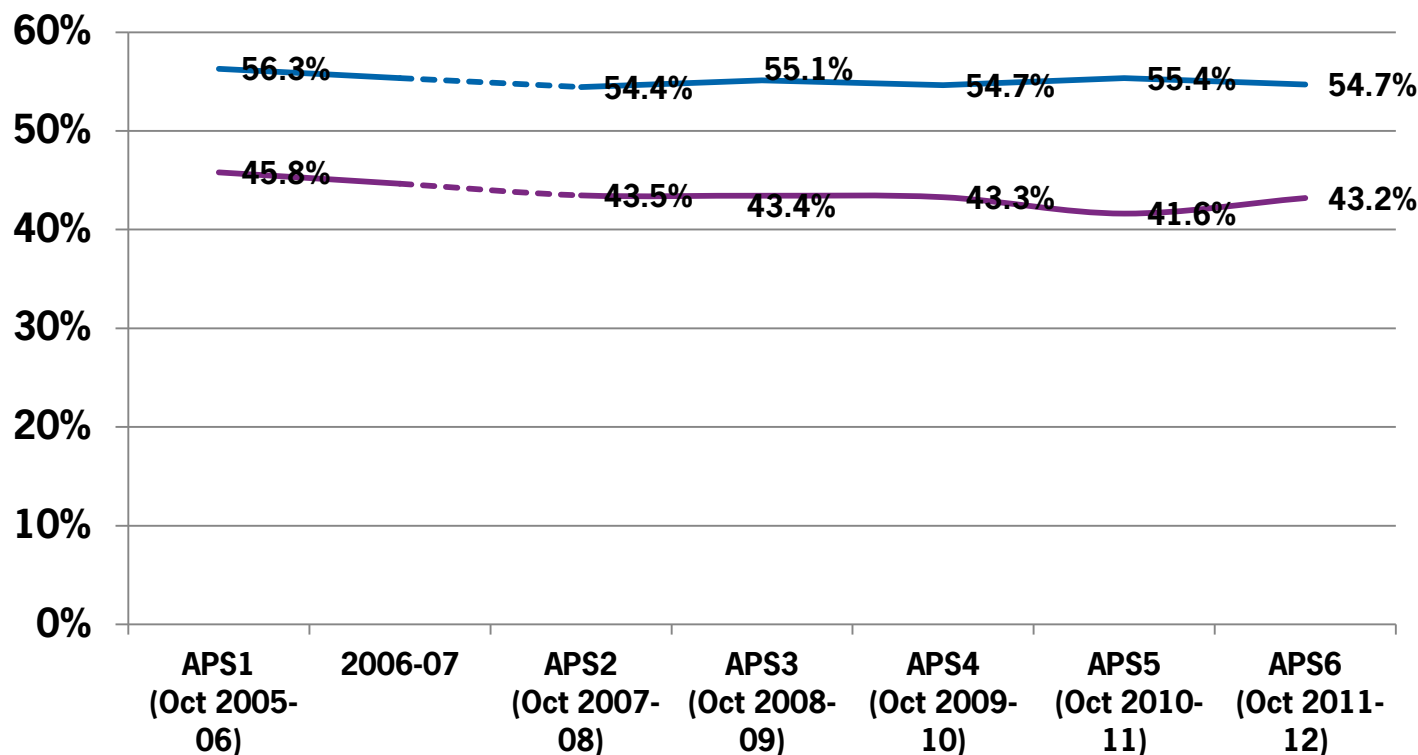
See Note 1

Infrequent participants

9.6 million women take part in sport at least once a month. This is around 3,000 more women than in 2005-06 but 563,000 more than last year.

% of people participating in any sport, including light intensity, in the last four weeks

— Women — Men



There are
1.9 million
more men
than
women
taking part
in sport at
least once
a month

Base: All respondents,

Sources: Sport England Active People Survey; National Statistics population estimates (2005, 2010 and 2011)

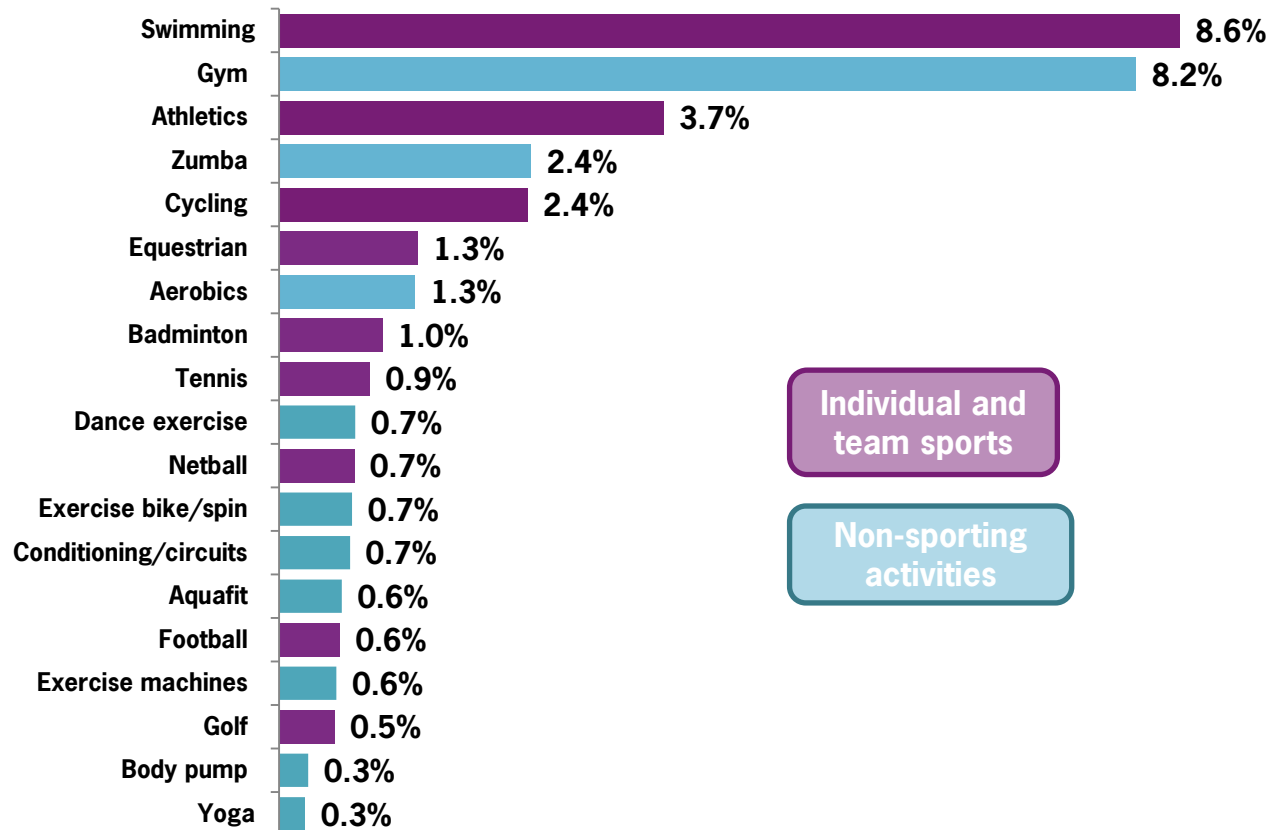
See Note 1

Most popular sports and activities for women, 2012

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Swimming, gym and athletics are the top three activities that women take part in on a weekly basis. Zumba, a relatively new activity, is now the fourth most popular activity. Within the top 10 activities that women do, four are non-sporting activities and six are individual sports.

% of women participating in at least one session of 30 minute exercise per week at a moderate intensity



Base: All women respondents, Source: Sport England Active People Survey 6. Excludes walking.

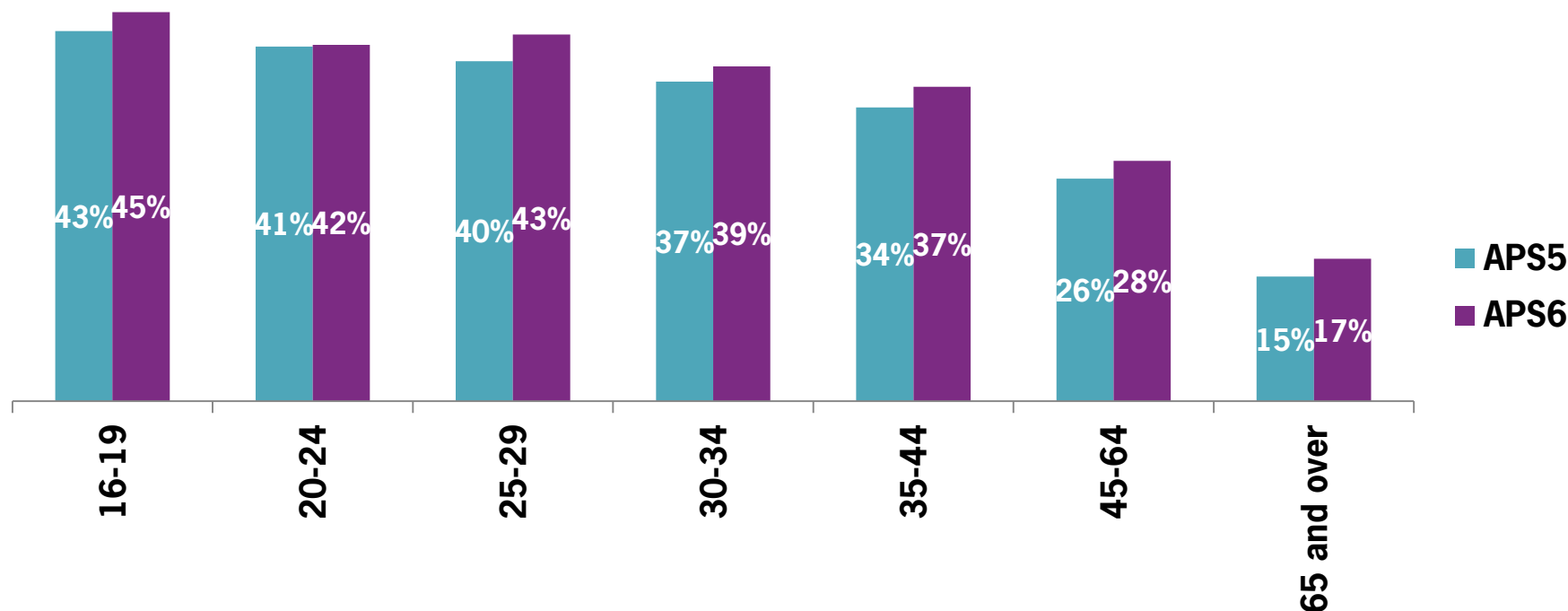
Demographics

Participation levels by age (APS5 and APS6)

In the last year, female participation has increased significantly for every age group except in the 20-24 year-old group, where there has been no change. Losses in the last year among young people generally have been driven by 16-19 year-old men (down from 69% to 66%).

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% of women participating in at least one session of 30 minute sport per week at a moderate intensity



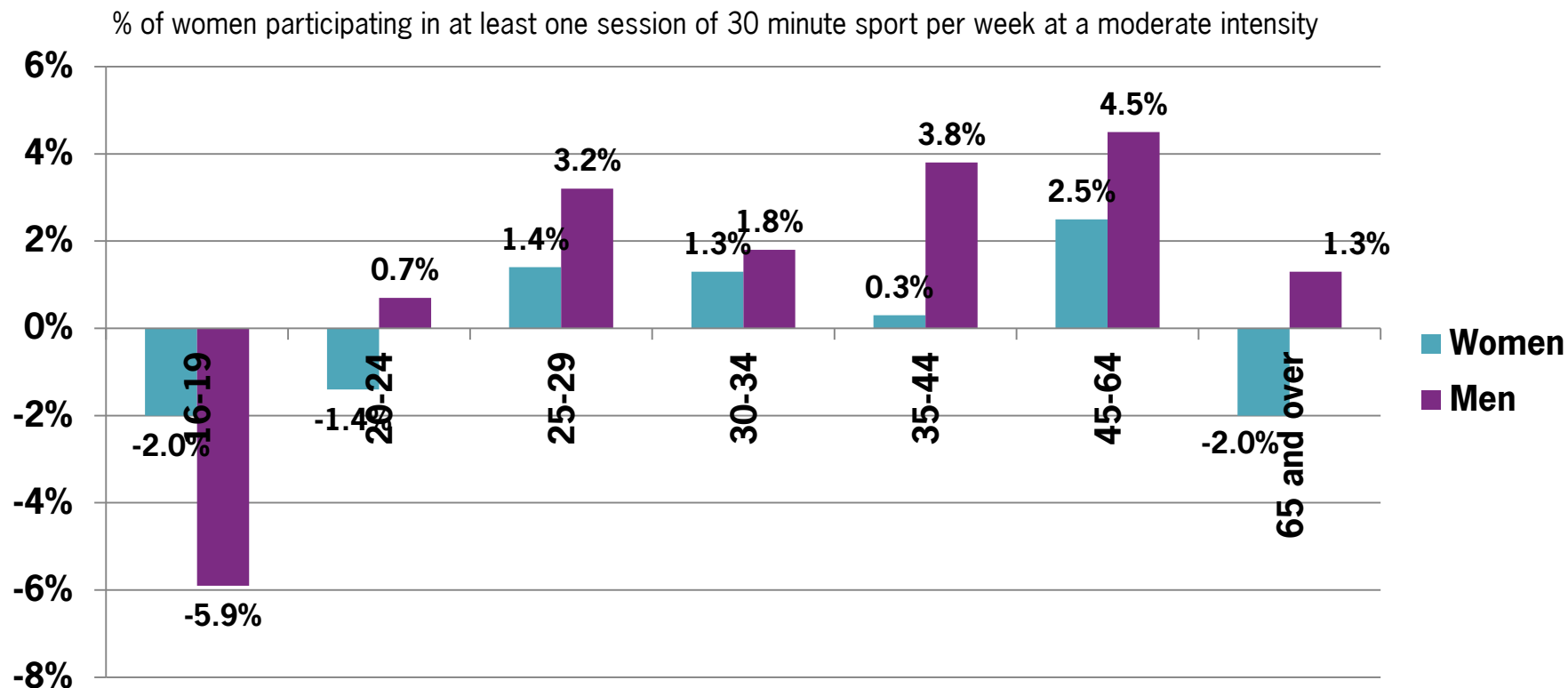
Base: All respondents

Sources: Sport England Active People Survey 5 and 6

Change in participation levels (APS1 to APS6) by age

While participation among young women increased in the last year, the long-term picture still shows a significant decline has occurred in 16-24 year olds – although the loss in the youngest age group (16-19) is much higher for men than women.

Over the past six years, there has been particularly strong growth in the 45-64 year-old age group. There are similar losses for women aged 65 and over as in the 16-19 year age group.



Base: All respondents

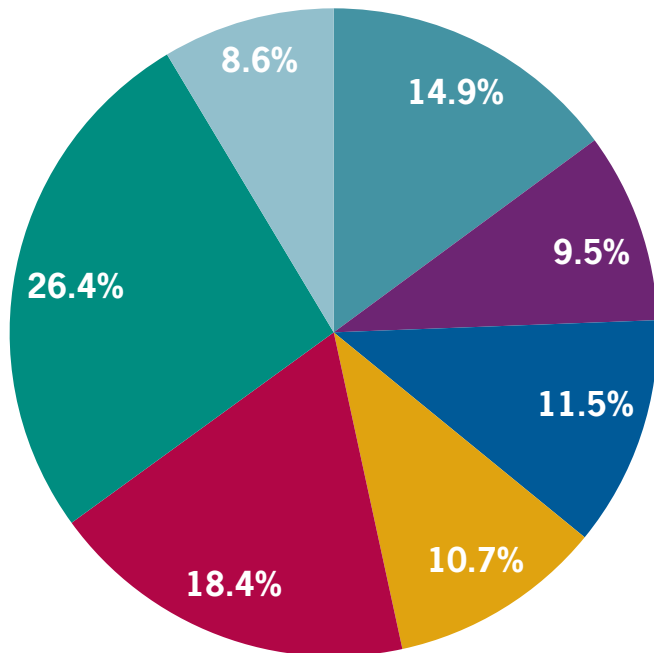
Sources: Sport England Active People Survey 1 and 6

Current age profile

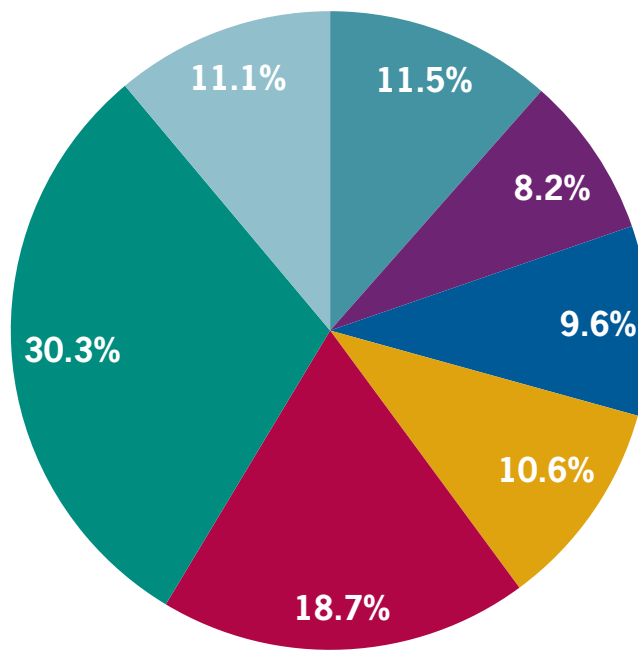
Female participants are slightly older than male participants – over 60% of female participants are aged 35+ compared with just over half of men.

% of people participating in at least one session of 30 minute sport per week at a moderate intensity

Men



Women



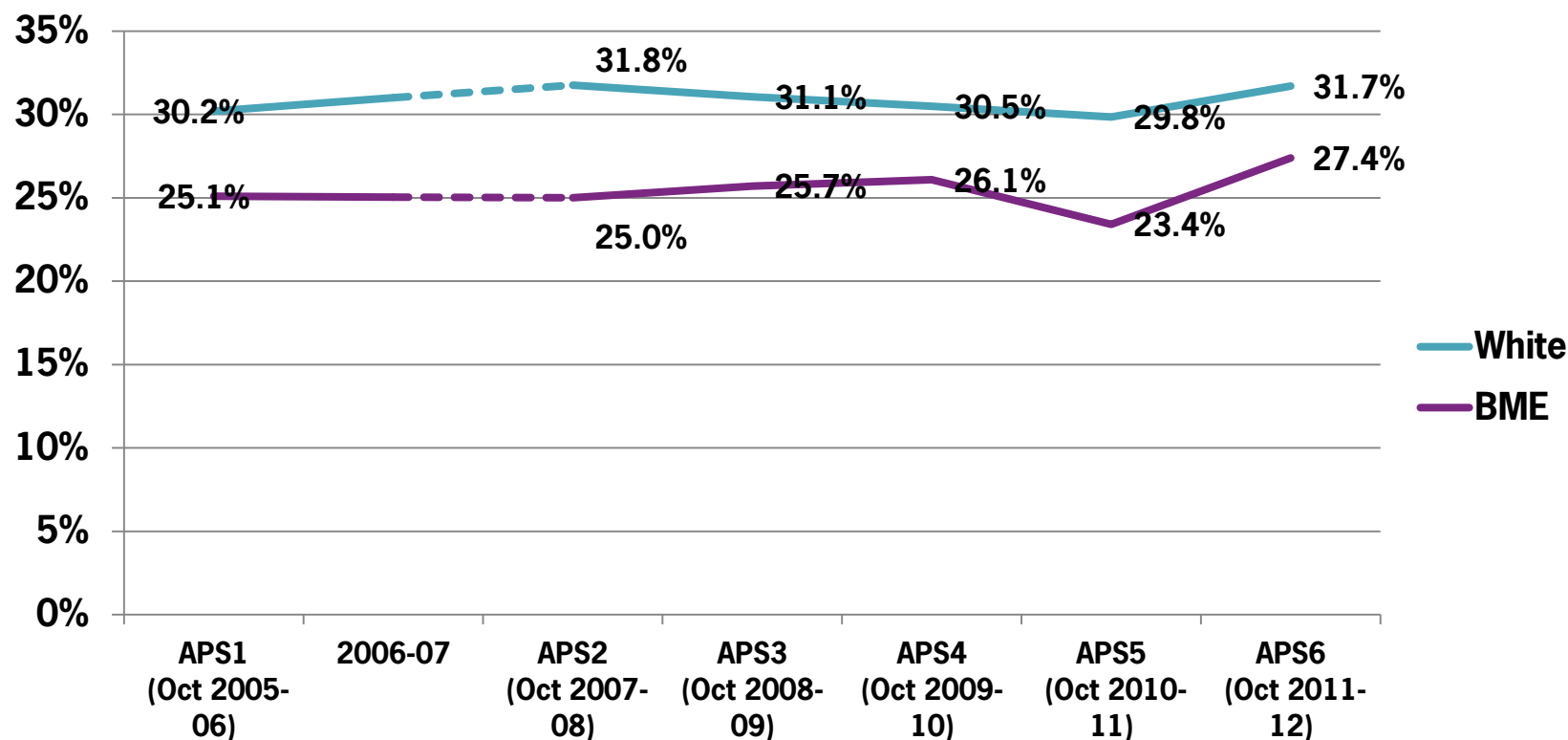
- 16-19
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-44
- 45-64
- 65 and over

In England, around 70% of all women and 68% of men are aged 35 and over

Trends in ethnicity – women

While, White women are more active than BME women, participation among BME women is currently at an all time high, closing the gap.

% of people participating in one session of 30 minute sport per week at a moderate intensity



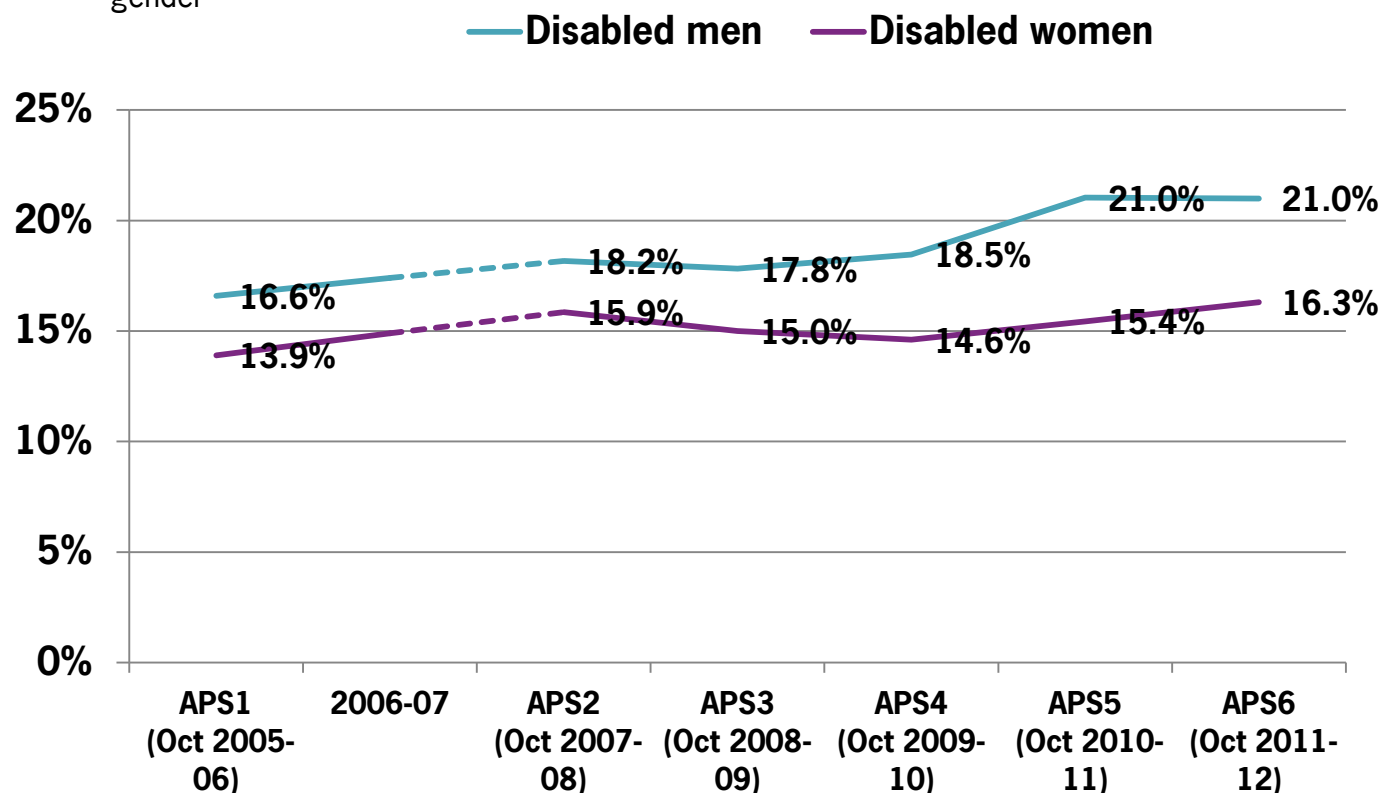
Base: All women

Source: Sport England Active People Survey

Trends in disability sport

Disabled women's participation is half that of women who do not have a disability (34.4%). Participation among disabled men and women is currently as high as it has ever been – however – the gap between men and women has increased, as male growth outstrips that of women.

% of people participating in at least one session of 30 minute sport per week at a moderate intensity, by disability and gender



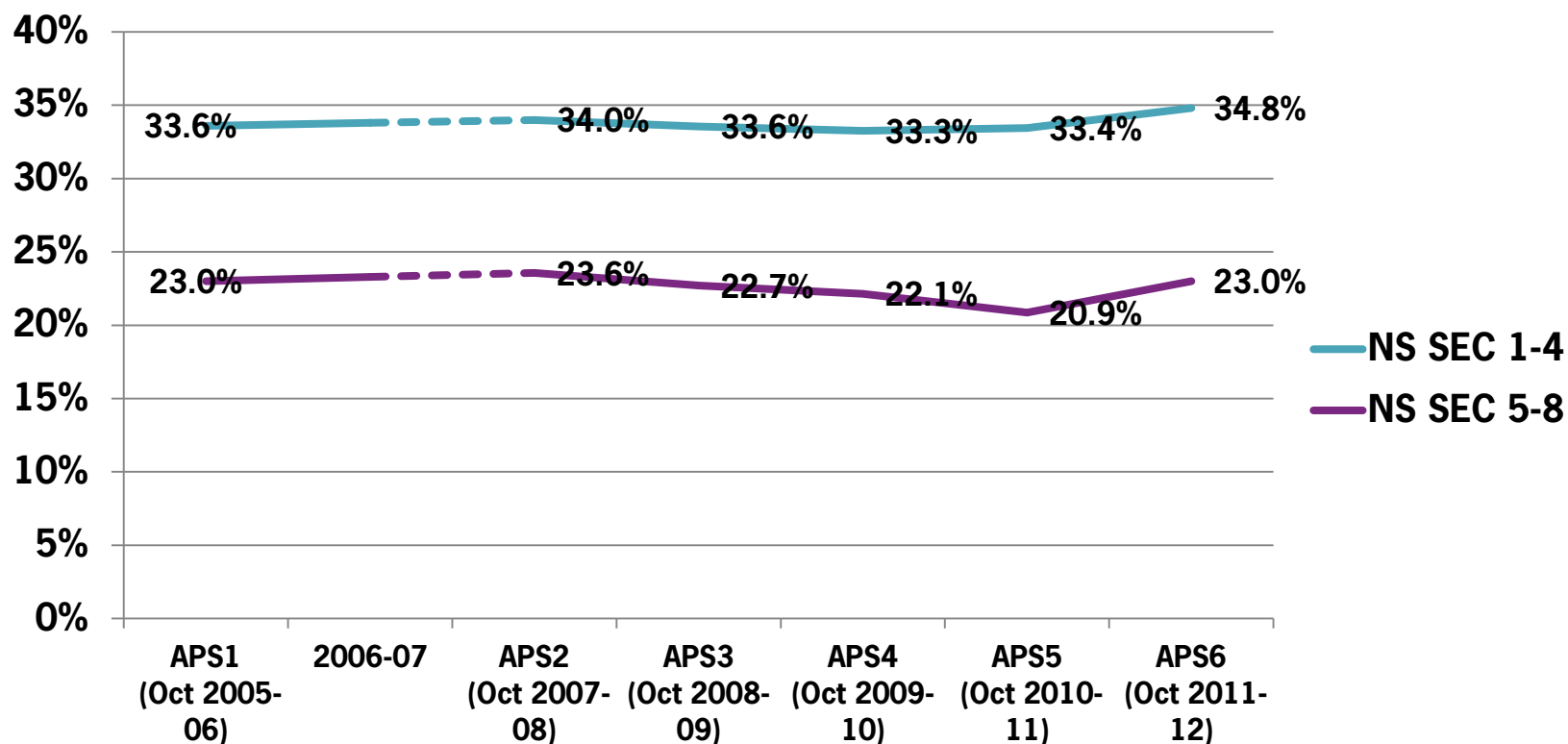
Base: All with a limiting illness or disability

Source: Sport England Active People Survey

Trends in social grade – women

Over the past year, there has been an increase in weekly participation among women from both the higher and lower social grades. For women in higher social grades, participation is currently at its highest level yet, while women in the lower social grades have seen the first increase in three and a half years.

% of women participating in at least one session of 30 minute sport per week at a moderate intensity

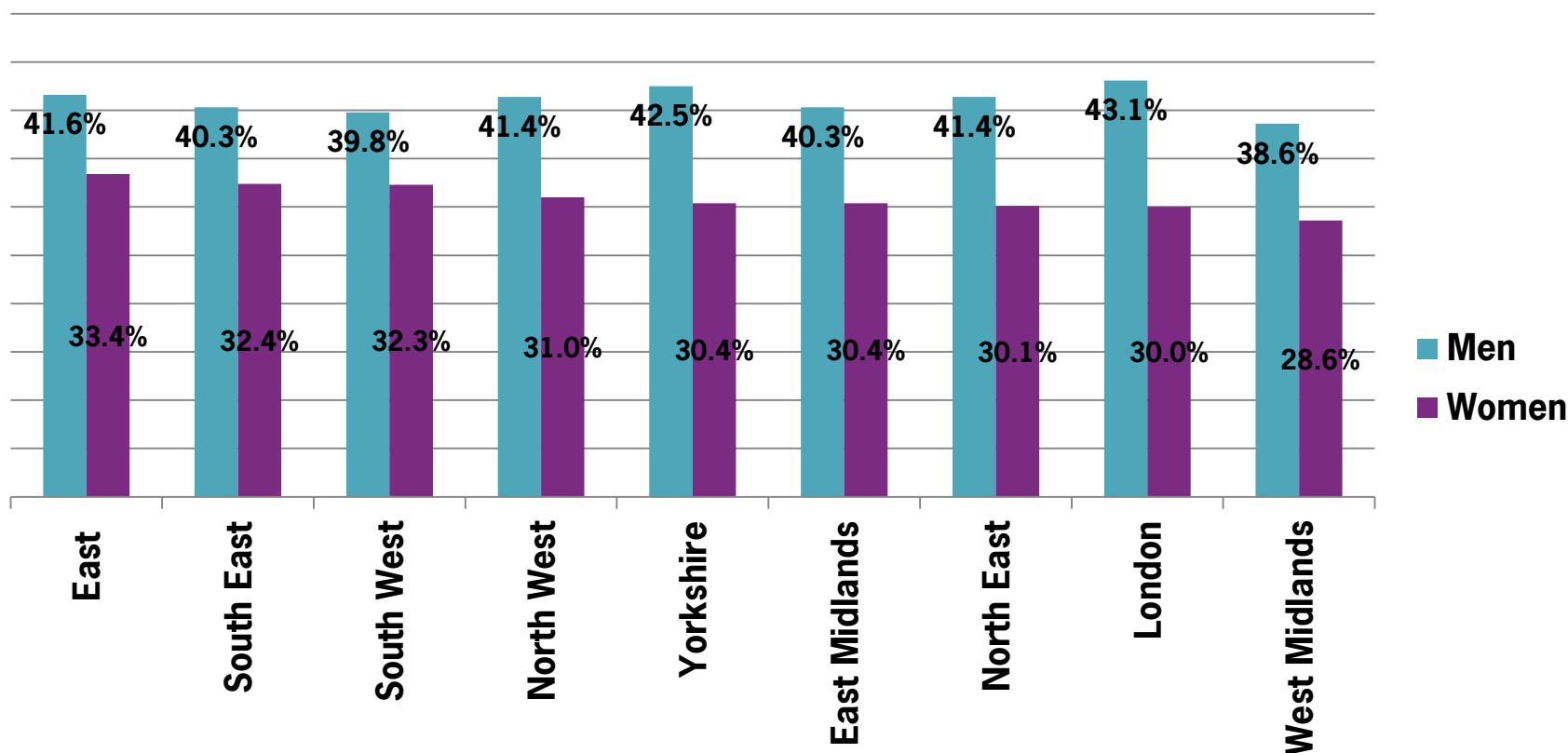


Base: All women

Source: Sport England Active People Survey

Regional participation by gender

Percentage of men and women participating in at least one session of 30 minute sport per week at a moderate intensity



Base: All people

Sources: Sport England Active People Survey APS6

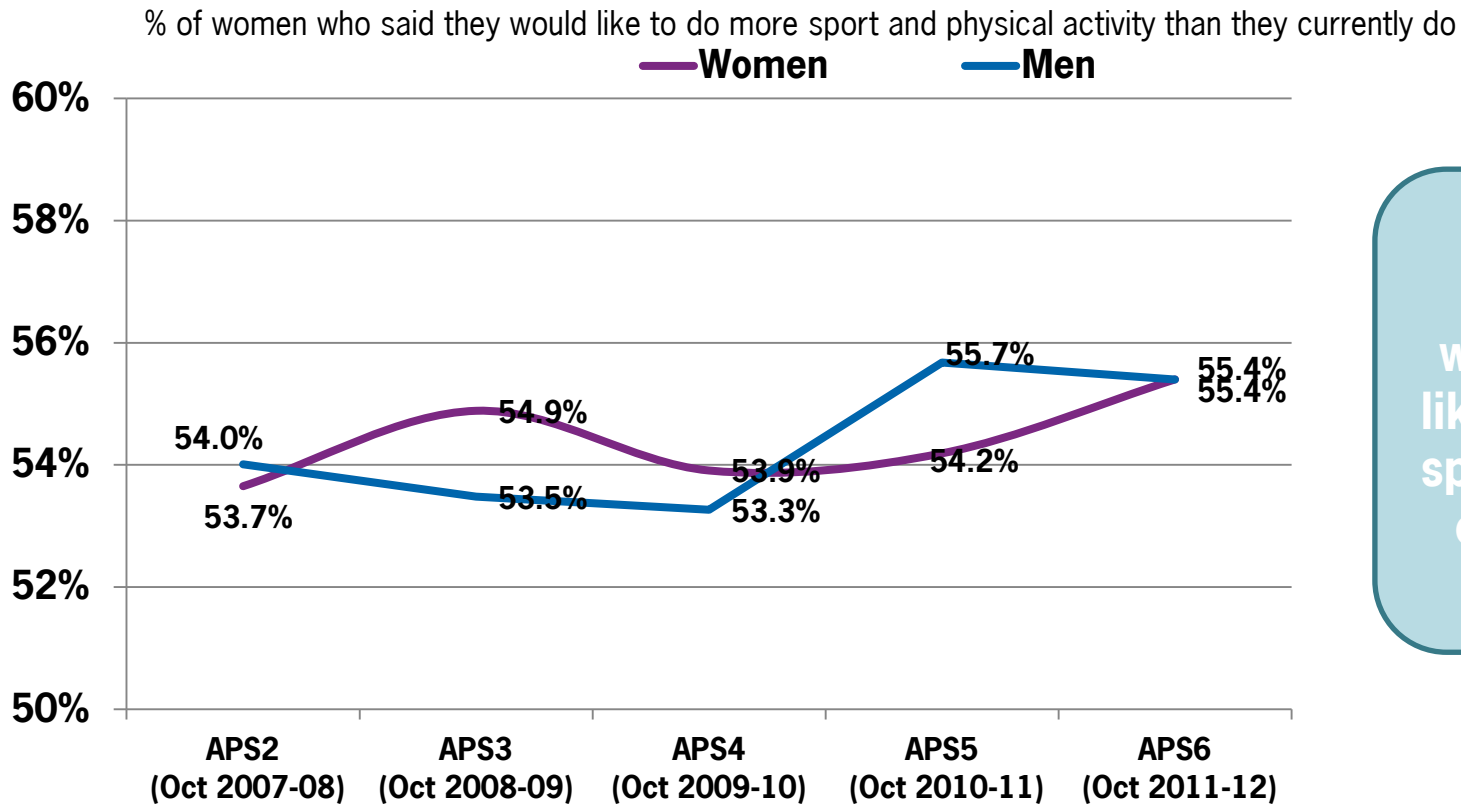
Latent demand

Latent demand for any sport

Latent demand has seen fluctuating trends, but for the past two years the proportion of women who want to do more sport/physical activity has increased and is currently at its highest level yet.



Latent demand is greatest among women who currently take part in some activity 57.6% compared with 45.3% of currently do nothing



12.1 million women would like to do more sport than they currently do

Base: All respondents

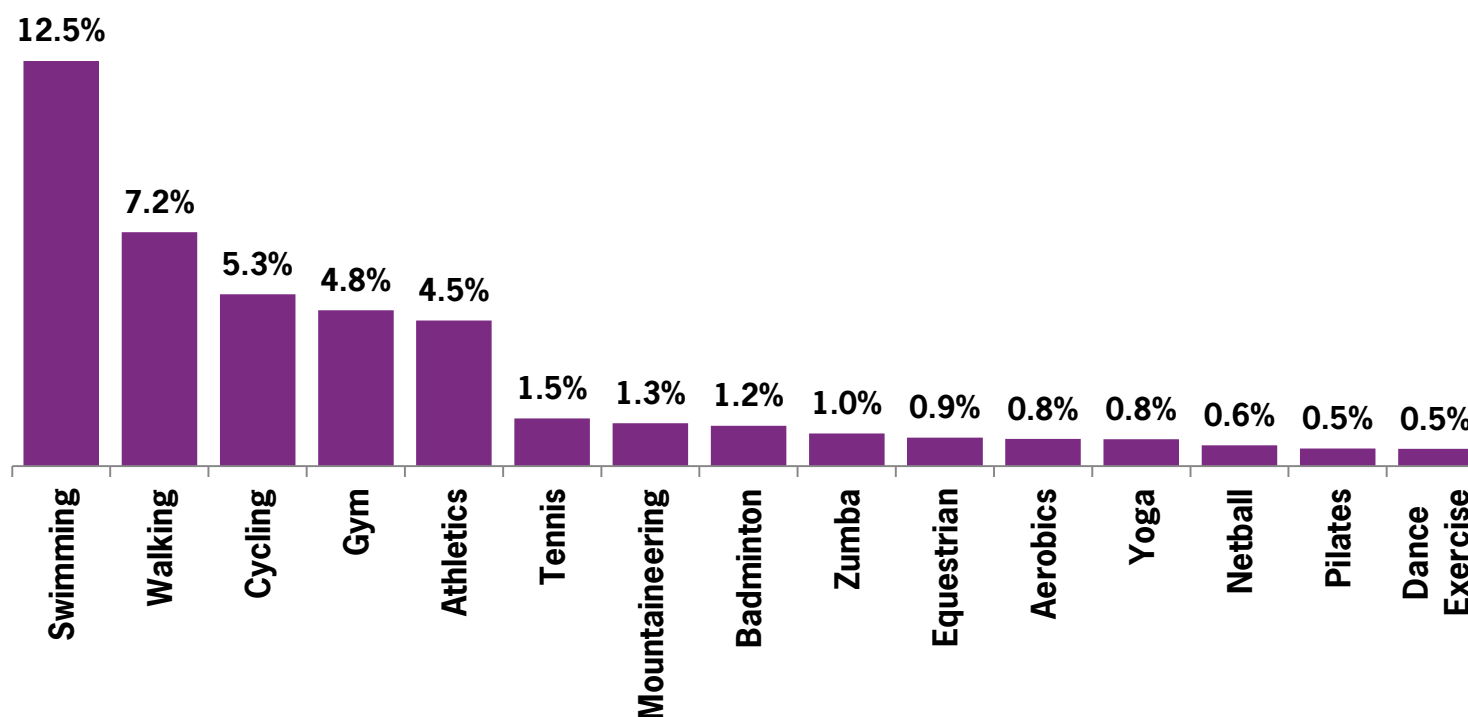
Sources: Sport England Active People Survey, Office for National Statistics population estimates (2011). See Note 1

Latent demand for top 15 activities

Swimming is the sport that has most latent demand, followed by walking and cycling.

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% of women who said they would like to do more sport and physical activity than they currently do



Base: All women who would like to do more sport and physical activity than they currently do

Source: Sport England Active People Survey 6

- 1. The most recent data release from the Active People Survey is for the period October 2011 to October 2012. A survey was not carried out in 2006-7, so there is a gap in the annual trend. 'Sport' includes gym-based activities and other non-sport exercise, for example Zumba, but not recreational walking. Charts exclude walking unless stated otherwise.**

The following English population estimates were used in the calculations:

APS1 (Women) 20,954,000

APS2 (Women) 21,266,200

APS5 (Women) 21,708,700

APS6 (Women) 22,080,100

APS6 (Men) 20,997,100