



**Understanding participation in sport: What determines sports participation among recently retired people?**

**February 2006**

**Research conducted by:  
Arkenford Ltd. and Act 2**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction and Context

Sport England appointed Arkenford Ltd. to carry out research to examine the underlying factors that determine recently retired older people's attitudes and propensity to take part in sport and physical activity.

The research is viewed as a crucial part of Sport England's commitment to build an evidence base to better inform strategic policy and practice in sport. The overall research programme involves a number of linked research projects to examine what sport and physical activity means in the lives of a wide range of people from many different social backgrounds, socio-demographic groups and life stages.

The research was designed to address the need to conduct qualitative research that will assist in the testing and development of the participation model developed by the University of Oxford, that has to date been largely based on quantitative evidence. The work also improves Sport England understanding of 'what works' in promoting participation. In short, this qualitative evidence will help to inform and shape future interventions that aim to increase participation in sport and widen access.

## Context and Study Objectives

Sport England is an organisation committed to creating opportunities for people to start participating in sport, stay in sport and succeed in sport. As an organisation they provide the strategic lead for sport in England and we are responsible for delivering the Government's sporting objectives.

Sport England has built up strong empirical evidence around the prevalence of participation in sport and physical activity. This work concludes that a significant proportion of the UK adult population are doing little (if any) regular sport and physical activity. It also shows that levels of activity decline with age. The research brief also refers to Game Plan, a Government funded strategic report that refers to evidence that only c.30% of the population is active at levels sufficient to derive health benefits. This strategy sets a challenging target of 70% of the population being active by 2020<sup>1</sup>.

Further analysis carried out by Sport England shows the considerable inequities that exist in terms of levels of participation in sport by different groups in the population<sup>2</sup>, e.g.;

- More men participate in sport than women,
- more people without a disability participate than those with a disability,

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- and the white majority have higher rates of participation than people from various ethnic groups

In addition levels of income and social class differences impact on all these groups in different ways to create an even greater divergence in levels of participation in sport and physical activity, e.g.;

- People for socio-economic groups AB are three times more likely to participate in sport than people in Groups DE

Equity underpins the basic premise of Sport England's work. The power of sport to engage, unite and motivate people, break down barriers, promote social inclusion and improve health makes it essential that all sporting organisations in England ensure equal status and opportunities to all members of our communities.

As part of the analysis underpinning the development of the Framework for Sport in England, The Henley Centre identified seven key drivers that will influence the ability of Sport England in achieving the Game Plan target by 2020. These include four demand side variables:

- The ageing population;
- The shifting attitudes towards well-being and obesity;
- The growth in participation in higher education, and
- Way people choose to allocate their time.

Extensive consultation with over 1,500 stakeholders across the country concluded that there is a need for research to better understand the reasons for non-participation in sport and sedentary behaviours. Research on this subject to date has been fragmented, often taking the form of simplistic attitude scales built into large scale survey questionnaires, or at the other end of the scale, academically driven research without strong connections to policy and practice.

To provide a sound theoretical basis and to help identify priority groups for this research a systematic review of existing qualitative research was commissioned by Sport England<sup>3</sup>. This review identified the need for more qualitative research to understand sports participation.

The research review also includes a descriptive review of attitudes in recent published quantitative surveys, including:

- Common barriers to participation such as lack of time, not being a 'sporty type', or not having a place to go or people to be active with;
- Significant gaps between perception and reality; evidence that some people who feel that they do 'enough exercise to keep fit' are in fact classed as sedentary based on level of activity undertaken;

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- Evidence to suggest that people think about doing exercise but never get around to it, described as ‘chronic contemplation’.

These kinds of measures do not get under the surface of the factors that are really at play when, for example, somebody says that they have not got time to be active, yet they spend a number of hours watching television or playing computer games. Whilst quantitative research provides some insight, the focus now is on qualitative research aimed at providing a greater understanding of the meaning of an experience to participants and focus on exploring views and context.

Based on this secondary data analysis, a theoretical model has been designed by The University of Oxford linking together those factors that are likely to influence an individual’s participation in sport and physical activity.

The Oxford Model is shown in diagrammatic form in a later section of this Executive Summary and it is this model that has informed our proposed methodology, as outlined later, and our output will contribute towards further testing and refinement of this model.

## Research Objectives

The aim of this research is to significantly improve the understanding of determinants of participation in sport and physical activity. This will enable the better design of interventions that will encourage people into lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity in order to derive the benefits that this brings to them as individuals, to the communities they live in and to society as a whole.

The outcomes from the research will contribute towards evidence-based decision-making to influence national policy on sport and physical activity. It will inform the ways in which we can encourage the ‘cultural shifts’ which the government is seeking and lead to better, more effective investment in projects designed to increase and widen participation.

To that end, there are a number of specific objectives as listed below:

1. To apply the theoretical model of sporting behaviour change as the basis for this research to test and develop it as more evidence is obtained;
2. To identify within the target group (Older people who have recently retired) different subsets with motivational and constraining factors in common that impact on their participation and activity levels and for which specifically tailored intervention strategies could be designed;
3. To test the likely success of different approaches of seeking to get relatively sedentary adults (in this case recently retired older people) to start being more active and sustaining levels of activity;
4. To identify specific opportunities to engage more adults in sport and physical activity and sustain their involvement and to explore how these sports can best present themselves in a way that would engage hard to reach adults;

5. To establish a methodology that provides a continuing and flexible approach to delivering the kind of market intelligence sport as a sector needs if it is to anticipate fashions, provide the right kind of product that will meet the needs of its customers and most importantly stimulate demand in a way that will build towards achieving the challenging targets set in *Game Plan* and *Framework for Sport in England*.

## Methodology

A total of 21 focus groups were carried out across England amongst older people who have recently retired. A recruitment screening questionnaire was initially administered to recruit respondents to be invited to take part in the focus groups. Respondents had to have retired between 6 months to 2 years ago. We also included a small proportion (maximum of 3 per group) of individuals who had part time employment (semi-retired). This was defined as working up to 3 days a week in a different job to that held at time/ age of retirement.

Each focus group was attended by 6-8 respondents and lasted approximately 2 hours.

## Sample Design & Recruitment

The sample design of focus groups helped to ensure 'co-operative' groups, namely groups of like-minded individuals. This worked to create a more conducive atmosphere for the discussion of personal values and attitudes that were included as part of the research.

Broadly, focus groups were broken down by;

- Gender – Male / Female
- Age – 55-64 / 65-70 (mainstream groups)
- 55-70 (ethnic groups)
- Activity Levels - Active / Inactive
- Neighbourhood Environment – Positive / Negative
- Individual Environment – Positive / Negative
- Ethnicity

Respondents were classified as Inactive or Active based on their answers to a series of questions on how they spent their spare time. Inactive respondents had not taken part in any recreational walking, cycling or sporting activity on a weekly basis. Active respondents did some of these activities at least once a week, and each Active focus group contained at least two members who did these activities at least three times a week (Very Active).

The Neighbourhood Environment criteria refers to each group location. In addition groups were conducted at a range of Urban / Suburban and Rural locations. Each location was categorised as 'opportunity rich' (Positive) or 'opportunity poor' (Negative) depending on the number of sports and leisure services listed as available in their vicinity.

Mainstream groups were held in Oldham, Stockport, Leeds, Brompton on Swale, Plymouth, Bristol (recruited in Whitchurch), Banbury, Barnes (London) and Ripley. Ethnic groups were held in Leicester and Luton.

The Individual Environment criteria is a rating of either 'positive' or 'negative' based on a combination of a number of factors relating to respondents' personal circumstances and outlook. These factors related to their:

- social grade
- health and mobility
- time commitments
- attitudes to personal safety
- use of a car/ access to reasonably good public transport
- awareness of local activities/ leisure pursuits aimed at their age
- having someone with whom they could take up a new hobby or leisure activity
- history of participation in sport/ active pursuits

Respondents had to have retired between 6 months to 2 years ago. We also included a small proportion (maximum of 3 per group) of individuals who had part time employment (semi-retired). This was defined as working up to 3 days a week in a different job to that held at time/ age of retirement.

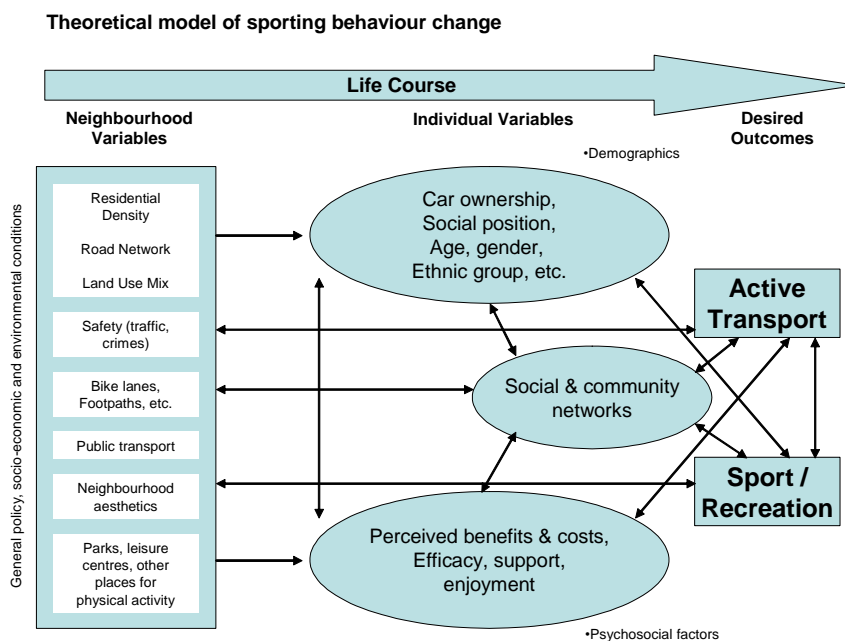
## Content of Discussion

The discussion encompassed a number of key areas:

- how they spend their time
- attitudes to exercise/ sport in relation to their age group
- awareness of exercise/ sports opportunities and opportunities wanted
- their participation in exercise/ sport in the past and nowadays
- perceived benefits and downsides of exercise/ sport
- perceived motivators and barriers to participation
- attitudes to their lifestage
- reactions to a number of intervention concepts

## The Oxford Model

A requirement of the research was to apply the theoretical model of sporting behaviour change (The Oxford Model) in order to test and develop it based on evidence gathered. The current Oxford model identifies two key factors that influence individual participation, namely the neighbourhood and individual variables.



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The recruitment and design of this research reflected the neighbourhood and individual variables. As outlined above, each group location was selected according to the opportunity available to residents, and respondents were asked a number of questions at the group recruitment stage relating to their current home environment, and the impact that this might have on participation in sport. From these responses we were able to place them into either a positive or negative environment.

Whilst the recruitment process for this research looked to build on the knowledge of the Oxford Model by adopting known variables, the content of the research focused more on individual attitudes towards sport;

- personal orientation and attitude towards sports...
- understanding the place of physical activity in people's values, self esteem and life priorities

## Summary of Findings

### Lifestage

The attitudes towards retirement listed below refer only to those respondents who are fully retired. The semi-retired do not necessarily perceive themselves as retired, and their lifestyles seemed to be intrinsically different to those of their fully retired contemporaries'.

The fully retired acknowledge that retirement represents a very radical change in their lives. For many it took time to adapt to a new way of living. Key areas of change include:



- Imposing some structure and purpose to each day;
- Learning to spend more time with partner (more likely from the male perspective);
- Building in space from retired partner (more likely from a female perspective);
- Living within means (financially).

Generally retirement is viewed in a positive light, especially amongst respondents that come from a negative individual environment (often lower social grades). It is seen as something to look forward to especially if an individual is mentally and physically fit.

The traditional Asians appeared least likely to view retirement in a positive light citing fears over health, finance and social status.

The key positives of retirement are widely seen as;

- Freedom ... can do what you want, when you want
- Reduced stress ... feeling more relaxed

A key negative is;

- Miss people at work (camaraderie)

With freedom, however, comes a desire to keep busy and fill the available time. Many feel the need to impose a purpose or achieve something on a daily basis. This could be as simple as cleaning out a cupboard.

As a result, many claim to be very busy, often wondering how they 'fitted work in'. There is evidence that many expand their role as a carer within the family looking after grandchildren, undertaking more domestic tasks, (or) conducting voluntary work or taking up a role within the community (e.g. School Governor, Neighbourhood Watch, etc.).

Even though retirement for many is a busy time, there is a general acknowledgement that they have slowed down as they have got older, taking things at their own pace.

Along with a change in the structure of their life comes a change in their priorities. It would seem that for many, the family becomes a key focus and that health becomes more of a concern.

Generally most respondents feel young at heart, while acknowledging that they are older of body and therefore do tire more easily.

Some older inactive respondents feel their self-esteem has declined since retiring. Also a more general feeling expressed across all groups is that older people become invisible to others, and to a certain extent lose respect. Traditional Asians are more likely to feel they are a burden (or potential burden) to younger family members.

## Attitudes to Exercise and Sport

Across many groups the initial reaction of respondents when asked to define 'exercise' was that any form of physical activity with some exertion is exercise. This includes housework, gardening and non-recreational walking. For many the benefits are seen as being the same as for recreational exercise/ sport and in some cases greater value was placed on 'active chores'.

Consequently quite a few of the 'Inactives', think that they regularly take exercise. Active respondents are more likely to define exercise more tightly and believe that exercise has to be strenuous.

Whilst awareness of the need for regular exercise was witnessed across the board, generally the (Female groups) women and those that had some form of medical condition were more likely to be able to specify or quote guidelines.

Generally all groups are aware of the benefits and value of exercise. Many see a strong correlation between a healthy body and healthy mind.

What also became apparent was that the recently retired feel that only certain forms of exercise are suitable for their age group. These tend to be more gentle forms of exercise (walking, swimming, bowling, yoga, dancing) and certainly exclude contact sports.

Any exercise that is more strenuous or dangerous is deemed unsuitable. Women articulate that this perception is underpinned in part by a fear of injury that could jeopardise their independence.

Generally the word 'sport' does not sit well with this age group, especially the 'Inactives' as it implies strenuous / serious exercise. For men, it also implies team or contact exercise.

Reasons for non-participation are varied;

- More value placed on other activities (even physical chores)
- Physical constraints (bad knee, health problems)
- Motivation

'Inactives' are less likely than 'Actives' to be aware of local exercise opportunities. Women think in terms of very local opportunities; while men spread the net further when evaluating local opportunity.

## Motivators and Barriers

The research found that motivators for participation are partly internally driven and partly, external. Regardless of which, the list is similar for men and women.

Internal motivators include:

- Physical benefits:
  - Getting/ keeping fit
  - Getting healthier/ maintaining health
  - Staying supple
  - Controlling weight
  - Prolonging (healthy) life/ staving off old age – older
- Social benefits
  - Meeting/ mixing with other people
- Mental/ emotional benefits:
  - Enjoyment of activity
  - Having 'own space' (from partner) ... or more time together for some
  - For self esteem
  - Pursuing an interest (talking about 'other people') – Inactives
  - Not feeling/ appearing lazy – some Actives
  - Lessen feeling of guilt (some Males)
- Retaining independence

External motivators are:

- Media tells you to
- Doctor tells you to
- Partner tells you to (Males)

Amongst 'Inactive' groups this list becomes extended to include;

- Friend encourages you
- Family encourages you (also active Indian women)
- Companion to do activity with (friend/ relative)
- Having very local opportunity

However, motivators are countered by a raft of barriers including cost, physical limitations – and for some the belief that an active lifestyle makes recreational exercise redundant.

Language and mixed sex facilities also function as barriers for traditional Asian women and a busy schedule (that might include Cable TV!) is identified as a barrier for Asian men.

## Interventions

A number of interventions were tested amongst the groups to best understand what would trigger interest and ultimately future participation.

Reactions to the interventions that were presented indicate the appeal of taster sessions and moderately priced local activities organised for their age group. The social component is also seen as important.

The research also identified the requirement that staff who administer any interventions have to be in touch with the physical needs and restrictions of this age group.

In terms of hooks, fun and enjoyment are seen as the most appropriate platform. Health benefits are already known and not currently increasing participation. Reassurance is also needed in relation to safety and the fact that controlled participation will not result in injury.

## Refining the Oxford Model

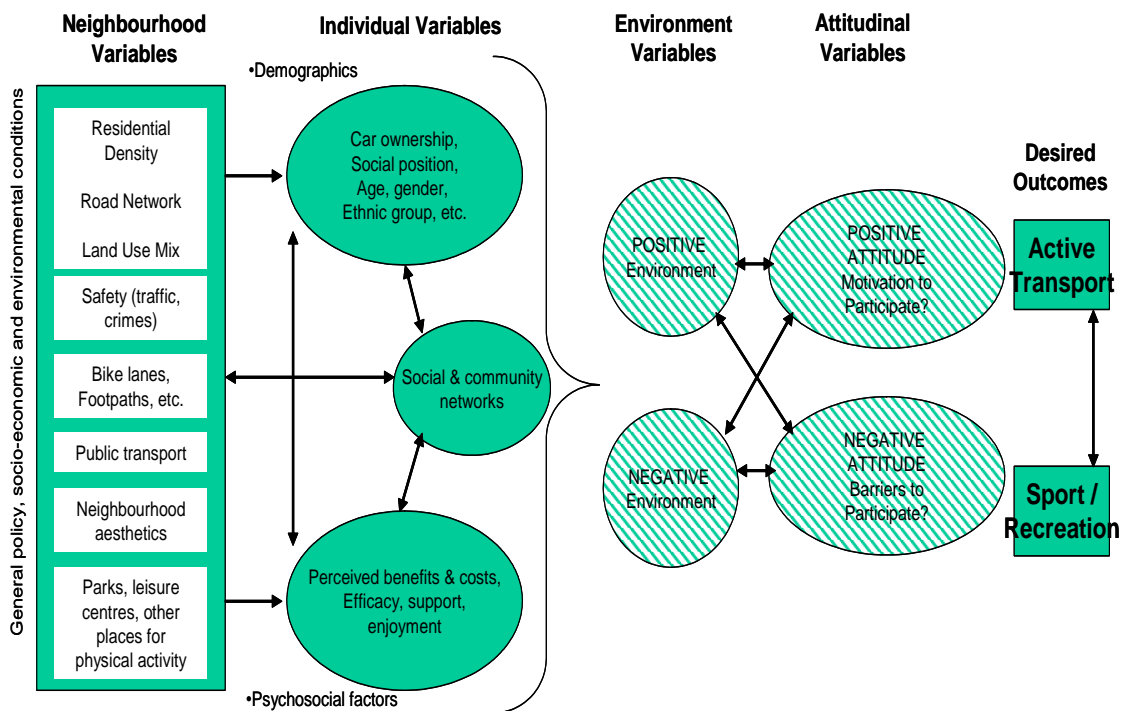
The Oxford Model lists a number of **neighbourhood variables** that affect participation. In this research with recent retirees, the Focus Groups were recruited according to neighbourhood types, and for each location defined as opportunity rich or opportunity poor. At this qualitative level we witnessed little difference in response between respondents living in either neighbourhood type. Some key neighbourhood factors that appears to have most affect on participation are safety (traffic / crimes) and security.

Many of the **individual variables** listed in The Oxford Model were used in the recruitment process for the Focus Groups. Expected specific differences were found particularly across gender, age and ethnic groups. Social and community networks also have some potential to affect levels of participation, although this will depend on intervention that each can offer and how it is sold to the target market. However, psychosocial factors are by far the greatest influencer and motivator of participation, namely what an individual values from participation, and the benefits participation offers to them.

Whilst it is essential that the environment for participation is maintained and / or improved, participation is also heavily affected by *motivation*. It is this **attitudinal variable** that we feel needs to be added into The Oxford Model, designed to identify the best ways to motivate participation. Despite the fact that at an aggregate statistical level we see trends relating to participation at a neighbourhood level, at a qualitative level these differences have far less impact. The key differences that we witnessed for this research project were at an individual variable level, particularly

- Actives / Inactives
- Males / Females
- Age groups

Some of the Inactives had been Actives in the past. Amongst women there was a continuum with the Actives likely to have been active in the past and the Inactives likely to have been far less active in the past. However in the case of Inactive men a number had been extremely active when they were younger.



The motivation to take part will in part come from an individual’s previous participation experience, but just because respondents had participated in sport throughout their life doesn’t mean that they will carry this on into retirement. Often it is quite the opposite; many Inactives were active at some point of their life. Knowledge of benefits of exercise were similar across all respondents, but obviously this not enough to motivate participation.

Key barriers and motivations have been identified in this research. A “good” environment needs to be combined with the promotion of the opportunities available to individuals to “motivate” them, but it may also be influenced by effective marketing messages and well designed interventions.

In short, Sport England now needs **to sell the environment** available to the public as well as more tailored interventions presented in a more appealing way that helps this age group to overcome existing barriers.

## Recommendations

The research has reported some clear recommendations to address the participation levels of older people who have recently retired.

### **Communicate a need:**

- Convey that recreational exercise is different, better than being generally active, busy
- And reinforce level of strenuous requirements of any exercise (getting out of breath)
- At the same time reinforce safety to overcome fear of injury / need for recovery from exercise

### **Provide an opportunity:**

- ‘Taster’ sessions – of activities that are likely to appeal
- Keep fit exercises/ bend and stretch sessions/ dance exercise
- Yoga, bowling, swimming, walking

### **Present relevant hooks:**

- Fun/ enjoyment
- Social aspect (missing social aspect of work)
- General well being (they know about health and fitness benefits and these alone aren't getting them exercising)

### **Address barriers:**

- There are exercises that are suitable for their age group and for people who haven't exercised for some time
- Can go along alone – will be others like them there
- Inexpensive/ good value (including no equipment, special clothes to buy)
- Avoid using the word ‘sport’
- Promote competition against themselves as opposed to others in interventions directed at men

### **Make it easy:**

- As local as possible (women cast very narrow net re: opportunities)
- Organised for them

### **Make it comfortable:**

- Their age group
- Single sex (unless dancing)

**Make it a possibility for ethnic minority (traditional Asian) women:**

- Held in their community hall/ centre
- Single sex – with assurance that private/ not in sight of men
- For members of their community
- Instructor to speak their language
- Exercises that can be done in usual (modest) clothes

**Reach them:**

- Promote the fact that opportunities are available to this age group
- Promote through local free press, local press, libraries, GP surgeries, temples/community centres (ethnic)

**Use appropriate person/ celebrity:**

- Older, 'looking good for their age' individual/ duo

# Main Report

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Each focus group was attended by 6-8 respondents and lasted approximately 2 hours. Groups were moderated by Ben Moxon (Arkenford), Sue Linge and Ruth Foulds (Act2) and Ina Qureshi (ethnic research specialist). Respondents were incentivised to the value of £35.

## Sample Design & Recruitment

The sample design of focus groups helped to ensure ‘co-operative’ groups, namely groups of like-minded individuals. This worked to create a more conducive atmosphere for the discussion of personal values and attitudes that were included as part of the research. Broadly, focus groups were broken down by;

- Gender – Male / Female
- Age – 55-64 / 65-70 (mainstream groups)
- 55-70 (ethnic groups)
- Activity Levels – Active / Inactive
- Neighbourhood Environment – Positive / Negative
- Individual Environment – Positive / Negative
- Ethnicity

A detailed sample frame is included below.

### Mainstream Sample Frame

| Group   | Active/<br>Inactive | Sex    | Age     | Neighbourhood<br>Environment | Individual<br>Environment | Area | Urban/<br>Rural |
|---------|---------------------|--------|---------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------|-----------------|
| Group 1 | Inactive            | Female | Younger | Negative                     | Negative                  | NE   | Rural           |
| Group 2 | Inactive            | Female | Older   | Negative                     | Negative                  | SE   | Urban/<br>Sub   |
| Group 3 | Inactive            | Female | Younger | Negative                     | Positive                  | SW   | Urban/<br>Sub   |

|          |          |        |         |          |          |    |               |
|----------|----------|--------|---------|----------|----------|----|---------------|
| Group 4  | Inactive | Female | Older   | Negative | Positive | NW | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 5  | Inactive | Female | Younger | Positive | Negative | NW | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 6  | Active   | Female | Older   | Positive | Negative | NE | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 7  | Active   | Female | Younger | Positive | Positive | SE | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 8  | Inactive | Female | Older   | Positive | Positive | SW | Rural         |
| Group 9  | Active   | Male   | Younger | Negative | Negative | NW | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 10 | Active*  | Male   | Older   | Negative | Negative | SW | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 11 | Inactive | Male   | Younger | Negative | Positive | NE | Rural         |
| Group 12 | Active   | Male   | Older   | Negative | Positive | SE | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 13 | Inactive | Male   | Younger | Positive | Negative | SE | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 14 | Inactive | Male   | Older   | Positive | Negative | NW | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 15 | Active   | Male   | Younger | Positive | Positive | SW | Rural         |
| Group 16 | Inactive | Male   | Older   | Positive | Positive | NE | Urban/<br>Sub |
| Group 17 | Inactive | Male   | Younger | Negative | Positive | SE | Rural         |

\* Group should have been 'Inactive' and additional group (Group 17) conducted

## Ethnic Sample Frame

| Group    | Ethnicity | Active/<br>Inactive | Sex    | Neighbourhood<br>Environment | Individual<br>Environment | Area     |
|----------|-----------|---------------------|--------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Group 18 | Indian    | Active              | Female | Positive                     | Negative                  | Midlands |
| Group 19 | Indian    | Active              | Male   | Positive                     | Positive                  | Midlands |
| Group 20 | Pakistani | Inactive            | Female | Negative                     | Positive                  | South    |
| Group 21 | Pakistani | Inactive            | Male   | Negative                     | Negative                  | South    |

Respondents were classified as **Inactive or Active** based on their answers to a series of questions on how they spent their spare time. Inactive respondents had not taken part in any recreational walking, cycling or sporting activity on a weekly basis. Active respondents did some of these activities at least once a week, and each Active focus group contained at least two members who did these activities at least three times a week (Very Active).

The **Neighbourhood Environment** column refers to each group location. In addition groups were conducted at a range of Urban / Suburban and Rural locations. Each location was categorised as 'opportunity rich' (Positive) or 'opportunity poor' (Negative) depending on the number of sports and leisure services listed as available in their vicinity.

Mainstream groups were held in Oldham, Stockport, Leeds, Brompton on Swale, Plymouth, Bristol (recruited in Whitchurch), Banbury, Barnes (London) and Ripley. Ethnic groups were held in Leicester and Luton.

The **Individual Environment** column holds a rating of either 'positive' or 'negative' based on a combination of a number of factors relating to respondents' personal circumstances and outlook. These factors related to their:

- social grade
- health and mobility
- time commitments
- attitudes to personal safety
- use of a car/ access to reasonably good public transport
- awareness of local activities/ leisure pursuits aimed at their age
- having someone with whom they could take up a new hobby or leisure activity
- history of participation in sport/ active pursuits

Details of Group Locations and a copy of the Recruitment Questionnaire are included in the Appendices.

### **Content of Discussion**

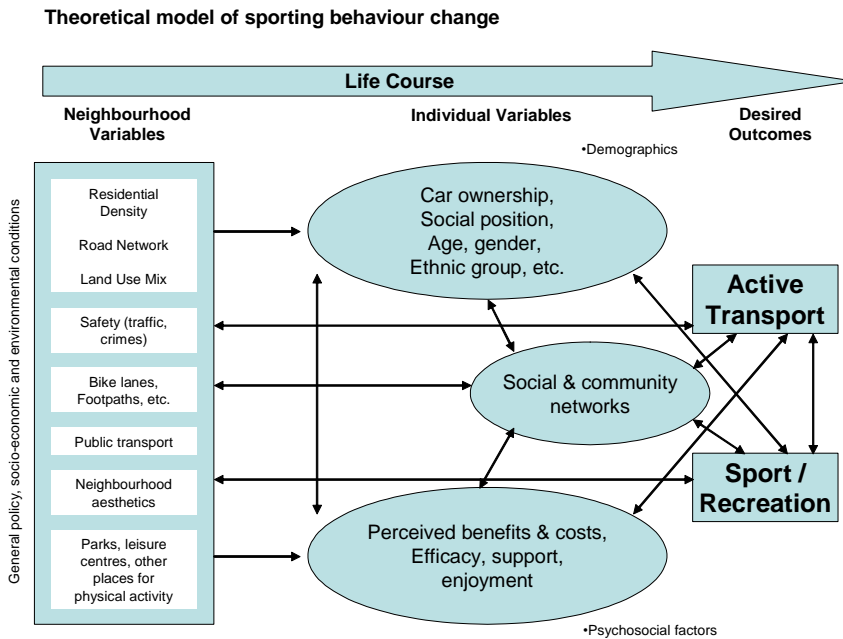
The discussion encompassed a number of key areas:

- how they spend their time
- attitudes to exercise/ sport in relation to their age group
- awareness of exercise/ sports opportunities and opportunities wanted
- their participation in exercise/ sport in the past and nowadays
- perceived benefits and downsides of exercise/ sport
- perceived motivators and barriers to participation
- attitudes to their lifestage
- reactions to a number of intervention concepts
- 

Copies of the Discussion Guides and the Intervention Concepts are included in the Appendices.

## The Oxford Model

A requirement of the research was to apply the theoretical model of sporting behaviour change (The Oxford Model) in order to test and develop it based on evidence gathered. The current Oxford model identifies two key factors that influence individual participation, namely the neighbourhood and individual variables.



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The recruitment and design of this research reflected the neighbourhood and individual variables. As outlined above, each group location was selected according to the opportunity available to residents, and respondents were asked a number of questions at the group recruitment stage relating to their current home environment, and the impact that this might have on participation in sport. From these responses we were able to place them into either a positive or negative environment.

Whilst the recruitment process for this research looked to build on the knowledge of the Oxford Model by adopting known variables, the content of the research focused more on individual attitudes towards sport:

- personal orientation and attitude towards sports...
- understanding the place of physical activity in people's values, self esteem and life priorities

## The Key Findings

This section of the Report sets out the detailed findings from the research. It is structured under a number of headings representing the key elements of the focus group discussions and in each case the analysis is broken down by gender, active/inactive and, where appropriate, age. Where the information is backed up by quotes, these are set out under Inactive and Active headings, identifying gender, age group, whether their individual environment was positive or negative and their location.

The key headings are:

- Lifestage
- Attitudes to Exercise and Sport
- Participation in Exercise and Sport
- Exercise and Sporting Opportunities
- Motivators and Barriers
- Intervention Concepts

### Lifestage

The **composition of their households** reflects the different circumstances of the focus group members.

For the women:

- the majority live with partners;
- most partners are retired;
- some live alone; some older women and about one-half of ethnic women (most of them Pakistanis) are widows;
- some ethnic minority women live in extended family households.

For the men:

- the majority live with partners;
- most partners are retired;
- some live alone; more likely to be as a result of divorce rather than being a widower;
- some have children still living at home, particularly younger retirees;
- ethnic minority men more likely to live in extended family households.

The **overall attitudes towards retirement** listed below refer only to those respondents who are *fully* retired. The semi-retired do not necessarily perceive themselves as retired, and their lifestyles seemed to be intrinsically different to those of their fully retired contemporaries.

The fully retired acknowledge that retirement represents a very radical change in their lives. For many it took time to adapt to a new way of living. Key areas of change include:

- Imposing some structure and purpose to each day;
- Learning to spend more time with partner (more likely from the male perspective);
- Building in space from retired partner (more likely from a female perspective);
- Living within means (financially).

Generally retirement is viewed in a positive light, especially amongst respondents that come from a negative individual environment (often lower social grades). It is seen as something to look forward to especially if an individual is mentally and physically fit. However, for the younger 'inactives' there are some health issues and the traditional Asians appeared least likely to view retirement in a positive light, citing fears over health, finance and social status. The Asian widows feel vulnerable and the Asian men cite lack of support from the next generation.

“When we both retired ... I felt time to myself was gone, I have had to get used to it” .../  
“I make sure I go out every day and he is a stay-at-home”  
(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Oldham)

“It’s heaven”/ I worked all my life and I was frightened of retiring and I don’t know what the hell I was frightened of. There is not enough time in the day, I don’t know where the time goes. I can do what I want when I want” .../ “I worked until 60 and then one day I thought right I’ve had enough and put my notice in and I’m enjoying myself”  
(Inactive women 55-64 negative, Brompton on Swale)

“My health deteriorated very badly in the last 5 or 6 years, so my life has totally changed”  
(Inactive women 55-64 positive, Plymouth)

“If you’re 65, 80% fit and you’ve got all your marbles, retirement must be one of the best things to do!”  
(Active men 55-64 positive Brompton on Swale )

“Now is my time to enjoy life ... I have worked hard enough for it”  
(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Plymouth)

“I’ve found the whole 24hour day has changed. Before I was on the road going to work at 7.45am; I can now stay in bed until 9am if I want. At the same time I can go to bed after midnight knowing I don’t have to get up. It’s a luxury – it’s wonderful! ”  
(Inactive men 65-70 positive, Leeds)



‘The only thing against it is that now we are getting old!

(Active men 65-70 positive, Banbury)

“Most people, even in our Muslim community, are beginning to realise that they cannot depend on their children, and that’s why they must stand on their own two feet. There is no way that your daughter in law is going to come along and cook for you, or help to bathe you! Forget it! It’s not going to happen! Times are changing and we know we will have to fend for ourselves. That’s why we need to preserve our limbs - our hands and feet – otherwise, it will be very difficult for us.”

(Inactive Pakistani men 55-70 negative, Leicester)

The key **positives of retirement** are widely seen for women as:

- Freedom
- Not ruled by clock
- Can do what want, when want
- No longer rushing to fit everything in
- Have more time
- No pressure/ stress of work
- Can do things for themselves, particularly Indian women

Men also identify the freedom to do what they want when they want and the emphasis on less stress and feeling more relaxed. However, men see retirement as an opportunity to spend more time together with their partner or family and also the opportunity to meet new people or catch up with old friends.

Your life then is your own”

(Inactive negative women 55-64, Stockport)

“What’s changed is that now we have time to think about ourselves”/ “It’s high time we gave ourselves some time actually!”

(Inactive Indian women 55-70 negative, Leicester)

“I am much less stressed ... more relaxed”

(Active men 55-64 positive, Bristol )

“It’s the freedom ... You can do things when you want to do them. I can go on holiday when I want to”

(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Stockport)

The key **negatives of retirement** for women are missing people at work – the buzz and the social side of work. They are also conscious of time passing and being in the last lifestage, particularly for those living in a positive individual environment.

Men, generally, will not miss work, although some will miss camaraderie and those living in a negative individual environment miss being told what to do. Men also have more financial and health worries and men in the Asian groups feared being left alone.

“You don’t get the banter at work when you are retired”/ “You miss people”  
(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Oldham)

“When you’re working you meet loads of people and suddenly it’s cut off”  
(Inactive women 55-64 positive, Plymouth)

“Every twinge and every pain becomes life threatening (laughs). When you are 40-50 and get a pain you think it is nothing. When you get a pain now you think ... is it indigestion? Is it a heart attack?”  
(Inactive men 65-70 positive, Leeds)

“There is nobody to say ‘OK ... we are going to motivate you to relax now’. All the people you met at work and all the laughs you had are gone”  
(Inactive men 55-64 negative, London)

“If there’s a husband and wife together, then they can count on each other for support. If one of them dies, then it’s a problem for the other one. Your children don’t look after you in the same way”  
(Active Indian men 55-64 positive, Luton)

With freedom, however, comes **a desire to keep busy** and fill the available time. Many feel the need to impose a purpose or achieve something on a daily basis. This could be as simple as cleaning out a cupboard. For women, there is a recognition that they could get ‘lazy’ and sometimes do, particularly the inactives. Many women claim to be very busy, have full days and wonder how fitted work in. Some expand their role as carer within the family, helping adult children or caring for grandchildren.

Whilst men mostly feel more relaxed, many men feel that they are very busy and as with women generally crave a structure to the day. For some, their partner offers this structure (job lists, etc) whilst others see structure in the form of picking up kids, domestic tasks such as shopping or DIY, or conducting voluntary work or taking up a role within the community (e.g. School Governor, Neighbourhood Watch). Men generally feel that a mental stimulus is essential.

Even though retirement for many is a busy time, there is an acknowledgement that they have slowed down as they have got older, taking things at their own pace. Generally most respondents feel young at heart, while acknowledging that they are older of body and therefore do tire more easily.

If I have a day when I've hardly done anything, I feel like I've wasted that day"  
(Inactive women 55-64 negative, Stockport)

"Always something to do"/ "Even your messy drawer that you can look through and tidy"  
(Active women 65-70 negative, Leeds)

Stopping myself getting like my mates who go to the pub and vegetate. They don't seem to have any activities or any objectives"  
(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Stockport)

"There's a vast difference between people who retired 30 years ago and beyond that, when they actually stopped working and sat down for most of the day, now we don't really retire we just change the type of work that we do from every day earning work to more pleasurable activity"  
(Active men 65-70 positive, Banbury)

"The wife leaves me a list before she goes out because I work better on my own"  
(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Stockport)

Along with a change in the structure of their life comes a **change in their priorities**. For women a number of factors have been identified:

- Want to enjoy life – aware of time passing
- Value freedom and independence
- Family and grandchildren become very important part of life, especially the older women
- Money becomes *less* important
- Health becomes more of a concern
- Religion becomes more important, particularly for Pakistani women

Men identify a similar set of factors, but often expressed slightly differently:

- Retirement means getting their life back and doing things when they want to
- Spending more time with family and friends
- Spending time as a 'couple' is important for some ... but avoided by others
- Money becomes *more* important or at least they worry more about making it last, particularly the 'Negatives'
- Health is more of a concern

I'm very conscious of the fact that time is running out"  
(Active women 55-64 positive, Barnes)

"Making money isn't as important, it is enjoying what you have got"  
(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Oldham)

"I have the grandchildren and the garden ... it's just getting your priorities differently"  
(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Whitchurch)

"I felt my mind was active as well because I was working. Suddenly I couldn't do any of it because I had a heart attack and had to have a triple bypass. I got depressed"  
(Inactive women 55-64 positive, Plymouth)

" Less stressed – much more relaxed"  
(Active men 55-64 positive, Bristol")

"I think it comes to choice, that's the nice thing about it, you can get up in the morning and say I want to do this today and do it"  
(Active men 65-70 positive, Banbury)

"Probably the dramatic change, working flat out and then all of a sudden you feel like you are on the scrap heap"  
(Inactive men 55-64 negative, London)

"You still have pressure but it is different. It is under control"  
(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Stockport)

"There is a freedom to choose which you didn't have when you're working for someone else"  
(Inactive men 65-70 positive, Leeds)

There are also distinct changes in the **way they see themselves and how they view others**. For most women who are younger and 'active' their life seems largely unchanged, but older 'inactives' recognise that they tire more easily and some older 'inactives' feel their self-esteem goes down.

Men generally feel younger than they actually are ... young in mind, old in body, and as a result appreciate that they must go at their own pace. The majority 'live for today' which keeps them busy, but some men can feel a bit useless ... no longer needed.

Both women and men feel that they begin to lose respect from others and become invisible, considered unimportant or written off. Indian and Pakistani men are more likely to feel a burden to other family members, but Indian women feel lucky to have

their freedom. In addition, there is recognition that we live in an 'ageist' society, where they are identified as pensioners on the one hand, but by their own family as a spare set of hands available to help... pick kids up, Taxi service, DIY etc...

“When I look in the mirror I can definitely see a change”/ “But you don’t feel it inside”  
(Active women 55-64 positive, Barnes)

“You become invisible”/ “When you reach a certain age, people tend to disregard you”  
(Inactive women 65-70 negative)

“It has changed me on the basis off putting on more weight and being lazier”/“We are young men...we are all in our early sixties, I don’t think of myself as an old man”  
(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Plymouth)

“It’s quite an ageist society we live in”  
(Inactive men 65-70 positive, Leeds)

The **key lifestage findings can be summarised** as:

- Retirement seen as a very major life change
- Generally regarded positively, but some downsides
- Freedom to do what they want, when they want is key benefit:
- That brings with it a need to impose structure and purpose to days
- Young in mind, but old in body, so recognise need to slow down
- Health is therefore a key consideration
- Missing social side of work is an important downside

## Attitudes to Exercise and Sport

### What is exercise?

Across many groups the initial reaction of respondents when asked to define ‘exercise’ was that any form of physical activity with some exertion is exercise. This includes housework, gardening and non-recreational walking. For many the benefits are seen as being the same as for recreational exercise or sport and in some cases greater value was placed on ‘active chores’.

Consequently quite a few of the ‘Inactives’, think that they regularly take exercise. However, active women respondents are more likely to define exercise more tightly and believe that exercise has to be strenuous. For men, there is almost an illusion that being active has the benefits of doing exercise, but, when challenged, there is a realisation that there is quite a difference between being active, doing exercise and doing sport.

|   |
|---|
| <p>“Cleaning as well, that can be quite aerobic ... I think of it as exercise ... I think well, I’ve done some exercise today”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Inactive women 55-64 negative, Stockport)</p>   |
| <p>“Housework is exercise” .../ “You’re bending, stretching and kneeling”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Active women 65-70 negative, Leeds)</p>  |
| <p>“A brisk walk, I’m talking about walking until you’re actually out of breath, not an amble”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Active women 55-64 positive, Barnes)</p>  |
| <p>”Walking is good exercise, you can pace yourself or do a brisk walk or whatever and gardening”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Active men 55-64 negative’ Oldham)</p>   |
| <p>“At the end of the day he spends two hours in the gym and I spend two hours out there digging, so I am getting as much exercise as he is”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Active men 65-70 positive, Banbury)</p>   |
| <p>“If you’re thinking about exercise as meaning doing a triathlon because I’m certainly not. I’m thinking about being able to do DIY, decorating, and cutting the grass and doing the garden”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Inactive men 65-70 positive, Leeds)</p> |

### How much exercise do you need?

Awareness of the need for regular exercise was witnessed across the board with most saying two or three times a week or every day. Generally it was the female groups and those that had some form of medical condition were more likely to be able to specify or quote guidelines (e.g. 30 minutes 3 times a week or 10,000 steps a day).

Most men were surprised when guidelines quoted. However, once the figures were thought about, some felt they met these through non-exercise activity (e.g. gardening),

to a certain degree feeling that the level of exercise required was dictated by their body and that overdoing it was more dangerous and therefore there was a tendency not to push oneself too hard.

### **What are the benefits of exercise?**

Generally all groups are aware of the benefits and value of exercise. Many see a strong correlation between a healthy body and healthy mind.

Amongst the female groups, physical benefits were the most often mentioned, both for 'now' and over the long term:

- Feeling well
- Helps/ maintains mobility/ suppleness, good for joints
- Keeps weight down
- Good for heart/ cardio vascular system
- Builds up bone density
- Feeling of well-being (endorphins)
- Helps/ maintains mental alertness
- Makes you happier
- Don't dwell on aches and pains (older inactive)
- Wards off depression (ethnic group)
- Keeps you going, keeps you 'young', keeps you alive

Amongst the male groups there was an emphasis on health and mobility aspects of exercise:

- Good for the mind as well as the body
- General well being
- Stops body seizing up
- Friendship
- Enjoyment
- Essential for keeping medical conditions under control eg, diabetes
- Helps with weight control.
- Can involve the whole family
- Makes you feel younger
- Satisfying – feel as if you have achieved something
- Keeps you occupied
- Wards off depression (ethnic group)

“It prolongs our life, doesn't it really, the exercise, that's the theory isn't it?” .../ “Keeps you supple” .../ “And your heart and blood circulating well”  
(Inactive women 65-70 negative, Banbury)

Socialising is a good by-product of taking exercise”  
(Inactive men 55-64 positive, Ripley)

“Swimming, you have got cardiovascular benefits which a lot of people want at our age”.../ “It gives you a good feeling, when your body is actually working, you feel good in yourself, you feel happier”.../ Any exercise where your blood is pumped around your body, it brings oxygen to every organ, to your skin, your hair” .../ “It feeds your brain also ... so you are more alert”

(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Oldham)

“Stops you being miserable”

(Inactive men 55-64 negative, London)

“Keeping your brain in time with your body

(Active men 55-64 positive, Bristol)

However, what also became apparent was that the recently retired feel that only *certain* forms of exercise are suitable for their age group. These tend to be more gentle forms of exercise, such as walking, swimming, bowling, yoga, and dancing.

For women strenuous and ‘dangerous activities’ were not seen as suitable, including jogging, cycling, cricket, walking alone. The ‘downsides’ of exercise were seen as:

- Causing injury by:
  - Over-doing it
  - Doing exercise unsuitable for age, condition
  - Joint damage (high impact exercise e.g. jogging)
  - Strains, breaks
  - Aggravating existing condition
- Becoming addicted and obsessive
- It’s boring – includes some older Actives
- Can be costly
- Getting on with it – amongst the Actives

Some of these views were underpinned by a fear of injury that could jeopardise their independence. The word ‘sport’ acts as a turn-off, especially for the Inactives, where it is seen to imply strenuous, serious exercise which should not be taken up at retirement. Current sports participants of their age are seen as admirable, but lucky and ‘different’.

“If I did netball, I would fall over and break something)

(Inactive woman 65-70 positive Oldham)

“People who overdo it and get neurotic about it”

(Inactive woman 55-64 negative, Stockport)

“I think I won’t bother tonight”/ “ You’d always think of an excuse not to do it”

(Active women 65-70 negative Leeds)

When you say sport I am thinking of netball and tennis and running and we can’t do that”

(Inactive women 66-70 positive, Oldham)



For men, there was a similar range of ‘downsides’ identified, although they were less likely to fear injury:

- A strong emphasis on overdoing it.
- Concerns about general health and the time it would take them to recover
- Feeling that enjoyment would be lost as inability to compete at level they would like (mainly the ‘Inactives’)
- Vanity – don’t want to look stupid ... old blokes in lycra look silly
- Cost – e.g., Gym membership, Golf equipment

Men expressed similar views on suitable and unsuitable activities, with contact sports unsuitable (e.g. football, rugby). There was a realisation that there was a difference between ‘exercise’ and ‘sport’ and their attitudes to ‘sport’ were often dictated by their own physical state ...they couldn’t undertake even if they wanted to.

If I go too far then my calf muscles will ache, I wont be able to do anything – I will be in bed”

(Active male 55-64 positive, Bristol)

“If you garden all day you end up with a bad back”

(Inactive male 65-70 positive, Leeds)

“My grandkids are in a football team and they want me to play with them but you find you can’t – it’s frustrating”

(Inactive male 65-70 negative, Stockport)

Exercise is self-generating ... if you are exercising your brain is better, your circulation is better, everything else is better. I’ve definitely noticed the difference in the last couple of years where I haven’t done anything – the brain is starting to fudge up a bit now!”

(Inactive men 55-64 negative, London)

The **range of differing views on the benefits of exercise** were also reflected by the outcomes from a sentence completion task, where group members were asked to complete the sentence *“People who do sport....”*

For women:

*‘Are to be admired’*

(Active women 65-70 negative, Leeds)

*‘Must be healthy and must have always done sport’*

(Inactive women 55-64 positive, Plymouth)

*'They're Mad!'*

(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Whitchurch)

For men:

*'Have my undying admiration'*

(Inactive men 65-70 positive, Leeds)

*'Get a great deal of pleasure out of it'*

(Active Men 65-70 negative, Stockport)

*'Are very fortunate ... because they are able to do it'*

(Active Men 55-64 positive, Bristol)

The **key findings on attitudes to exercise** can be summarised as:

- Most people do not differentiate between recreational and non-recreational exercise
- With this broad definition of exercise, many Inactives think they do a lot or enough
- Aware of many benefits of recreational exercise – though feel only gentle forms suitable for older people
- “Sport” carries implication of strenuous exercise and can be a turn-off
- That said, many are happy to undertake other strenuous activities, e.g. gardening
- Fear of injury or overdoing viewed as a downside to exercise

## Participation in exercise and sport

The current and ‘past’ levels of participation amongst the different groups show clear distinctions between the Actives and the Inactives.

Most of the **Inactive group members** had done some activity in the past. For women, this was usually some time ago and mostly ‘short term in its nature. A small minority had done quite a lot of exercise or activity in the past, but some women had never done exercise or sport. Although classified in the inactive group because they did not do activity on a regular, weekly basis, some of the women did do some exercises informally (e.g. exercises at home), some did exercise occasionally (e.g. swimming) and others did activities which they saw as exercise (e.g. non-recreational walking, dancing, gardening, housework), that doesn’t fit the definition used in this Research.

Most of the Inactive men Inactive males did some sort of sport when they were younger and sport or physical activity was seen as part of the structure of their younger life - sport at school, cycling to work, national service, etc. Most sports they took part in were competitive team sports (e.g. football, cricket) although some also did more individual sports (e.g. cycling) in the past. Nowadays, some sports were still done, however these were a lot less physical (e.g. Golf, Tennis, Swimming) and generally there was a greater emphasis on general exercise, rather than actual sport (e.g. Gardening, Walking, DIY).

In contrast, most of the **Active group members** had a ‘history’ of participation in sport and exercise. The Active women were likely to have participated in range of activities and nowadays some do more than one activity regularly. The most usual activities were walking, keep fit exercises, swimming, bowling, yoga and dancing.

Nearly all of the Active men had been ‘sporty’ throughout life ... often undertaking several sports throughout the year, (e.g. Football, rugby, tennis, Judo). Nowadays, even after a break, all had felt a need to get back into some sports and saw exercise as an important part of the daily or weekly routine. The sports undertaken are less ‘team’ orientated, (e.g. Walking/rambling, Golf, Tennis, Badminton), although some miss the competitiveness of sports, but felt that they can’t join teams at their age (no opportunity anyway).

### Reasons for non-participation amongst the Inactives

The ranges of reasons for non-participation given by the inactive groups are varied. For the women, there is a tendency to express the view that they should participate amongst those in the younger age groups. Others were more likely to spontaneously rationalise their non-participation:

- More value placed on ‘active chores’
- May see as no-go area because of their age and/or health:
- Some 55-64s with health problems, and more in the 65-70 age group and amongst the Pakistani women (in contrast, many of the Active women with health problems were likely to see exercise as way of dealing with them}
- Some inactive women have a very distanced take on exercise, talking in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person and referring to ‘other people’.

You always think I must do that some day ... more swimming, I’ve not been swimming for ages, more walking in my case”

(Inactive women 55-64 negative Stockport)

“I have health problems, I can’t do walking and cycling, because you can’t do these things, you’re very aware you have to keep yourself stimulated mentally”

(Inactive women 55-64 positive Plymouth)

“Why jog? I just can’t see the point in it”/ “Why can’t they go and mow some OAP’s lawn instead?” .../ “But if you’ve already stiffened, would you be able to start?.../ “If they want to do it let them do it, if they enjoy it”

(Inactive women 65-70 negative Banbury)

“The biggest obstacle is that we can’t even stretch our arms and legs, we are so old now”/ “Everything hurts and creaks now anyway, so we’re not capable of anything else”

(Inactive Pakistani women 55-70 positive Luton)

Amongst the men, the younger Inactive groups were more likely to feel ‘guilty’ about non-participation, particularly those that used to be more active. In fact very few Inactive men could be classed couch potatoes. As with females, more value was placed on ‘active chores’ and was seen by some to be as good as exercise in terms of the benefits. Reasons for non-participation included, physical restraints (bad knee, etc.)

and amongst 'previously active Inactives' they were also wary that they cannot compete at the standards they would like to. In general, whilst most of the Inactive men realise the benefits of exercise, most find it hard to find the motivation to participate.

You can't do the garden without getting exercise. I do my hard work in the garden"  
(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Plymouth)

"You've got to want to do it rather than feel you have to"  
(Inactive men 55-65 positive, Ripley)

"I get bored. My problem is boredom. When you go to exercise classes you have TV's there. I like exercise when I'm enjoying it – walking or whatever. I don't want to build my muscles up I just want to be healthy. I don't want a leotard, fancy trainers – I just want to be healthy"  
(Inactive men 65-70 positive, Leeds)

### Reasons for giving up specific exercises or sports

All of the groups discussed the reasons why they had given up specific activities, and once again, the reasons are slightly different between the women and the men. The main reasons given for women were:

- Life changes (e.g. started/ changed job, moved house)
- Class stopped/ teacher changed
- Companion stopped going, particularly amongst the Inactives
- Developed physical problem
- Decline in skill/ competence, mainly amongst the Actives
- Too costly (for level of usage)
- Lost interest

For men, many of these reasons also apply, but aspects linked to skill decline are more common:

- Health reasons – injury or illness preventing them carrying on
- Lifestage - often family commitments
- No longer feel 'sporty'
- Can no longer compete to standard they want to – both Inactives and Actives
- No competitive teams for the older age group
- Feel out of place in sports clubs/gym
- Don't realise what actually goes on in these places - Pakistani males associated the word 'club' with dancing and drinking
- No longer have anyone to play sport with i.e. no tennis partner.
- Laziness

I went to Rosemary Conley classes ... but then I had an arthritic knee for a while, so I've given it up"  
(Inactive women 65-70 negative, Banbury)

“I belonged to a gym ... but not been for a couple of years ... I went so seldom, the annual fee wasn't worth it”

(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Whitchurch)

“I used to play tennis, but I don't play so much anymore ... I just thought I was not good enough” .../ “I used to do aerobics, did it for years, I stopped about 4 years ago ...work commitments ... I just sort of got fed up with it”

(Active women 55-64 positive, Barnes)

“By the time I was 40 I hadn't really got back into it (football). My way is if you play you have to be competitive. And if you don't put enough effort into it then you don't enjoy it. You play to win”

(Active men 55-64 negative, Stockport)

“When my father had a stroke a couple of years ago, It meant we couldn't go anywhere. If something unexpected like that occurs, it takes up your time. So you can't go to exercise classes with that all going on!”

(Active Indian men 55-70 positive, Leicester)

The key findings in respect of **participation in exercise and sport** can be summarised as:

- Most Inactives did some form of recreational exercise in past, but Actives did more
- Some Inactives do some recreational exercise nowadays, but Actives do a lot more, a lot more often
- Activities undertaken at this lifestage are less likely to be team orientated, and therefore often not seen as a 'sport'
- Health/physical problems and decline in competence are amongst the reasons for stopping specific sports or exercises

## Exercise and sporting opportunities

The 'Inactives' are less likely than the 'Actives' to be **aware of existing local exercise opportunities**. Most of the women think in terms of very local opportunities and local for this age group equates to a very restricted geographical area and only the immediate 'village' for rural areas. Some women commented that rural facilities had shut down and fewer opportunities were identified by women in rural or 'opportunity poor' locations. There were felt to be more opportunities in Summer with outdoor activities available and there were more opportunities on holiday (more time, better weather, more facilities), although hotel or resort gyms and classes very unlikely to be used by the Inactive women. Some of the Active women felt it was possible to exercise through year if they wanted to, but they were more likely to walk or swim.

Men were more likely to spread the net further when evaluating local opportunities.

Active men are generally more aware of opportunities that exist or at least the types of opportunity they would expect to see (e.g. veteran teams etc). Most men knew of gyms and golf clubs, although some, particularly ‘Negatives’, felt these were too expensive and there is evidence of a clear ‘class divide’. Most men talked about local opportunities (e.g., local sports clubs or fitness classes) rather than opportunities in general terms and most seemed aware of over 55’s classes in some sports centres, but didn’t seem to be very keen on going, with a feeling of embarrassment evident.

As far as **future opportunities which they might want** are concerned, there are distinct differences between the Inactives and the Actives.

Inactive women would prefer opportunities specifically for their age group and mentioned:

- Keep fit exercises – younger women
- Gentle keep fit – older women
- Dancing – and men to dance with!
- Tai Chi
- Badminton

However, some conceded that they don’t want any new opportunities, as did some of the inactive men. The younger men feel some need for opportunities specifically for their age group, such as gym sessions or fitness classes. Some thought bowls was a sport they would be interested in, but needed more local facilities. Many had been told by their doctors to take up swimming, but find public pools too overcrowded and private clubs too expensive.

The Active groups had far more ideas for new opportunities, as might be expected. The older women mentioned more facilities in general and more daytime opportunities, whilst the younger women mentioned selective use of gym facilities at a lower cost, inexpensive adult-only swimming and indoor tennis.

Active men feel they need a certain type of environment for their age group, to include leisure facilities for them to enjoy and private sports centre that didn’t cost a fortune. They generally want to do the sports they used to play (e.g. cricket), but cant find teams or people of their age to play with or compete against at a similar level. However, some said that they would be more inclined to try new things than the Active women.

A keep fit class ... in a gentle, nice way, a social thing”.../”Gentle exercise, not aerobics or anything strenuous”

(Inactive women 65-70 negative, Banbury)

“Aerobics for over-fifties” .../ “Salsa dancing, it wouldn’t matter if it was Latin American, salsa or just rock and roll”

(Inactive women 55-64 negative, Brompton on Swale)

“A roomful of nice men to dance with”

(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Oldham)

“I’m not bothered, I’m quite happy as I am”

(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Whitchurch)

The sports you can’t do are like the ones I used to do like football and cricket because how are you going to get the team”

(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Stockport)

“One lane is dedicated to serious swimmers, then there is a part of the pool where children learn to swim, and then there is a toddler area as well. So there really isn’t enough space for normal swimmers. It’s over congested”

(Active Indian men 55-70 positive, Leicester)

In summary, the key findings with regard to **sporting and exercise opportunities** are:

- The Inactives very much less likely than Actives to be aware of local exercise opportunities
- Women think in terms of very local opportunities; men will spread their net further when evaluating local opportunity
- Inactives want opportunities aimed at their age group and many request fitness sessions

## Motivators and Barriers

The research found that motivators for participation are partly internally driven and partly, external. Regardless of which, the list is similar for men and women.

**Internal motivators** include:

- Physical benefits:
  - Getting/ keeping fit
  - Getting healthier/ maintaining health
  - Staying supple
  - Controlling weight
  - Prolonging (healthy) life/ staving off old age – older
- Social benefits
  - Meeting/ mixing with other people
- Mental/ emotional benefits:
  - Enjoyment of activity
  - Having ‘own space’ (from partner) ... or more time together for some
  - For self esteem
  - Pursuing an interest (talking about ‘other people’) – Inactives

- Not feeling/ appearing lazy – some Actives
- Lessen feeling of guilt (some Males)
- Retaining independence

“Keeping your love handles under control” .../ “When you’re retired you think you must get healthy and fit”

(Inactive women 55-64 positive Plymouth)

“Trying to stave off old age, when you have trouble getting out of bed, you may suddenly think, gosh this is the only body I’ve got and I ought to do something about keeping myself supple”

(Inactive woman 65-70 negative Banbury)

“It’s basically an interest, isn’t it? You’ve got to have an interest in it”

(Inactive woman 55-64 negative Brompton on Swale)

“Who is there to look after us in this country? So it’s just as well to look after your own health ... If you are fit and healthy, then at least you can remain independent”

(Active Indian woman 55-70 negative Leicester)

You enjoy it”

(Inactive male 65-70 negative, Stockport)

“I can sit and watch telly all day and die at 71 or I can get off my backside and go and do something and live until I’m 80 odd”

(Inactive male 65-70 positive, Leeds)

“You can go for a pint in the village, you might think...that guy is the same age as me, but look at the state of him, he doesn't do any exercise, he just sits there...I don't want to be like that”

(Active male 55-64 positive, Brompton)

“It’s the sense of achievement”

(Active male 55-64 positive Bristol)

“I don’t know about anybody else but if I don’t do anything then I feel guilty”

(Active male 55-64 positive, Bristol)

#### External motivators are:

- Media tells you to
- Doctor tells you to
- Partner tells you to, particularly males

Amongst ‘Inactive’ groups this list becomes extended to include;

- Friend encourages you
- Family encourages you (also true for Active Indian women)



- Companion to do activity with (friend/ relative)
- Having very local opportunity

The doctor might suggest you do something ... some doctors are good at things like that, instead of giving you pills, they will say things like go walking”  
(Inactive women 55-64 negative, Brompton on Swale)

“I think it encourages you if you have a friend who goes with you”  
(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Oldham)

“When your wife says ‘Get off your backside!’”  
(Inactive men 65-70 positive, Leeds)

“It’s socializing as well”  
(Active men 55-64 negative, Oldham)

“It’s encouraged as part of controlling diabetes”  
(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Stockport)

However, these motivators are **countered by a raft of barriers**, particularly identified by the Inactive groups:

- Lack of time:
  - spontaneous, top of mind
  - considered, and likely to concede matter of choice (apart from part-time workers and carers)
- Cost – especially gym membership
- Health and physical limitations
- Fear of injury, mainly amongst older groups
- Self-consciousness – mainly amongst older groups
- Feel unsafe out alone, after dark
- Lack of (very) local opportunities
- Lack of companion
- Poor weather
- Getting started
- Lack of interest
- Don’t enjoy
- Never acquired habit
- Prefer to do other things
- Laziness
- Don’t look the part
- Can’t compete at desired level
- Don’t need to – because active and busy already

“I wouldn’t do anything on my own ... if I had company I would probably do something every day” .../ “I think in my area there isn’t as much locally going on ... I think in the

evening there is the issue about being out on your own, safety” .../ “I think you choose to spend your time in other ways”

(Inactive women 55-64 negative, Stockport)

“Young girls doing it ... they always look so bloomin’ slim!” .../ “To me I’m active, but to a lot of people I’m boring and lazy. I walk and I go to the shops, I go round the supermarket, I do housework and go down the garden and take the dog for a walk. I don’t think I should change now at my time of life” I’m sure I won’t” .../ “When you get older you worry that you might break something, I feel that then it’s down to my daughter ... I try to be careful”

(Inactive women 65-70 positive, Whitchurch)

“A lot of people aren’t happy with their body, ‘my ass is too big’ or something, there’s always something”

(Inactive women 55-64 positive, Plymouth)

The thought of it”

(Inactive men 65-70 negative, Stockport)

“I don’t want to go to the gym where all those 30 year olds are like Adonis”

(Inactive men 55-64 negative, London)

“You always remember how good you were and you will never aspire to those levels again so you think what is the point of even trying”

(Inactive men 55-64 negative, London)

For **the ethnic minority groups** additional barriers were identified:

- Family commitments - broad and prioritised
- Cultural norms of behaviour appropriate to women and to older people – and fear of provoking censure or gossip
- Most forms of exercise or sport considered unsuitable for women
- May consider sportswear immodest
- Cannot use mixed sex facilities
- Instructors and other participants have to be female
- Instructors and other participants should be Asian and speak their language
- Facilities have to be very local
- Some sports not in their culture (e.g. bowls, golf)
- Word ‘club’ has very negative connotations – precludes investigation of what’s on offer
- A key barrier amongst Asian male groups was lack of time, in part as a result of family commitments and lack of support from the family group
- Weather was more of a barrier to participation for the Asian male groups
- Male groups had little knowledge of what is available in the area
- Asian Cable TV Channels have become a great distraction

We were running around after our husbands in our adult life. They didn't give us a moment to spare ... there was so much work to be done in our household in Pakistan. Do you really think we needed to exercise after having completed all those chores? We were exercising all day long!"

(Inactive Pakistani woman 55-70 positive Luton)

We are not used to sharing facilities with men ... It doesn't look good. That's the way our parents trained us, to behave in a certain way" .../ "It's our Indian culture as well, you know. I mean, just look at my situation, if I go and do something, people say, 'You're too old to be doing this now, you're 60 years old, why are you behaving like this?' .../ "Men think women shouldn't do anything except look after the house, look after them and not go anywhere. That's why they think exercise is surplus to requirements" .../ "I go round and cook and clean for my mother-in-law every day, I also help her to have a bath ... then I come back at 4 o'clock and start cooking our own evening meal, so for me the problem is lack of time"

(Active Indian women 55-70 negative Leicester)

"You need your family's support. It can be difficult for older people if they don't have the support of their family"

(Active Indian men 55-70 positive, Leicester)

"We are just a lazy community – we eat 3 or 4 chapattis and then end up having a snooze"

(Inactive Pakistani men 55-70 negative, Luton)

"I think the weather in this country also stops you. You see clouds, you see some rain and that puts you off. So the weather can be discouraging"

(Active Indian men 55-70 positive, Leicester)

"We are all mostly community workers and I think the truth is that most of our time gets taken up in dealing with community problems...I have less time than I did before"

(Inactive Pakistani men 55-70 negative, Luton)

"Since the launch of all these Pakistani and Indian channels, that is all people of our age want to do! They are happy to spend their time watching films and soaps"

(Inactive Pakistani men 55-70 negative, Luton)

The **key findings as far as motivators and barriers** are concerned can be summarised as:

- Perceived physical, social and mental or emotional benefits serve as motivators
- Prompting by others also serves to motivate Inactives

- Motivators countered by raft of barriers including cost, physical limitations and for some the belief that active lifestyle makes recreational exercise redundant
- Language and mixed sex facilities also function as barriers for traditional Asian females
- A busy schedule (that might include watching Cable TV!) listed as a barrier for Asian men

## Interventions

A number of interventions were tested amongst the groups to best understand what would trigger interest and ultimately future participation. These are listed in the Appendices.

The reaction was mostly positive to these types of interventions. Moderately priced activities specifically for their age group and 'taster' sessions were seen as good ideas. Local activities where you could go alone and 'join' in with others were welcomed and having opportunities which could be done with the family and grandchildren. Some thought GPs advising would be helpful, particularly the older and ethnic groups. Expert advice and a one-to-one service were also thought likely to be attractive features.

In terms of hooks, the social component, fun and enjoyment are seen as the most appropriate platform. Health benefits are already known and not currently increasing participation. The research also identified the requirement that staff who administer any interventions have to be in touch with the physical needs and restrictions of this age group, both physical and cultural. Reassurance is also needed in relation to safety and the fact that controlled participation will not result in injury.

On the negative side, these intervention schemes needed to avoid:

- A focus on serious, solo exercise
- Using exercise machines
- Being perceived as costly
- Using the word 'sport'
- Being just 'group' activity
- Being pigeon holed as for 'oldies'

If these interventions were to be successful how they were promoted was seen as important. Suggestions included promotion through local (free) newspapers, direct mail, leaflet, notices in the library, village shop/ notice board and announcements in community centres, temples and through the Mosque.

They would also be more likely to relate to older people if they used an older person who looks good for their age and who understood their needs rather than a 'super fit' sportsperson.

## Refining the Oxford Model

The Oxford Model lists a number of **neighbourhood variables** that affect participation. In this research withholder people who have recently retired, the Focus Groups were recruited according to neighbourhood types, and for each location defined as opportunity rich or opportunity poor. At this qualitative level we witnessed little difference in response between respondents living in either neighbourhood type. Some key neighbourhood factors that appears to have most affect on participation are safety (traffic / crimes) and security.

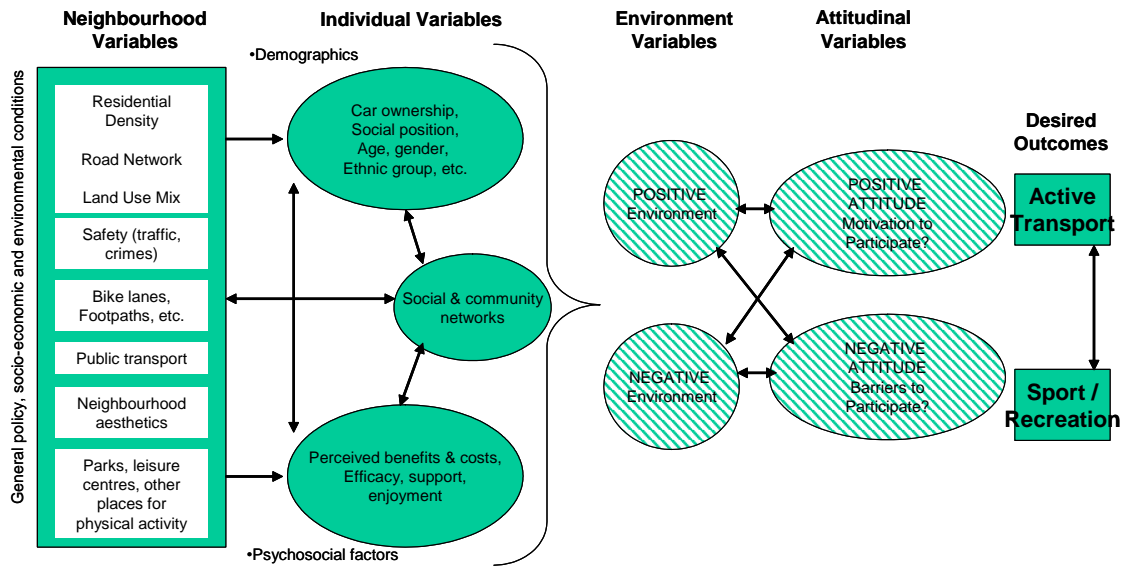
Many of the **individual variables** listed in The Oxford Model were used in the recruitment process for the Focus Groups. Expected specific differences were found, particularly across gender, age and ethnic groups. Social and community networks also have some potential to affect levels of participation, although this will depend on the interventions that each can offer and how they are sold to the target market. However, psychosocial factors are by far the greatest influencer and motivator of participation, namely what an individual values from participation, and the benefits participation offers to them.

Whilst it is essential that the environment for participation is maintained and / or improved, participation is also heavily affected by *motivation*. It is this **attitudinal variable** that we feel needs to be added into The Oxford Model, designed to identify the best ways to motivate participation. Despite the fact that at an aggregate statistical level we see trends relating to participation at a neighbourhood level, at a qualitative level these differences have far less impact. The key differences that we witnessed for this research project were at an individual variable level, particularly:

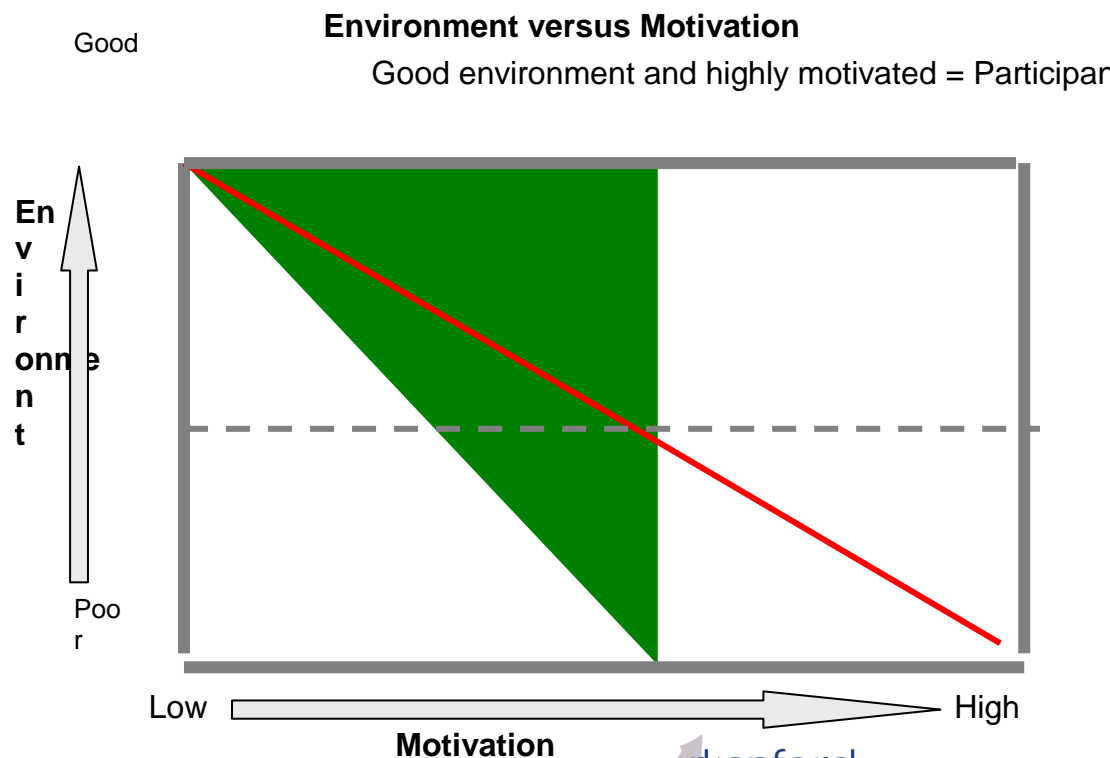
- Actives / Inactives
- Males / Females
- Age groups

Some of the Inactives had been Actives in the past. Amongst women there was a continuum with the Actives likely to have been active in the past and the Inactives likely to have been far less active in the past. However in the case of Inactive men a number had been extremely active when they were younger.

## The Refined Model



The **motivation to take part** will in part come from an individual’s previous participation experience, but just because respondents had participated in sport throughout their life doesn’t mean that they will carry this on into retirement. Often it is quite the opposite; many Inactives were active at some point of their life. Knowledge of the benefits of exercise were similar across all respondents, but obviously this not enough to motivate participation. Some key barriers and motivations have been identified in this research. As the diagram below indicates, a “good” environment needs to be combined with the promotion of the opportunities available to individuals to “motivate” them, but it may also be influenced by effective marketing messages and well-designed interventions.



In short, Sport England now needs **to sell the environment available to the public as well as more tailored interventions presented in a more appealing way that helps this age group to overcome existing barriers.**

## Recommendations

The research has reported some clear recommendations to address the participation levels of older people who have recently retired.

### **Communicate a need:**

- Convey that recreational exercise is different, better than being generally active, busy
- And reinforce level of strenuous requirements of any exercise (getting out of breath)
- At the same time reinforce safety to overcome fear of injury / need for recovery from exercise

### **Provide an opportunity:**

- ‘Taster’ sessions – of activities that are likely to appeal
- Keep fit exercises/ bend and stretch sessions/ dance exercise
- Yoga, bowling, swimming, walking

### **Present relevant hooks:**

- Fun/ enjoyment
- Social aspect (missing social aspect of work)
- General well being (they know about health and fitness benefits and these alone aren’t getting them exercising)

### **Address barriers:**

- There are exercises that are suitable for their age group and for people who haven’t exercised for some time
- Can go along alone – will be others like them there
- Inexpensive/ good value (including no equipment, special clothes to buy)
- Avoid using the word ‘sport’
- Promote competition against themselves as opposed to others in interventions directed at men

### **Make it easy:**

- As local as possible (women cast a very narrow net when thinking of potential opportunities)

- Organised for them

**Make it comfortable:**

- Their age group
- Single sex (unless dancing)

**Make it a possibility for ethnic minority (traditional Asian) women:**

- Held in their community hall/ centre
- Single sex – with assurance that private/ not in sight of men
- For members of their community
- Instructor to speak their language
- Exercises that can be done in usual (modest) clothes

**Reach them:**

- Promote the fact that opportunities are available to this age group
- Promote through local free press, local press, libraries, GP surgeries, temples/community centres (ethnic)

**Use appropriate person/ celebrity:**

- Older, 'looking good for their age' individual/ duo



## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX ONE - DETAILS OF FOCUS GROUP LOCATIONS**

#### **MAINSTREAM GROUPS**

##### **North West**

Royton, Oldham  
Urban/ Suburban    Negative Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Poor

Heald Green, Stockport  
Urban/ Suburban    Positive Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Rich

##### **North East**

Rawdon, Leeds  
Urban/ Suburban    Positive Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Rich

Brompton on Swale, Richmond  
Rural                      Negative Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Poor

##### **South West**

Marsh Mills, Plymouth  
Urban/ Suburban    Negative Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Poor

Knowle Park, Bristol (Groups recruited in Whitchurch)  
Rural                      Positive Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Rich

##### **South East**

Barnes (London)  
Urban/ Suburban    Positive Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Rich

Milcombe, Banbury  
Urban/ Suburban    Negative Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Poor

Ripley, Surrey  
Rural                      Negative Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Poor

## **ETHNIC GROUPS**

### **Midlands**

Leicester (LE4)

Urban/ Suburban    Positive Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Rich

### **South**

Luton (LU4)

Urban/ Suburban    Negative Neighbourhood Environment/ Opportunity Poor

**APPENDIX TWO – THE RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE  
(To be included in Final Report)**

## APPENDIX THREE- DISCUSSION GUIDES

### DISCUSSION GUIDE – MAINSTREAM GROUPS

#### ON ARRIVAL

Respondents asked to quickly jot down what they did the day before – indicating mode of transport if they went out.

#### INTRODUCTION (5 mins)

Welcome, names, household composition, whether working/ retired.

#### PICTURE SORT: (15-20 mins)

Respondents divided into 2 groups and each group given a set of images of people involved in a variety of sporting activities and in other pursuits, both active and sedentary. Also given card label relating to their task.

One group asked to work together and thinking about what people shown are doing, not about the people themselves and choose images that show:

- (a) 'How retired/(semi-retired) people your age are likely to be spending their time'

The other group asked to choose images that show:

- (b) 'How retired/(semi-retired) people your age **should** be spending their time'

[If ask whether they should be thinking about men/ women say their sex]

Right, can this group (a) talk us through the selection of pictures you made?

And now this group (b), what made you choose these pictures?

Everyone, looking at the two sets of pictures, how do they compare?

In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?

[If you had been sorting for ....(other sex) what sort of pictures would you have chosen?]

**(PHOTOGRAPH IMAGE SETS WITH LABELS. LEAVE SETS ON DISPLAY)**

#### REALITY CHECK (5-10 mins)

Lets think about this set (a), how does this relate to how you personally spend your time?

How does it compare to how you spent your time yesterday? – use the notes you made when you arrived here.

Now let's think about this set (b), how does that compare to how you spend your time generally nowadays?

And how does it compare to what you did yesterday?

#### SENTENCE COMPLETION (10 mins)

Now I have some half-written sentences here for each of you and I would like you to very quickly complete each sentence. You just quickly write what comes into your head. Don't agonise over it, just write in your first thoughts.

(WORK THROUGH SENTENCE OPENERS, ONE AT A TIME AND FOR EACH:)

Right, what did you write after .....? Anyone else write something similar?

Tell me more about that? What do others think about that?

Who wrote something different? What? What about that?

## **EXERCISE, KEEP FIT + SPORT ACTIVITIES + THEIR AGE GROUP/ LIFE STAGE (20-25mins)**

Let's go back to your picture choices now and think specifically about exercise, keep fit activities and sport.

What do these sets of pictures tell us about people your age in relation to exercise and sport? What else? What else?

PROBE – e.g. Tell me more about that? Why do you think this is?

(IF SPORT/ KEEP FIT ACTIVITIES IN SET (a):)

Why do you think people your age are likely to participate in ..... + .... ?

What is it about those activities that appeal to people your age?

(INDICATE SPORT/KEEP FIT ACTIVITIES EXCLUDED FROM SET (a):)

And why are they unlikely to participate in these sorts of activities?

(IF SPORT/ KEEP FIT ACTIVITIES IN SET (b):)

And why do you think they **should** spend time participating in ... + ...? What other reasons are there?

(INDICATE SPORT/KEEP FIT ACTIVITIES EXCLUDED FROM SET (b):)

And why didn't you choose these activities as things people your age should be doing?

Thinking about exercise, keep fit and sporting activities generally, do you think there are real benefits in doing this sort of thing for people of your age?

What are the benefits? What else?

How much exercise do you think you need to do to be fit?

Are there any long-term benefits of doing exercise, do you think? What are they?

What about downsides, do you think there are downsides in doing exercise or sport at your age? What are these?

What encourages people of your age to participate in exercise/ sports activities?

What else do you think encourages them?

What motivates them to take up exercise, what are the spurs to getting started?

I'm going to write your ideas down on cards and then we can think about them

(WRITE EACH MOTIVATOR ONTO A SEPARATE CARD)

What else? What else?

(POSSIBLE PROMPTS: getting/ keeping fit/ healthy? meeting people? enjoyment? doing something different? doing something for yourself? having something to do?)

(DISPLAY CARDS) What about these then, which do you think are the strongest motivators/ spurs for your age group? Which are the weaker ones?

Which would be most relevant to you personally?

And what do you think keeps people going, keeps them doing an activity?

What would keep you doing something. What would stop you giving up on it?

And what discourages people your age from participating in exercise/ sport activities?

What stops them doing this sort of thing? What else puts them off?

What else? (PROBE FULLY)

What puts you off?

What sort of exercise and sports opportunities are there for your age group?  
What sort of opportunities are there at this time of year?  
How does that compare to exercise and sports opportunities at other times? (Prompt: What about Summer? Winter?)  
And what sorts of opportunities are there for your people around your age when they are away on holiday?

What opportunities are available locally? What else?  
What else is available within fairly easy reach?  
How do you feel about these sorts of opportunities?  
Are they of any interest to you? Why?/ Why not?

**\*\*What sort of opportunities do you want?      \*\*What would you like to do?**  
Let's try and come up with some exercise opportunities that would really appeal to you.  
What sort of thing would you like?  
What else? What else?

### **INACTIVE GROUPS**

#### **EXERCISE, KEEP FIT + SPORT ACTIVITIES + THEM (20 mins)**

(EXPLORE FURTHER/ FILL IN GAPS)

OK, let's talk a bit (more) about what you yourselves have done in terms of exercise, keep fit activities and sport.

Who has done some sort of exercise or sport as an adult? What? When? What got you started? Have you stopped this? When and why stopped?  
Does anyone do any sort of exercise or sport nowadays? What do you do? How often? How long been doing this? What got you started?  
Whether enjoy/ not? Do you do this alone/ with others?  
[PROBE ON WALKING FOR PLEASURE/ EXERCISE , CYCLING FOR PLEASURE/ EXERCISE]

Other people, why doesn't exercise or sport feature for you (nowadays)?  
What stops you doing this sort of thing, do you think? What else stops you?  
A little while ago when we were talking about what stops people your age doing exercise or sport or you mentioned ... and ..... (REITERATE), which of those apply to you? What else?

Others, what stops you doing more than you do nowadays?

#### **PROBE FULLY ON BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION – INCLUDING:**

(IF MENTION BEING 'NOT SPORTY:') What do you mean by that? What does 'sporty' mean?

Is being 'sporty' a physical type? Does it relate to physical ability?

Is being 'sporty' to do with an attitude of mind?

(IF TALK ABOUT 'LACK OF TIME:') Tell me more about that, what do you mean?

Is it about really not having time, do you think, or is it about choosing to spend the time in other ways?

So, why do you think you choose to spend time on other things, rather than exercise or sport?

### **ACTIVE GROUPS**

#### **EXERCISE, KEEP FIT + SPORT ACTIVITIES + THEM (20 mins)**

(EXPLORE FURTHER/ FILL IN GAPS)

OK, let's talk a bit (more) about what you yourselves have done in terms of exercise, keep fit activities and sport.

Thinking back, what sorts of exercise or sports activities have you done as an adult?  
When did you get started on that? What got you started?  
Do you do that now? (IF STOPPED:) When did you stop? Why did you stop?

What exercise or sport are you doing nowadays? When did that start?  
What made you take that up? How often do you do it?  
Do you do it alone/ with others?  
Why do you do this? What other reasons? What other reasons?  
What keeps you going, what stops you giving up on this?  
(IF DON'T MENTION ENJOYMENT:) Is it something you enjoy or not really?

#### **[PROBE ON WALKING FOR PLEASURE/ EXERCISE, CYCLING FOR PLEASURE/ EXERCISE]**

Do you think you should be taking more exercise than you do now?  
What is stopping you doing more? What else?  
Experts think people should be doing exercise or sport for at least 30 minutes at least 3 times a week, what do you think of that?  
Is that reasonable do you think?  
Is it likely that you would do that much? (IF NO:) What would be stopping you?

In fact, you are doing more exercise than most people around your age, why is that do you think?  
What is it that makes you choose to exercise while most of your contemporaries don't?  
What do you think stops these other people doing some form of exercise or sport? What else might be stopping them?

### **ALL GROUPS**

#### **LIFE STAGE PERCEPTION (15 mins)**

(EXPLORE FURTHER/ FILL IN GAPS) Right, let's put aside the topic of exercise and sport and just think about your stage of life generally.

How have your lives changed since you retired/(became semi-retired)?

Tell me more about the changes. What else has changed?

Have your priorities changed? In what way?

How do you feel about being retired?

What are the pluses for you of being retired? And what are the minuses?

Has the way you see yourself changed at all since you retired? How?

What about other people's attitudes to you, have they changed since you retired? In what way? What other ways? How do you feel about that?

For those of you with retired partners, what effect does that have, your partner also being retired?

And for those of you who have partners who are still working, what effect does that have?

Does having a retired or a working partner have any influence at all on whether or not you do exercise or sport, do you think?

### **INTERVENTION CONCEPTS (20 mins)**

I've got some ideas here of different sorts of exercise opportunities and I'd like to know what you think of them.

(PRESENT CONCEPT BOARDS, ONE AT A TIME. FOR EACH:) What about this? What else on this one?

PROBE ON ELEMENTS OF CONCEPT: What about this bit?

Truthfully, would this sort of thing be likely to get your interest?

What would be likely to happen, would you look into this, or would you forget about it, do you think?

RE: references to doing activities with other people: What sort of people would you want to do activities with? Men/ women/ mixed? Your age/ across age range?

RE: 'health and fitness coach' and 'Activity co-ordinator': What sort of person would you want? Man/ woman?

RE: 'health and fitness coach': If query whether have to pay, ask whether this would make a difference, how much they would pay? (Likely to be a charge)

RE: 'Activity co-ordinator': If query whether have to pay, advise services of co-ordinator free, but might have to pay for activity organised e.g. use of local pool – What do they think of that?

(HAVING SEEN ALL AND WITH ALL ON DISPLAY) Which do you think are the best of these? Why is that? Which is the worst one? Why?

What would be the best way of letting you know about these sorts of things?

If they were to use someone to promote these ideas, what sort of person should be used?

And if an organisation was advertising exercise and sports opportunities for your age group, what should they talk about that would encourage people to participate?

(PROMPTS: Health benefits? Fun? Social side?)

What would encourage you?

### **COLLECT IN 'WHAT THEY DID YESTERDAY' + SENTENCE COMPLETION SHEETS**

### **THANK AND CLOSE**



## DISCUSSION GUIDE - ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS

### INTRODUCTION (5 mins)

Welcome, names, household composition, Whether working/ retired.

### PICTURE SORT: (15-20 mins)

Respondents divided into 2 groups and each group given a set of images of people involved in a variety of sporting activities and in other pursuits, both active and sedentary.

One group asked to work together and thinking about what people shown are doing, not about the people themselves and choose images that show:

- (a) 'How retired/(semi-retired) people your age in your community are likely to be spending their time'

The other group asked to choose images that show:

- (b) 'How retired/(semi-retired) people your age in your community **should** be spending their time'

[If ask whether they should be thinking about men/ women say their sex]

Right, can this group (a) talk us through the selection of pictures you made?

And now this group (b), what made you choose these pictures?

Everyone, looking at the two sets of pictures, how do they compare?

In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?

[If you had been sorting for ....(other sex) what sort of pictures would you have chosen?]

**(PHOTOGRAPH IMAGE SETS WITH LABELS. LEAVE SETS ON DISPLAY)**

### REALITY CHECK (5 mins)

Lets think about this set (a), how does this relate to how you personally spend your time?

How does it compare to how you spent your time yesterday?

Now let's think about this set (b), how does that compare to how you spend your time generally nowadays?

And how does it compare to what you did yesterday?

### EXERCISE, KEEP FIT + SPORT ACTIVITIES + THEIR AGE GROUP/ LIFE STAGE (25 mins)

Let's go back to your picture choices now and think specifically about exercise, keep fit activities and sport.

What do these sets of pictures tell us about people your age in relation to exercise and sport? What else? What else?

PROBE – e.g. Tell me more about that? Why do you think this is?

(IF SPORT/ KEEP FIT ACTIVITIES IN SET (a):)

Why do you think people your age are likely to participate in ..... + .... ?

What is it about those activities that appeal to people your age?

(INDICATE SPORT/KEEP FIT ACTIVITIES EXCLUDED FROM SET (a):)

And why are they unlikely to participate in these sort of activities?

(IF SPORT/ KEEP FIT ACTIVITIES IN SET (b):)

And why do you think they **should** spend time participating in ... + ...? What other reasons are there?

(INDICATE SPORT/KEEP FIT ACTIVITIES EXCLUDED FROM SET (b):)

And why didn't you choose these as things people your age should be doing?

Thinking about exercise, keep fit and sporting activities generally, do you think there are real benefits in doing this sort of thing for people of your age?

What are the benefits? What else?

How much exercise do you think you need to do to be fit?

Are there any long-term benefits of doing exercise, do you think? What are they?

What about downsides, do you think there are downsides in doing exercise or sport at your age? What are these?

What encourages people of your age to participate in exercise/ sports activities?

What else do you think encourages them?

What motivates them to take up exercise, what are the spurs to getting started? What else? What else?

(POSSIBLE PROMPTS: getting/keeping fit/ healthy? meeting people? enjoyment? doing something different? doing something for yourself? having something to do?)

What do you think are the strongest motivators/ spurs for your age group?

Which would be most relevant to you personally?

And what do you think keeps people going, keeps them doing an activity?

What would keep you doing something. What would stop you giving up on it?

And what discourages people your age from participating in exercise/ sport activities?

What stops them doing this sort of thing? What else puts them off?

What else? (PROBE FULLY)

(INACTIVE GROUPS:) What puts you off?

What sort of exercise and sports opportunities are there for your age group?

What sort of opportunities are there at this time of year?

What about in the Summer?

What opportunities are available locally? What else?

What else is available within fairly easy reach?

How do you feel about these sorts of opportunities?

Are they of any interest to you? Why?/ Why not?

**\*\*What sort of opportunities do you want?      \*\*What would you like to do?**

Let's try and come up with some exercise opportunities that would really appeal to you.

What sort of thing would you like?

What else? What else?

## **INACTIVE GROUPS**

### **EXERCISE, KEEP FIT + SPORT ACTIVITIES + THEM (20 mins)**

(EXPLORE FURTHER/ FILL IN GAPS)

OK, let's talk a bit (more) about what you yourselves have done in terms of exercise, keep fit activities and sport.

Who has done some sort of exercise or sport as an adult? What? When? What got you started? Have you stopped this? When and why stopped?

Does anyone do any sort of exercise or sport nowadays? What do you do? How often? How long been doing this? What got you started?

Whether enjoy/ not? Do you do this alone/ with others?

[PROBE ON WALKING FOR PLEASURE/ EXERCISE, CYCLING FOR PLEASURE/ EXERCISE]

Other people, why doesn't exercise or sport feature for you (nowadays)?

What stops you doing this sort of thing, do you think? What else stops you?

A little while ago when we were talking about what stops people your age doing exercise or sport or you mentioned ... and ..... (REITERATE), which of those apply to you? What else?

Others, what stops you doing more than you do nowadays?

#### **PROBE FULLY ON BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION – INCLUDING:**

(IF MENTION BEING 'NOT SPORTY:') What do you mean by that? What does 'sporty' mean?

Is being 'sporty' a physical type? Does it relate to physical ability?

Is being 'sporty' to do with an attitude of mind?

(IF TALK ABOUT 'LACK OF TIME:') Tell me more about that, what do you mean?

Is it about really not having time, do you think, or is it about choosing to spend the time in other ways?

So, why do you think you choose to spend time on other things, rather than exercise or sport?

#### **\*\*RAISE (IF NECESSARY) AND EXPLORE (POSSIBILITY OF) CULTURAL FACTORS MITIGATING AGAINST PARTICIPATION IN EXERCISE + SPORT:**

E.g.: whether/ not:

- time spent on exercise/ sport seen as a 'luxury'
- exercise/ sport not seen as appropriate pastimes for women
- inappropriate for women to use mixed sex facilities
- would feel out of place at local facilities

## **ACTIVE GROUPS**

### **EXERCISE, KEEP FIT + SPORT ACTIVITIES + THEM (20 mins)**

(EXPLORE FURTHER/ FILL IN GAPS)

OK, let's talk a bit (more) about what you yourselves have done in terms of exercise, keep fit activities and sport.

Thinking back, what sorts of exercise or sports activities have you done as an adult?  
When did you get started on that? What got you started?  
Do you do that now? (IF STOPPED:) When did you stop? Why did you stop?

What exercise or sport are you doing nowadays? When did that start?  
What made you take that up? How often do you do it?  
Do you do it alone/ with others?  
Why do you do this? What other reasons? What other reasons?  
What keeps you going, what stops you giving up on this?  
(IF DON'T MENTION ENJOYMENT:) Is it something you enjoy or not really?

### **[PROBE ON WALKING FOR PLEASURE/ EXERCISE, CYCLING FOR PLEASURE/ EXERCISE]**

Do you think you should be taking more exercise than you do now?  
What is stopping you doing more? What else?  
Experts think people should be doing exercise or sport for at least 30 minutes at least 3 times a week, what do you think of that?  
Is that reasonable do you think?  
Is it likely that you would do that much? (IF NO:) What would be stopping you?

In fact, you are doing more exercise than most people around your age, why is that do you think?  
What is it that makes you choose to exercise while most other people don't?  
What do you think stops these other people doing some form of exercise or sport? What else might be stopping them?

### **\*\*RAISE (IF NECESSARY) AND EXPLORE (POSSIBILITY OF) CULTURAL FACTORS WORKING TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN EXERCISE + SPORT:**

E.g. whether/ not:

- tradition of certain sports, such as cricket, for men
- opportunity to engage with/ be part of broader local community (their culture/ general population)

## **ALL GROUPS**

### **LIFE STAGE PERCEPTION (15 mins)**

(EXPLORE FURTHER/ FILL IN GAPS) Right, let's put aside the topic of exercise and sport and just think about your stage of life generally.

*NOTE: This section is intended to explore respondents' perceptions of and attitudes to their current life stage and in particular, the impact of retirement.*

*There may be a number of different situations for women respondents  
e.g. respondent retired, husband retired, respondent never worked outside home,*

*respondent is a widow who hasn't worked outside home. Please use the question areas set out below as appropriate to respondents.*

## RETIRED/SEMI-RETIRED RESPONDENTS

How have your lives changed since you retired/(became semi-retired)?  
Tell me more about the changes. What else has changed?

Have there been any changes in what you think is important, now you've retired? In what way?

How do you feel about being retired? Do you like being retired or not?  
What is good about being retired? And what is bad about being retired?

Has the way you see yourself changed at all since you retired? How?  
What about other people's attitudes to you, have they changed since you retired? In what way? What other ways? How do you feel about that?

## RETIRED/ SEMI-RETIRED RESPONDENTS WITH PARTNERS:

For those of you with retired/ non-working partners, what effect (on your life) does that have, your partner being retired/ non-working?

And for those of you who have partners who are still working, what effect does that have?

Does the fact that your husband/ wife is retired, non-working or working have any influence at all on whether or not you do exercise or sport, do you think?

## NON-WORKING WOMEN WHOSE HUSBANDS HAVE RETIRED

How have your lives changed since your husband retired/ semi-retired?  
Tell me more about the changes. What else has changed?  
How has his retirement affected his life? How has it affected your life?

## NON-WORKING WOMEN WITHOUT HUSBANDS

How do your lives now compare to when you were a bit younger, say your early fifties?  
Tell me more about the changes

## BOTH NON-WORKING WOMEN WHOSE HUSBANDS HAVE RETIRED AND

## NON-WORKING WOMEN WITHOUT HUSBANDS

Have there been any changes in what you think is important?  
How do you feel about this stage of your life?  
What do you like about it? What don't you like about it?  
Has the way you see yourself changed at all over the last few years?  
In what way?  
Has the way other people see you changed at all, do you think?  
How has that changed? How do you feel about that?

## **INTERVENTION CONCEPTS (20 mins)**

(EXPLORE FURTHER/ FILL IN GAPS)

What might encourage you to take up a sport of some form of exercise? / more sport or exercise?

Is there anything that could be offered locally that would get you interested?

I've got some ideas here of different things that could be done/ offered and I'd like to know what you think of them.

(READ OUT EACH IDEA ONE AT A TIME. FOR EACH:)

What about this? What do you think of this idea? What else?

Truthfully, would this sort of thing be likely to get your interest?

What would be likely to happen, would you look into this, or would you forget about it, do you think?

- Let over-55s know what activity opportunities are available locally and offer 'taster' sessions, where you can try out an activity.  
PROMPT: What sort of activities would you like to try?
- Local exercise/ sports activities would arranged through existing organisations, such as local social groups or community organisations,
- There would be activity sessions specifically for 55+s
- There would be activity sessions specifically for members of Asian/ Indian/ Pakistani community/ Asian women.
- A personal health and fitness coach would be available to plan an individual activity schedule for you and introduce you to the local facilities  
PROMPTS: What sort of person would you like the coach to be?  
A man/ woman? From your community?  
If query whether have to pay, ask whether this would make a difference, how much they would pay? (Likely to be a charge)
- Local outdoor activities would be offered where you could meet up and do activities with others e.g. walking, cycling
- There would be a local 'activity co-ordinator' who would organise activities and would get people together to do them.  
PROMPTS: What sort of person would you like the coach to be?  
A man/ woman? From your community?  
And what about the people you would do the activities with?  
Would you want them to be men/ women/ mixed? From your community?  
If query whether have to pay, advise services of co-ordinator free, but might have to pay for activity organised e.g. use of local pool – What about that?
- Or the co-ordinator would organise the activities and put people in touch with each other so they could arrange to do them together.
- Activities could be advertised in GP surgeries.
- GPs would recommend exercise to patients and provide one-to-one advice  
What would be the best way of letting you know about these sorts of things?

If they were to use someone to promote these ideas, what sort of person should be used?

And if an organisation was advertising exercise and sports opportunities for your age group, what should they talk about that would encourage people to participate?  
(PROMPTS: Health benefits? Fun? Social side?)  
What would encourage you?

**THANK AND CLOSE**

## APPENDIX FOUR - INTERVENTION CONCEPTS

Let over-55s know what activity opportunities are available locally:

- including those suitable to do with younger family members

Offer 'taster' sessions, where can try out an activity such as golf or rock climbing.

Local sports activities arranged through existing organisations:

- local social groups, community organisations, Women's Institute etc.
- SAGA, University of the Third Age
- with mobile fitness facilities in rural areas
- sessions specifically for 55+s

Personal health and fitness coach available locally to plan an individual activity schedule and introduce you to the local facilities

Offer local outdoor activities that would allow you to meet up and do activities with others e.g. walking, cycling

Have a local 'activity co-ordinator' who would organise and promote activity opportunities and would get people together/ put people in touch with each other

Promote activity opportunities through GP surgeries:

- GP surgeries to display advertisements for local activities
- GPs to recommend exercise to patients and provide one-to-one advice