



# Inactivity amongst Adult Londoners

A summary of London data from Sport England's annual Active Lives Survey

October 2023

**LONDON  
SPORT**

# INTRODUCTION

Every year, Sport England releases data from its Active Lives Survey for adults which presents activity level data across England.

The Active Lives data - including a children and young person version published in the winter - is the most accurate measure of activity levels available. This helps London Sport and other Active Partnerships to establish key attitudes and behaviours across local and national populations, enabling us to hone focus on specific demographic groups for more specific consideration to help target and tackle inactivity.

This report has been created using the latest 2023 data release covering the period November 2021-2022, which now helps us to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic together with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis in the context of historic data.

## ABOUT LONDON SPORT

London Sport is a charity that exists to help all Londoners live longer, healthier and happier lives through being active.

Our focus is on children and adults in the most deprived communities who face the greatest challenges of inequality.

With physical inactivity responsible for 1 in 6 premature deaths, we want to help every Londoner find their way to move more.

We are supported by Sport England and the Mayor of London, and collaborate with London's local authorities and other organisations to provide better access to sport and physical activity across the capital.

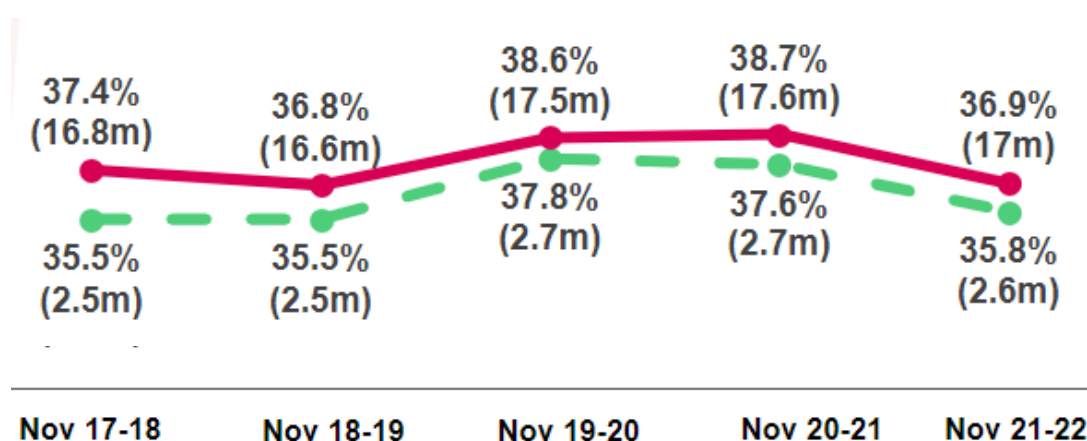




# INACTIVITY LEVELS IN LONDON

Although there is a sense of recovery following the pandemic, adults across London and England still fail to meet the recommended guidelines for physical activity.

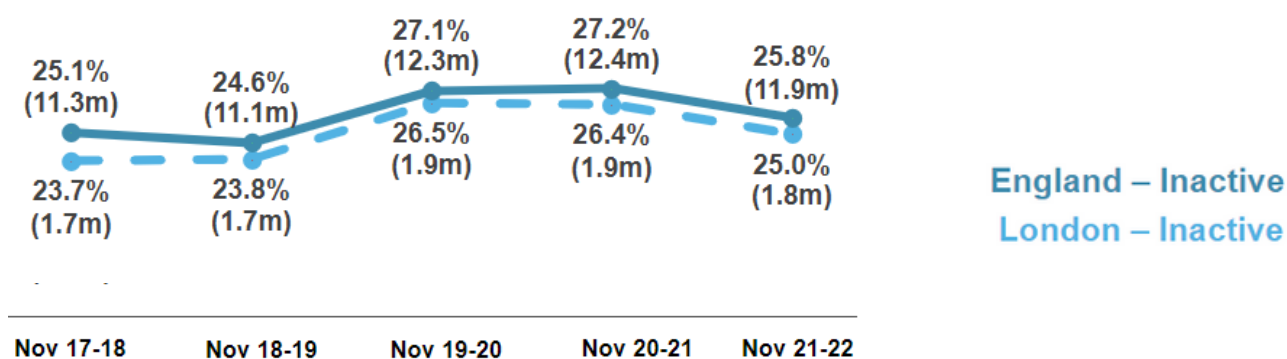
Just over a third of adult Londoners (35.8%) are not reaching World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended 150 minutes of exercise per week\*, meaning that they are not reaping the mental, physical and social benefits of an active life, risking long term health conditions and even early mortality.



England – Not active enough

London – Not active enough

\*‘Not active enough’ is a combination of Sport England’s definition for fairly active (30-149 minutes of activity a week) together with ‘Inactive’ (fewer than 30 minutes).



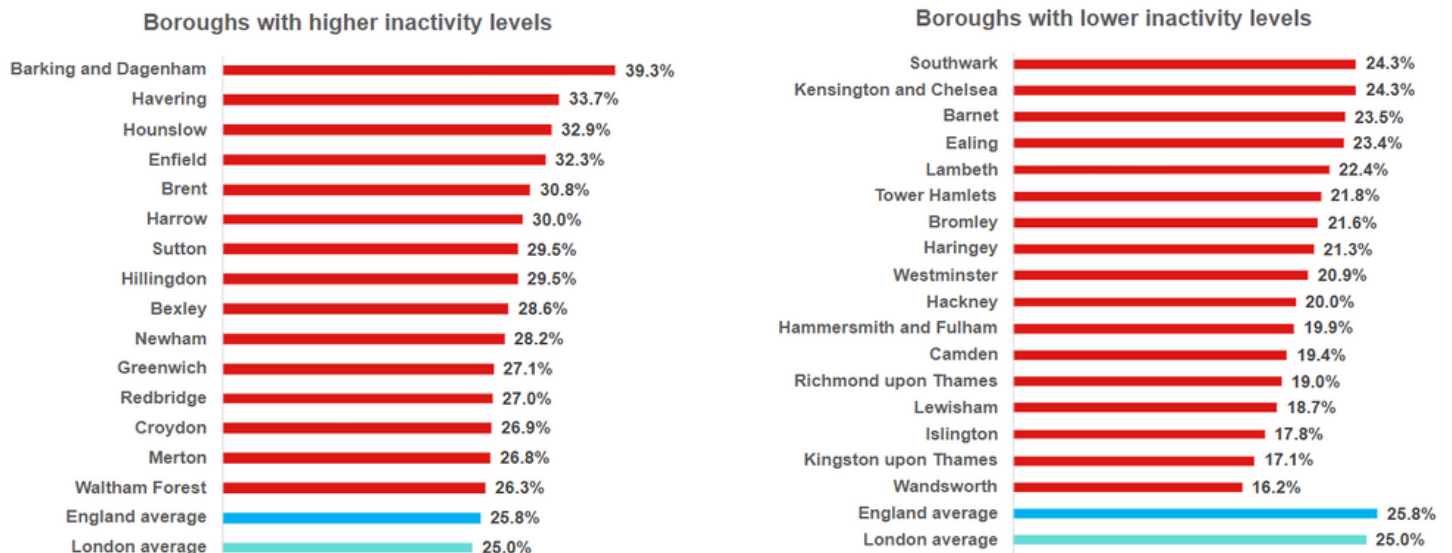
England – Inactive  
London – Inactive

Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2017 to 2022 waves)

# BOROUGH INACTIVITY LEVELS

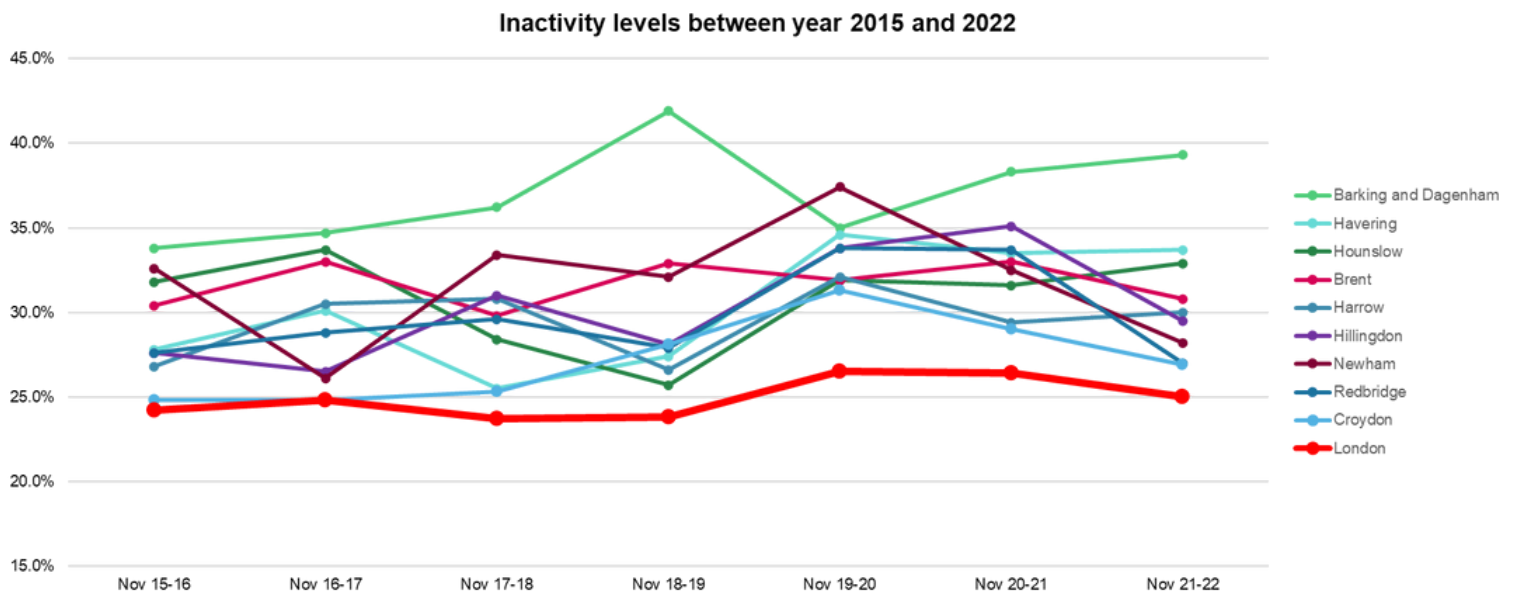
There is considerable variation in borough level inactivity, with more than twice the number of “inactives” in Barking & Dagenham compared to Wandsworth (39.3% vs. 16.2%).

Inactivity levels are also typically higher in outer London boroughs.



Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2021-2022 wave)

Since year 2015, 9 London boroughs in particular have seen their inactivity levels fluctuate but they remain consistently higher than the London inactivity average.

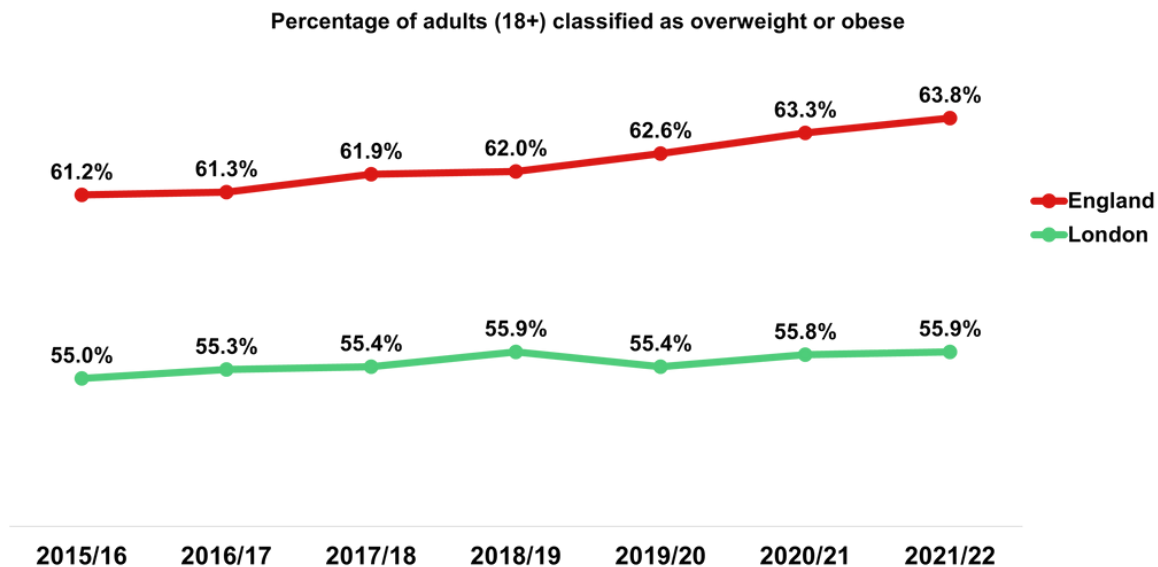


Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2015 to 2022 waves)

Inactivity levels in Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Hounslow, Brent, Harrow, Hillingdon, Newham, Redbridge and Croydon have remained above the London inactivity average since 2015; however, levels in Redbridge, Croydon, Newham and Brent have somewhat recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

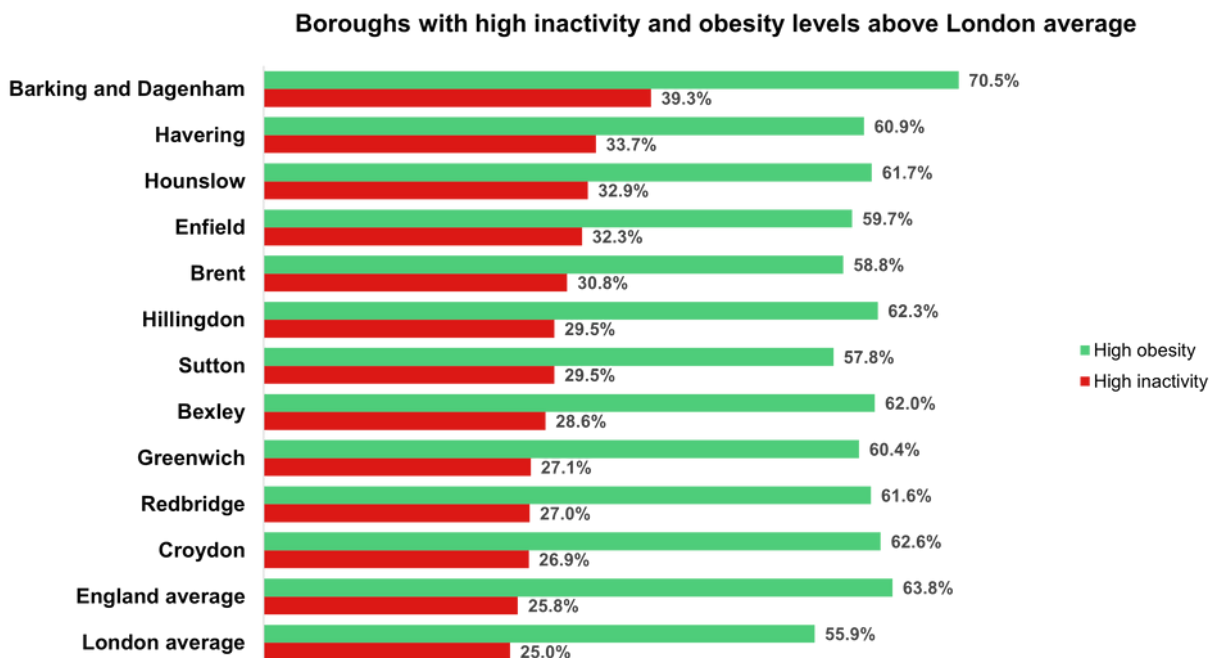
# OBESITY AND INACTIVITY

London obesity levels have historically been lower than the rest of England. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic levels have worsened.



Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (based on the Active Lives Adult Survey, Sport England, 2022)

Several boroughs in London present levels of inactivity and obesity that are both above the London average.



Sources:

Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2021-2022 wave)

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (based on the Sport England Active Lives Adult Survey Nov 2021-2022 wave)

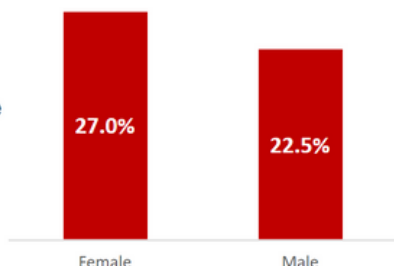
Latest Census data reveals that Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnicities make up more than half the population in ten London boroughs, and some of these same boroughs share high inactivity and obesity levels.

# INACTIVITY ACROSS KEY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS IN LONDON

There are significant inequalities in inactivity levels across different demographic groups to take into consideration.

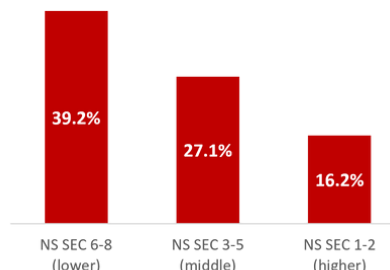
## Gender

Females are more likely to be inactive compared to males.



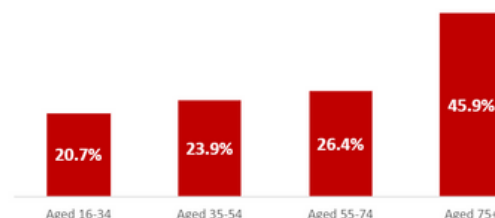
## Socio-economic groups

Those in routine / semi-routine jobs and those who are long-term unemployed or have never worked (NS-SEC 6-8) are more likely to be inactive.



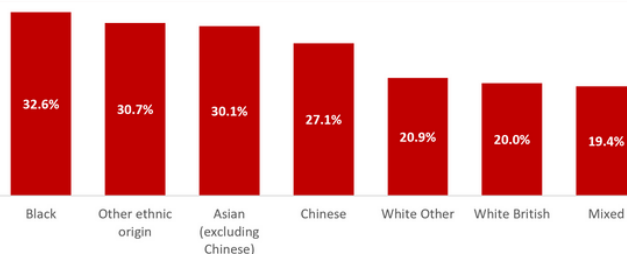
## Age

Inactivity levels increase with age, more so for those in the 75+ age category.



## Ethnic minority

Black, Other ethnic origin and Asian groups are more inactive.



## Disability and long-term health conditions

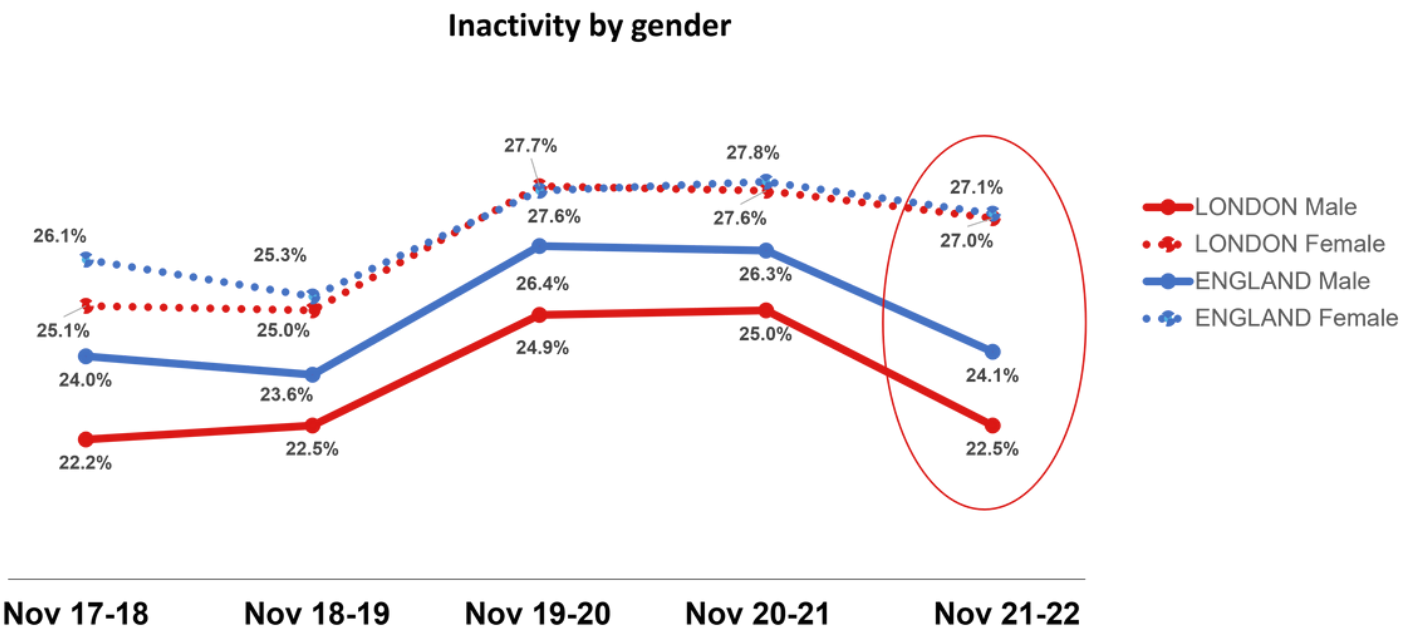
Inactivity is more common for disabled people or those with a long-term health condition.



Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2021 to 2022 wave)

# INACTIVITY AND GENDER

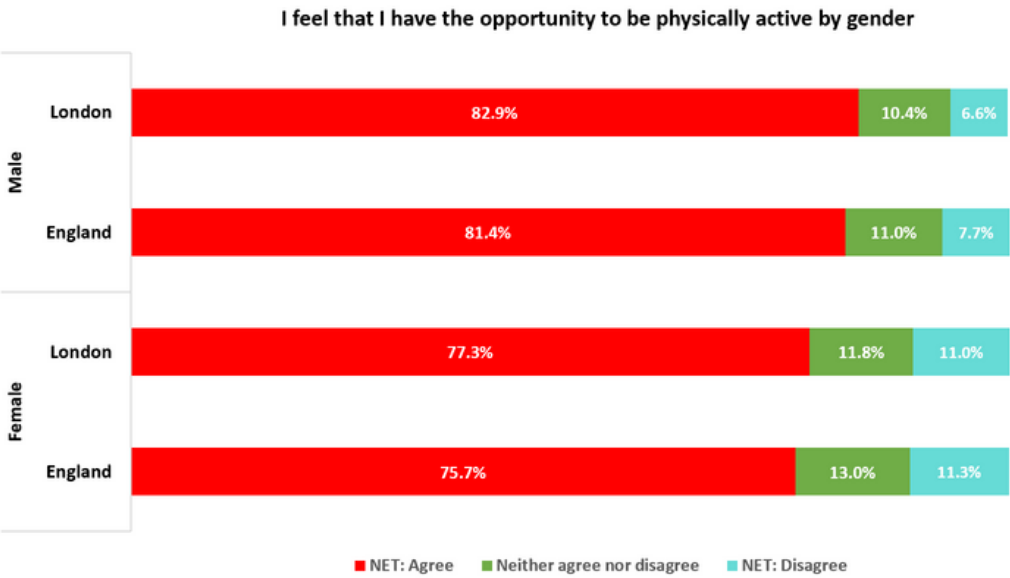
Levels of inactivity for men have recovered to pre-pandemic levels; however for women inactivity levels haven't recovered and remain similar.



Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2017 to 2022 waves)

Women report lower levels of opportunity to be physically active than men.

This is the case for both nationally and in London.

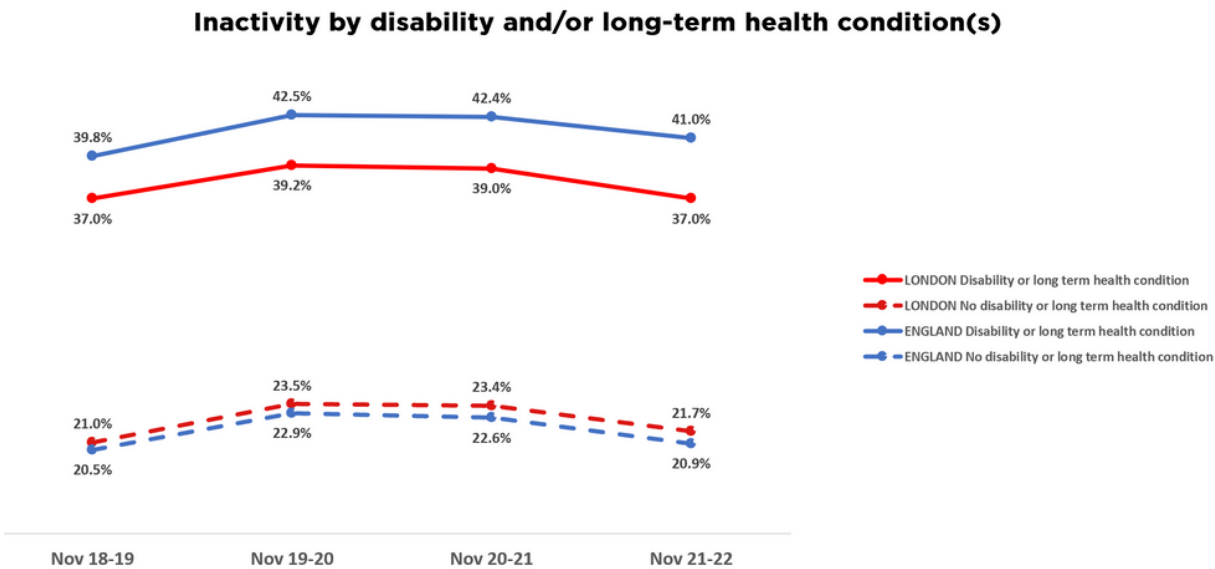


Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2021 to 2022 wave)

# INACTIVITY AMONGST DISABLED PEOPLE AND THOSE WITH LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

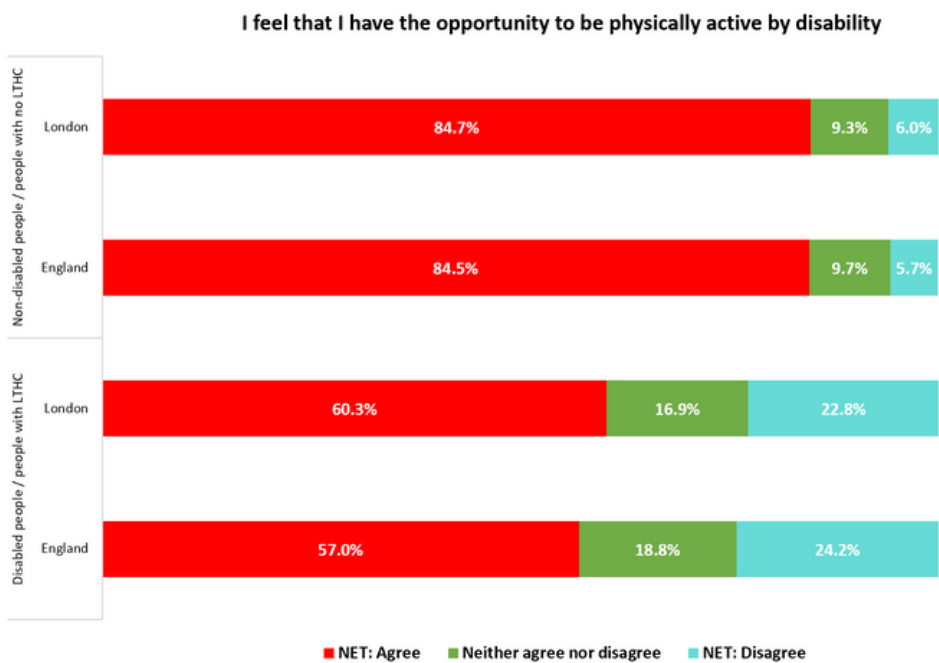
There remains a stubborn gap in inactivity levels for disabled people and those with long-term health conditions.

However, positively for London and England, inactivity levels have returned to pre-pandemic levels.



Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2018 to 2022 waves)

A higher proportion of disabled people / people with long-term health conditions in London state that they have the opportunity to be physically active (compared to national figures)

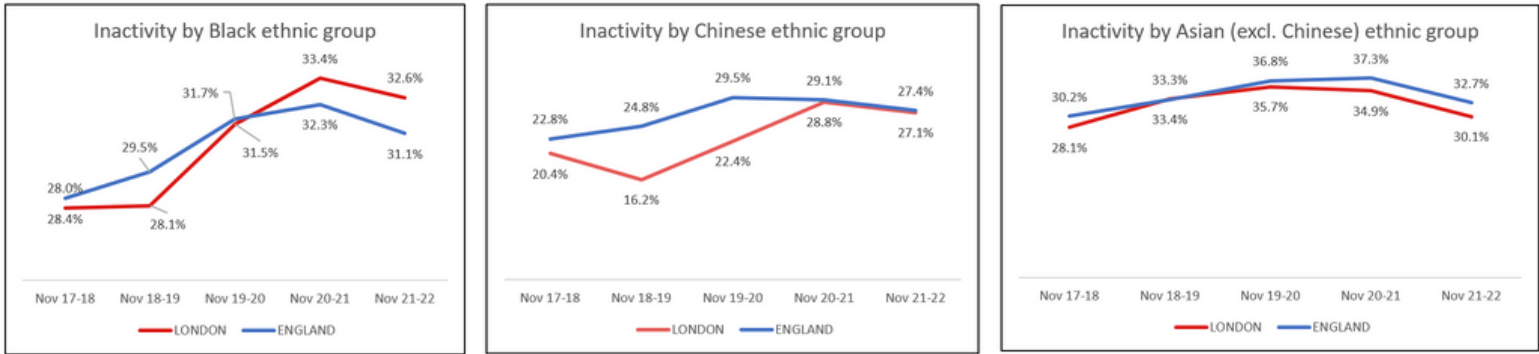


Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2021 to 2022 wave)



# INACTIVITY AND ETHNICITY

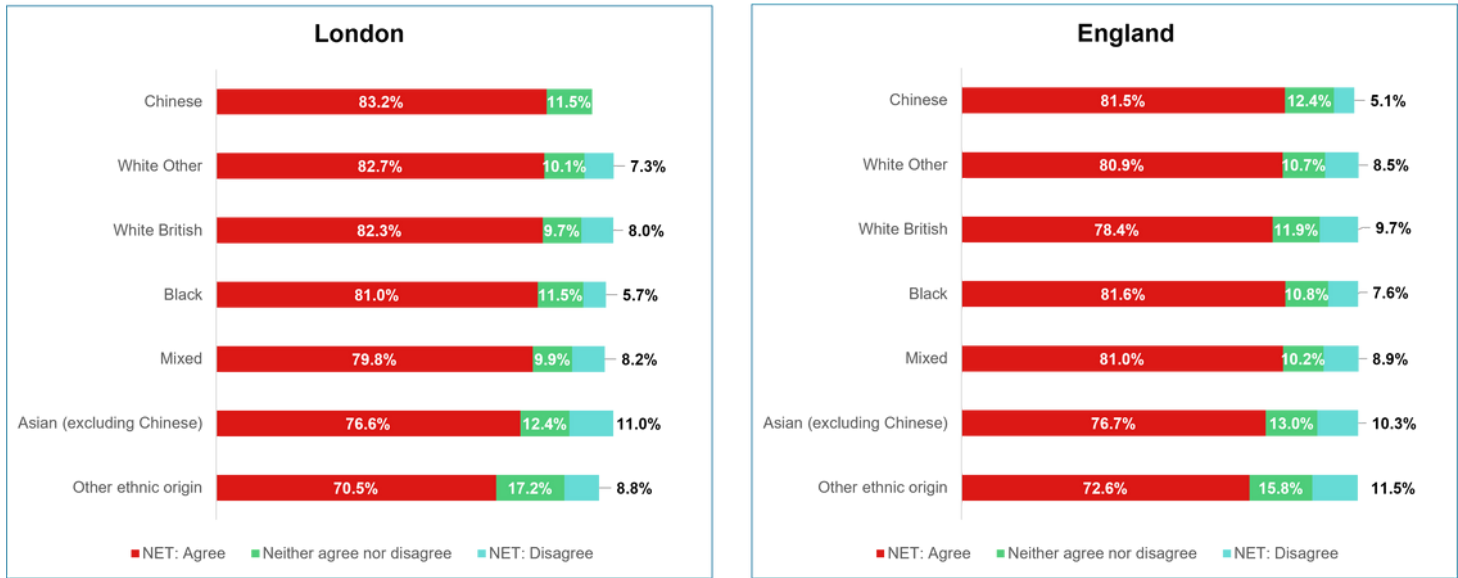
Black and Chinese and Asian ethnic groups rank amongst the most inactive; however, we are beginning to see signs of a post-pandemic recovery.



Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2017 to 2022 waves)

A higher proportion of Chinese, White other and White British population in London feel they have the opportunity to be physically active compared to the national average.

## I feel that I have the opportunity to be physically active by ethnic group

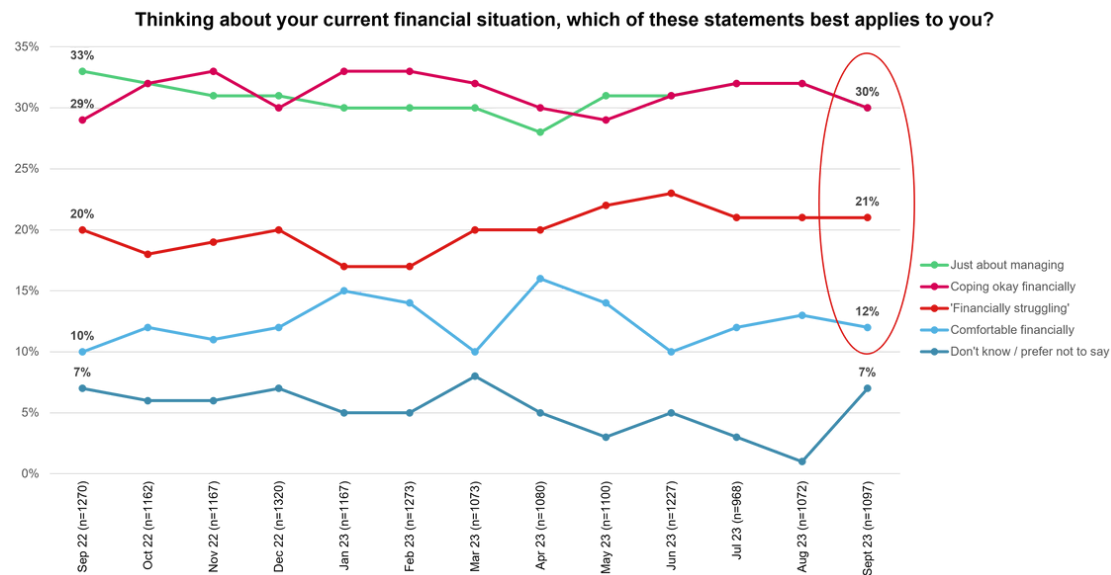


\* No disagreement data is available for Chinese ethnic group in London. Further, no strongly disagree data for Black, Mixed, and Other is recorded in London.

Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2021 to 2022 wave)

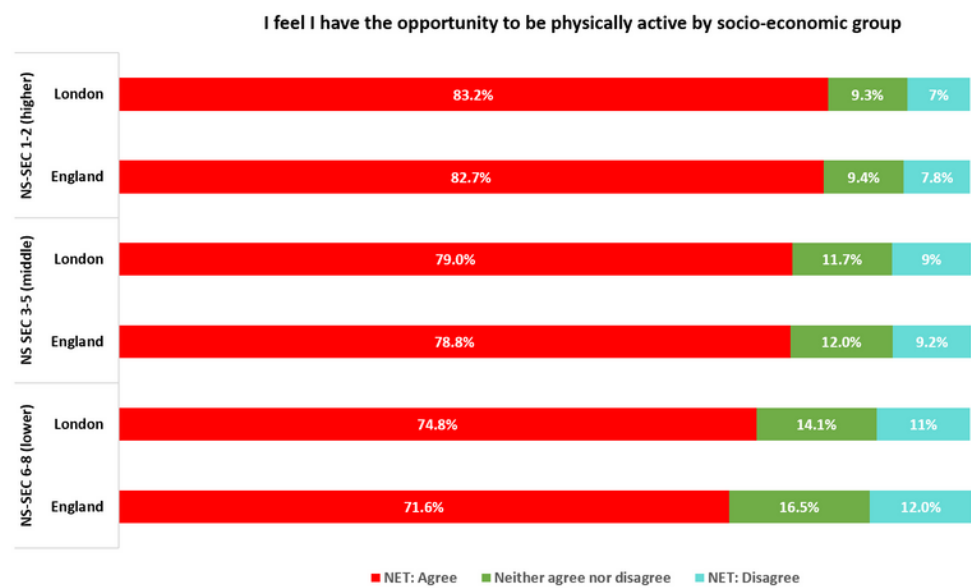
# COST OF LIVING AND OPPORTUNITY TO KEEP ACTIVE

Londoners are still struggling financially compared to the previous year due to the rising cost of living.



Source: GLA cost of living polling (Sept 2023)

Most adults in London and England state they have the opportunity to be physically active; however, fewer belonging to the lower NS-SEC 6-8 socio-economic believe this is the case.



Source: Sport England Adult Active Lives Survey (Nov 2021 to 2022 wave)

Previous London Sport research on the cost-of-living highlights the negative impact on Londoners' ability to be active, in particular for groups already facing economic challenges.

# CONTACTS

If you would like further detail on this report and the data presented, or if you would like get in touch with London Sport to see how we can work together to improve the lives of Londoners through sport and physical activity, please contact the relevant member of staff below.

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