



ECB Insight summary of girls' participation & volunteering

November 2023






Summary of ECB findings on girls' recreational cricket (1/2)

General findings, background & myth busting

- There is a clear societal bias towards boys playing sport
- A lack of visibility of the women's professional game is the major reason for this societal bias
- There are some minor personality differences between boys & girls, in general, but not enough to take into consideration
- U16s play skews towards boys, and the skew is more pronounced in adults
- All kids - both boys and girls - fall out of sport as they hit their teenage years

Motivations to play & keep playing

- Fun with friends the main motivation to play for all groups of kids
 - Importance of competing as the 'main reason' to play is, in general, the biggest difference in motivation between boys & girls
 - Focussing on social fun or fitness can motivate kids who don't usually get into sport
 - Via school or through friends and family are the main route kids get into sport
- 



Summary of ECB findings on girls' recreational cricket (2/2)

Barriers to young people playing: General

- Reasons for stopping play are typically a lack of time, a change of location or they struggle to find a game
- Travel time, lack of opportunity to play and lack of friends playing are the main barriers to playing more.
- Barriers are exaggerated for girls, due to less scale


Barriers to young people playing: Girl specific

- Stereotypes can hit girls' self-believe
- Cricket clubs are typically male run cricket clubs with male focussed facilities
- W&G cricket is perceived to be valued less than men's or boys' cricket in the club environment

Girls' sections & the importance of volunteering

- A small proportion of clubs have female sections
- Lack of players & lack of volunteers are top reason for not having a girl's section

Volunteering in the club game

- Volunteers typically make big time commitments
 - Coaches are the most common type of volunteer, but also the type in most need
 - Most club volunteers played cricket, and for almost all cricket is a passion in life
 - Word of mouth is, by far, the main way people become aware of volunteering opportunities
 - The motivations to volunteer are to give something back to cricket, be part of the cricket community, make a difference, and hang out with friends or family
 - Size of the time commitment, a change of circumstances & not feeling valued are reasons for stopping volunteering
 - Having more volunteers to spread the burden and telling people 'thank you' more often would improve retention
 - Asking people and offering flexible time commitments are the best ways to attract more volunteers
- 



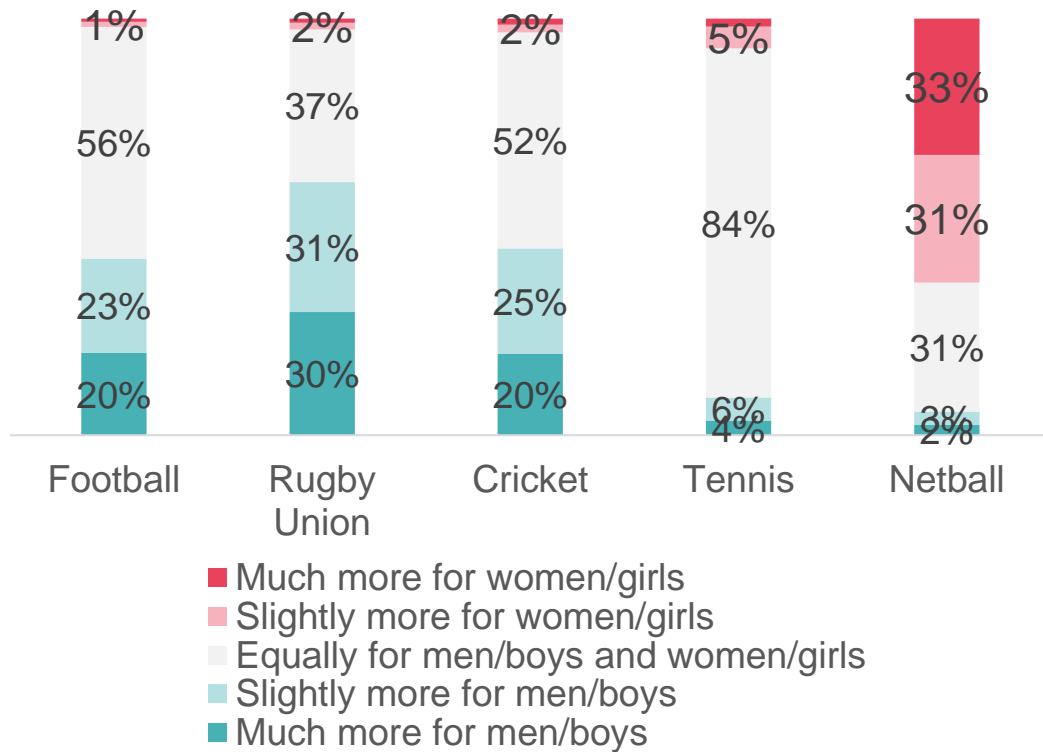
General findings, background & myth busting



There is a clear societal bias towards boys playing sport (1/3)

Most major sports are seen as more for boys

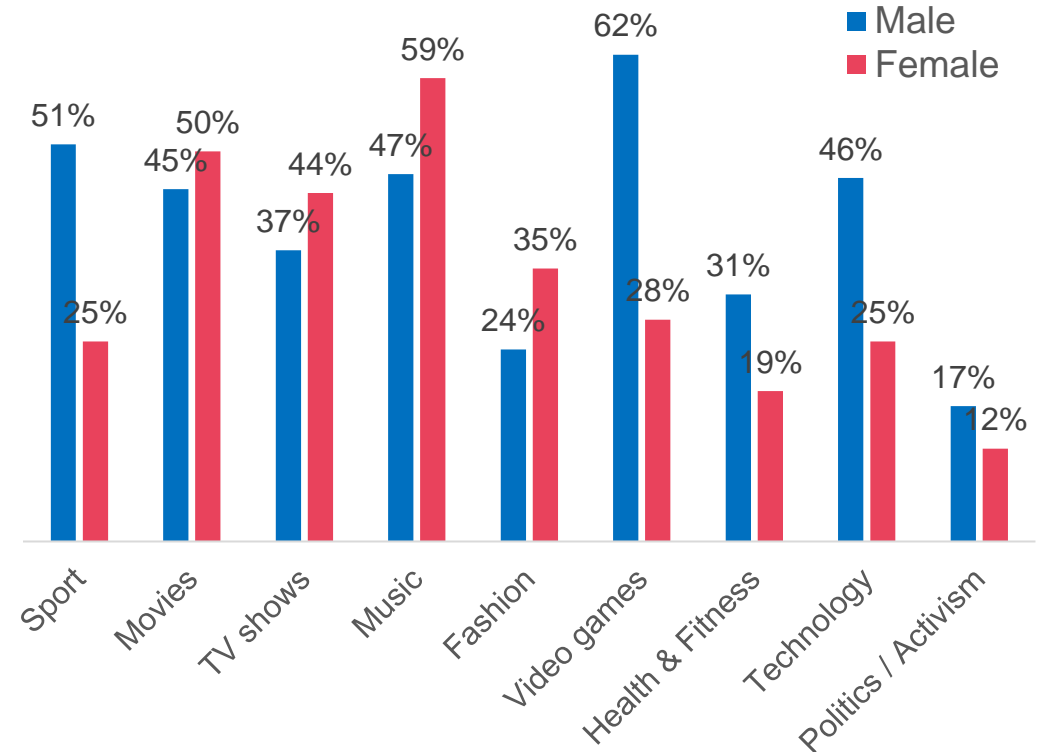
Perceptions of gender equality by sport



ECB Central Tracker January 2023

Sport, along with video games, are the hobbies with the bigger male skew

5-18 year olds: Hobbies interested in



2021 ECB Youth Segmentation work

There is a clear societal bias towards boys playing sport (2/3)

At school, Physical Education was a time of segregation – boys play football, rugby and cricket, and girls play netball and hockey. There was no opportunity to break out of this, so for woman to even show interest was seen as 'strange' by their friends. As a result, woman are getting involved in cricket much later than males, and can still experience sexism from spectators at these later stages.

Some feel the sport is built for men – large, heavy clothing and 'harsh', 'intimidating' equipment.



34, London

Thanks to the Women's Cricket World Cup and the exposure it received (television, press etc.), woman players feel that there is now a legitimacy that surrounds the game in regards to women. They perceive that being able to see a woman make a career from cricket will inspire young girls to believe that they too, along with boys, can take part in the game – this is motivating for woman players.

They believe that this is only possible however, when supported by schools by official organisations to ensure segregation doesn't take place and facilities can support all players.

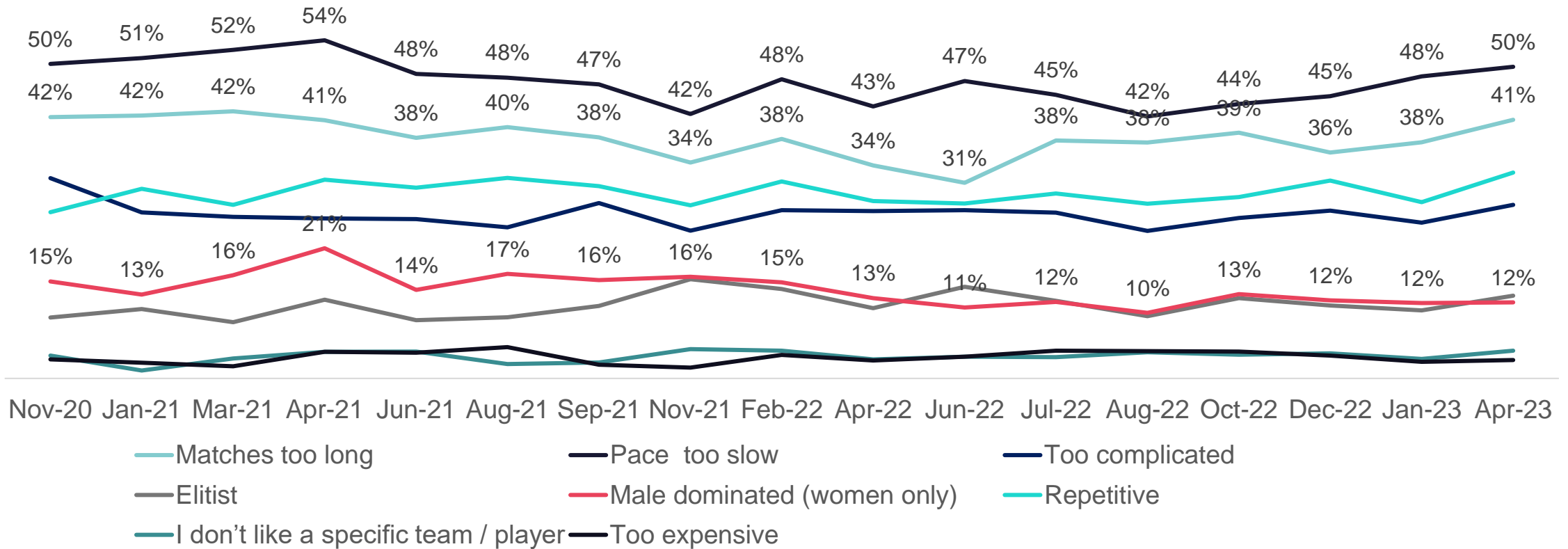


39, London

There is a clear societal bias towards boys playing sport (3/3)

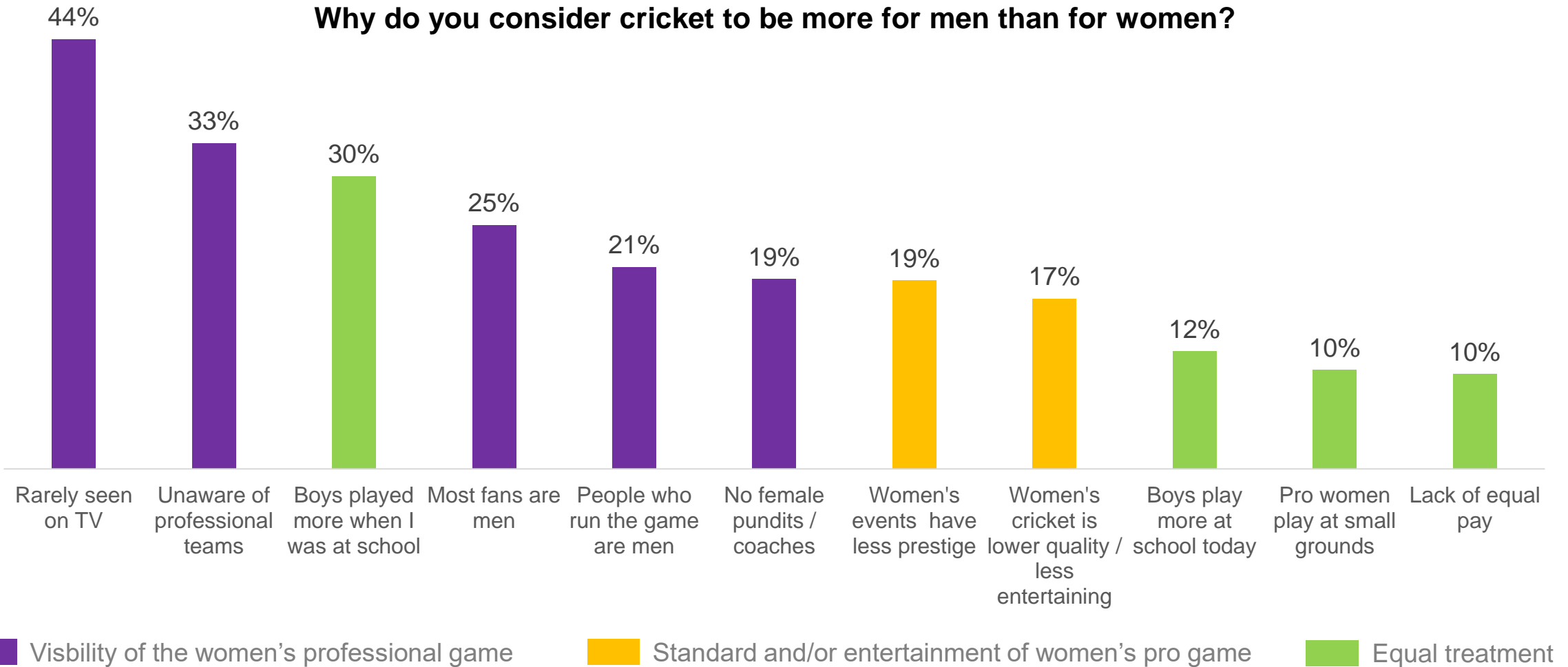
c12% of women who have a negative view of cricket cite 'male dominance' as a reason

Reasons for a negative view of cricket

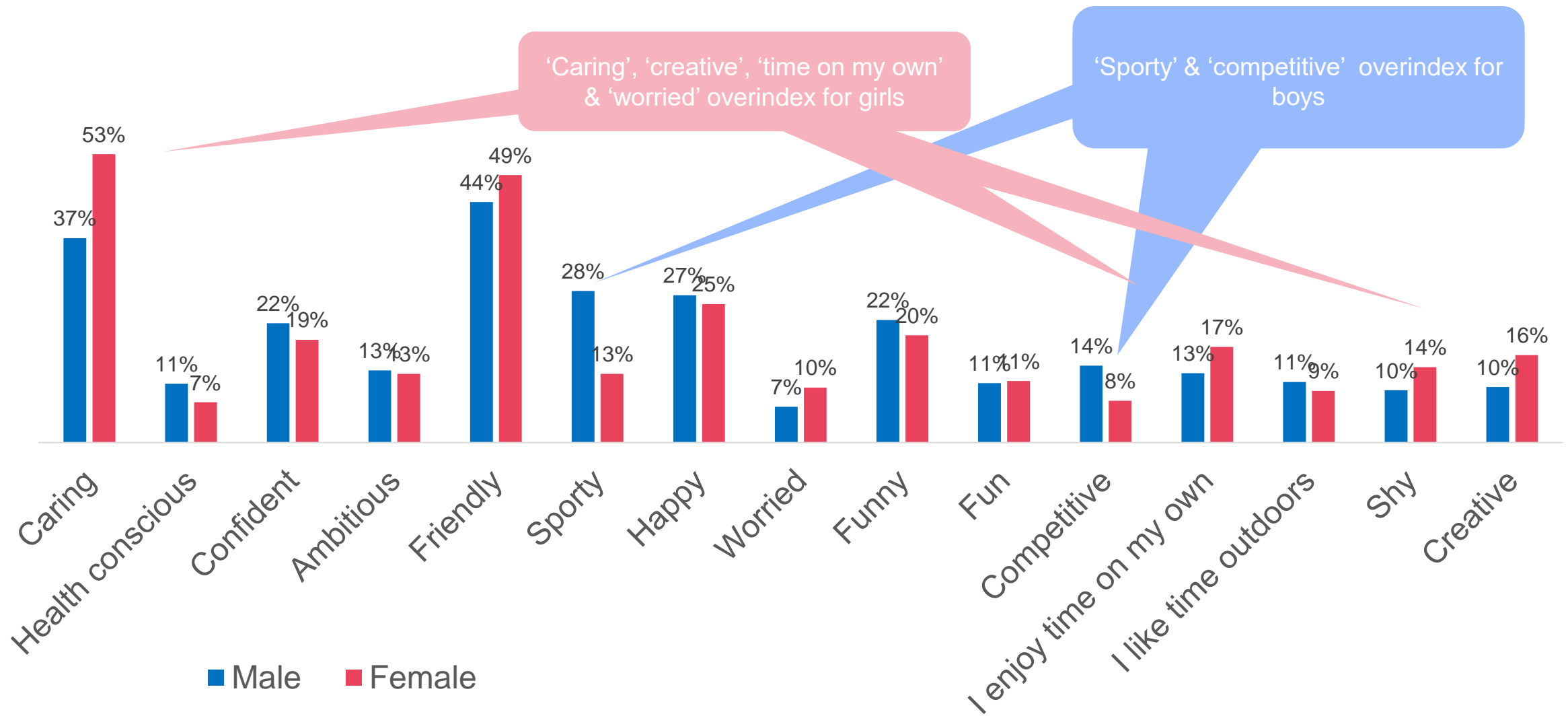


A lack of visibility of the women's professional game, and school age playing experiences, are the main cause of this bias

Why do you consider cricket to be more for men than for women?



There are some minor personality differences between girls & boys, in general,...but not enough to take into consideration

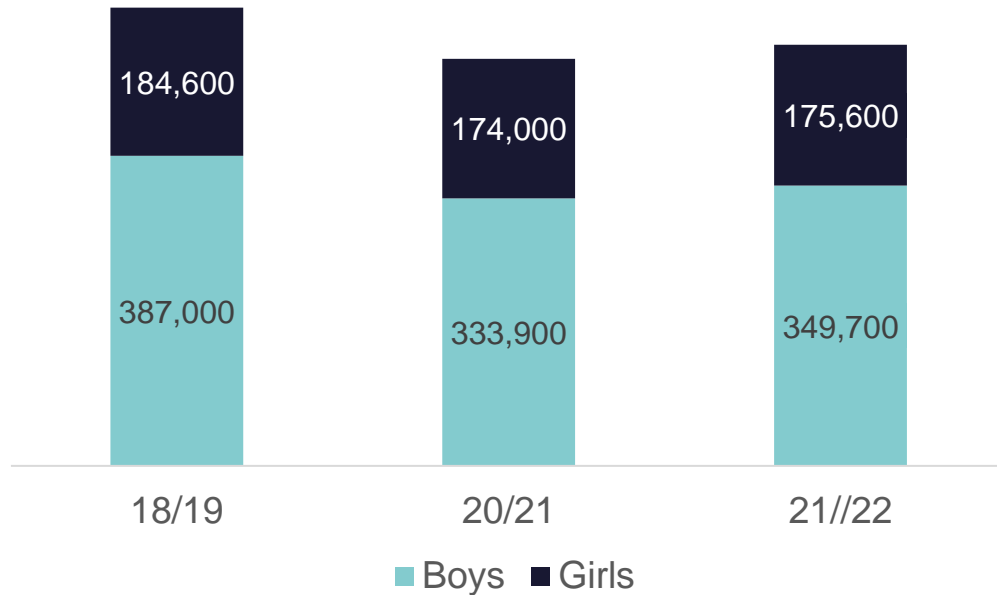


U16 play skews towards boys, and the skew is more pronounced in adults

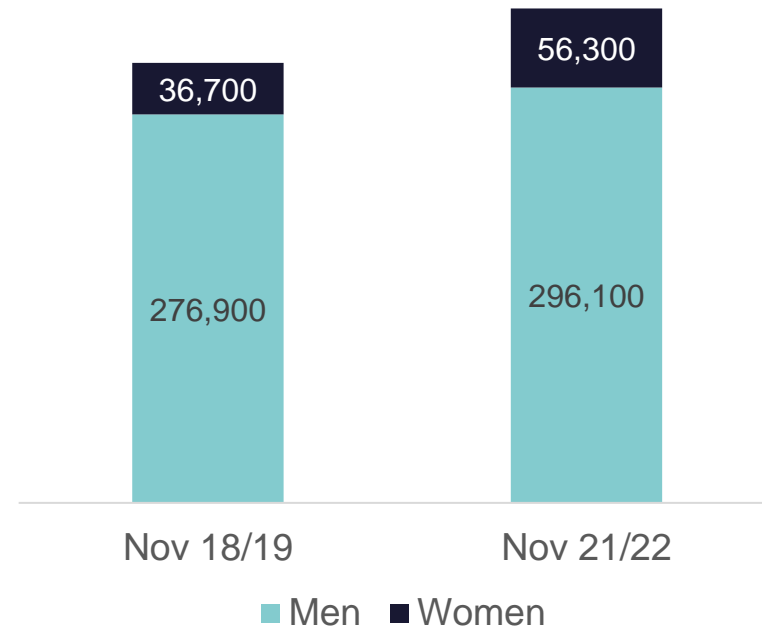
c1/3rd of U16 cricket play is from girls....

...this drops to c1/6th for adults*

U16s playing at least once a week



Adults playing twice in last 28 days



*Different definitions are used by Sport England for U16s & adults. We see across other areas of cricket engagement (i.e. TV viewing) that more casual fans are 1/3rd female and hardcore fans are c1/6th

All kids - both boys and girls - fall out of playing sport as they hit their teenage years

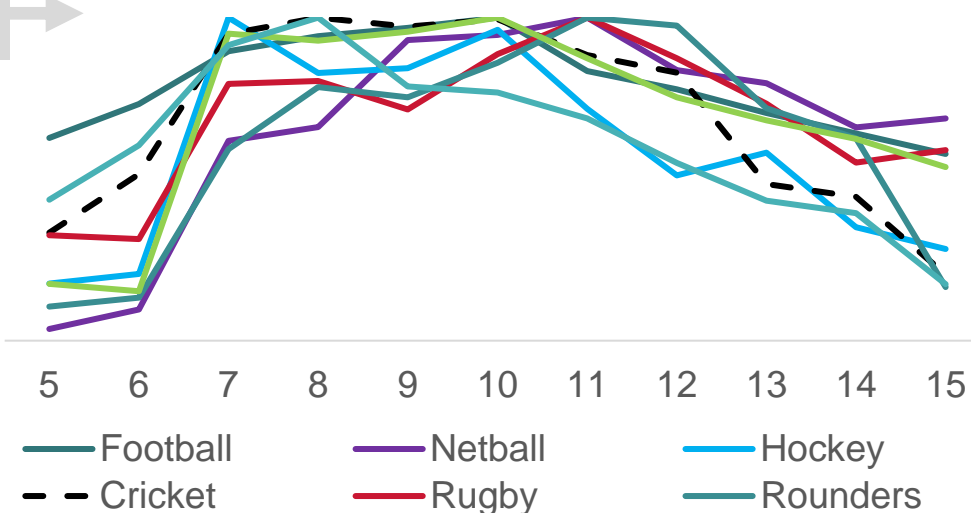
Peak participation for all sports is between 8-12

Similar decay patterns are seen for boys & girls

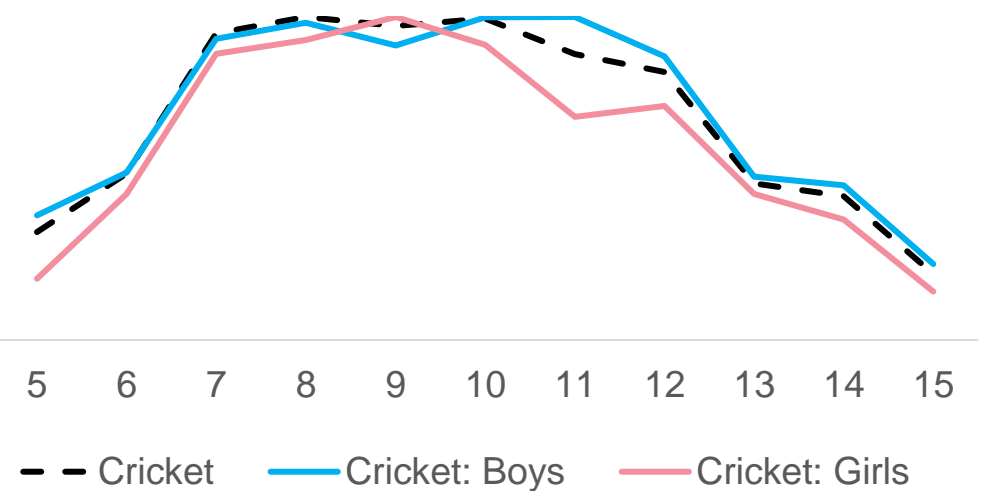
Participation by sport by age (Sport England)

Max participation →

Axis adjusted for each sport to allow comparison



Participation by sport by age (Sport England)



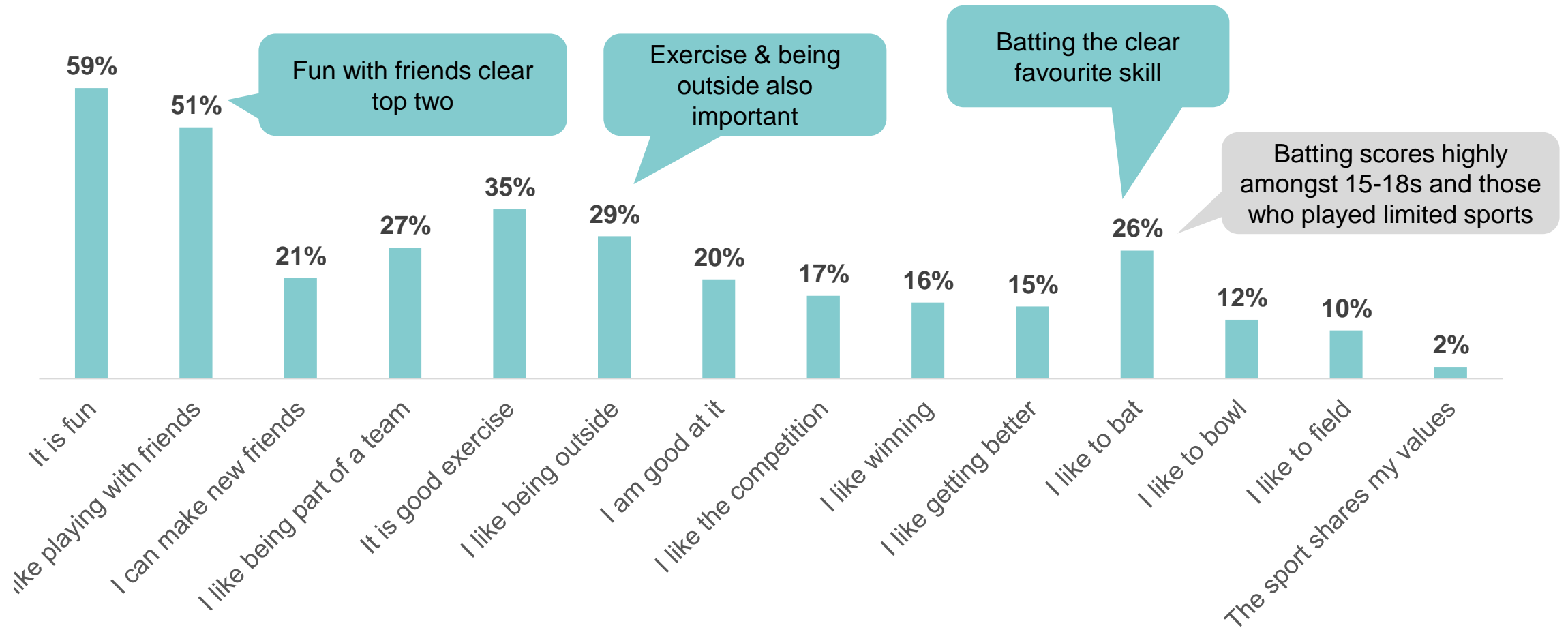
- Between 5 & 8 children try out lots of things. With All sports peaking around 8-12 for participation
- Children rationalise interests from 12 onwards. Sporty children tend to play multiple sports & pick a favourite



Motivations to play and keep playing

Fun with friends is the main reason to play for all groups of kids (1/2)

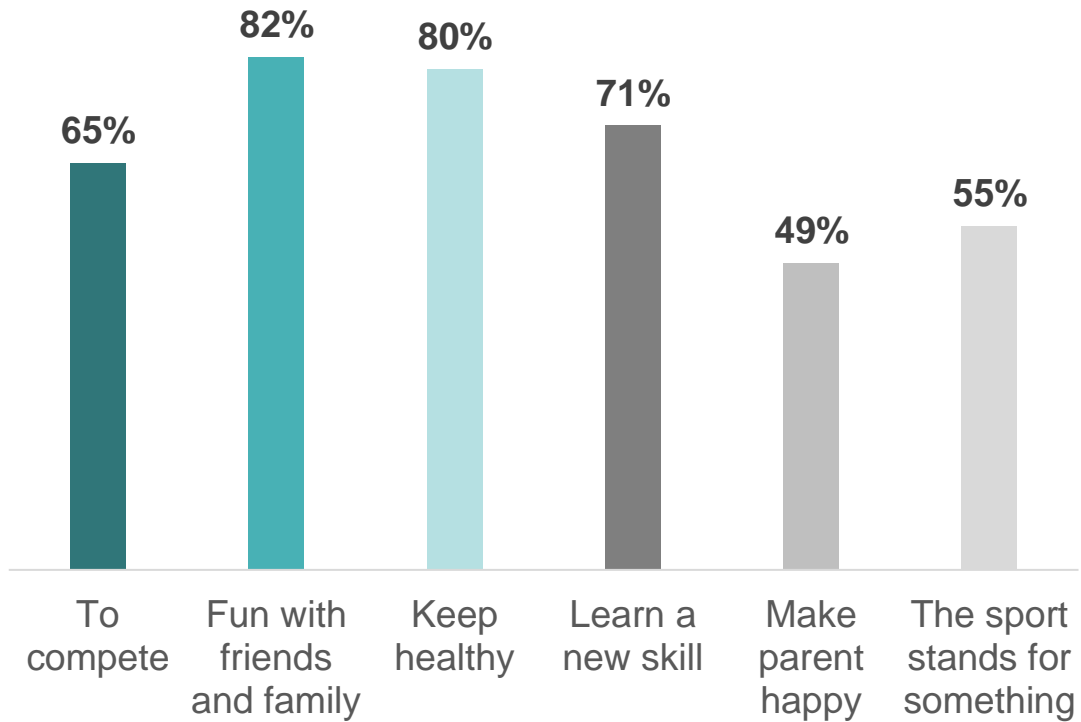
Why do you like playing cricket?



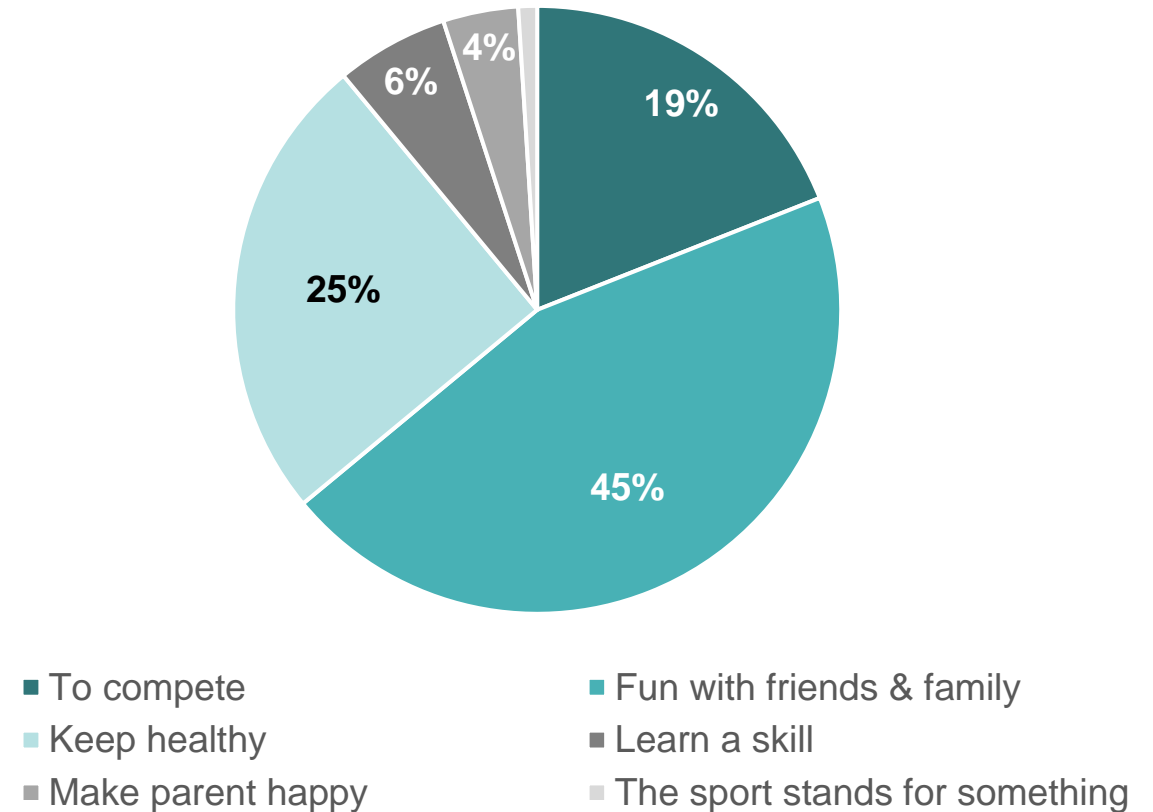
Limited differences between age, gender, race, socio demographics
Similar trends seen for all segments.

Fun with friends is the main reason to play for all groups of kids (2/2)

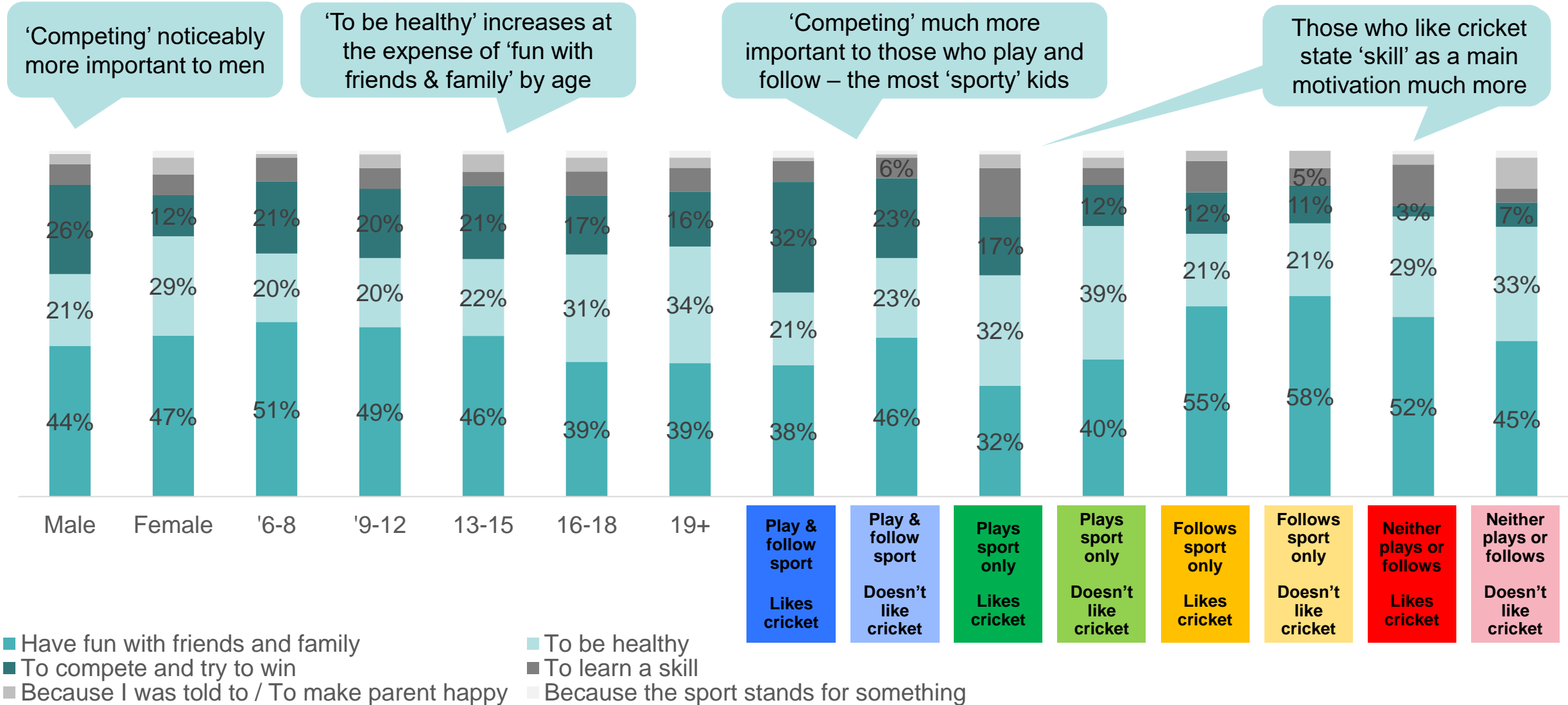
**Importance of individual reasons to play sport
(agree plus strongly agree)**



Main motivation to play sport



Importance of competing as the 'main reason' to play is the biggest difference between boys & girls (in general terms)



Focussing on social fun or fitness can motivate kids who don't usually get into sport (1/2)

How to encourage play

Women would be encouraged to play if the game had a greater emphasis on family and more casual style of games

Emphasis on family

"Family sessions so all the family can be included for special family time"

Casual Player

"Parents versus children games with shorter runs between wickets"

Uninterested

"To encourage families to come along and have a great day out, have fun playing cricket which is good for you and all the family"

Help Me Play

"I think if I was a family event more people would take part and it would be a fun day out for the family"

Real Worlders

More casual games

"I would make the game very casual to play - there would be no set number on the teams and families would turn up and we would then arrange the teams"

Feeling Old

"Make it shorter and get all ages involved"

Uninterested

"Cricket can be seen as quite stuffy, boring and very regulated. If you could make it more fun that would be good"

Disconnected Cricketers

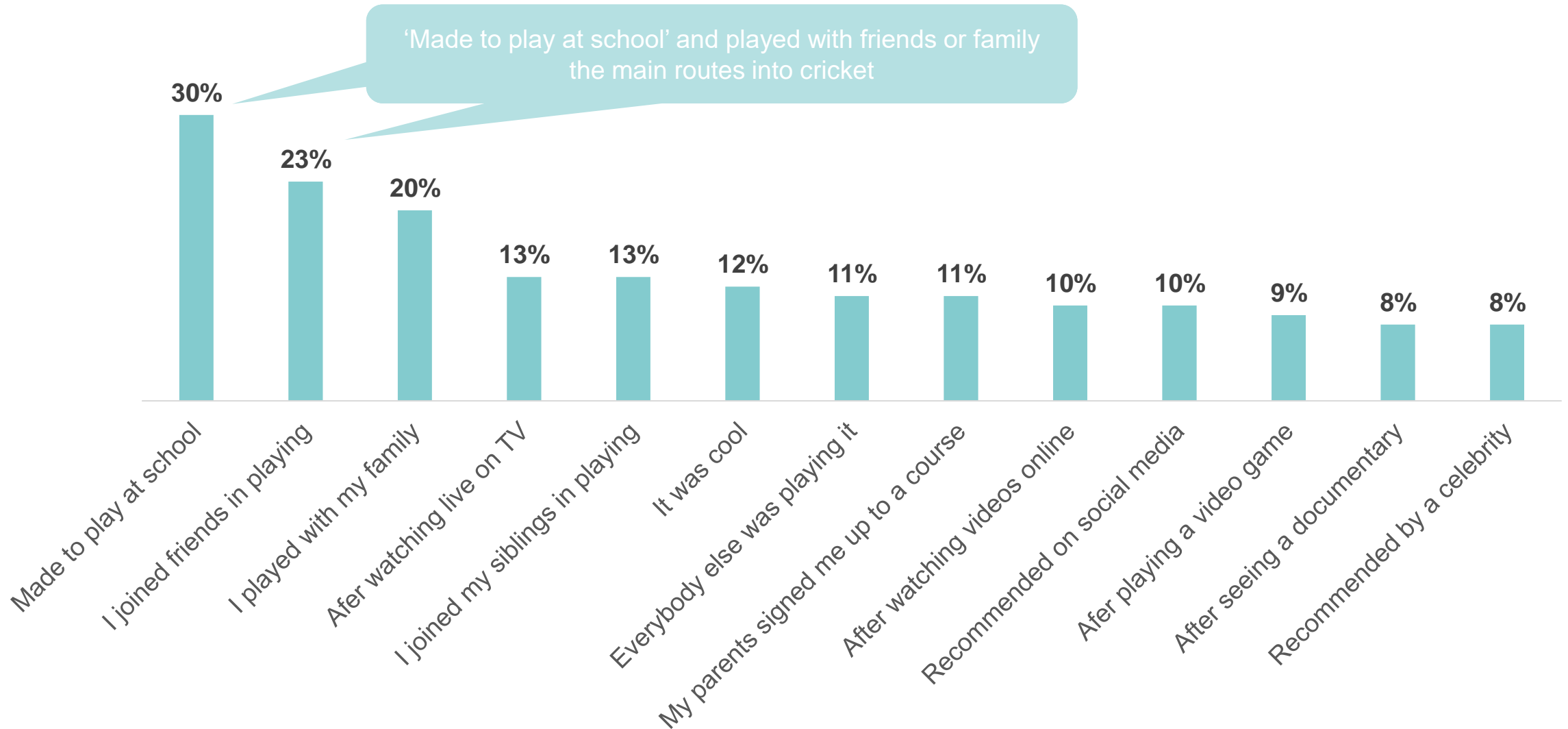
"More of a rounders type of cricket where each person has an equal chance of getting points more than one time i.e. not being out permanently"

Help Me Play

Focussing on social fun or fitness can motivate kids who don't usually get into sport (2/2)

Motivation segments		Boys	Girls
Existing core cricketers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing cricketer, playing at 4+ times a year; Keen to try all forms of cricket Play lots of sports; highly physically literate across all Sport England metrics Generally, score highly on all motivations; similar to 'highly motivated' group 	9%	6%
Highly motivated by all aspects of sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated by all aspects of sport; interested by existing offers if attracted to cricket Play lots of sports; highly physically literate across all Sport England metrics 	48%	32%
Motivated but not by purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated by all aspects but not purpose. Not as strongly motivated as above Play fewer sports in total, usually focussed on football Batting particularly attractive part of cricket. Open to try something casual at first 	11%	10%
No competition or purpose: Social & fitness only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absolutely hate competition and no interest in purpose either Do not consider themselves sporty Any offer would need to be casual or have a fitness element 	8%	14%
Weakly motivated and lacking physical literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weakly motivated in general; fun with friends & being healthy have some appeal More open than some other groups to less casual options but lack of physical literacy, understanding & confidence would require a safe & targeted offer 	9%	10%
Rejectors of cricket: I will never play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claim are not interested in any form of cricket offer under any circumstances 95% are not attracted to cricket at all 	16%	27%

Via school or through friends and family are the main routes kids which get kids into sport



Question: What made you first try cricket?

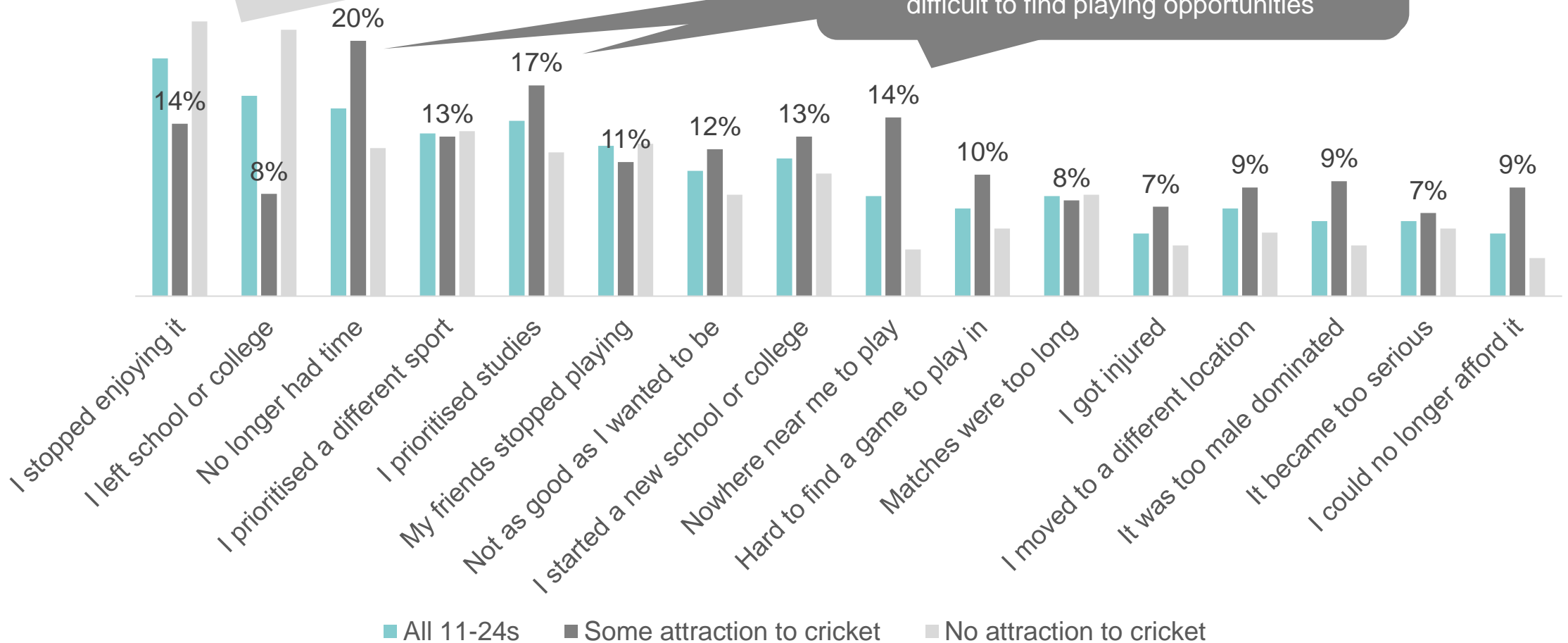


Barriers to young people playing: General

Reasons for stopping cricket entirely are typically around lack of time, changing location or struggling to find a game

Those who don't like cricket stopped playing when they no longer had to

Those who like cricket stop due to time constraints or changing location making it difficult to find playing opportunities



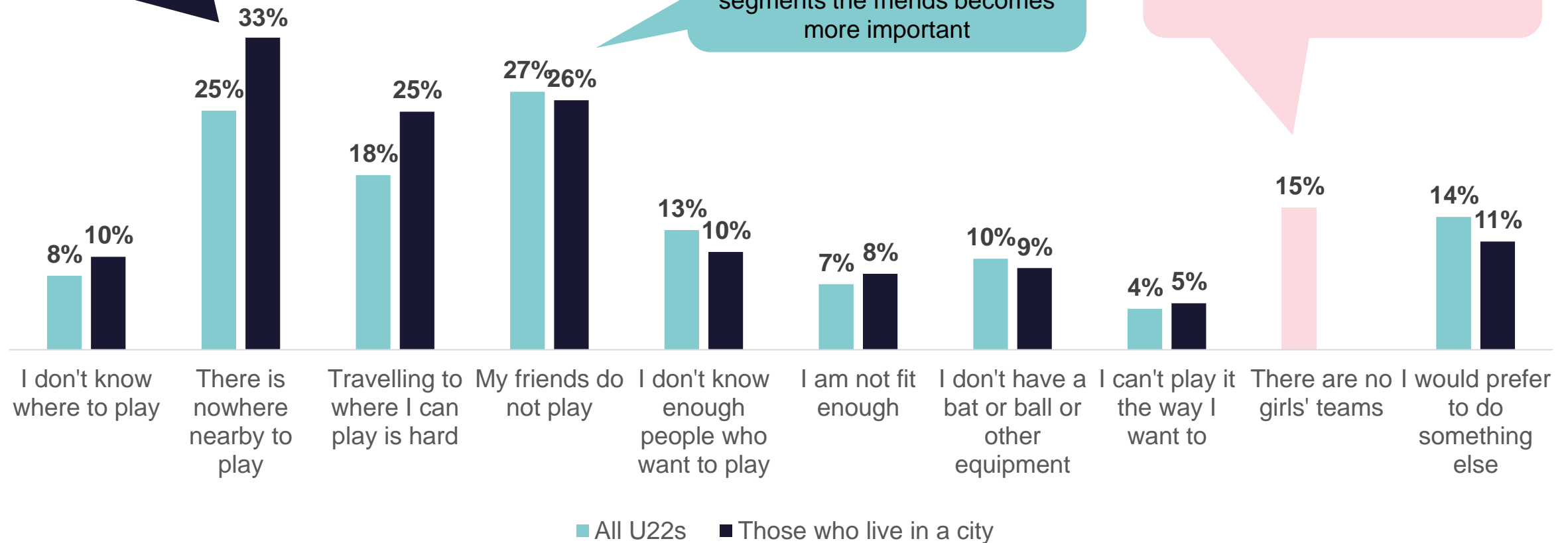
Question: Why did you stop playing cricket?

Travel time, lack of opportunity to play, a lack of friends playing and confidence are the main barriers to play (1/2)

Ease of playing nearby significantly more of a problem for city dwellers

Same broad trend seen across all segments. For less sporty segments the friends becomes more important

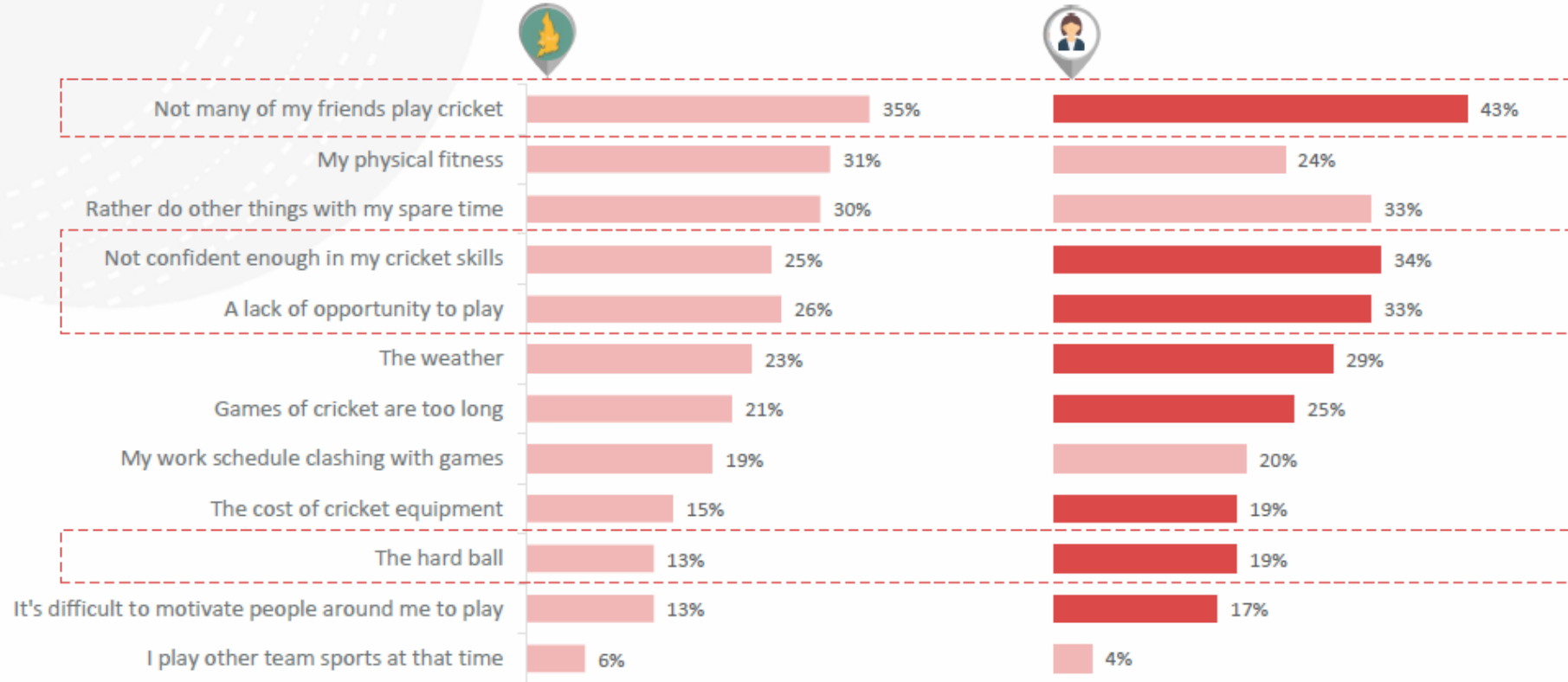
Lack of girls teams is a big problem for girls



Travel time, lack of opportunity to play, a lack of friends playing and confidence are the main barriers to play (2/2)

Barriers to playing

Women are significantly more likely to mention most barriers. Not having friends that play and lack of confidence in cricket skills are particularly important to women



"The ball...it's very intimidating for some women. It's hard and heavy, so we like to change the type of ball we use for our team."

■ Significantly higher than total population



Barriers to young people playing: Girl specific

Stereotypes hit girls self-believe that they can play (1/2)

Suggestions on how to motivate girls

GIRLS' ENJOYMENT AND MOTIVATION ARE DRIVEN BY 4 KEY ELEMENTS



1

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

- ▶ Making progress
- ▶ Recognition/praise
- ▶ Challenge/competition
- ▶ Progress/feedback
- ▶ Given responsibility
- ▶ Key to driving a passion for sport



2

BELONGING/ FAMILIARITY

- ▶ Involves support from friends or family - mum, brother, dad etc.
- ▶ Gives sense of belonging (e.g. routine, uniform, part of the club)



3

PEER ROLE MODELS

- ▶ Someone to aspire to
- ▶ Someone they feel is similar to them



4

FEELS GOOD/ SENSE OF RELEASE

- ▶ Even more important since lockdown
- ▶ Uses up energy, feel free, excitement, fresh air

How can we motivate young girls to participate in physical activity and sport?

Alongside building the right skills and surrounding them with positive messaging, it is vital to motivate and engage girls in the right way. In particular:

- Girls are not born under-confident or with lower self-esteem, but develop this due to external factors - supporting confidence and self-belief is therefore essential;
- Girls can thrive in competitive environments, given the right skills and in a fair environment;
- As a result of stereotyping, self-belief is reduced and more girls fear failure, especially in front of peers and teachers, so receiving recognition and positive feedback is key.

Girls' enjoyment and motivation in sport centred around four key elements: personal achievement; a feeling of belonging and familiarity; seeing others like them taking part; and experiencing that feel-good factor and freedom sport and exercise elicit.

Stereotypes hit girls self-believe that they can play (2/2)

Suggestions on how to give girls a positive start

What do we need to do to give girls a more positive start?

By combining these findings with our understanding of girls' broader lives we developed five success factors to creating a positive start for young girls in sport:

1 Surround girls with the expectation that they will succeed:

Parents, teachers and peers must help to change the narrative by showing that they value girls taking part in sport and expressing expectations that they will do well.

2 Build girls' skills early so there's a level playing field:

Encourage, expect, and support girls from a young age to master the fundamental skills they need to succeed in sport. Skills give sport meaning for girls, make competition fairer and success more attainable, building and sustaining self-belief.

3 Don't 'dumb it down' for girls:

Stop the messaging of young girls being fragile, weak and not liking competition. Instead reinforce the expectation that they can be courageous, powerful and fearless in their own way and are expected to be, and can be, good at sport.

4 Provide more opportunities for young girls:

Girls need to have as many opportunities as boys in school PE, after-school clubs and in the community, particularly in team sport. Opportunities must be visible, accessible and create an environment where girls are genuinely welcomed and equally valued.

5 Harness the school and after school environment:

Teachers and coaches need to invest in closing the skills and confidence gaps between boys and girls. Use school to embed the right attitudes amongst boys towards girls in sport, so there is greater appreciation, value and respect for girls playing sport.

Cricket clubs are typically male run with male focussed facilities (1/2)

A women's and/or girls' section is much more sustainable if a club has the 'right' attitude

Depending on the offering, this can be a combination of factors

Has a generally 'progressive' attitude towards women's roles in cricket and the club



- Resistance from the 'old guard'?
- What does being 'inclusive' mean to a club?
- Are women part of the decision-making process across the whole club?

Listens to its female members – understands what they need and want



- Is there enough potential for an all-female offering?
- Are there options for open and female-only cricket?
- Takes a player-first approach

Integrates its open and female offerings where appropriate



- Ensures the teams, while operating under a suitable environment, are not entirely independent of each other
- Proactive looks for open cricket opportunities

Thinks creatively outside the box to problem-solve



- Finds solutions, often outside of the club
- To ensure better matched fixtures, league structure
- Linking clubs up to field sides and generally pool resources, playing or otherwise

Implications –

Culture change is the most important yet most challenging issue to address

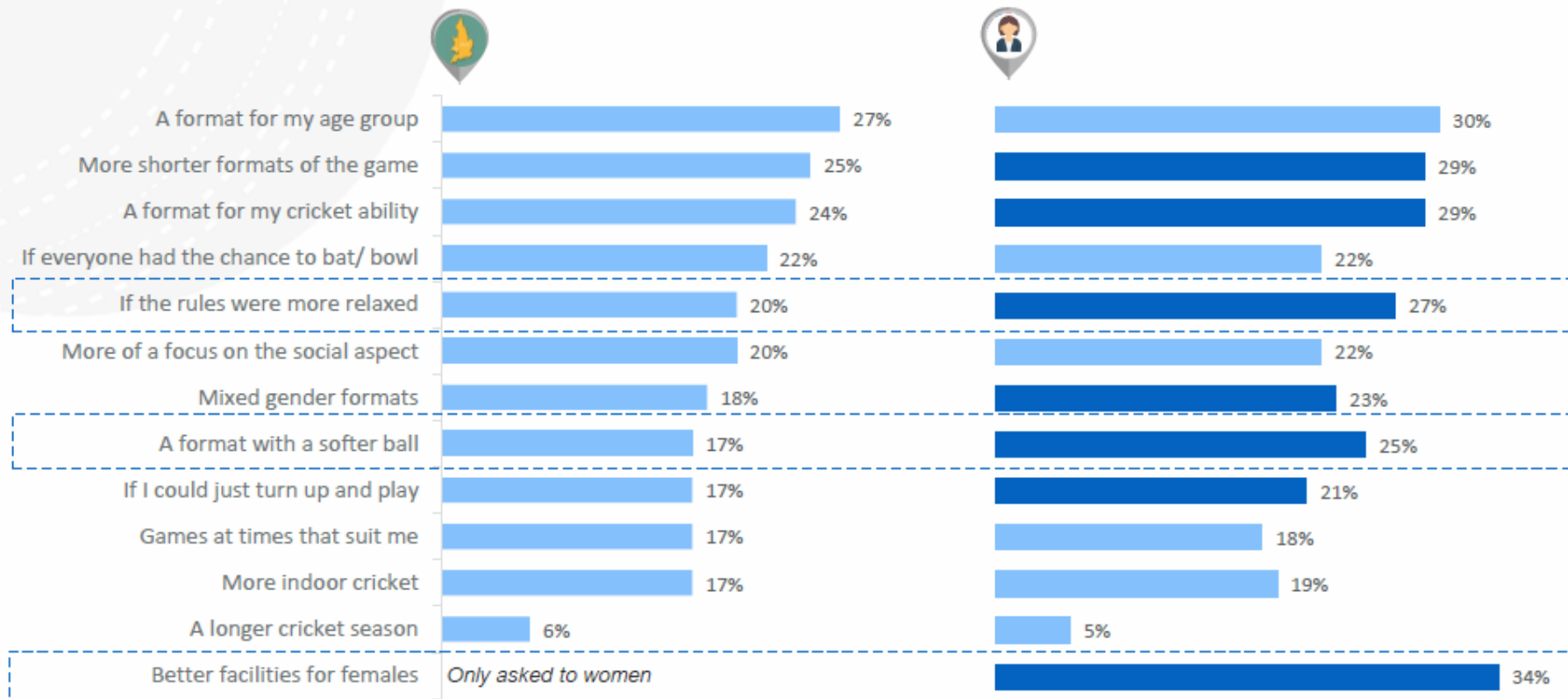
- Women's cricket often operates in a man's world – in many cases overt or casual sexism, or indifference lead to women struggling to have a voice
- In many cases women's and girls' cricket operates in parallel – tolerated and even applauded but not integrated into the wider (male) cricketing culture
- Some women like and value the 'independence' that separateness brings, but in many cases that is counter-productive to a sustainable offer
- Culturally there is little expectation of focused, structured support, which is the path to sustainability
- Until this changes it will be disproportionately difficult for clubs to maintain, let alone grow, female cricket

Cricket clubs are typically male run with male focussed facilities (2/2)

Enablers to playing

22

Women are significantly more likely to mention most enablers. Better facilities for women, relaxed rules and a softer ball are particularly important to women



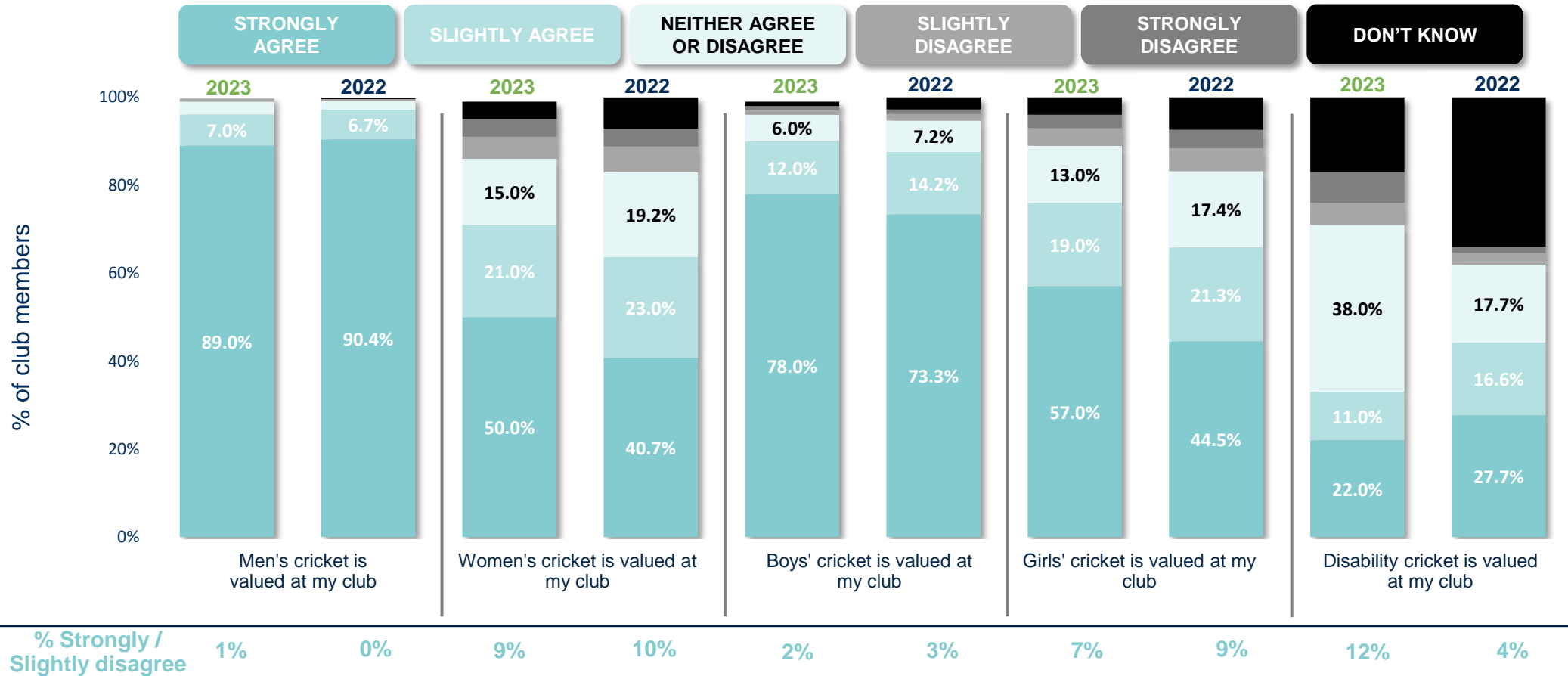
There is a perception that due to entrenched bias against females in the game, official facilities were not historically set up to support female players. They also haven't received modern updates to reflect changing demographics.

"Some don't even have ladies toilets... I have to ask the guys to leave the changing room to be able to get changed."

Significantly higher than total population

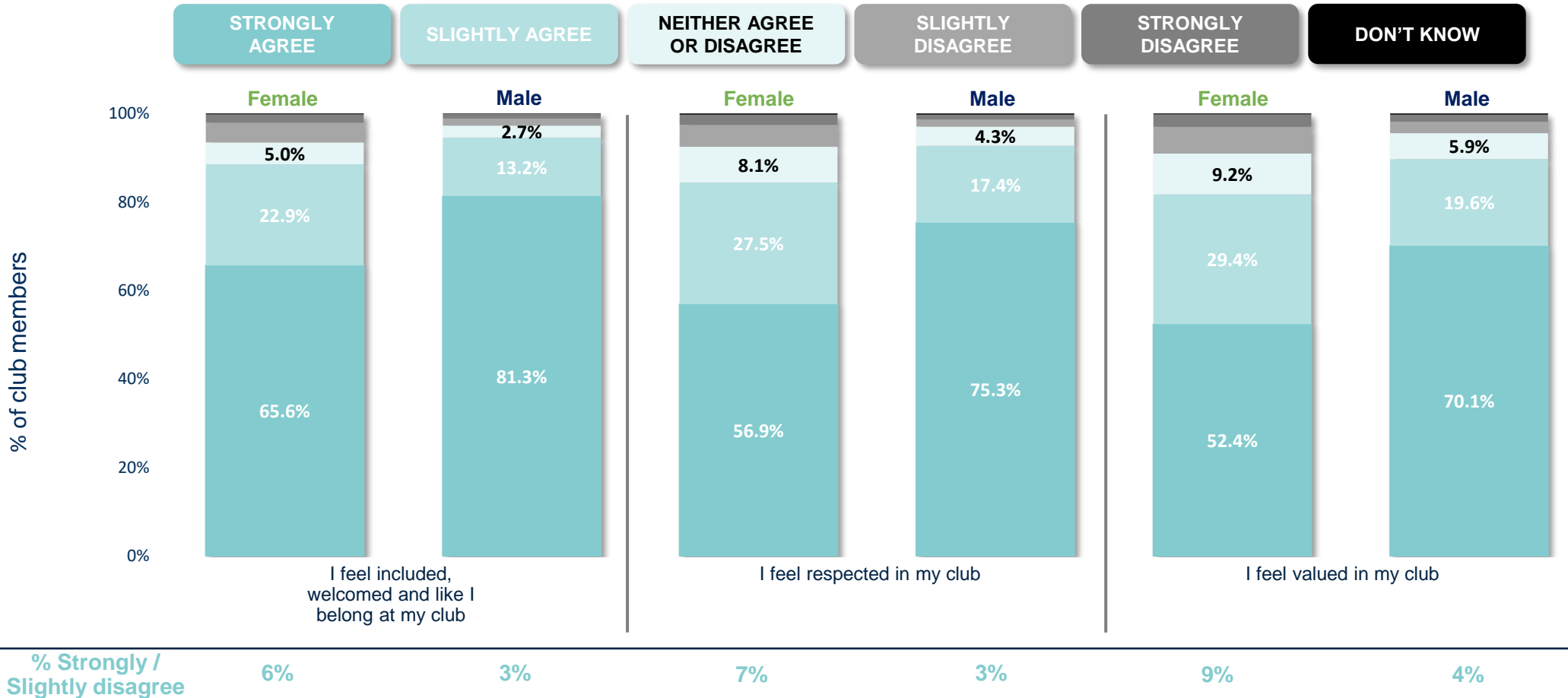
W&G cricket perceived to be valued less than men's or boys' cricket in the club environment (1/3)

The level of agreement with club sections being valued has remained in line or increased across all sections, except disability cricket which has declined by -12%pp YoY.



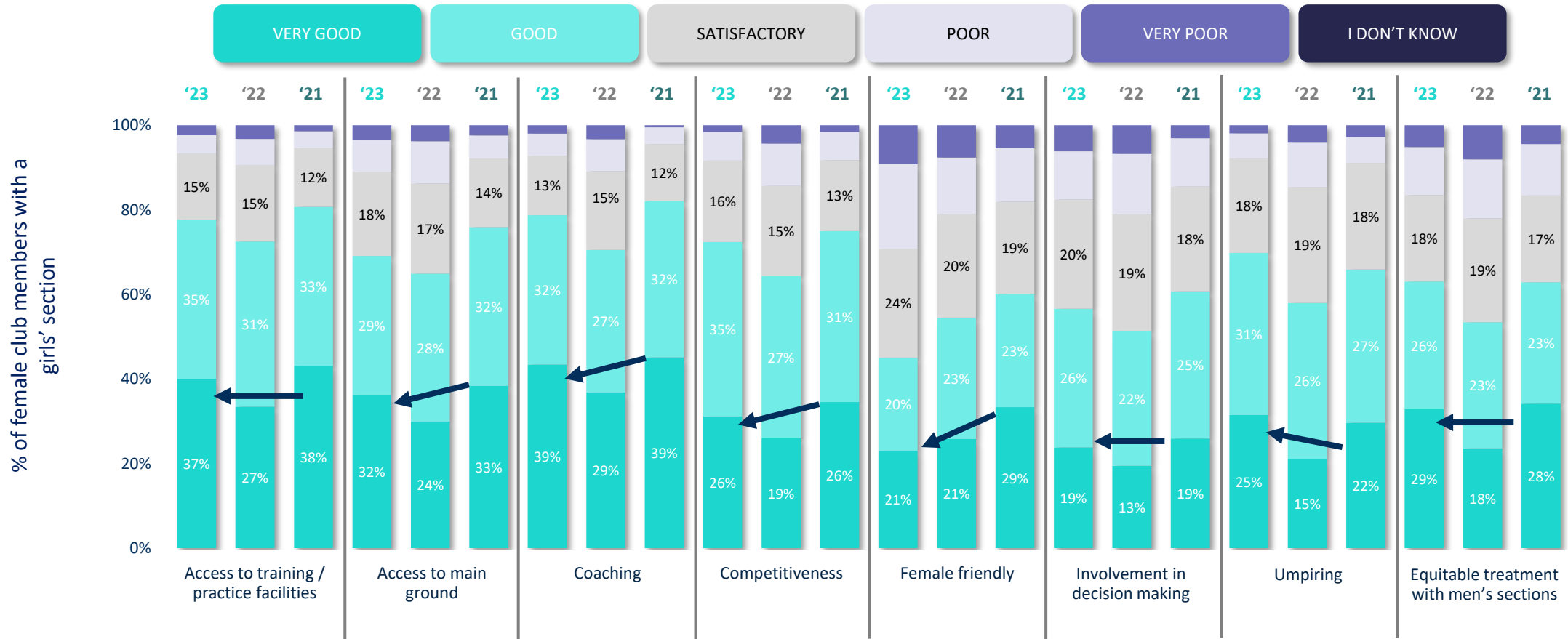
W&G cricket perceived to be valued less than men's or boys' cricket in the club environment (2/3)

Male cricket members feel more valued (+9%pp), respected (+7%pp) and included (+5%pp) at their club than females.



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Female = 1,489) (Male=8,812)

W&G cricket perceived to be valued less than men's or boys' cricket in the club environment (3/3)





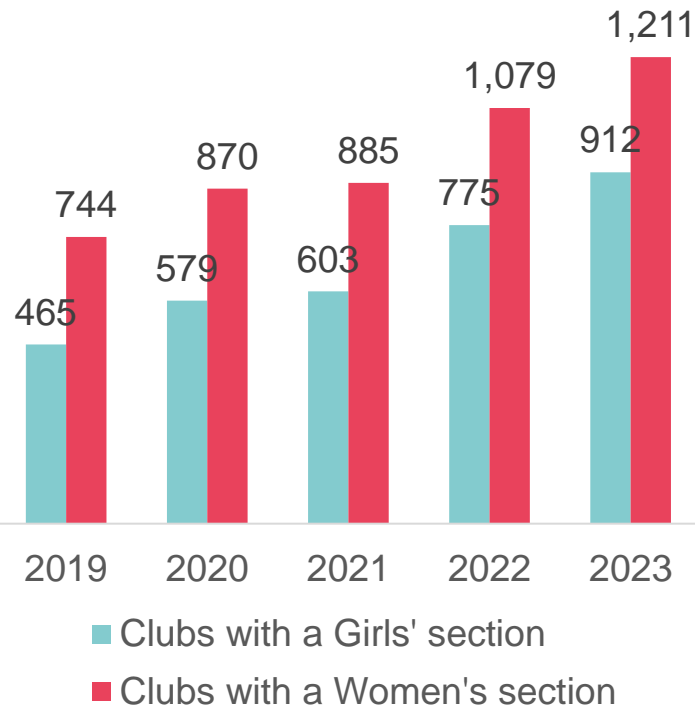
Girls' sections & the importance of volunteering

A small proportion of clubs have female sections

Although we have generated an increase in recent years

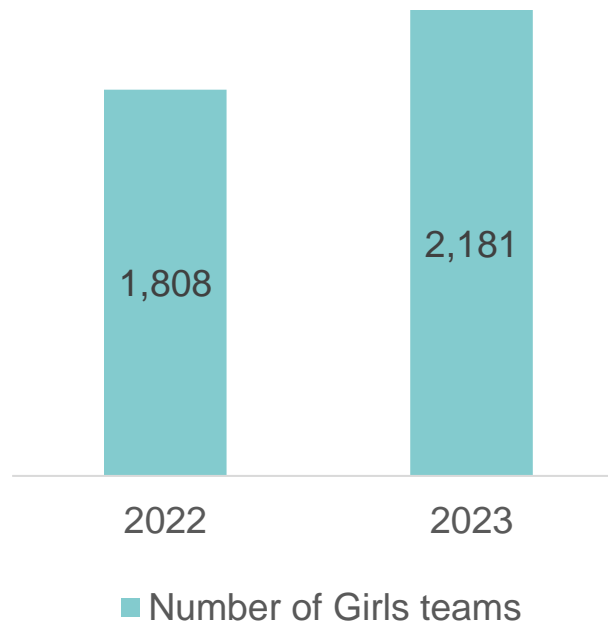
We have seen growth in number of Women & Girls sections at clubs...

Number of Women & Girls sections in recreational cricket



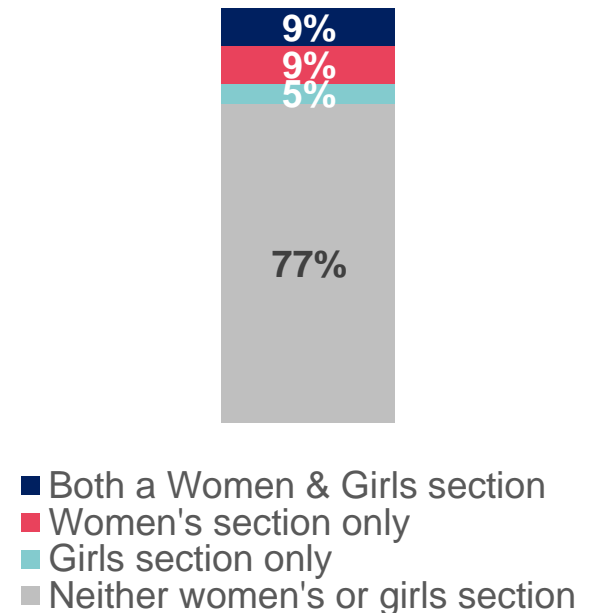
...as well as growth in the number of Girls teams...

Number of Girls teams in recreational cricket



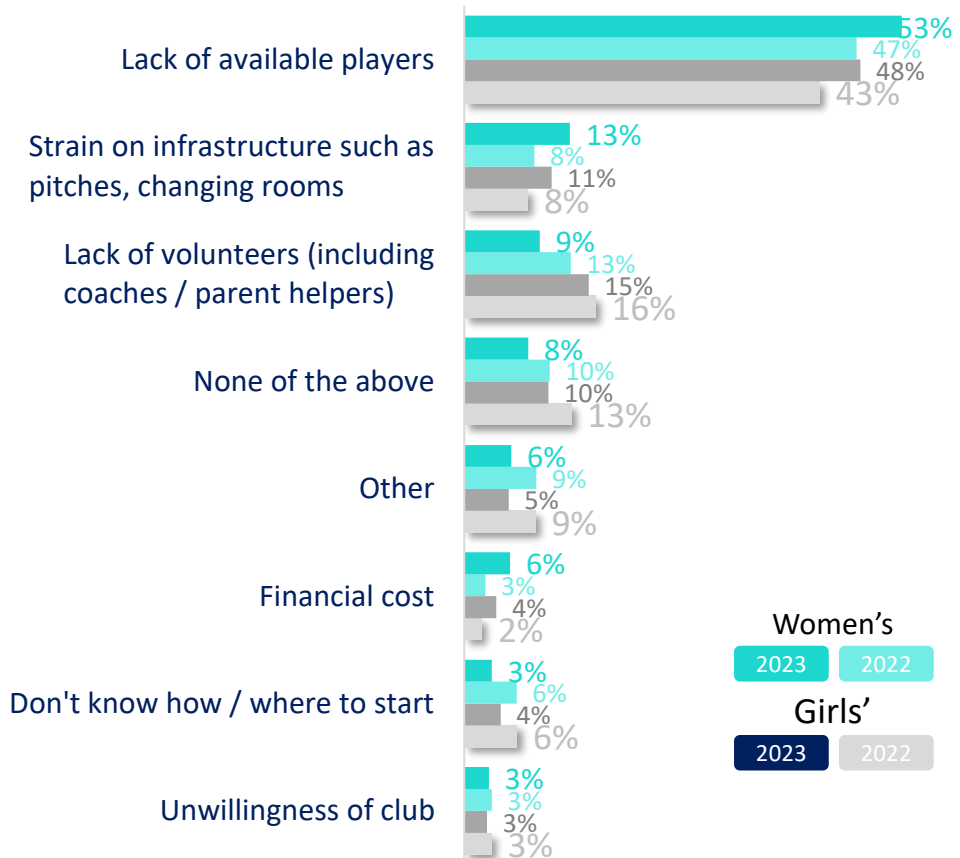
Most clubs still do not have either a Women or Girls section

Proportion of clubs with a Women & Girls section in recreational cricket



Lack of players & lack of volunteers are the top reasons for not having a girl's section (1/2)

Biggest Barriers To Having A Women's Or Girls' Section



Around half of the respondents perceive a lack of available players as the biggest barrier to having a women's or girls' section.

Confidence In Women's & Girls' Section Continuing

What are the main reasons that you are confident your women's and girls' sections will continue over next 3 years? (N = 1,087)

84% Are very confident or confident
 Vs 79% in 2022
 Vs 85% in 2021

- #1 Promoting women's and girls' cricket within and outside the club 19%
- #2 Committee support 16%
- #3 Female role models 13%

People are increasingly confident the women's and girls' sections will continue over the next 3 years, mostly through promotion.

Lack of players & lack of volunteers are the top reasons for not having a girl's section (2/2)

Many of the women's and girls' sections are in their infancy and have been set up ad hoc to answer a very specific need at a point in time

This makes them vulnerable and most in need of structure and support to become sustainable. The smaller the section, the more vulnerable it is to churn. Key factors for churn are...

Dependent on one individual

- Too much work / stress for one person
- Lack of contingency / continuity planning

Section following a cohort

- Particularly with the girls sections
- If following one cohort and no other teams present, the section is vulnerable to natural wastage
- Vulnerability to girls' relationships / fall outs. And if one goes, they all go

Lack of support

- Not enough emotional and practical support from the club
- Too few volunteers/ players able to help out
- Don't get access to the pitches / facilities
- Is not seen as important to the club

Too many obstacles to climb

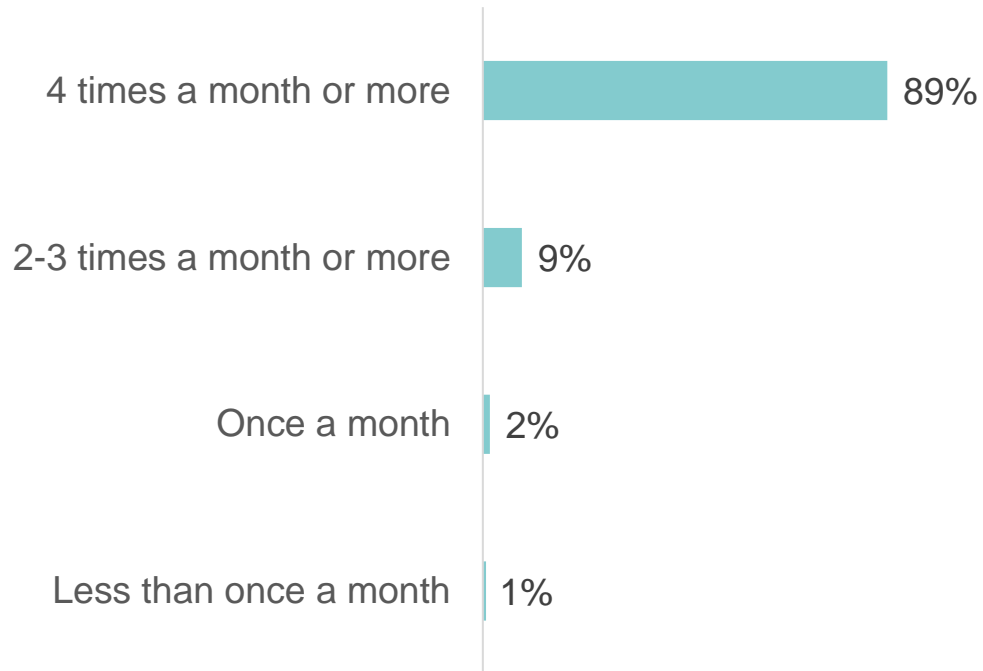
- Find it hard to get a team together
- Find it hard to find appropriate matches
- The fun goes out of it



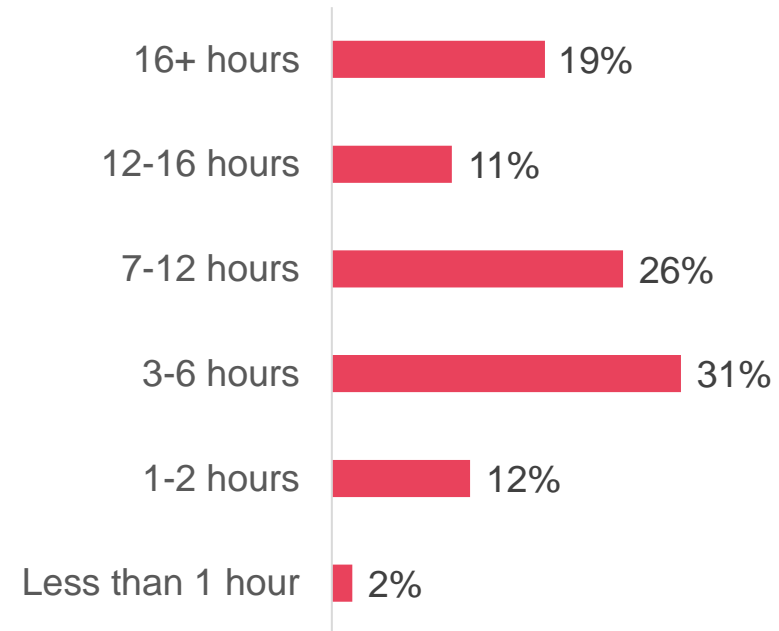
Volunteering in the club game

Volunteers typically make big time commitments

Q. During a season, how frequently do you volunteer in cricket?



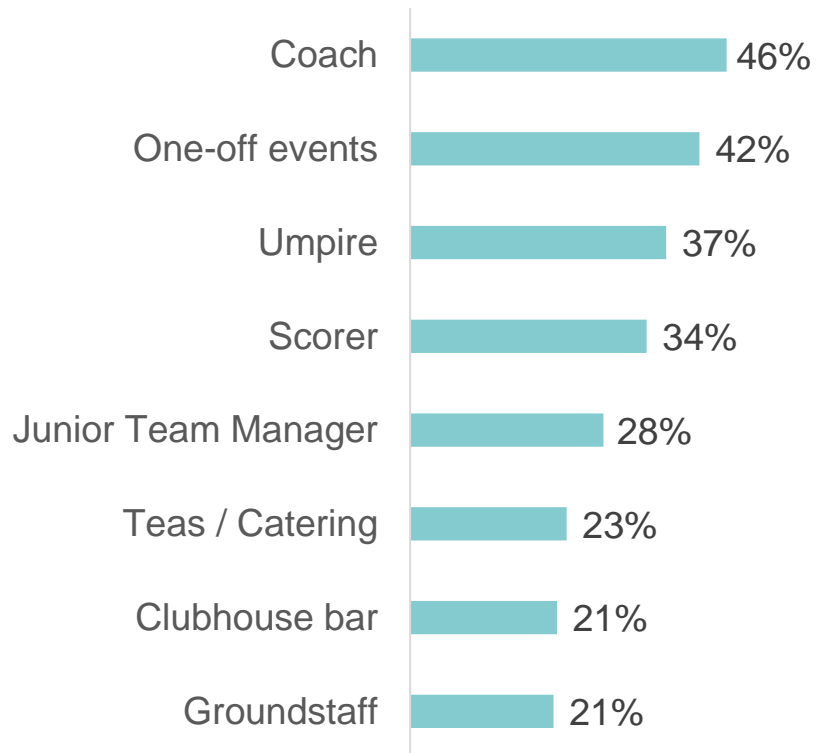
Q. In an average week during the season, how many hours do you spend volunteering?



Over half (55%) of volunteers do 7+ hours of volunteering per week

Coaches are the most common type of volunteer... ...but also the most needed

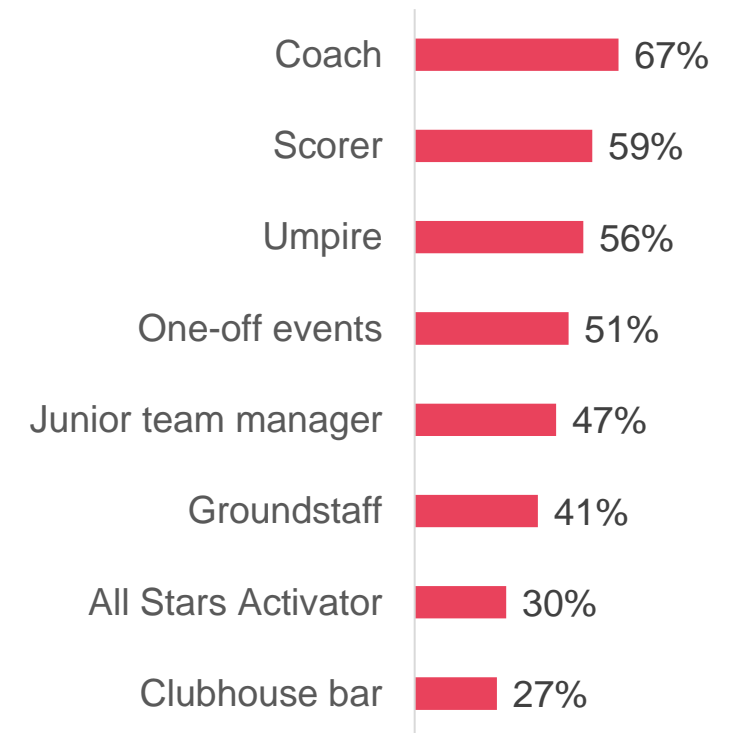
Q. Which volunteering role do you undertake?



Q. Do you have enough volunteers at your club?



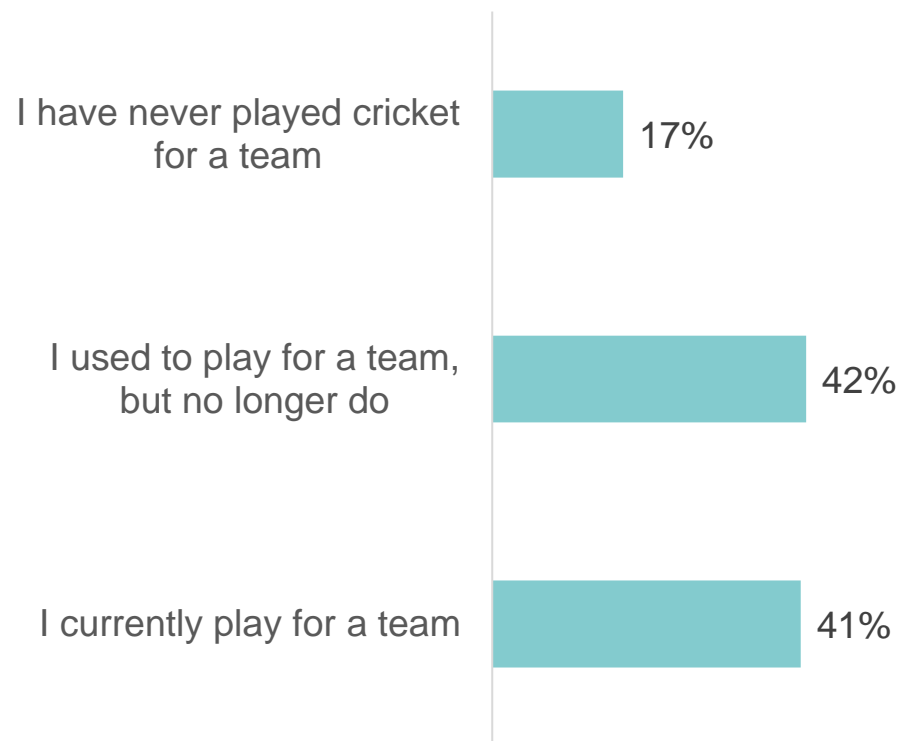
Q. Which roles do you need more volunteers for?



Most club volunteers play or played cricket, and for almost all it is a major passion in their life

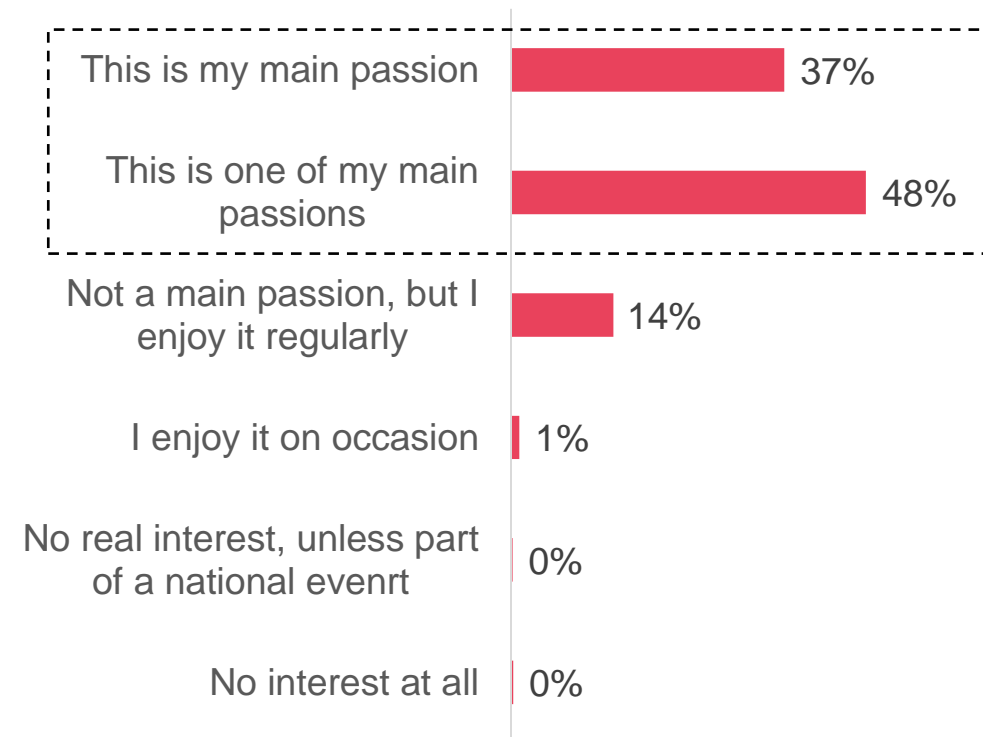
83% of volunteers either play or have played club cricket

Q. Which best describes your relationship with cricket?



85% consider cricket to be their passion, and 99% fall under our definition of a cricket fan

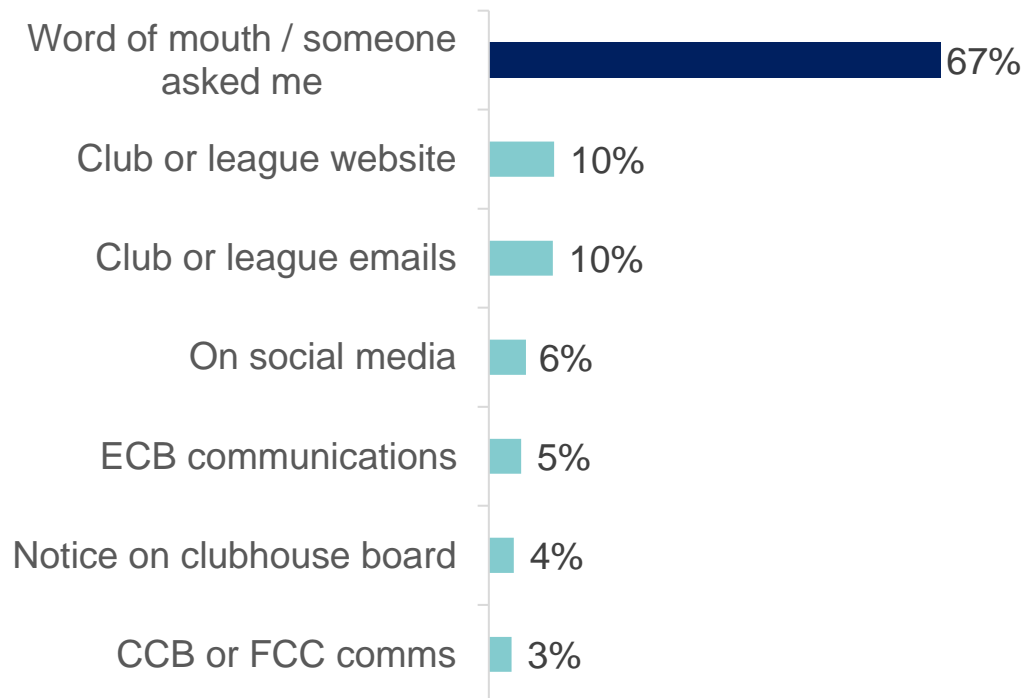
Q. How would you describe your passion for cricket?



Word of mouth is, by far, the most common way people become aware of volunteering opportunities

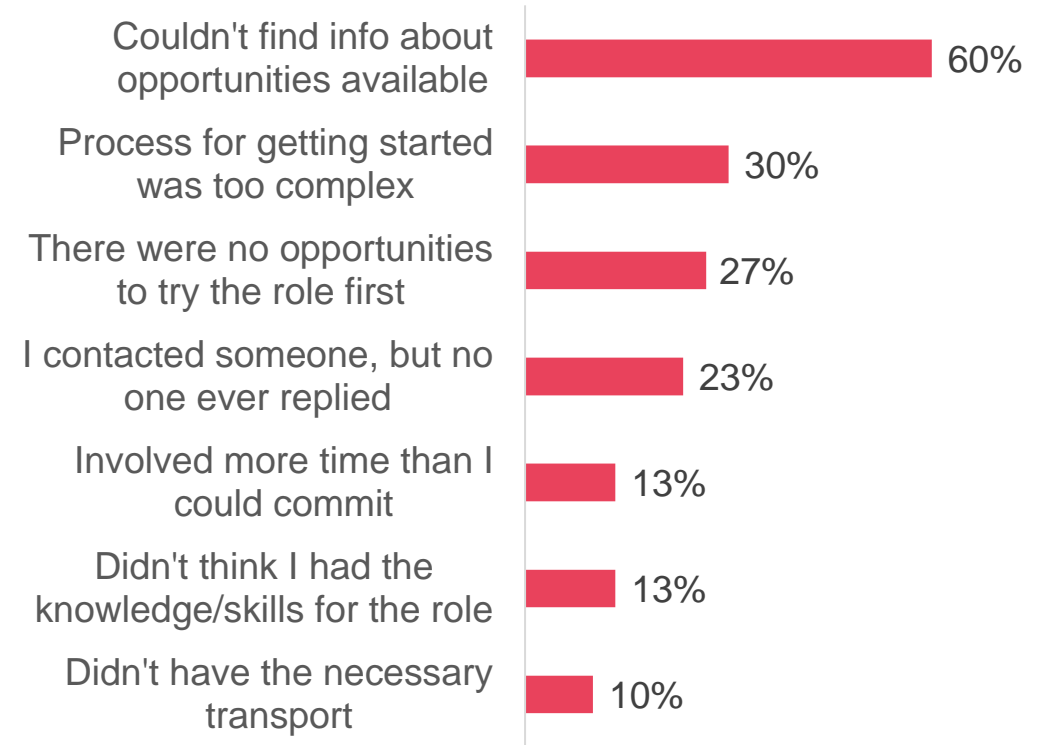
Most people become aware of volunteering opportunities by word of mouth or being asked

Q. Thinking about when you decided to volunteer, where did you find out about the opportunity?



The main thing stopping people becoming a volunteer is not knowing about opportunities

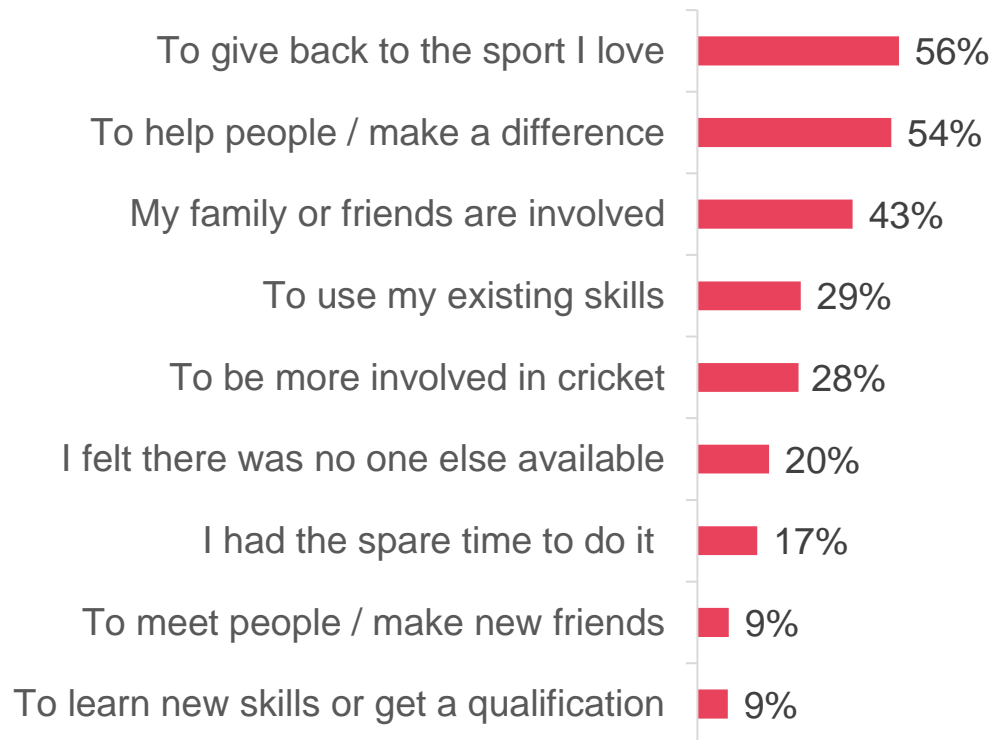
Q. When you looked into volunteering in cricket before, what prevented you from starting?



The motivations are to give something back, be part of the cricket community, make a difference and to hang out with friends or family

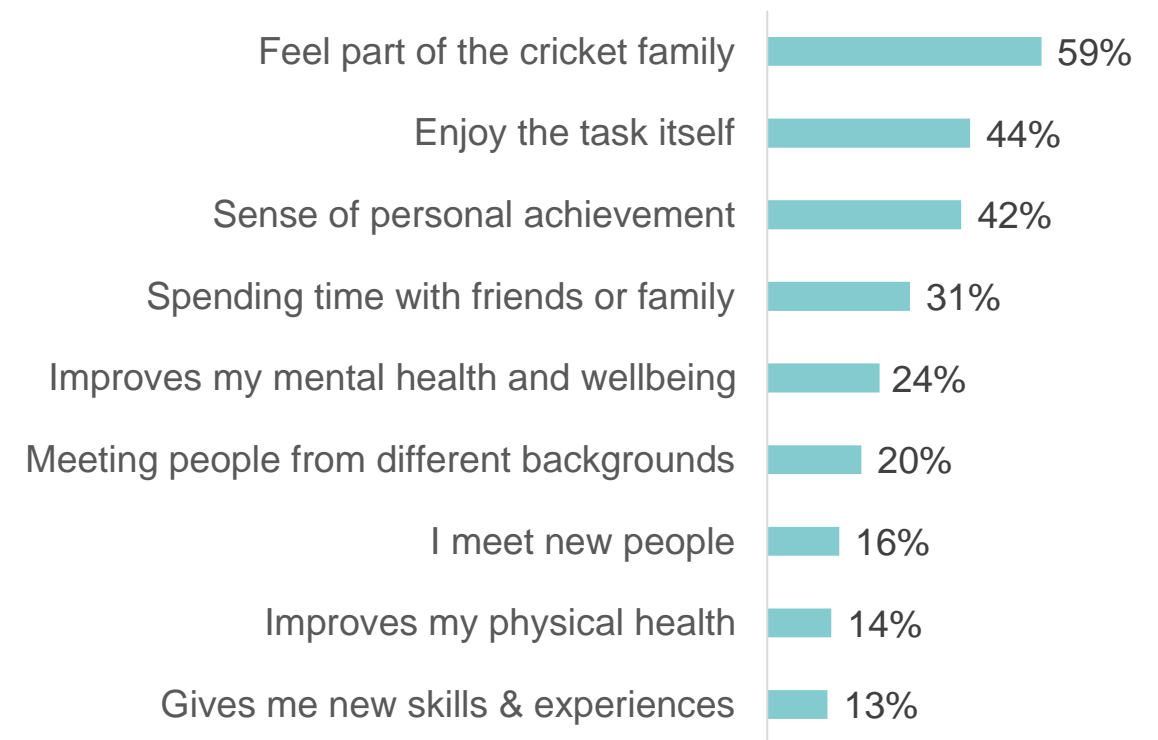
The main reasons people choose to volunteer are to give back to cricket, and make a difference

Q. Why do you volunteer in cricket?



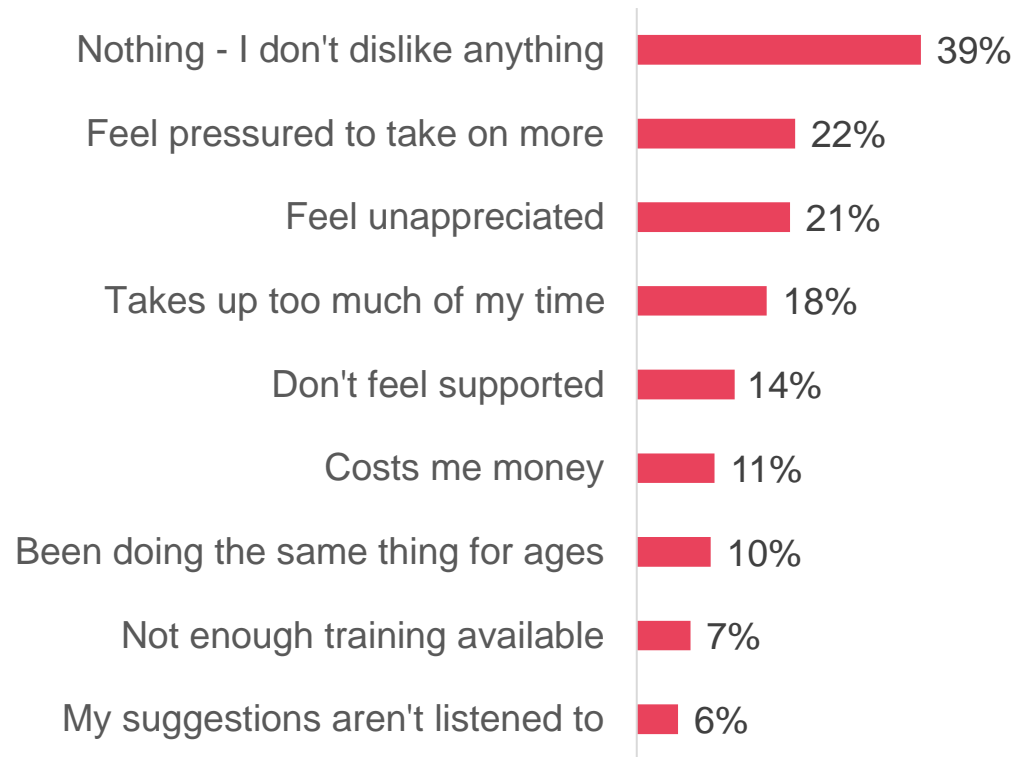
The main thing people like about volunteering is feeling part of the cricket community...

Q. What do you like about volunteering?

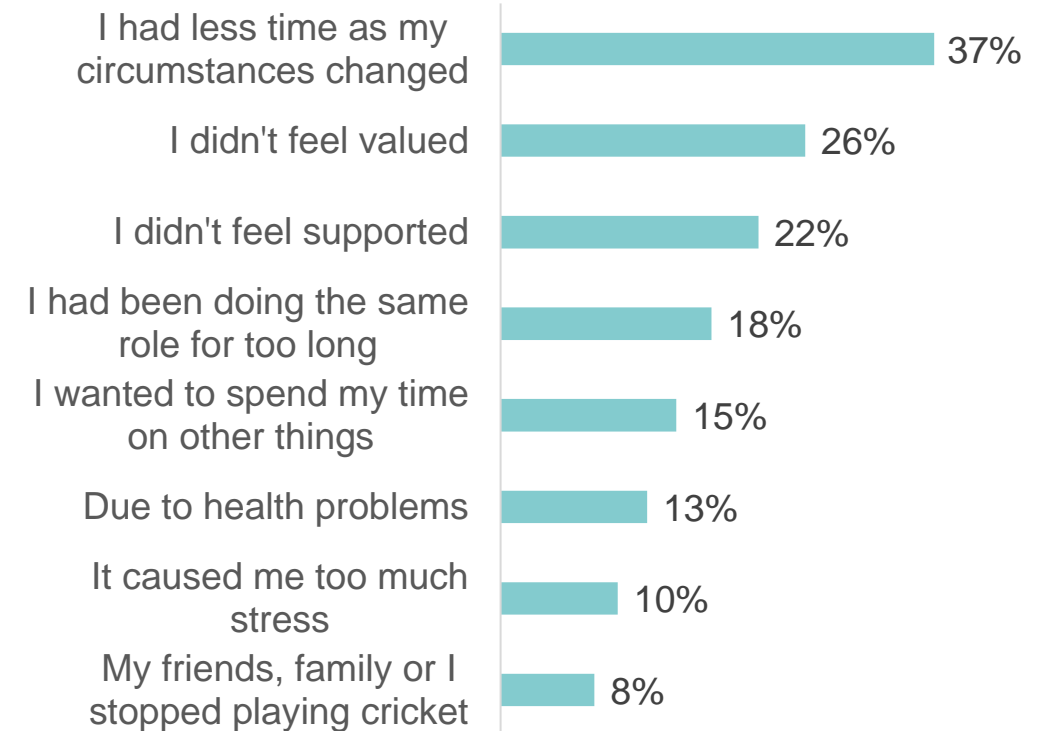


Size of the time commitment, a change in circumstances and not feeling valued are the main reasons volunteers stop

Q. What do you dislike about volunteering?



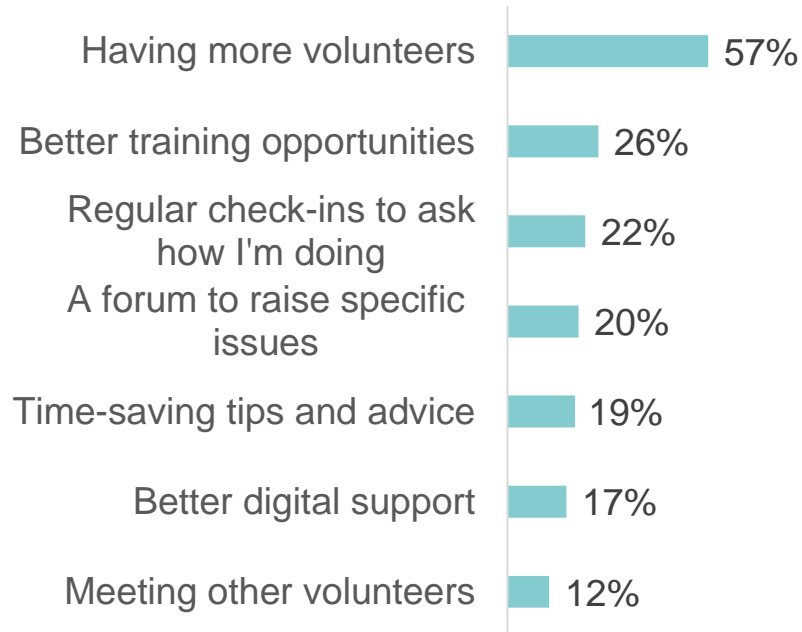
Q. Which factors contributed towards you stopping volunteering?



Having more volunteers to spread the burden and telling people 'thank you' more often would help retention

More volunteers would help people feel more supported and spread the burden

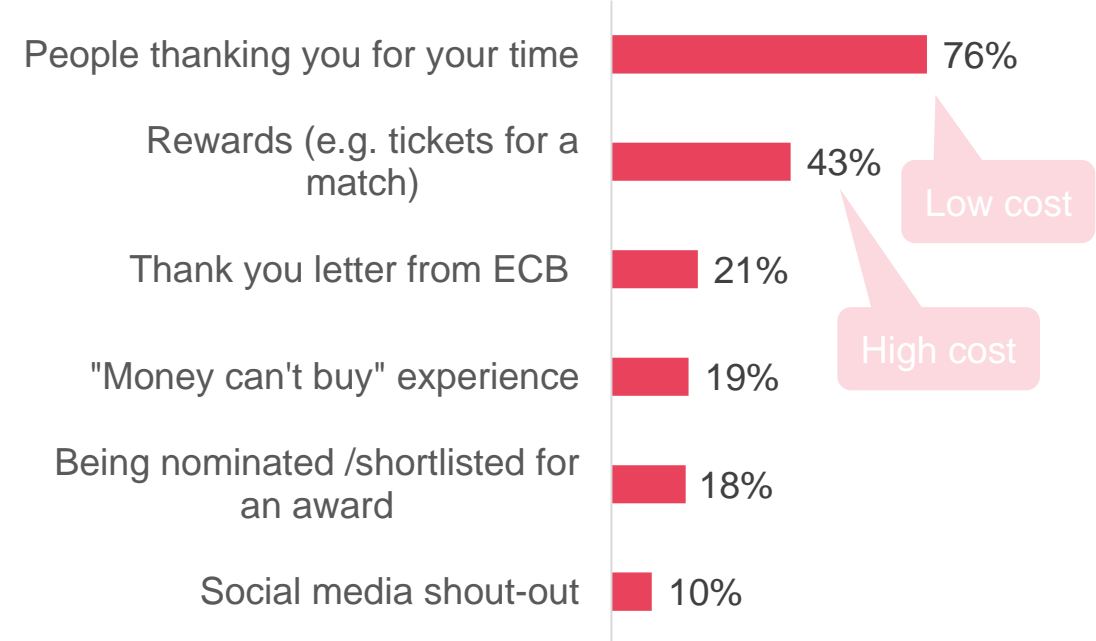
Q. What would make you feel more supported?



60% of volunteers do feel supported; 40% do not

...and the occasional thank you is the main thing needed to make volunteers feel valued

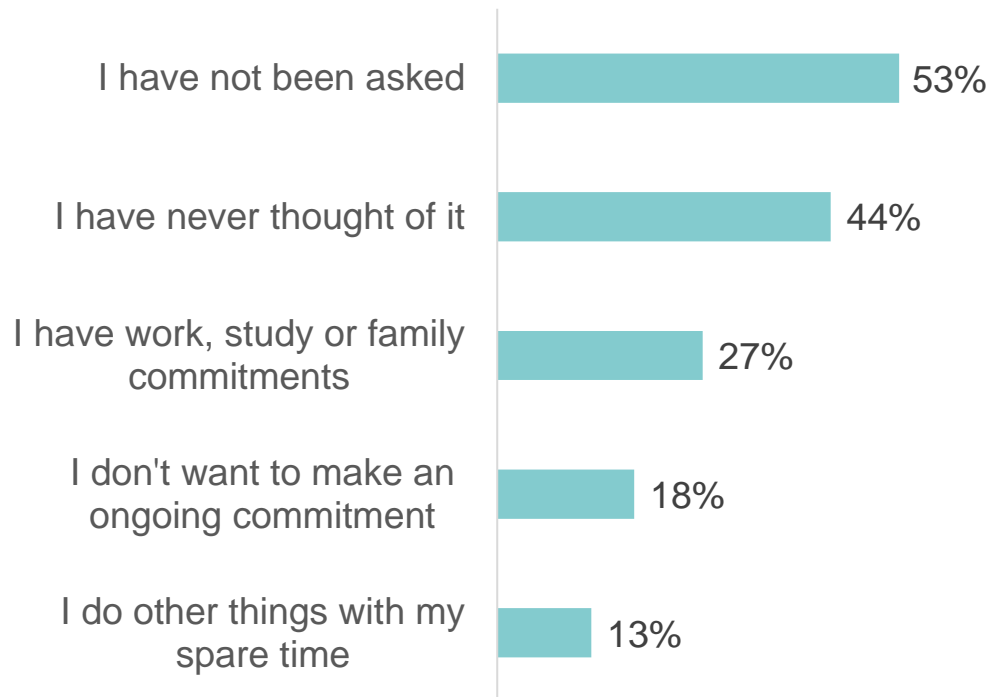
Q. What would make you feel more valued?



Asking people to volunteer and offering flexible time commitments are the best ways to attract more volunteers

The most common barrier to volunteering is often simply not being asked

Q. Which of these would you say have been barriers for you volunteering in cricket?



Returning volunteers would appreciate a more flexible time commitment

Q. Which of these might make you consider volunteering again?

