

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Survey (2009-2012):

Difference in access to the natural environment between social groups within the adult English population

Foreword

This report explores the data collected by the *Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment* (2009 – 2012) for information of relevance to advancing policy and practice in Outdoors for All. Further analysis has been undertaken relating to visits including children to the natural environment and this is published separately as *Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (2009 - 2012) – analysis of data related to visits with children*.

Context

Natural England is committed to increasing the number and range of people who can experience and benefit from the natural environment. Through our Outdoors for All programme Natural England is leading the Government's ambition that 'everyone should have fair access to a good quality natural environment'.

The Natural Environment White Paper (2011) aims to strengthen connections between people and nature. However it acknowledges that the opportunities to benefit from spending time in the natural environment are currently not open to everyone, which can contribute to health and other inequalities. Natural England has a responsibility to promote access, recreation and public well-being and to help Government deliver the ambitions set out in the White Paper.

Natural England is therefore championing Outdoors for All on behalf of Government and the natural environment, greenspace, volunteering and heritage sectors by working with partners to help improve the quality of everyone's experience of natural places and to increase the number and diversity of people inspired by and enjoying the natural environment.

Natural England is working closely with a range of partners to help deliver projects which seek to ensure that people living in deprived areas, the elderly, those with physical disabilities or mental health illness, and people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities all have opportunities to access high quality natural environments.

Natural England is keen to better understand the research needs and priorities to help improve engagement in the natural environment amongst these groups, and in this context was keen to use the data collected through the *Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment* (MENE) survey to add further insight.

This report should be cited as:

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Further information

This report can be downloaded from the Natural England website: www.naturalengland.org.uk. For information on Natural England publications contact the Natural England Enquiry Service on 0845 600 3078 or e-mail enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

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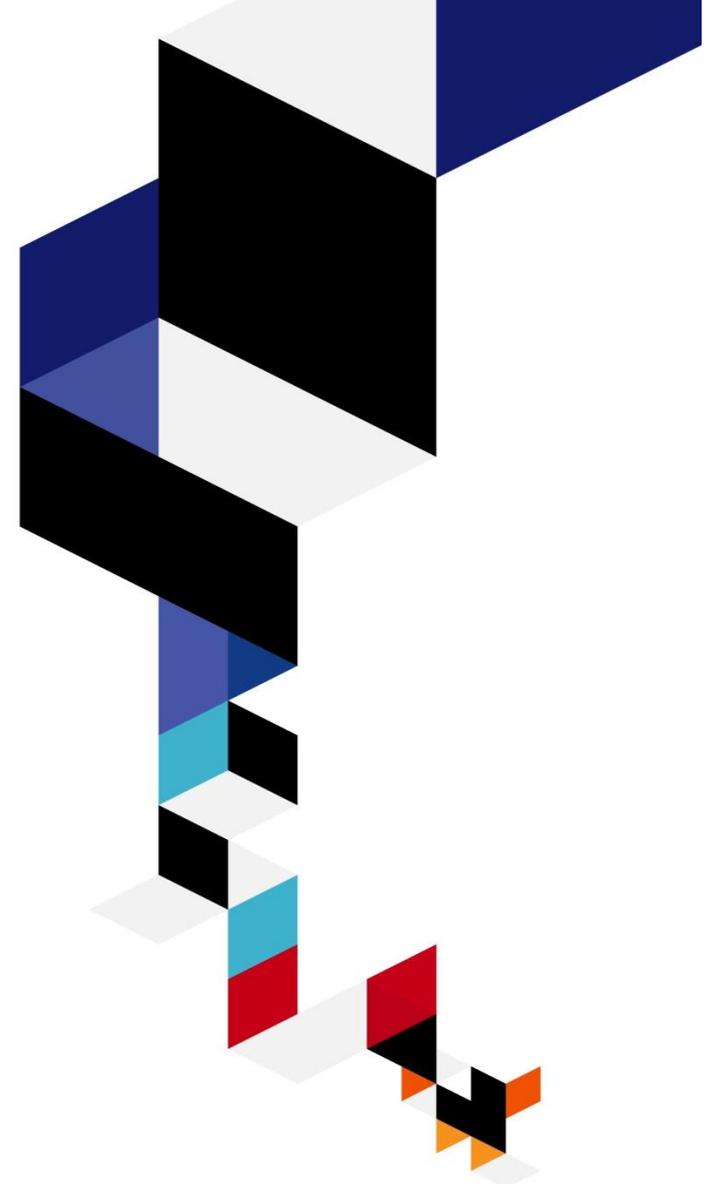
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1 Method and Summary



Method

Natural England, the Forestry Commission and DEFRA commissioned the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey to provide baseline data on how people use the natural environment in England.

The analysis contained in this report is based on interviews completed over the first three years of the MENE household survey undertaken from March 2009 to February 2012. During this period, around 142,000 interviews were undertaken. These respondents provided information on a range of topics including frequency of visits to the natural environment and the number of visits, if any, taken during the previous 7 days. Those who had taken any visits to the natural environment during this period (a sample of around 57,000 respondents) then provided full details of one of the visits they had taken.

In the analysis of results, weights have been applied so that the findings presented in this and other survey outputs are representative of the adult population and the visits taken by this population during the survey period (ONS mid-year population projections have been used as the basis of weighting targets). Full details of the survey methods, sampling, weighting procedures and other survey outputs are provided on the Natural England website (see <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/research/mene.aspx>).

Definitions and sample sizes

In this report, results have been analysed for the key groups listed in the table below (also note the various sample sizes). The groups are not mutually exclusive, for example a large proportion of those people aged 65+ also have disabilities. Throughout the report survey results relating to each of these groups have been compared with all other members of the adult population (i.e. the adult population minus the group of interest). This comparator group has been labelled 'Rest of population' in charts.

	Total survey respondents March 2009-February 2012 (respondent base)	Total survey respondents providing full details of visits March 2009-February 2012 (visit base)
BAME population - members of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population	18,220	4,638
Aged 65+ population	35,054	22,563
Disabled people - people with a long term illness or disability	29,716	18,472
DE socio-economic groups - members of the D and E groups (semi and unskilled workers and long term unemployed)/	48,478	27,490
Urban deprived population - residents of areas within the bottom 10% of Index of Multiple Deprivation AND in areas defined as Urban using the ONS Rural-Urban classification	15,906	6,473

Summary of findings - by population group

	BAME population	Urban deprived population	DE Socio-economic groups	People aged 65+	People with a disability or long term illness
Estimated size of population in England (based on weighted MENE data. Note groups are not mutually exclusive e.g. Many people aged 65+ also have a disability or long term illness)	5.4 million (13% of population)	4.2 million (10% of population)	11.5 million (28% of population)	8.1 million (19% of population)	7.4 million (18% of population)
Number of visits to the natural environment: (Total population average = 65 visits per person per year)	Av. 143 million visits per year Av. 27 visits per person per year	Av. 167 million visits per year Av. 40 visits per person per year	Av. 574 million visits per year Av. 50 visits per person per year	Av. 449 million visits per year Av. 55 visits per person per year	Av. 414 million visits per year Av. 56 visits per person per year
Places most frequently visited	Urban parks or other open urban green spaces	Urban parks or other open urban green spaces	A wide range but a bias towards urban locations and close to home	Countryside and coastal locations including rural visits	A wide range of urban and rural types of place visited
Activities and motivations for visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit are likely to involve walking (but not with a dog) and/or playing with children. • Health, relaxing and spending time with family or friends are motivators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most visits taken involve entertaining children and /or dog walking. • motivated by entertaining children. 	Visits are taken for dog walking or personal health and exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities include dog walking, walking for health and wildlife watching. • Fresh air and scenery are motivations. 	Over half of visits are taken for dog walking and a large proportion for personal health and exercise.
Positive outcomes of visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All three of these groups are generally less positive than the rest of population in terms of enjoyment of visit, feeling close to nature and relaxation. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More positive than rest of population, especially enjoyment of visits, feeling close to nature and taking time to appreciate surroundings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to rest of population apart from 'taking time to appreciate surroundings' which is likely to be much more positive.
Key Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too busy at work or at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too busy at work or home, relatively limited access to a car, expense. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide ranging barriers – poor health, old age, too busy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old age, poor health, physical disability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor health, old age, physical disability.

Summary of findings - by population group

Compared to the total population:

- both the BAME and Urban deprived populations tend to be younger and are more likely to have children at home, live in urban areas and have lower than average car access. In contrast, both those aged 65+ and people with disabilities are similar in that they are less likely to have children in the household, are more positive towards the natural environment but are likely to state that old age or poor health are barriers to taking visits.

Similarities between population groups:

1. the **urban deprived and the BAME population groups** take the fewest visits and are least positive towards the natural environment. Both of these groups tend to live in urban areas, have low car access and are constrained in their visits to the natural environment by a lack of time. Their visits tend to be near to home, more urban locations and taken for more functional purposes.

2. **disabled and elderly people** are more positive towards the natural environment and enjoy the visits they take. Visits are more likely to be taken in rural locations and driven by emotional purposes such as enjoying favourite places.

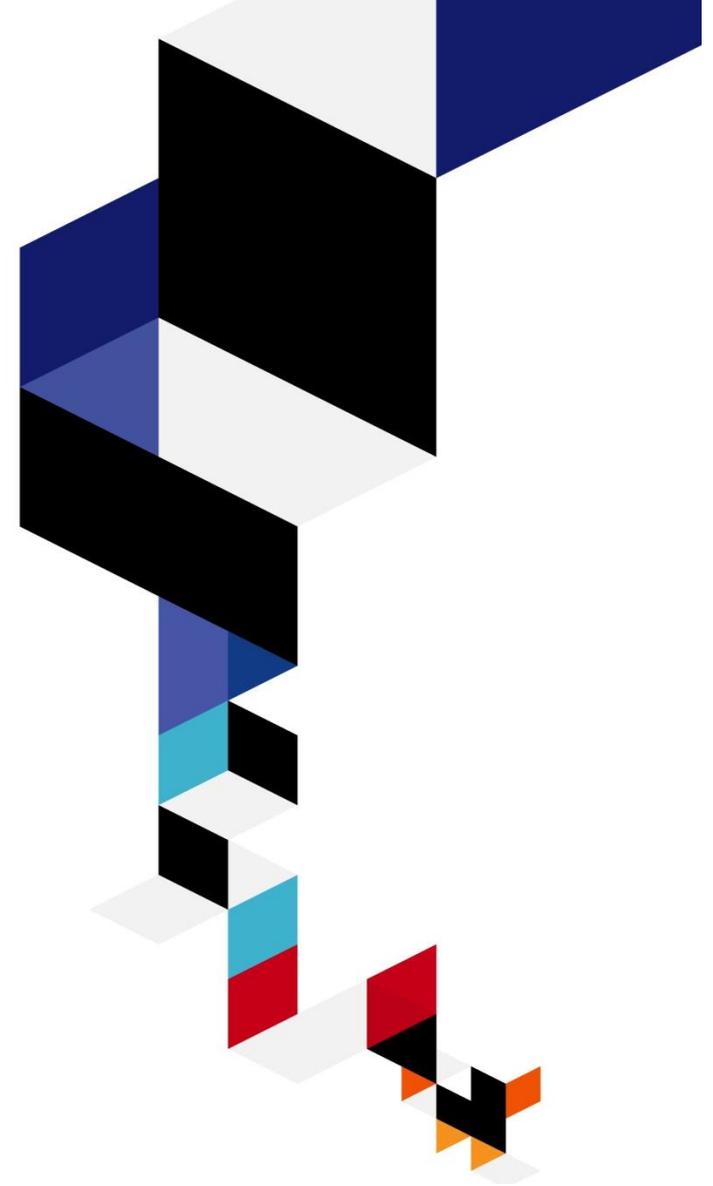
- Understanding these similarities between groups can inform and increase the efficiency of interventions which aim to develop participation in visits to the natural environment.

Summary of findings - insights

- There appears to be a positive correlation, across the five population groups, between the frequency of visiting the natural environment and attitudes these groups have to the natural environment. The elderly (aged 65+) and people with disabilities and long term illnesses visit the natural environment the most frequently of the five population groups and have the most positive attitudes to the natural environment. Conversely the urban deprived and BAME population groups take the fewest visits and are least positive towards the natural environment.
- The groups within the population that visit the natural environment most frequently have the most positive attitudes to the natural environment **and** their connection with the natural environment tends to be more emotional involving enjoyment of scenery and wildlife at favourite places. In contrast, those groups of people that visit the natural environment less frequently have less positive attitudes and their connection is more functional, involving activities such as entertaining children, exercising or socialising with family and friends.
- A number of interrelated factors can either motivate or create a barrier to taking visits to the natural environment. Most notably:
 - **Lifestage** – related to age and presence of children, working and family commitments can reduce the 'availability' of time to participate in outdoor recreation. This lack of time becomes less of an obstacle with increased age when concerns regarding health or disability may become more of a barrier to participation.

2 Analysis by population group

1. BAME Population
2. Residents of urban deprived areas
3. Members of the DE socio-economic groups
4. People aged 65 and over
5. People with a long term illness or disability



Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Population

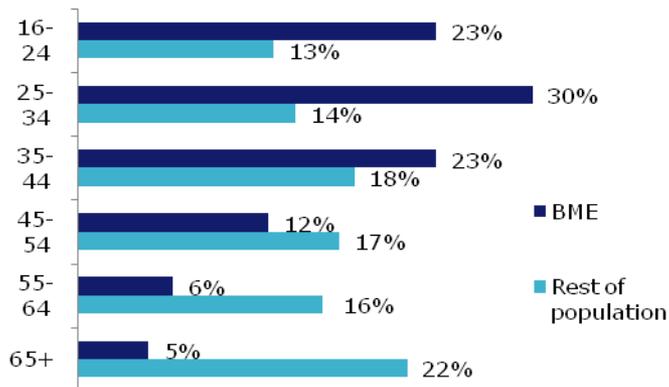


BAME Population

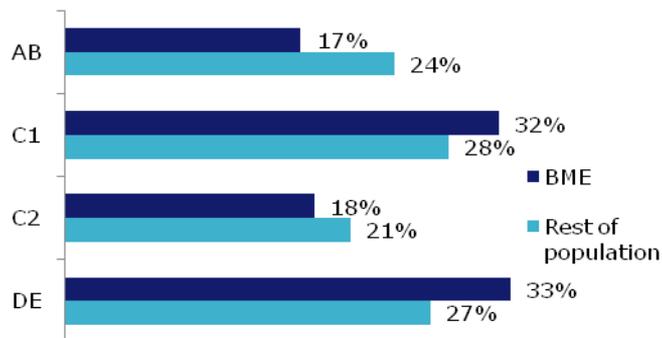
Demographic profile

- An estimated 5.4 million adults are in this group – 13% of the adult population in England.
- Compared to the rest of the population this population is younger and a higher proportion have children at home (43% v 26%). Most live in urban areas (98%) and a below average proportion have regular access to a car (59% v 76%). Members of this group are more likely to work or study on a full time basis (64% v 52%).

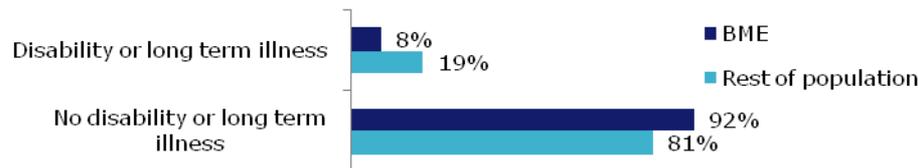
Age profile



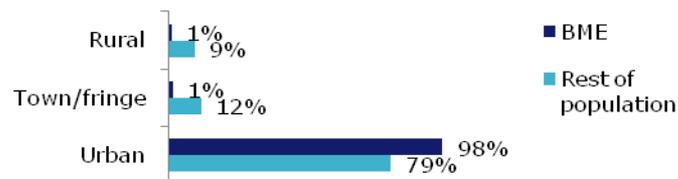
Socio-economic profile



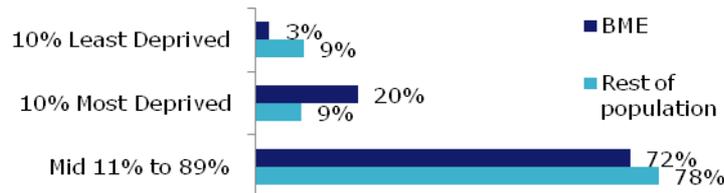
Disability/ long term illness



Place of residence – urban/rural ONS classification



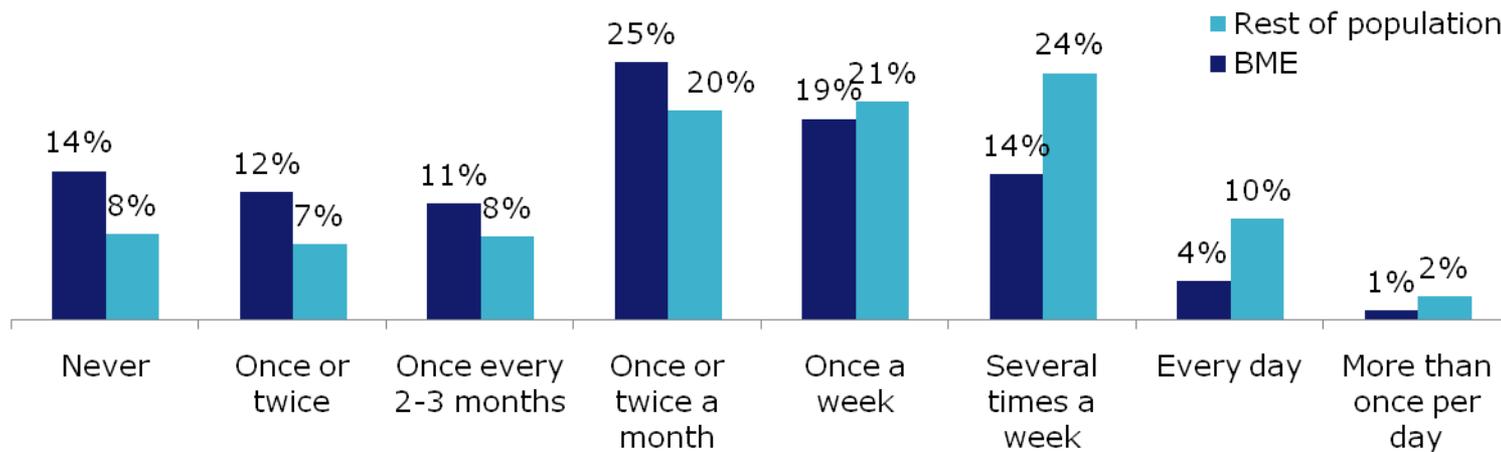
Place of residence – Index of multiple deprivation



BAME Population - participation

- Average number of visits taken to the natural environment per person per year is **27** - 62% less than the average for the rest of the population (i.e. 70 visits per person, per year).
- **14%** normally never visit the natural environment and **12%** visit once or twice a year at the most. **38%** normally visit at least once a week compared to 57% of the rest of the population.

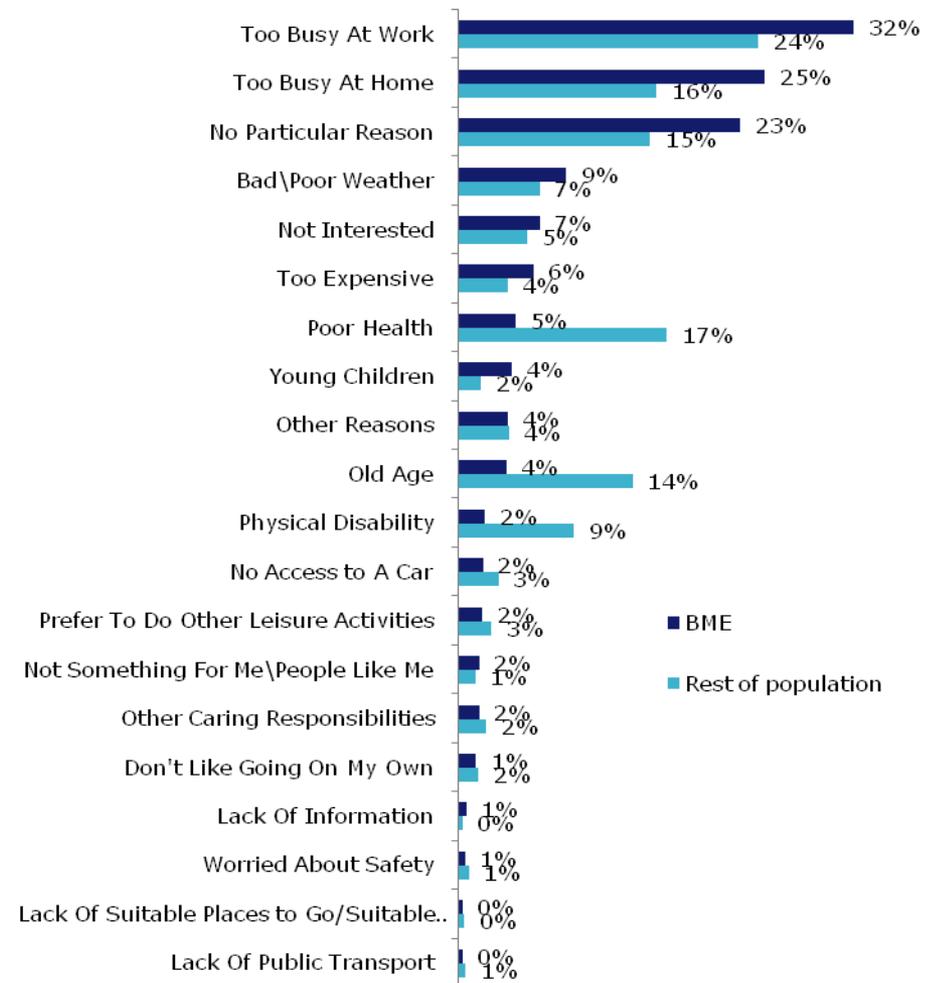
Frequency of visits to the natural environment



BAME Population - Barriers to visits

- Those members of the BAME population who normally visited the natural environment less than once a month were asked why they did not visit more often.
- The most frequently cited reasons for not taking part in visits to the natural environment were being **too busy at work** (mentioned by 32% of those who take part less than once a month) or **too busy at home** (25%). This is likely to be related to the age profile of the BAME population with large proportions at an age where they work or study on a full time basis and/or with children living at home.
- Around a quarter (23%) stated that they had **no particular reason** for not visiting the natural environment. This response suggests that interest in the environment per se is not a motivation for the visiting.
- Compared to the rest of the population a lower proportion of the BAME population stated that 'poor health', 'old age' or 'physical disability' prevented them from taking visits. This probably reflects the younger age profile of this population group.

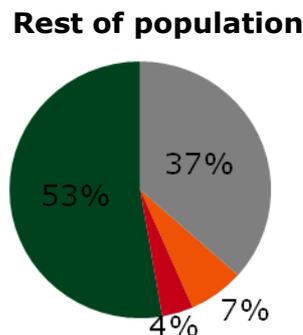
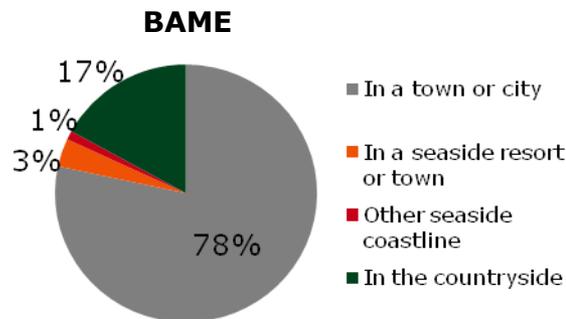
Reasons for not visiting



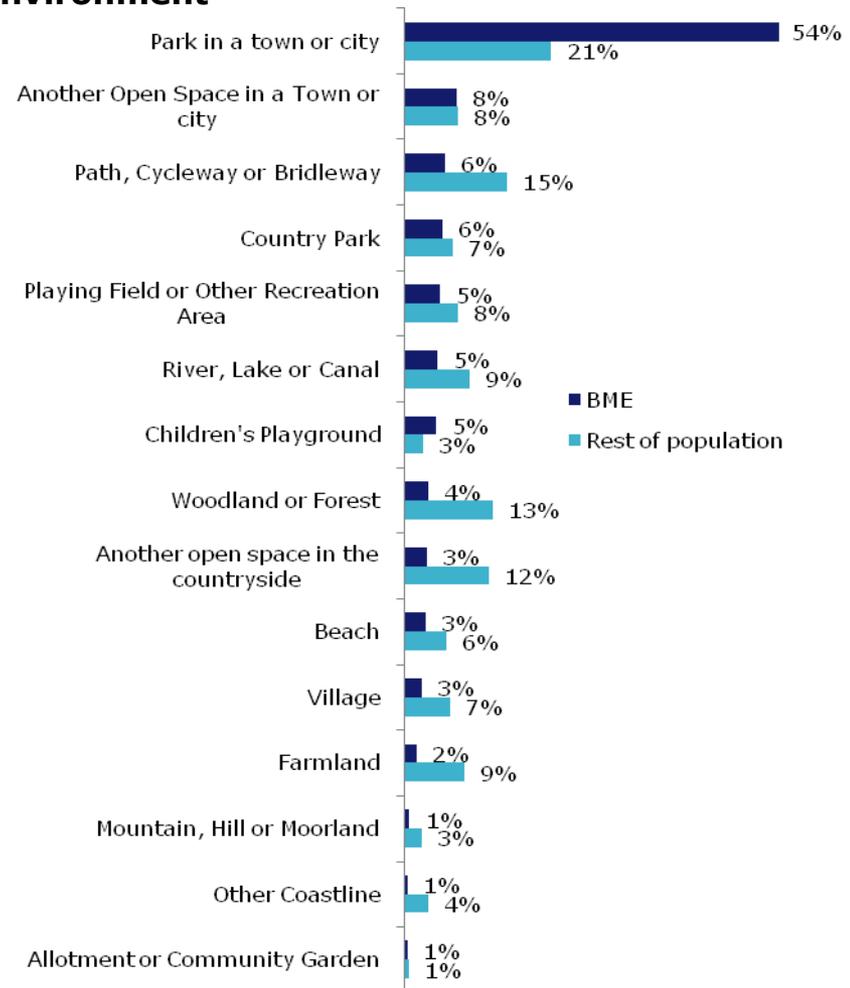
BAME Population - Places visited

- Over three-quarters of BAME visits (78%) took place in an urban environment, more than double the proportion amongst the rest of the population (37%), probably reflecting the high proportion of this group living in urban locations and low car ownership. Only 22% visits were to the coast or countryside (v.63% of the rest of the adult population).
- Over half of visits taken by the BAME population included an urban park (54%), again more than double the proportion for the rest of the population (21%).
- Public transport was more likely to be used on visits taken by this group (12% of visits involved a public bus or train v 2% for the rest of the population) consistent with low levels of car access.

Places included on visits to the natural environment



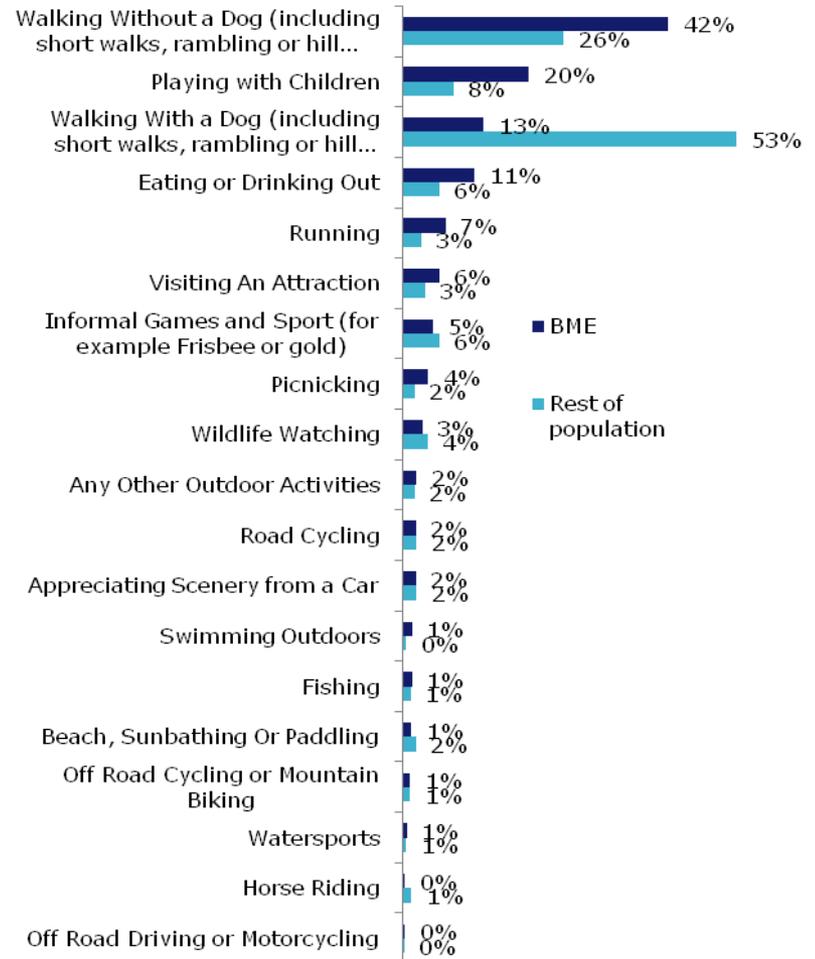
Places included on visits to the natural environment



BAME Population - Activities undertaken

- Over half of visits taken by the BAME population involved walking (42% without a dog, 13% with a dog).
- Compared to the rest of the population, higher proportions of the visits taken by the BAME population involved playing with children (20% v. 8%) or social activities such as eating or drinking out, picnicking or visiting and attraction.
- The significance of these preferred activities may be related to the age profile and life cycle stage of the BAME population: i.e. young families are more likely to socialise with friends and spend time together during visits to the natural environment.

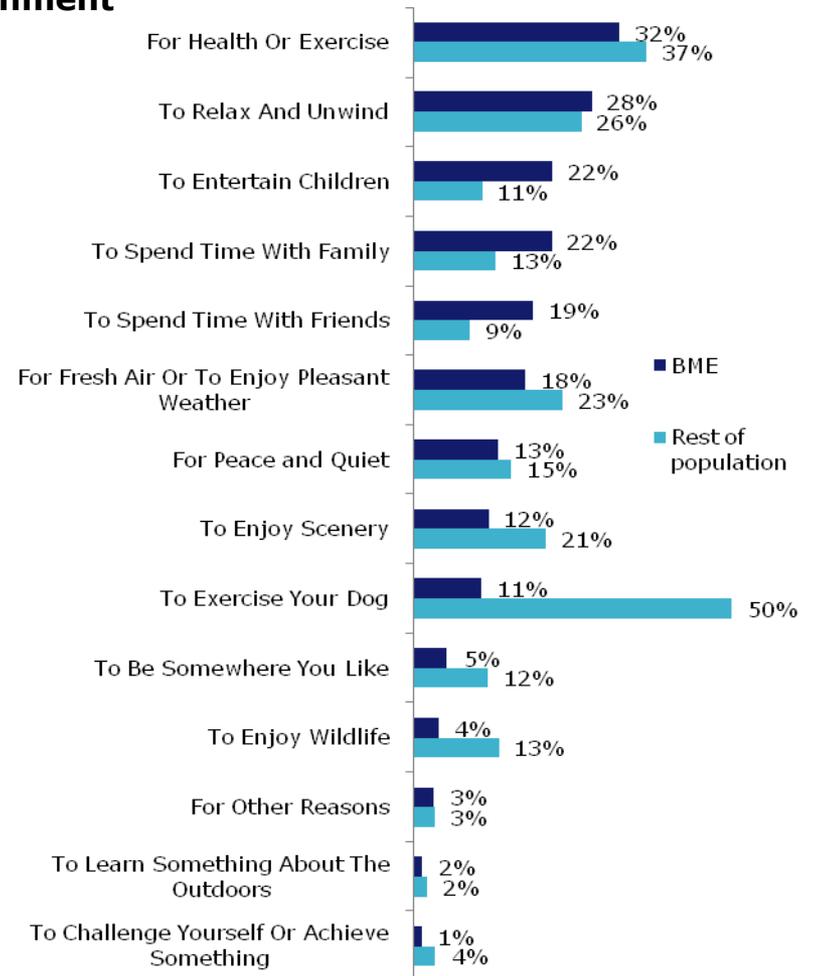
Activities undertaken during visits to the natural environment



BAME Population - Reasons for visits

- The motivations 'entertaining children' and 'spending time with family' were both given as reasons for 22% of visits by the BAME population, about double the proportion for the rest of the population.
- A third of visits taken by members of the BAME population were taken for 'health or exercise' (32%) and 28% were taken to 'relax and unwind'. These proportions are similar to those recorded amongst the rest of the population.
- By contrast, 'to enjoy wildlife' was around three times less likely to be given as a reason for visits taken by the BAME population.

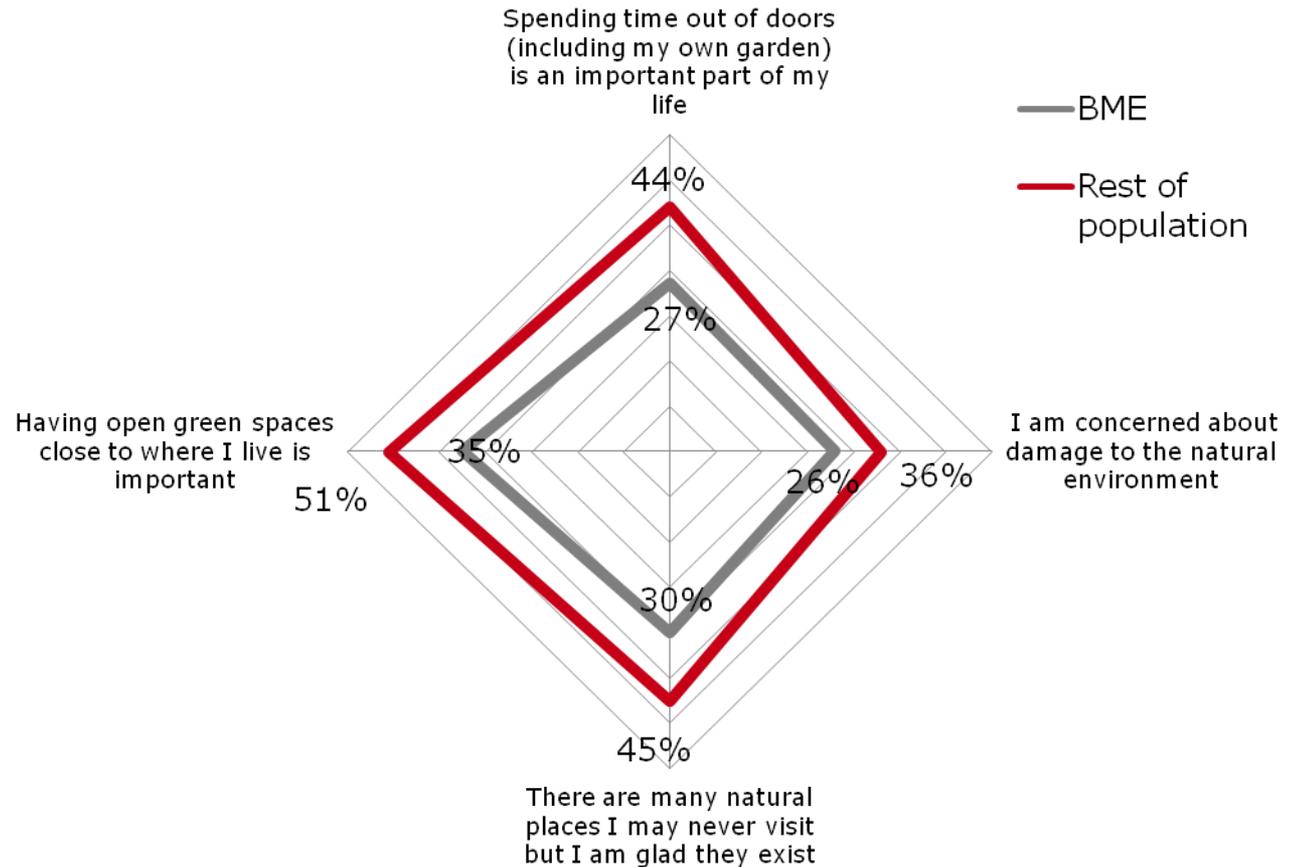
Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment



BAME Population - Attitudes towards the environment

- Respondents were also asked to indicate how much they **agreed** with a series of statements regarding **concerns for the natural environment**, including the importance of local green spaces.
- The chart illustrates the proportions strongly agreeing with each statement, comparing responses amongst those visits taken by members of the BAME population and the rest of the population.
- Members of the BAME population were generally **less concerned about the natural environment**, less likely to value local green spaces and less likely to consider spending time out of doors as being important in their life.

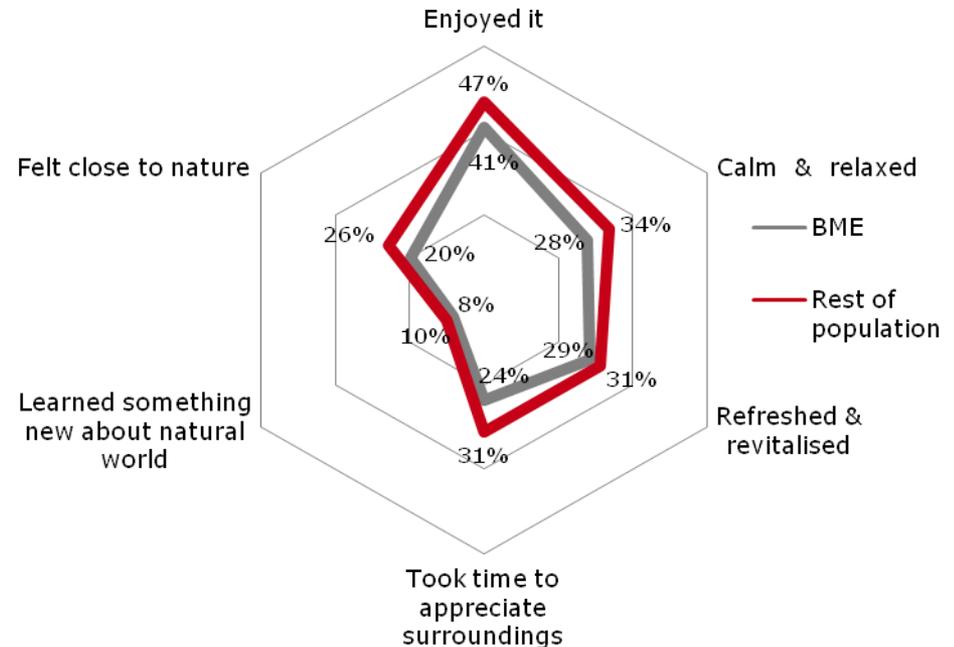
Strong agreement with statements regarding the environment



BAME Population - Positive outcomes of visits

- MENE respondents were also asked to indicate how much they **agreed** with a series of statements regarding the potential **positive outcomes** of their visit to the natural environment.
- The chart illustrates the proportions strongly agreeing with each statement, comparing responses amongst those visits taken by members of the BAME population and the rest of the population.
- Notably, members of the BAME population were generally less positive about their visits. Compared to the rest of the population they felt less close to nature and were less likely to take time to appreciate surroundings. This reflects the attitudes to the natural environment illustrated on the previous chart.

Positive outcomes of visits – strong agreement regarding visit



BAME Population - Summary of key findings

- **Population size:** c.5.4 million adults (13% of adult population).
- **Population profile:** younger than the rest of the population and more likely to have children at home. Significantly more likely to live in urban areas and with lower car access.
- **Frequency of visits:** average of 27 visits per year – 62% less than the rest of the population (70 visits).
- **Places visited:** predominantly urban with most visits to parks or other open spaces in a town, probably reflecting the place of residence.
- **Motivations for visits:** more likely to involve playing with children, walking and social activities with family and friends.
- **Barriers to visits:** a lack of time both at work and at home with family commitments is a major barrier, possibly reflecting the younger lifestage profile of this group.
- **Attitudes and outcomes of visits:** generally less concerned about the natural environment compared with rest of population and with generally less positive outcomes to visits.

Residents of urban deprived areas

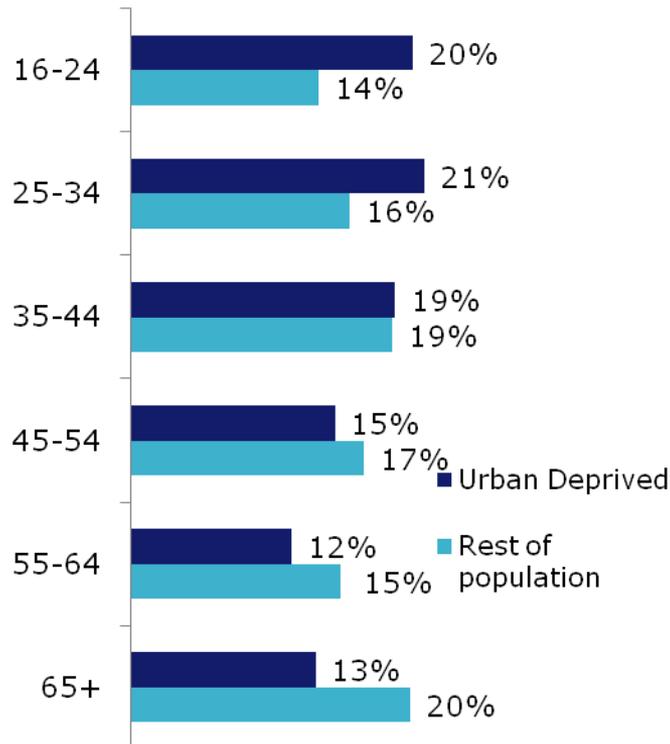


Urban deprived

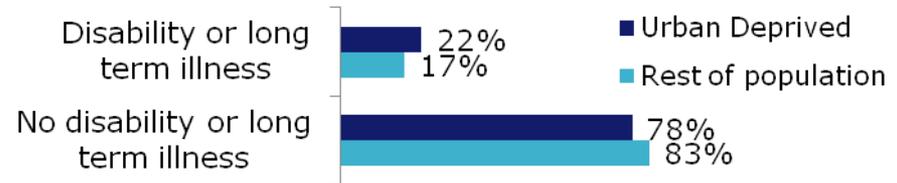
Demographic profile

- An estimated 4.2 million adults are in this group – 10% of the adult population in England.
- Residents of urban deprived areas are generally younger compared to the rest of the population (60% under 45), a larger proportion have children in their household (35% v 28%), but access to a car is relatively low (52% v 72%). While half are in the DE socio-economic groups, almost 1 in 3 are in other socio-economic groups, including 8% classified as ABs.

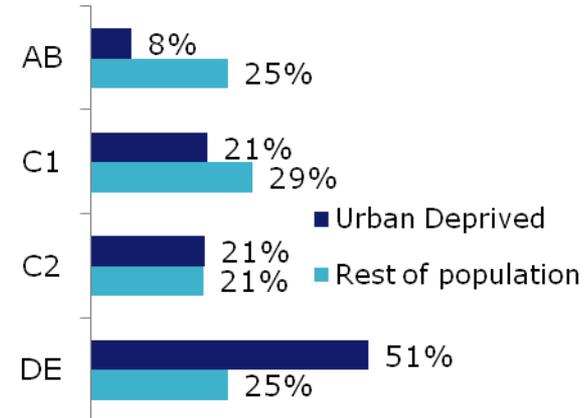
Age profile



Disability/ long term illness



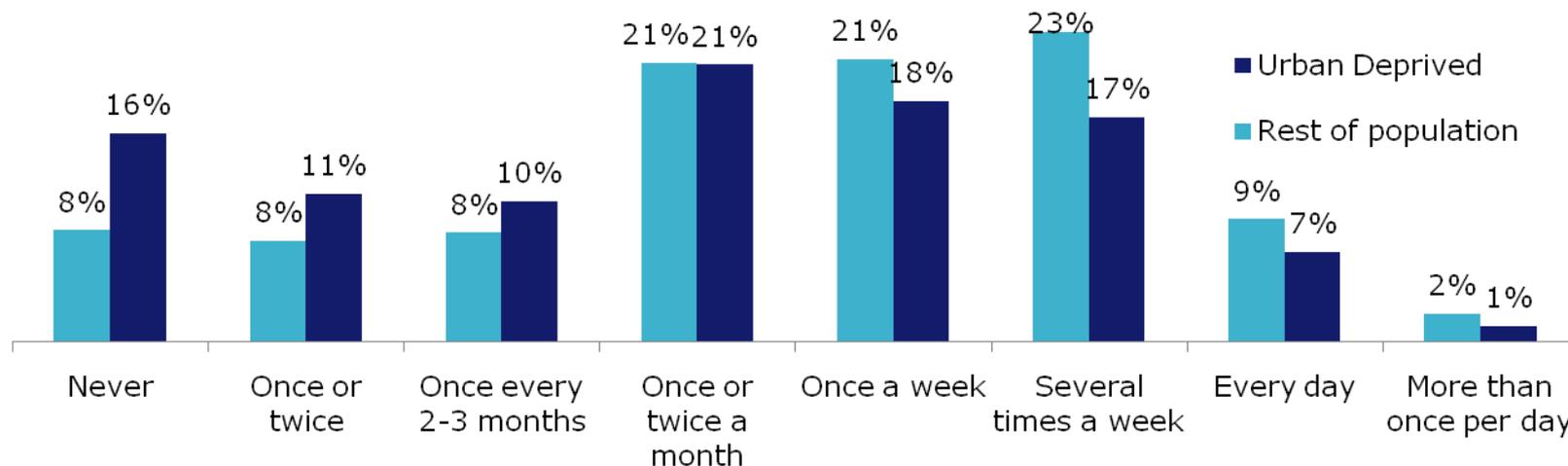
Socio-economic profile



Urban deprived - participation

- The average number of visits taken per person per year is **40** - 41% less than the average amongst the rest of the population (average 67 visits per person, per year).
- **16%** normally never visit the natural environment and **11%** visit once or twice a year at the most. However **43%** normally visit every week compared to 55% of the rest of the population.

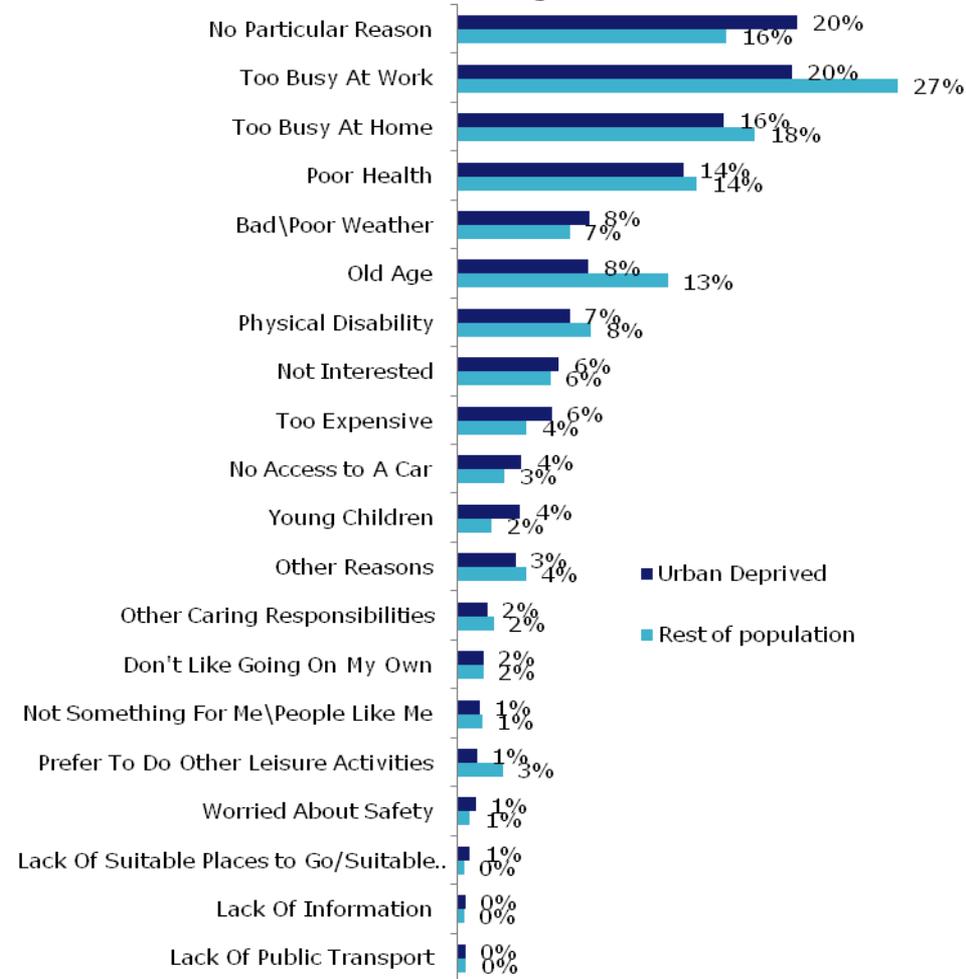
Frequency of visits to the natural environment



Urban deprived - Barriers to visits

- Those residents of urban deprived areas who normally visited the natural environment less than once a month were asked why they did not visit more often.
- The largest proportions stated that they had 'no particular reason' for not participating (20%) or that they were either too busy at work (20%) or too busy at home (16%). 14% mentioned poor health as a barrier.
- Other reasons more likely to be given by members of this group compared to the rest of the population included a perception that visits to the outdoors were too expensive or a lack of access to a car.
- This relatively broad range of reasons for not taking visits may reflect the varied profile of the population in urban deprived areas with those in the pre-family and family lifecycle stages restricted by home and work commitments while others are more limited by a lack of disposable income or car access making it harder to take visits to places beyond their immediate urban environment.

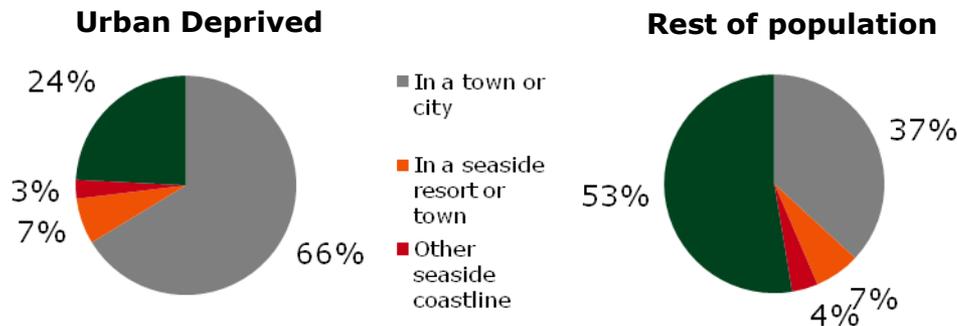
Reasons for not visiting



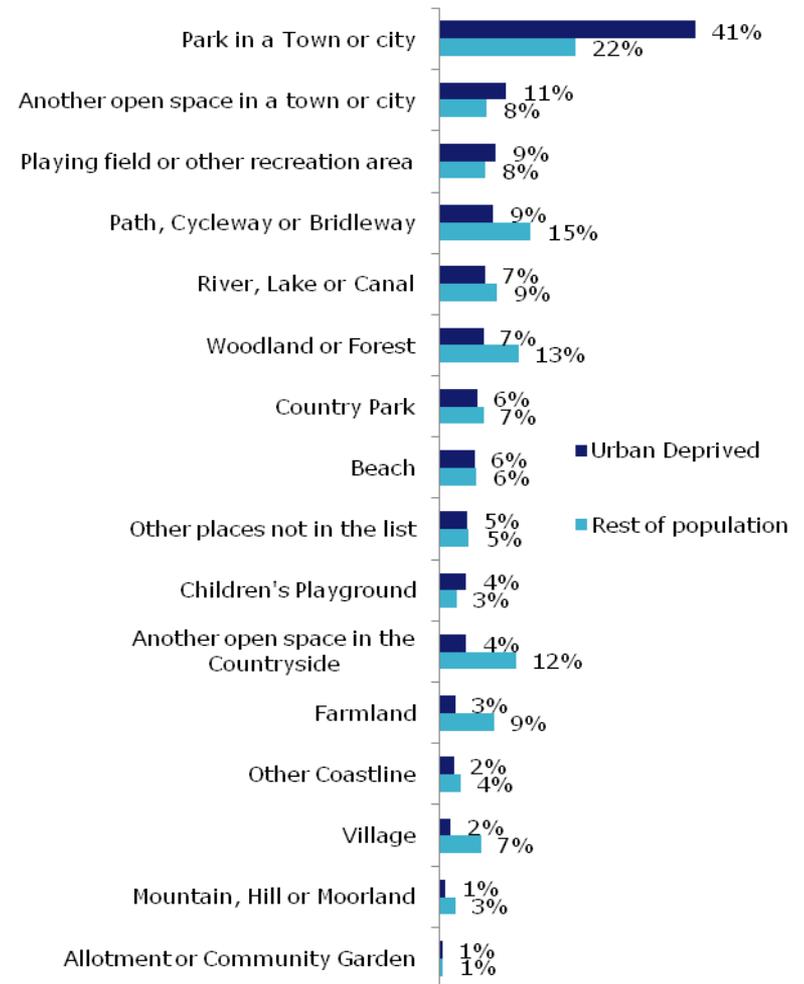
Urban deprived - Places visited

- The majority of visits taken by residents of urban deprived areas were to green spaces in towns and cities (66%).
- More specifically, the largest proportion of visits taken by this group were to parks in a town or city, playing fields or other urban recreation areas or open spaces.
- 50% of visits taken by residents of urban deprived areas were within 1 mile of home, a higher proportion than amongst the rest of the population (40%).
- Also more visits taken by residents of urban deprived areas were taken on foot (68% v 63%) or involved public transport (6% v 3%). This finding may be a reflection of the lower levels of car access among this population group.

Places included on visits to the natural environment



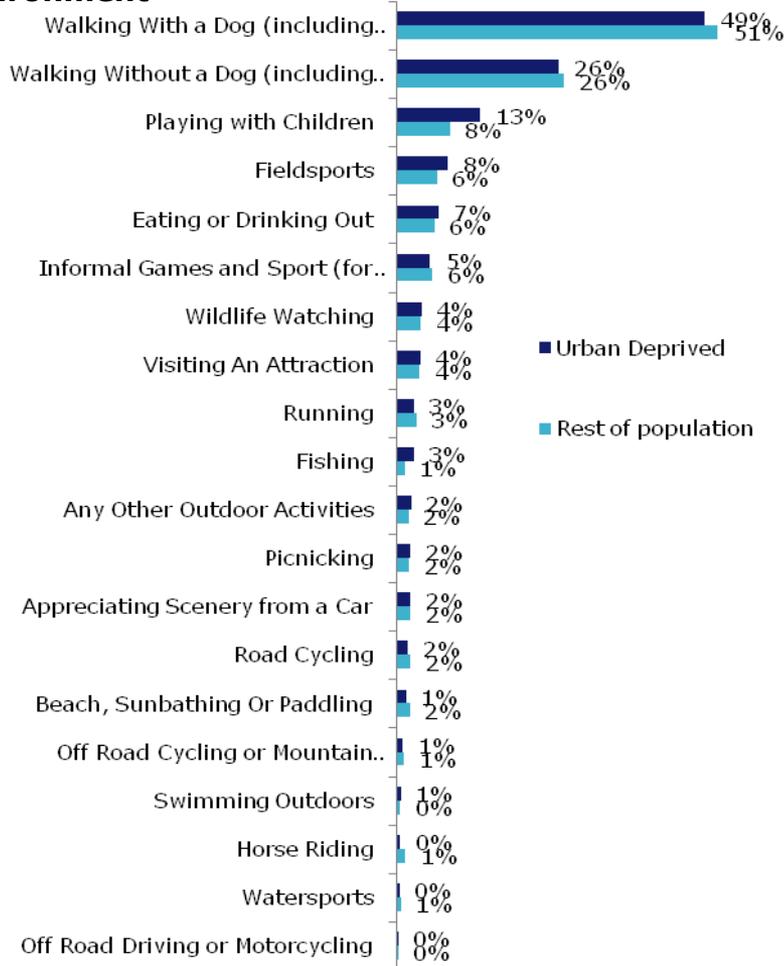
Places included on visits to the natural environment



Urban deprived - Activities undertaken

- Amongst residents of urban deprived areas a slightly larger proportion of visits were taken to play with children (13%) compared with the rest of the population (8%), possibly a reflection of the higher than average proportion with children in their household.
- However the general profile of activities undertaken on visits was similar to that for the rest of the population with most visits involving walking with or without a dog.

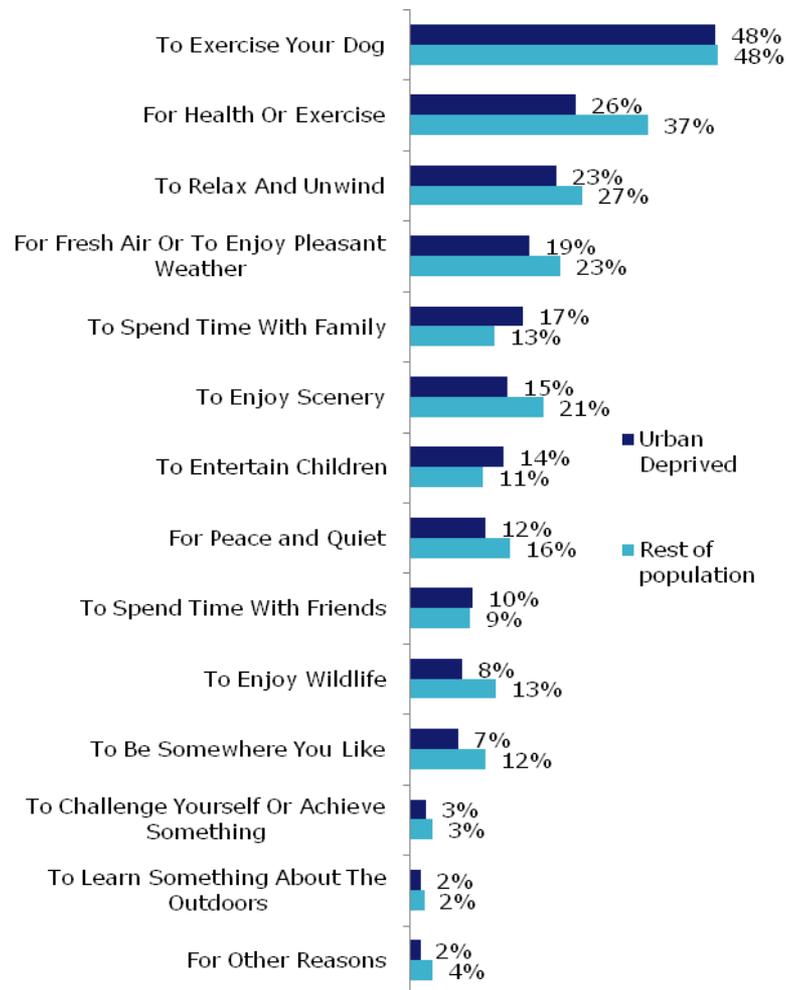
Activities undertaken during visits to the natural environment



Urban deprived - Reasons for visits

- Compared to the rest of the population, visits taken by people who live in urban deprived areas were slightly more likely to be motivated by the need to entertain children but less likely to be taken to enjoy scenery, enjoy wildlife or to be somewhere liked.
- Half of visits were taken to exercise a dog (48%).

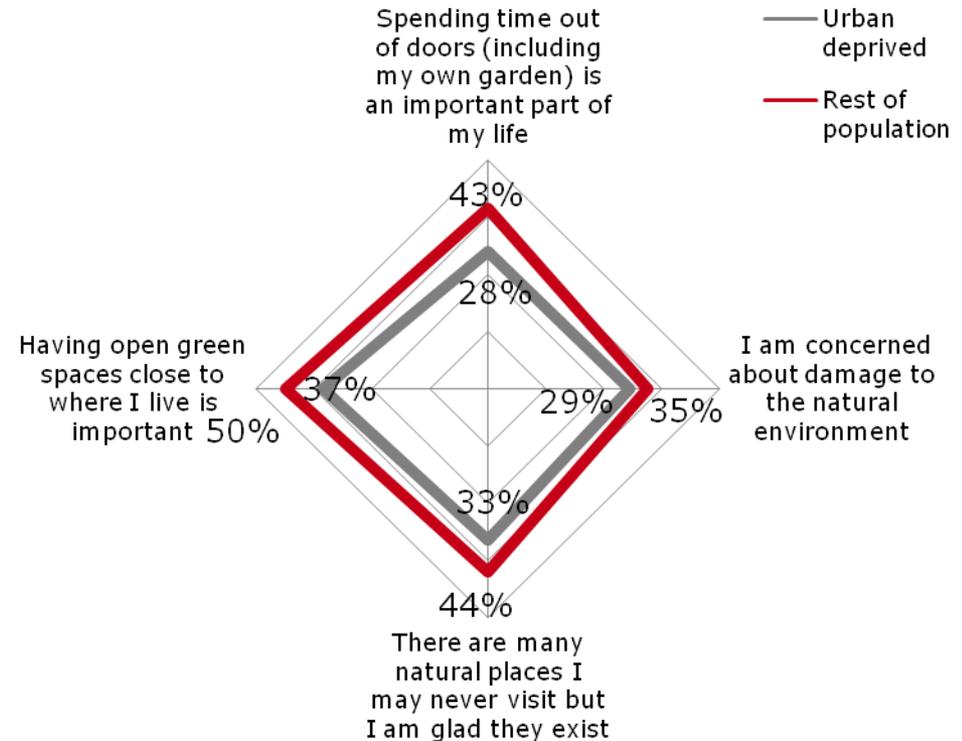
Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment



Urban deprived - Attitudes towards the environment

- Respondents were also asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements regarding concerns for the natural environment, including the importance of local green spaces.
- Compared to the rest of the population, residents of urban deprived areas were generally less concerned about the natural environment, less likely to value local green spaces and less likely to consider spending time out of doors as being important in their life.

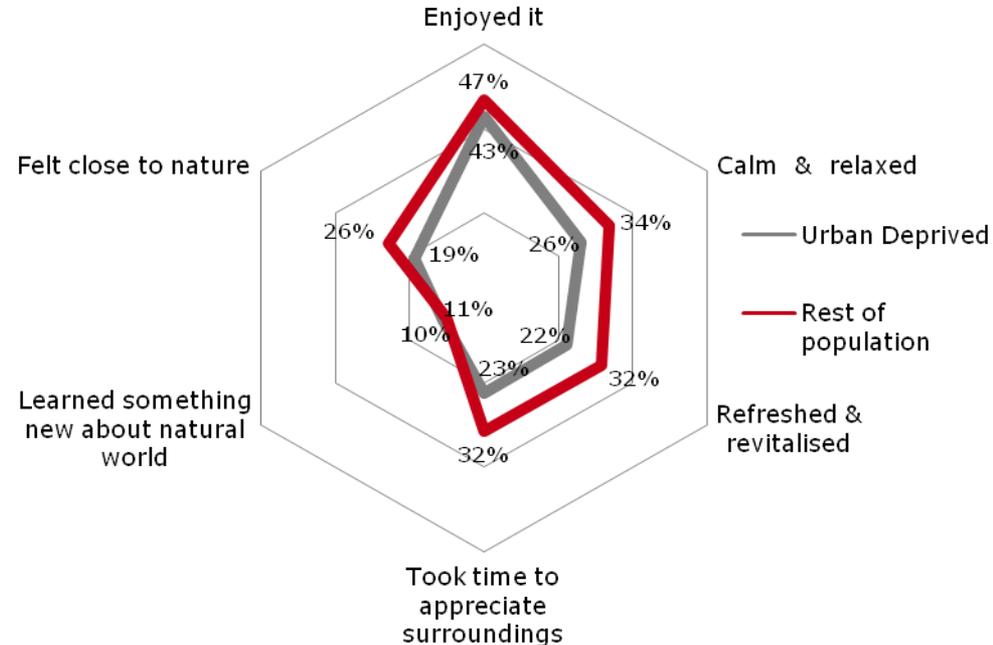
Strong agreement with statements regarding the environment



Urban deprived - Positive outcomes of visits

- MENE respondents were also asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements regarding the potential positive outcomes of their visits to the natural environment.
- The chart illustrates the proportions strongly agreeing with each statement, comparing responses amongst those living in urban deprived areas with the rest of the population.
- There are lower levels of strong agreement with most of the statements, with residents of urban deprived areas much less likely to feel close to nature, calm and relaxed or refreshed and revitalised when taking a visit to the natural environment. These variations reflect the less positive attitudes to the natural environment amongst this group shown in the previous chart.

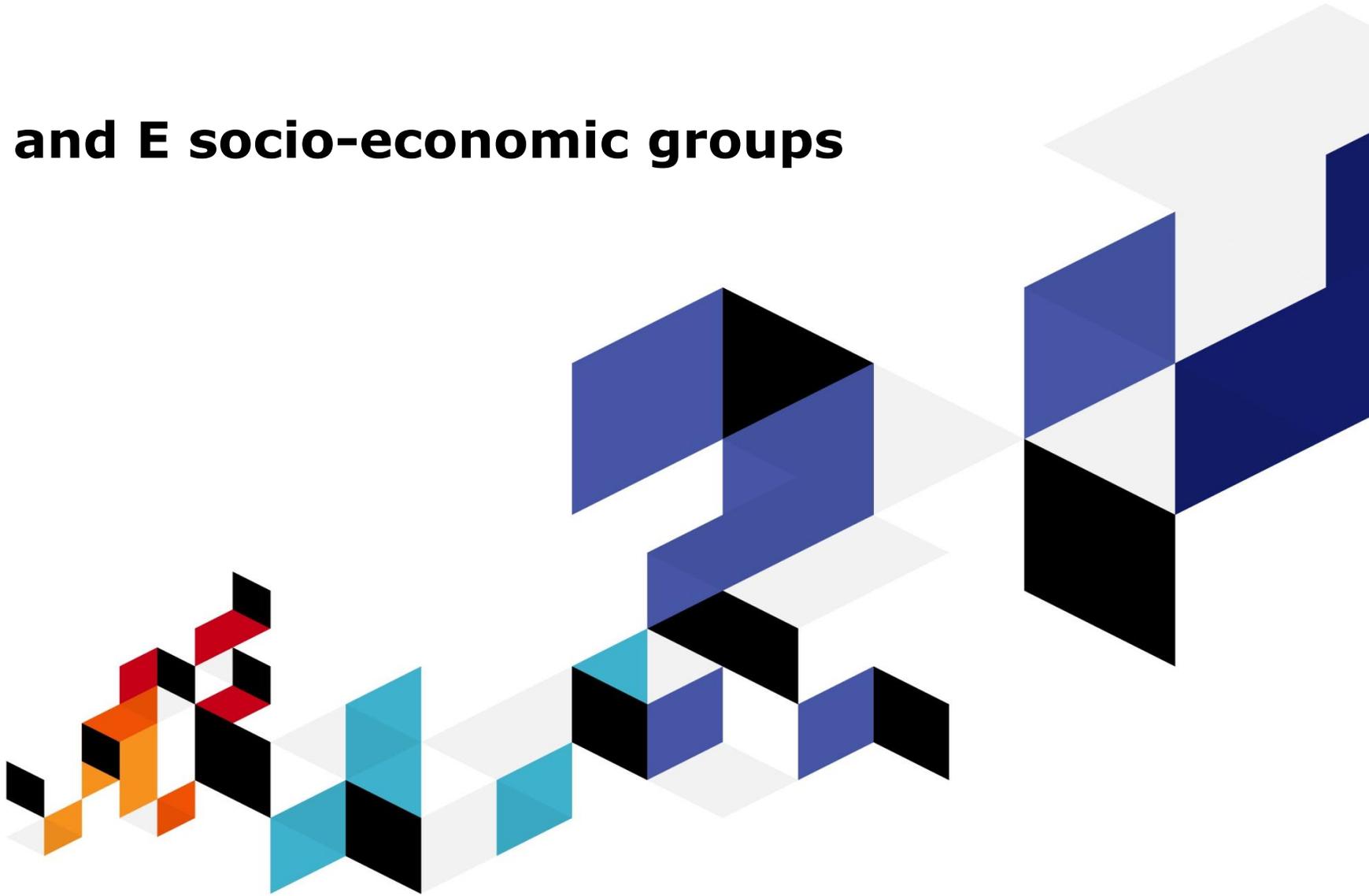
Positive outcomes of visits – strong agreement regarding visit



Urban deprived - Summary of key findings

- **Population size:** c.4.2 million adults (10% of adult population).
- **Population profile:** younger than the rest of the population, more likely to have children at home and with relatively low car access levels. Around half of residents of urban deprived areas are in the DE socio-economic groups .
- **Frequency of visits:** average of 40 visits per year – 41% less than the average amongst the rest of the population (average 67 visits per person, per year).
- **Places visited:** predominantly urban with most visits to parks or other open spaces in a town and cities, probably reflecting the place of residence.
- **Motivations for visits:** most visits taken involve entertaining children and /or dog walking. Motivations relating to enjoying scenery and wildlife are much less relevant in visits.
- **Barriers to visits:** a broad range of reasons including a lack of time due to work or family commitments but for others concerns over expense and/or a lack of car access.
- **Attitudes and Outcomes of visits:** residents of urban deprived areas generally report less positive outcomes to the visits they take to the natural environment and are generally less concerned about the natural environment.

D and E socio-economic groups

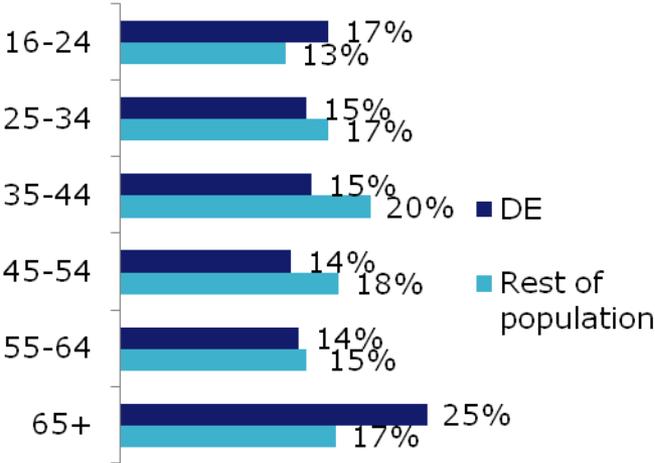


DE Socio-economic groups

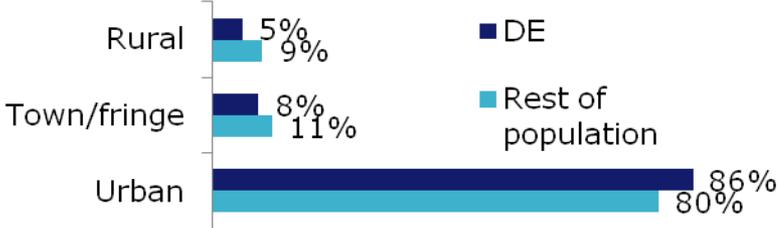
Demographic profile

- An estimated 11.5 million adults are in this group – 28% of the population in England.
- Compared to the rest of the population, members of the DE socio-economic groups are more likely to live in urban areas and only around half have access to a car (53% compared to 82%). A larger proportion have a disability or long term illness (27% compared to 14%).
- Members of the DE population are as likely as the rest of the population to have children in their household (29%).

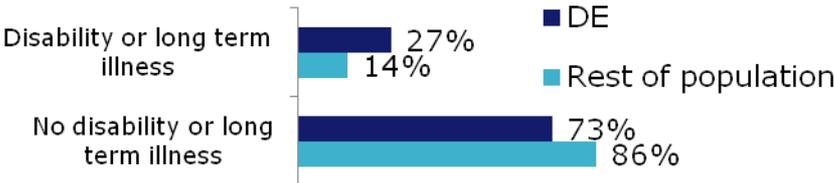
Age profile



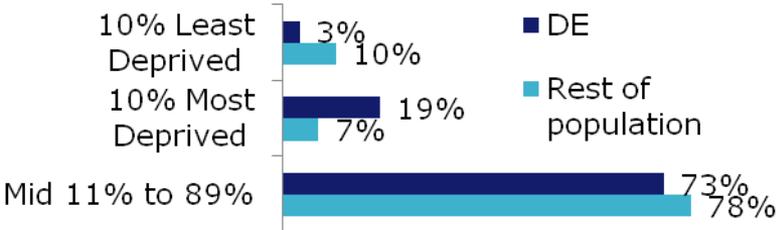
Place of residence – urban/rural ONS classification



Disability/ long term illness



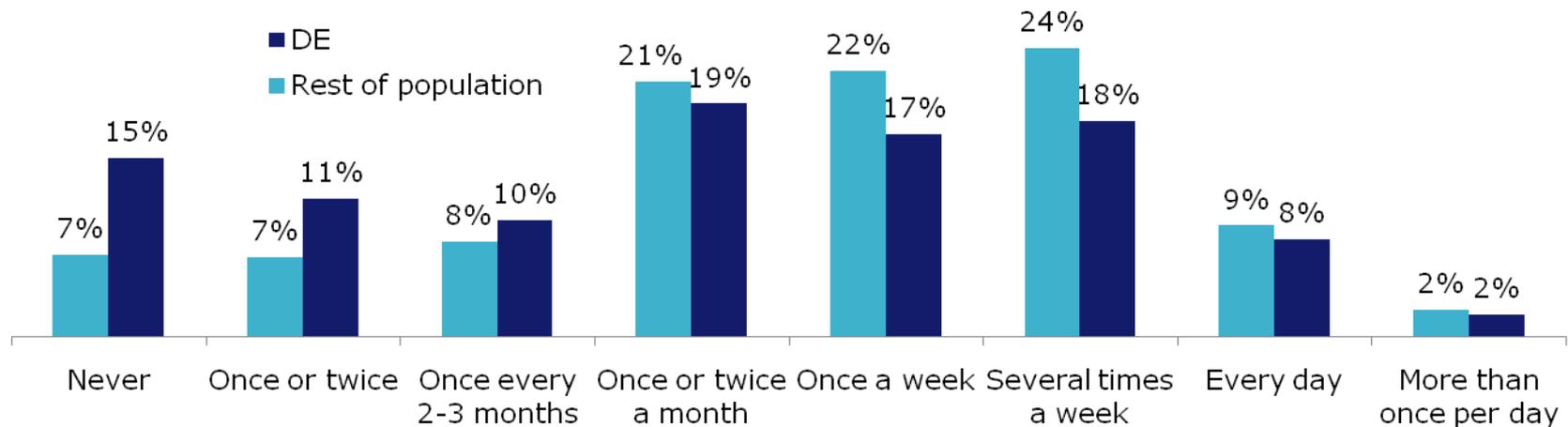
Place of residence – Index of multiple deprivation



DE Socio-economic groups - participation

- The average number of visits taken per person per year amongst people in DE socio-economic groups was **50**, 29% less than the average amongst the rest of the adult population (average of 70 visits per person, per year).
- **15%** of people in the DE socio-economic groups normally never visit the natural environment and **11%** visit once or twice a year at the most. However, it is notable that **45%** of this group normally visit every week.

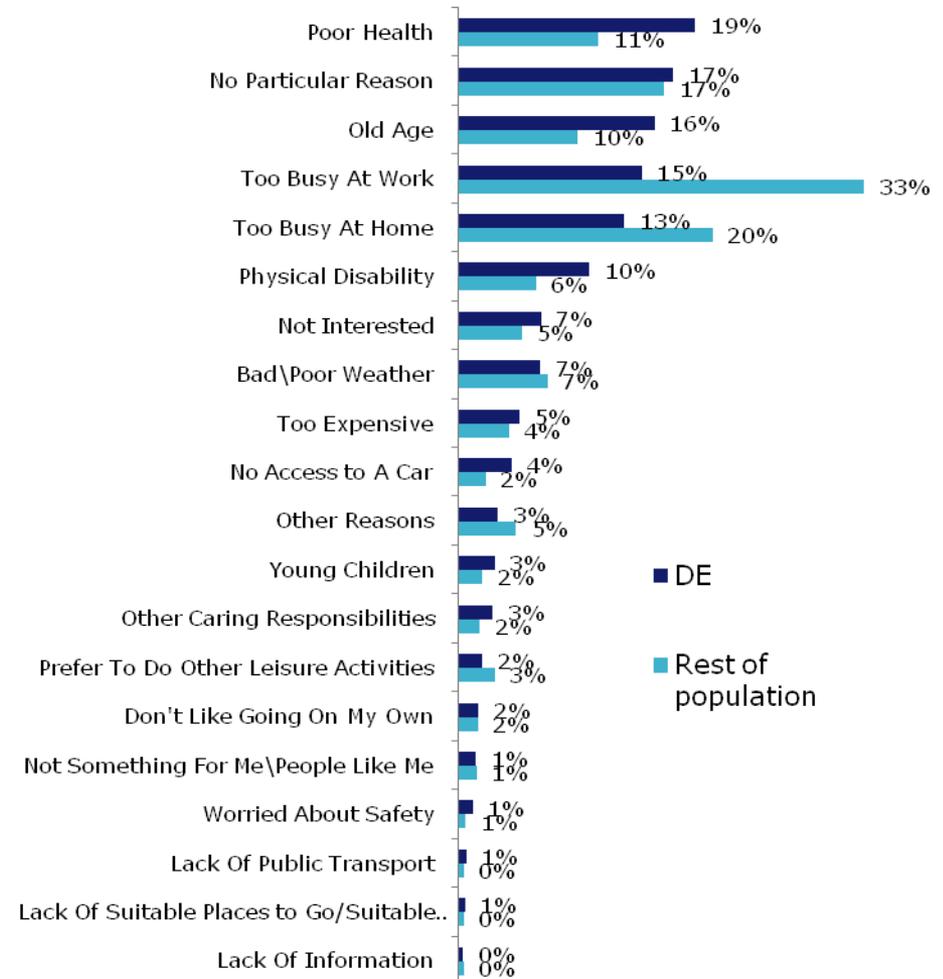
Frequency of visits to the natural environment



DE Socio-economic groups - Barriers to visits

- Those members of the DE socio-economic group who normally took visits to the natural environment less than once a month were asked to specify why they did not take visits more often.
- Amongst this group a wide range of reasons were mentioned including poor health, old age and physical disabilities and being too busy at work or at home. Also, 17% of this group stated that they had 'no particular reason' for not participating.
- This diversity of reasons for not visiting the natural environment more often may relate to the broad age range amongst DEs with large proportions in the younger lifecycle stages where family and work commitments could result in a lack of leisure time to take part in recreation and, older age groups where health or disability can become a significant barrier.

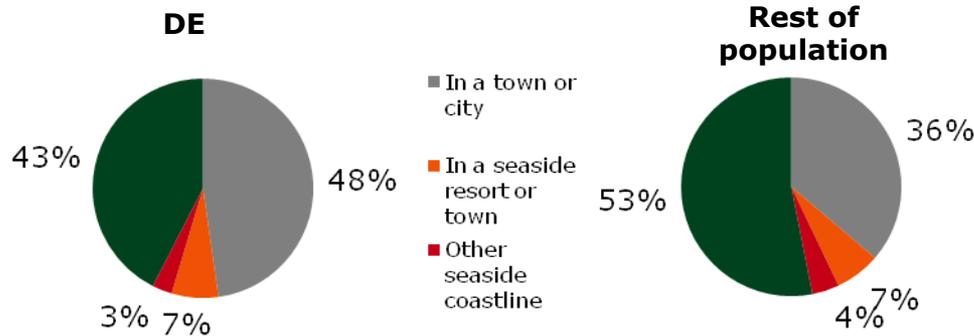
Reasons for not visiting



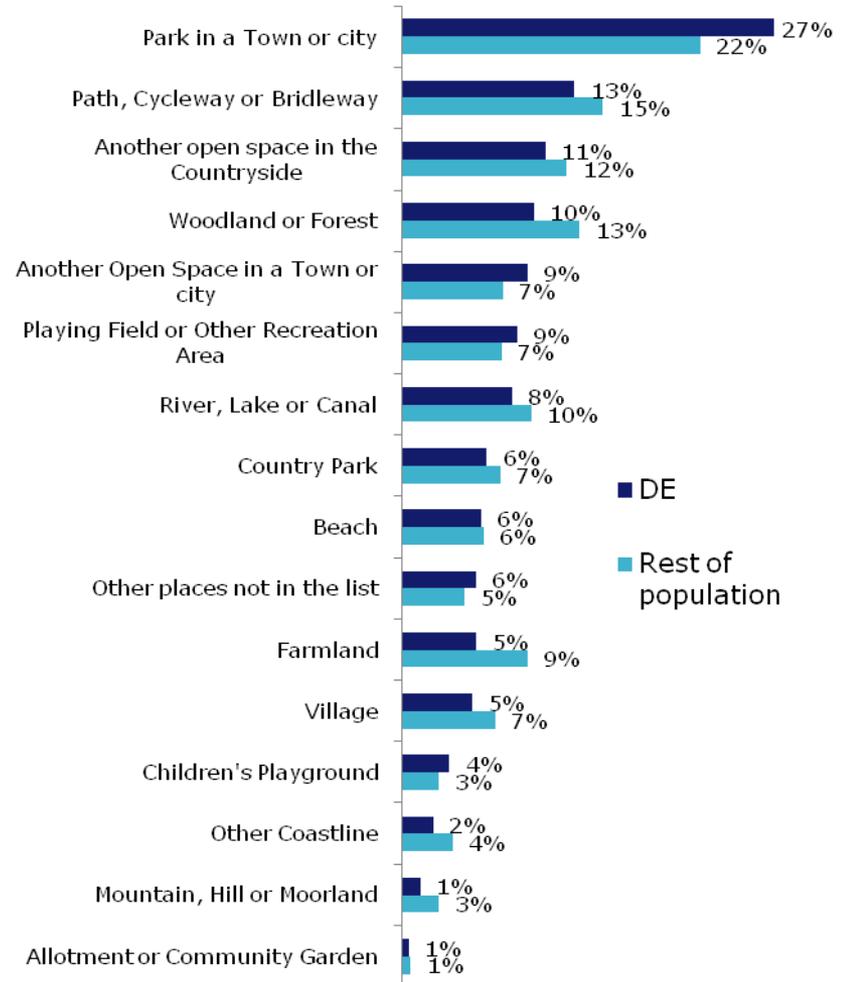
DE socio-economic groups - Places visited

- The highest proportion of visits taken by people in the DE socio-economic groups were to urban locations (48%), a significantly higher proportion than amongst the rest of the population. This variation probably reflects relatively high proportions of urban residents and lower levels of car access, restricting access to the countryside and coast.
- Correspondingly, the highest proportion of visits taken by members of the DE socio-economic group were to a park in a town or city.
- 48% of visits taken by DEs were within 1 mile of home, a higher proportion than amongst the rest of the population (39%).
- Also, a higher proportion of visits taken by DEs were taken on foot (70% compared to 61%), likely to be as a result of the lower levels of car ownership amongst this group.

Places included on visits to the natural environment



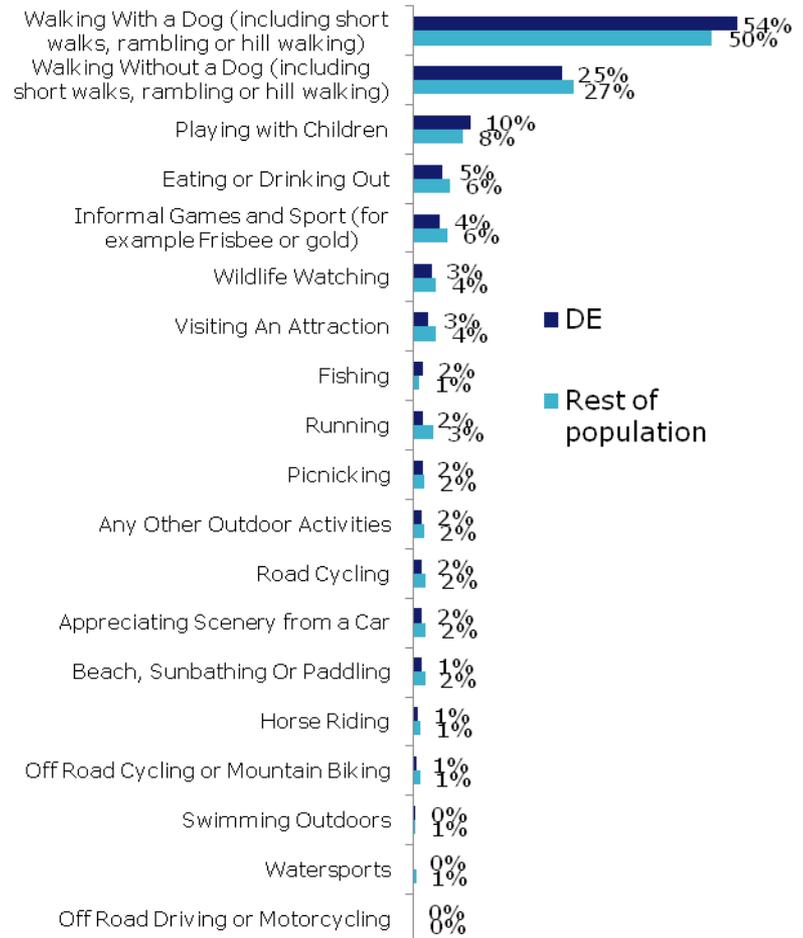
Places included on visits to the natural environment



DE socio-economic groups - Activities undertaken

- Around 4 in 5 visits taken by members of the DE socio-economic groups (79%) involved walking, either with or without a dog.
- Compared to the rest of the population, the visits taken by members of the DE socio-economic group were slightly more likely to include walking with a dog (54%) or playing with children (10%).
- The significance of these activities could reflect the large proportions of this group who own a dog and/or have children at home. Conversely, the urban environment which most of this group live in and lack of car access could restrict the potential to take part in other activities which are more often undertaken in the countryside (e.g. Wildlife watching).

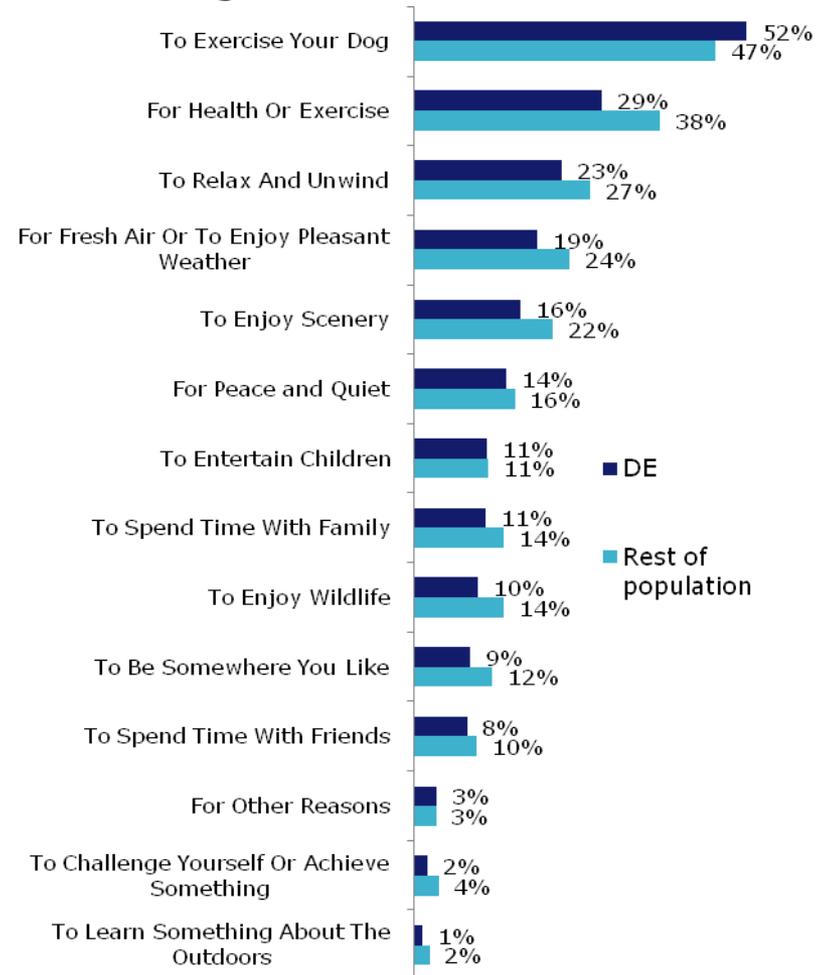
Activities undertaken during visits to the natural environment



DE Socio-economic groups - Reasons for visits

- Just over half of visits taken by members of the DE socio-economic groups were to exercise a dog (52%), a higher proportion than amongst the rest of the adult population (47%).
- While 29% of visits were taken for health or exercise, this was a lower proportion than amongst the rest of the population (38%).
- The two primary reasons for visiting the natural environment given by DEs were the more 'functional' motivations: to exercise a dog and to entertain children; consistent with the data on activities.

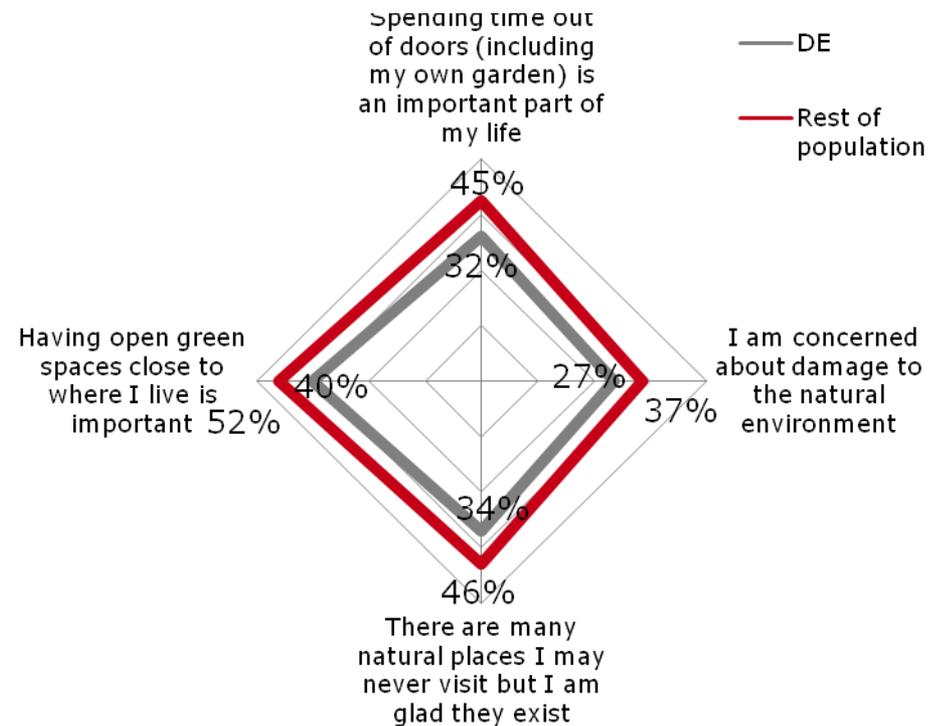
Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment



DE Socio-economic groups - Attitudes towards the environment

Strong agreement with statements regarding the environment

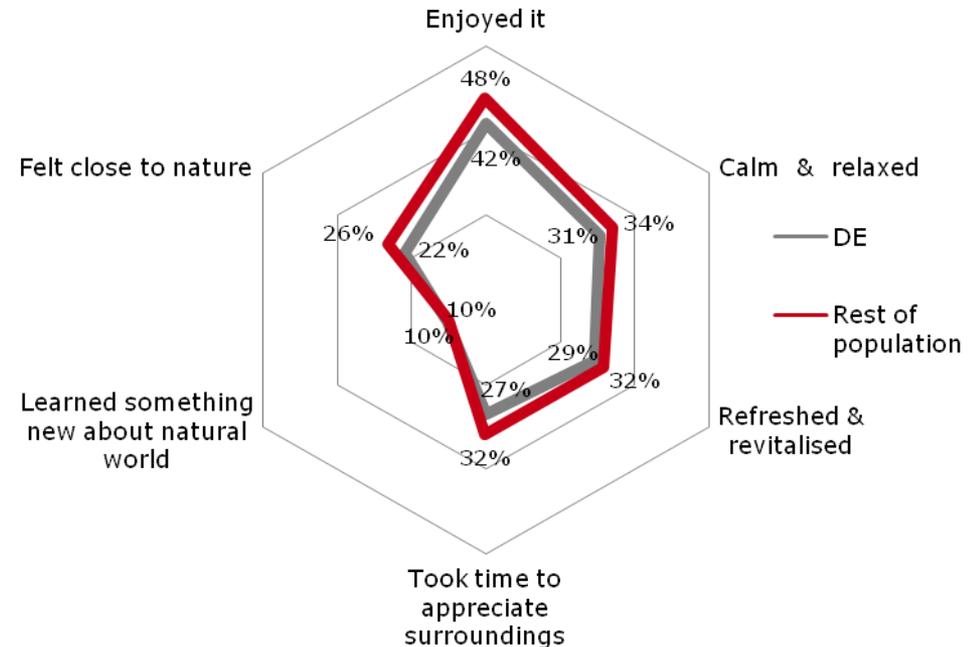
- Respondents were also asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements regarding concerns for the natural environment, including the importance of local green spaces.
- Concern for local green spaces and the wider environment is generally lower amongst people in the DE socio-economic groups than amongst the rest of the population.



DE Socio-economic groups - Positive outcomes of visits

- Respondents were also asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements regarding the potential positive outcomes of their visit to the natural environment.
- The chart illustrates the proportions strongly agreeing with each statement, comparing responses amongst those in the DE socio-economic group with those in the rest of the population.
- Lower proportions of DEs agreed strongly with a number of the statements - most notably those relating to enjoying the visit and feeling close to nature. These findings reflect the generally less positive attitudes to the natural environment amongst DEs as shown on the previous chart.

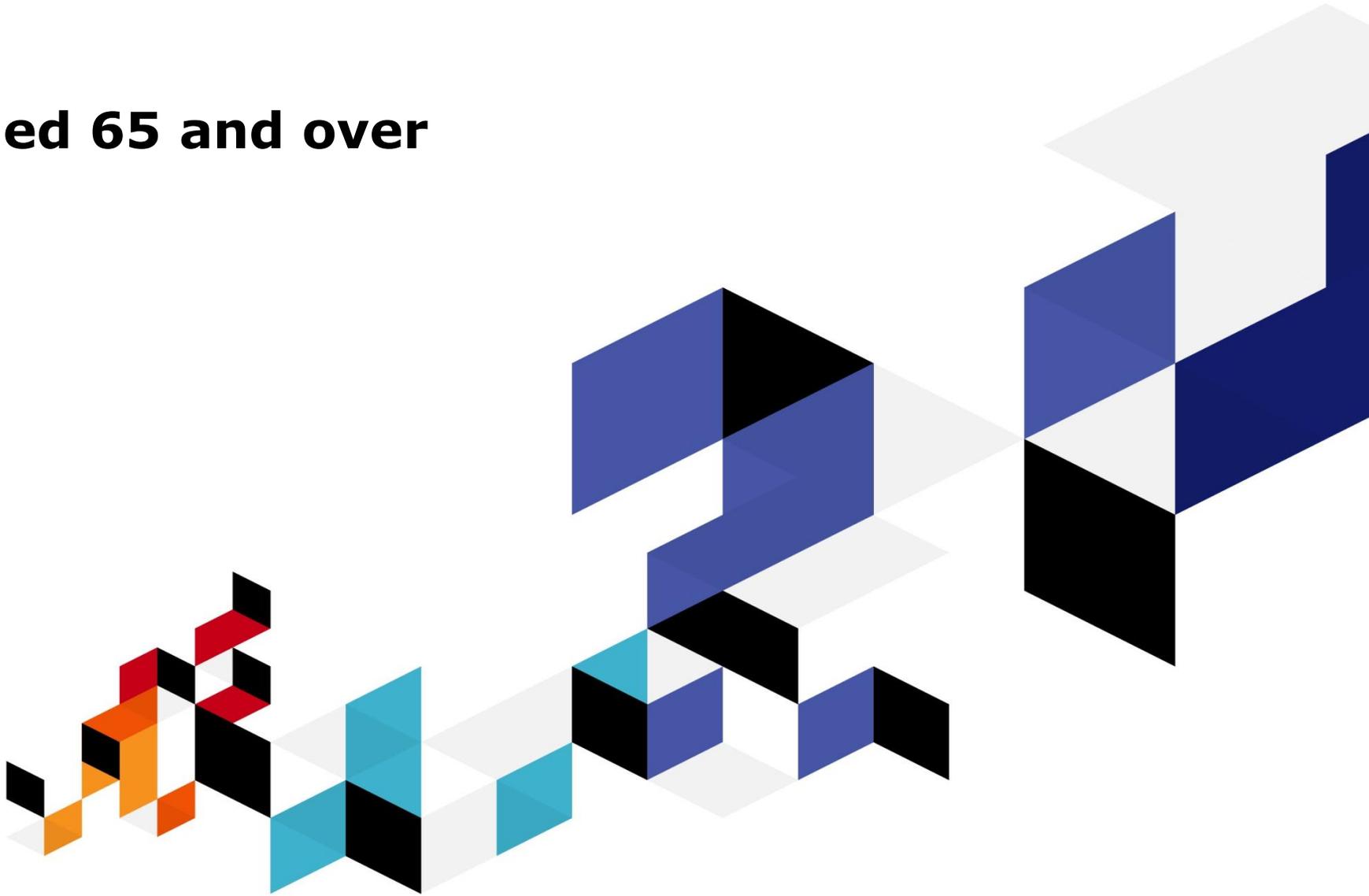
Positive outcomes of visits – strong agreement regarding visit



DE Socio-economic groups - Summary of key findings

- **Population size:** c.11.5 million adults (28% of adult population).
- **Population profile:** a broad age profile, more likely than rest of the population to live in urban areas and less likely to have access to a car. Similar to rest of population in terms of age profile, presence of children in home and dog ownership.
- **Frequency of visits:** average of 50 visits per year – less than amongst the rest of the population (70 visits).
- **Places visited:** visits tend to be close to home and compared to the rest of the population are more likely to be taken in urban locations such as parks rather than places in the countryside. This may be a reflection of the relatively low levels of car access.
- **Motivations for visits:** Around 4 in 5 visits taken by members of the DE socio-economic groups (79%) involved walking, 54% involved walking with a dog
- **Barriers to visits:** a broad range of reasons are provided including lack of time due to work or family commitments and old age and/or illness/ disability.
- **Attitudes and outcomes of visits:** members of this group are less likely to feel concerned about the natural environment, generally report less enjoyable visits to the natural environment and are less likely to feel close to nature during visits.

Aged 65 and over

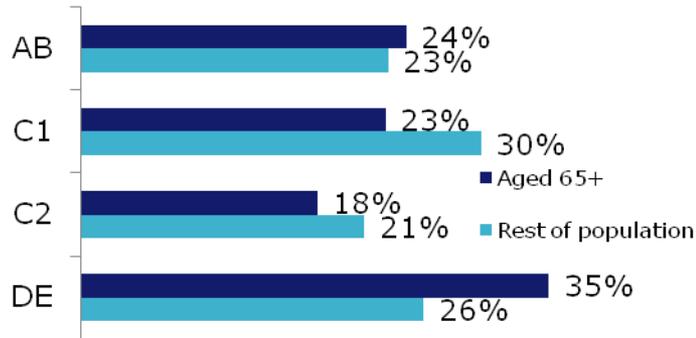


Aged 65 and over

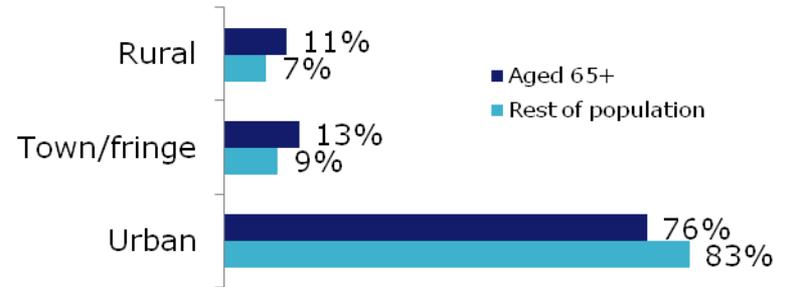
Demographic profile

- An estimated 8.1 million adults are in this group – 19% of the adult population in England.
- There is a large overlap between members of this group and the People with Disabilities Group with 42% of those aged 65+ stating that they have a disability or long term illness. People in this age group have lower levels of car access than those aged under 65 (68% v 75%).

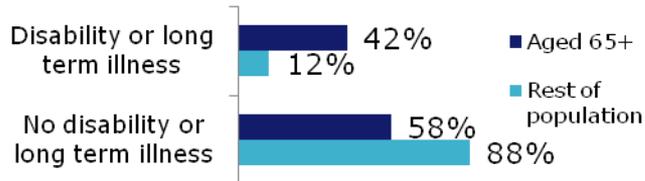
Socio-economic profile



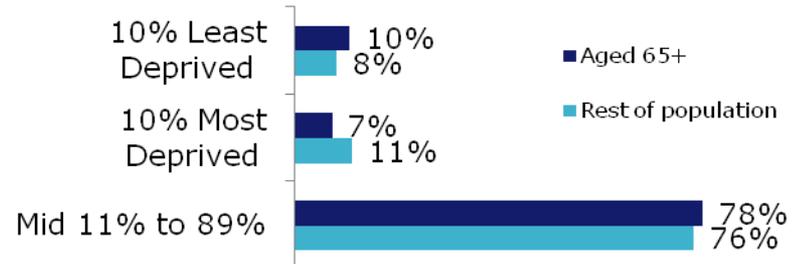
Place of residence – urban/rural ONS classification



Disability/ long term illness



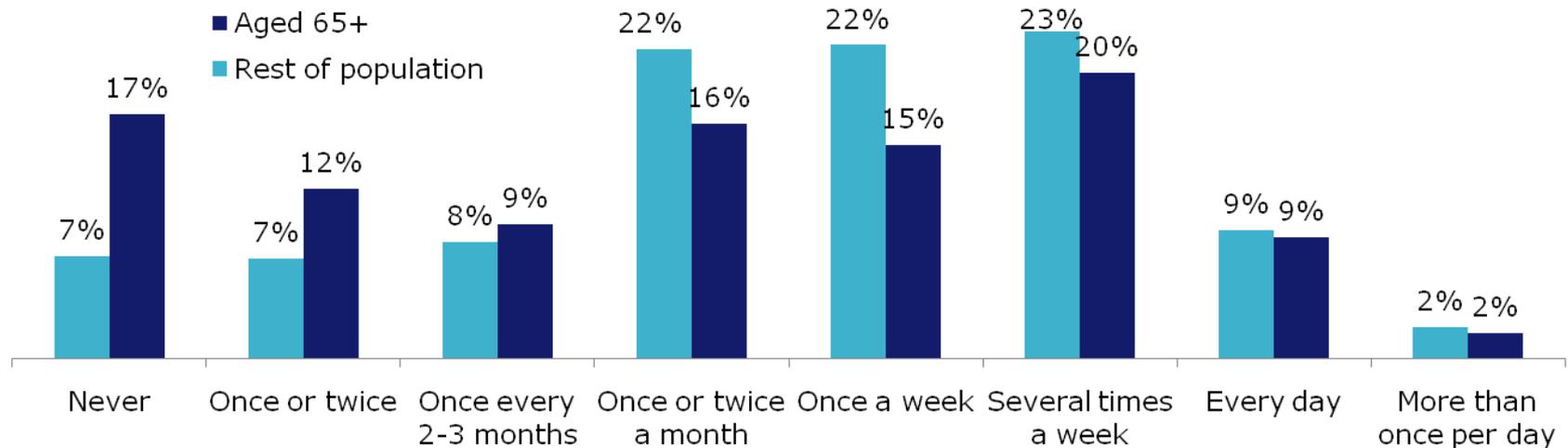
Place of residence – Index of multiple deprivation



Aged 65 and over - participation

- The average volume of visits taken per person per year amongst people aged 65 and over is **55**, 17% less than the average amongst younger people (average **67** visits per person, per year).
- **17%** of people aged 65 or over normally never visit the natural environment and **12%** visited once or twice a year at the most. However, some **46%** took visits at least once a week.

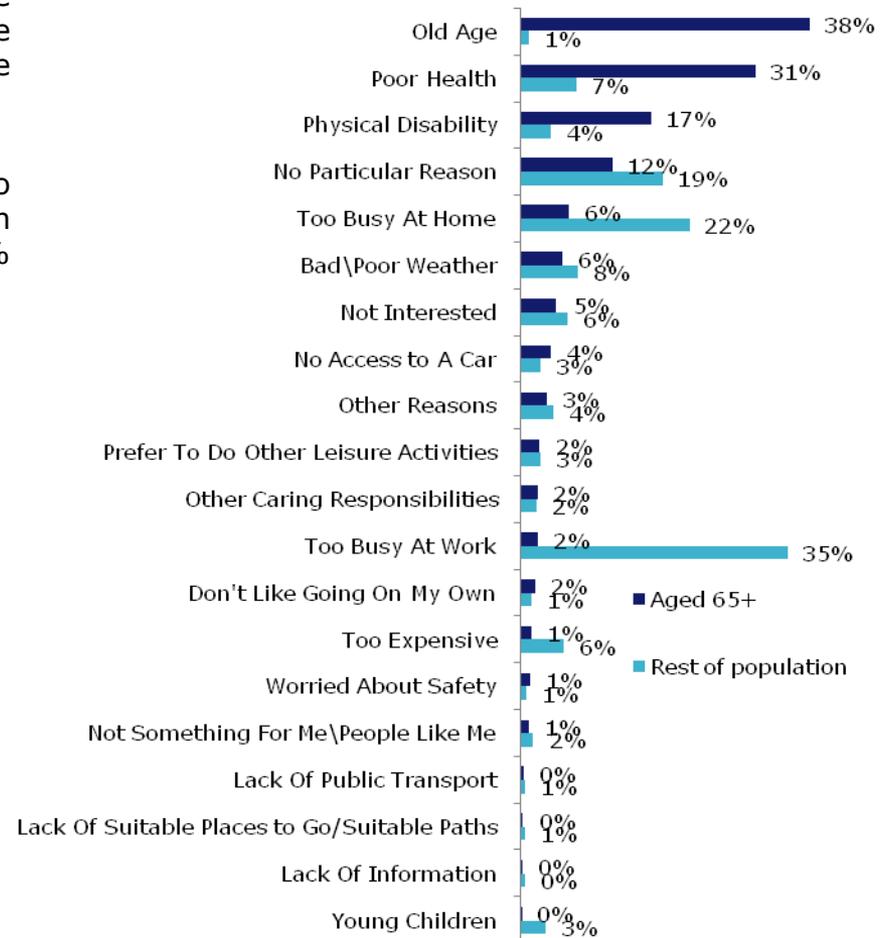
Frequency of visits to the natural environment



Aged 65 or over - Barriers to visits

- Those aged 65+ who normally took visits to the natural environment less than once a month were asked to specify why they did not take visits more often.
- The most frequently reasons for not taking visits to the natural environment were old age, poor health and physical disability (38%, 31% and 17% respectively).

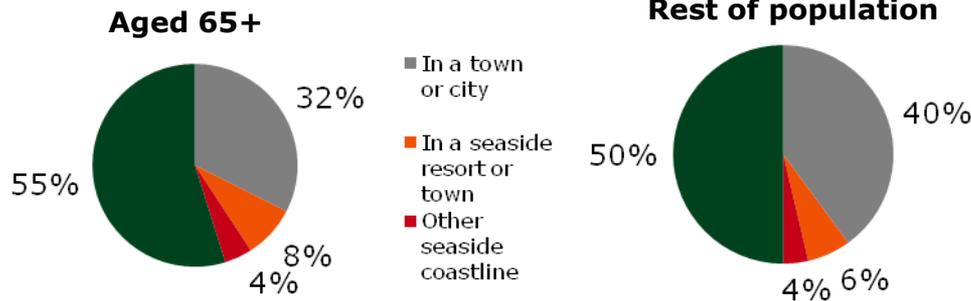
Reasons for not visiting



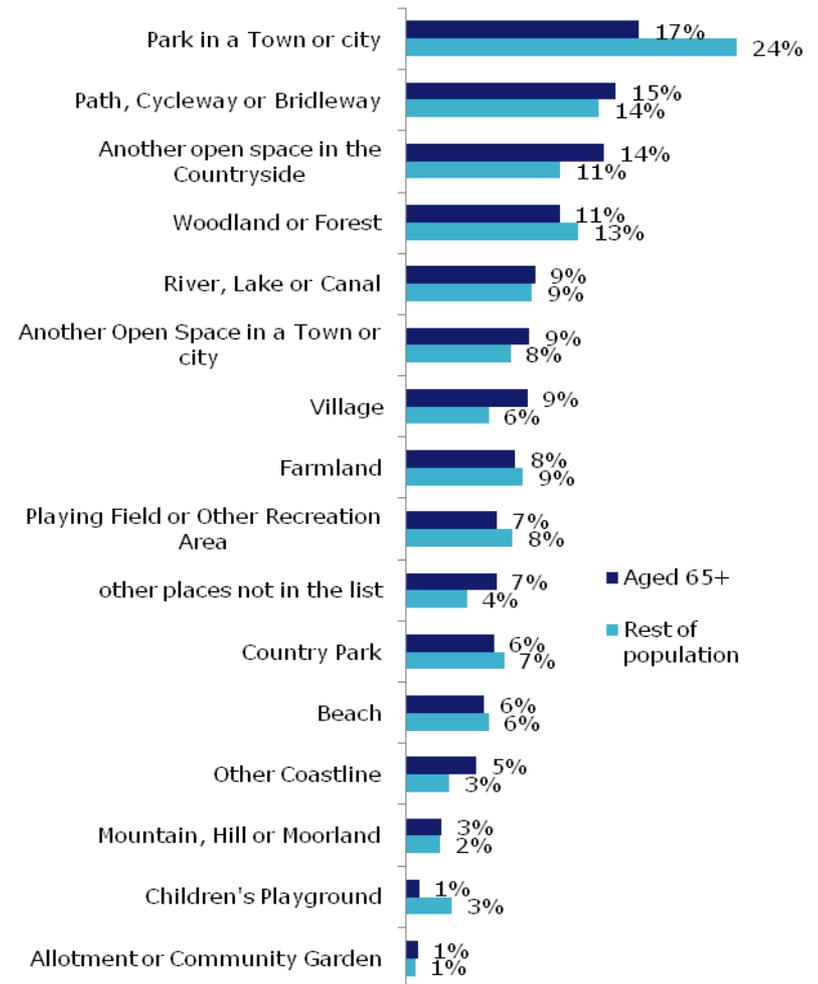
Aged 65 and over - Places visited

- Compared to the rest of the population, a higher proportion of the visits taken by those aged 65 and over were to places in the countryside or seaside resorts but fewer were to locations in towns and cities.
- More specifically, while parks in towns and cities were included in 17% of visits taken by those aged 65 and over, this was a significantly lower proportion than amongst those aged under 65 (24%).
- These patterns may be explained by the greater proportions of older people resident in rural and urban fringe areas with 70% of visits taken by people in this age group within 2 miles of home (compared to 67% amongst younger people).
- Most visits were taken on foot (63%) while around a third were taken by car (31%). These proportions are very similar to those recorded for the rest of the population.

Places included on visits to the natural environment



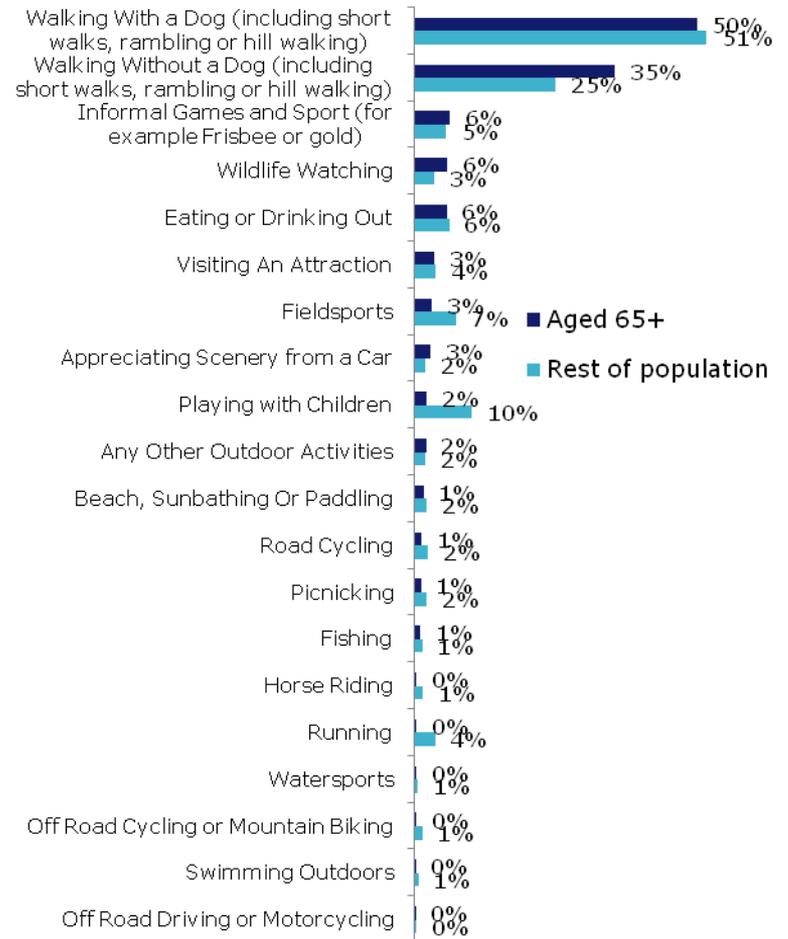
Places included on visits to the natural environment



Aged 65 and over - Activities undertaken

- 85% of all visits to the natural environment by people aged 65 and over involved walking.
- Half of visits involved dog walking (50%), a similar proportion to that recorded for the rest of the population. Most other visits involved walking without a dog (35% compared to 25%).
- Compared to those aged under 65, members of this age group were more likely to take part in wildlife watching but less likely to play with children or be involved in the more active pursuits such as running.

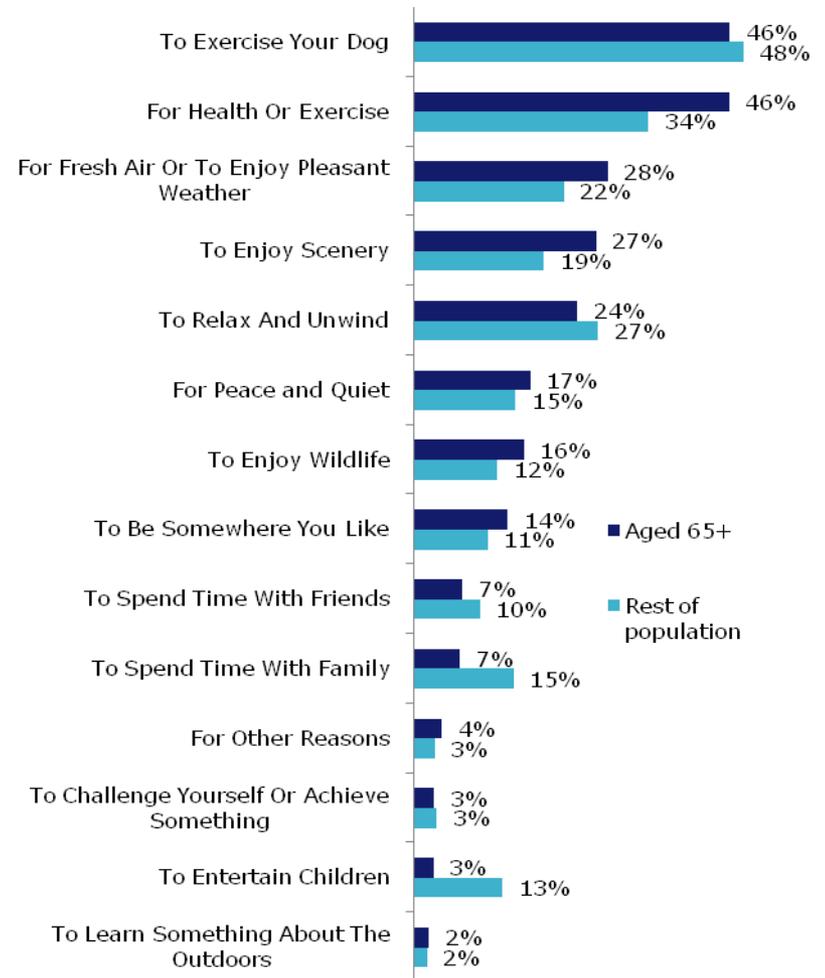
Activities undertaken during visits to the natural environment



Aged 65 and over - Reasons for visits

- Exercising a dog was the motivation for around half of visits taken by elderly people, similar to the proportion amongst those aged under 65 (46% and 48% respectively).
- Personal health and exercise prompted almost half (46%) of all visits taken by those aged 65+, a higher proportion than that recorded for younger people aged under 65 (34%).
- Other reasons more likely to motivate older people included enjoying fresh air, scenery and wildlife.
- However, spending time with family, friends or children was less likely to be as important for this older age group.

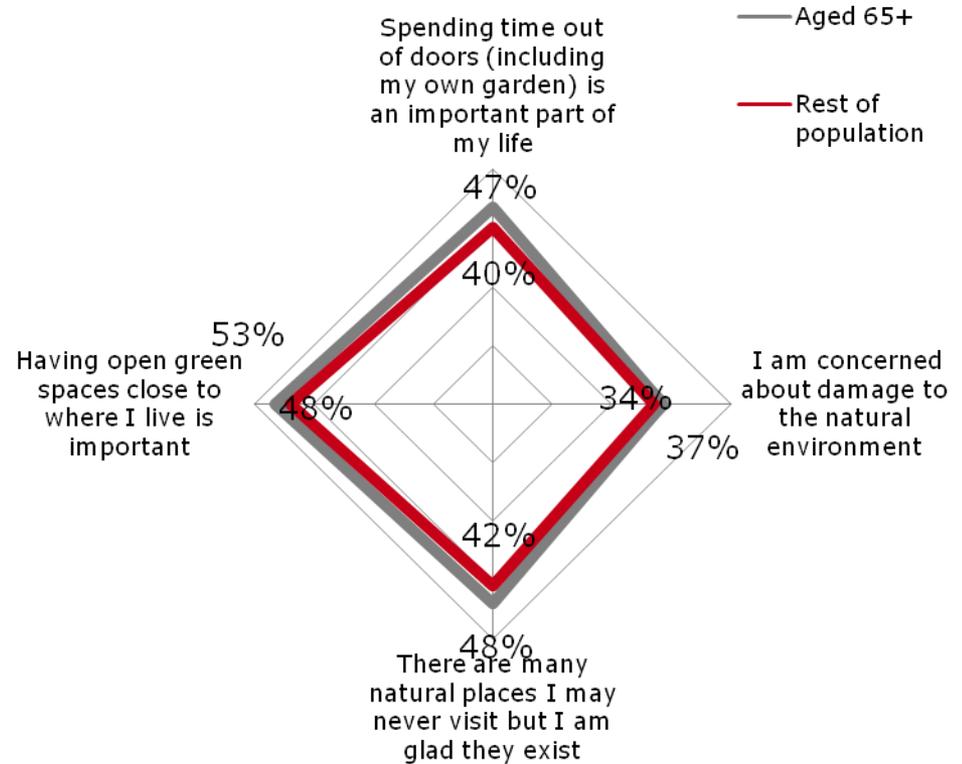
Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment



Aged 65 and over - Attitudes towards the environment

Strong agreement with statements regarding the environment

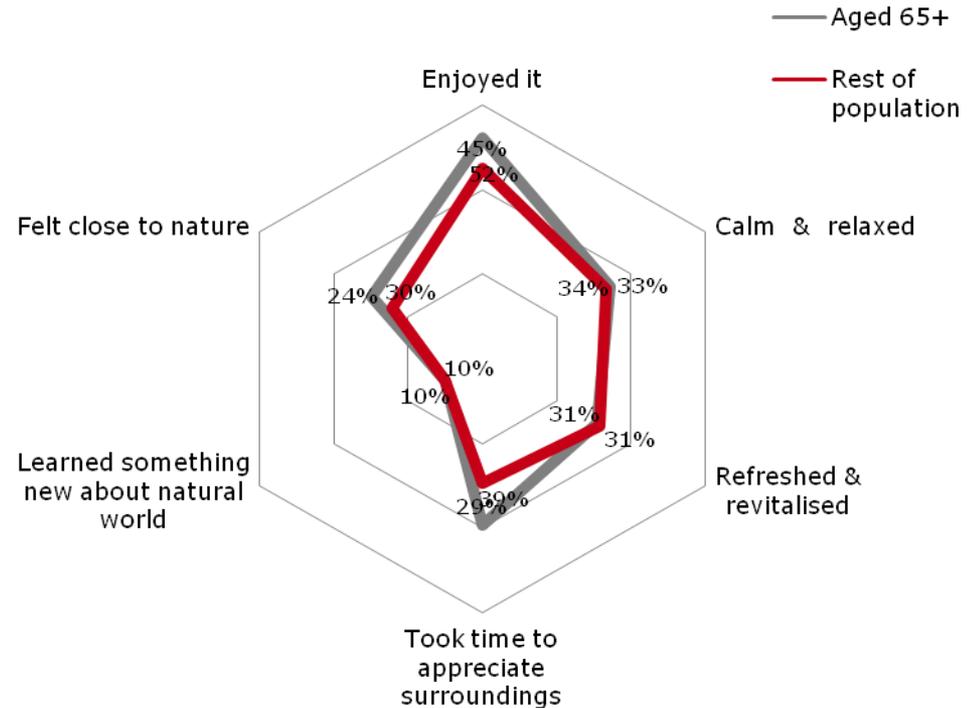
- Respondents were also asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements regarding concerns for the natural environment, including the importance of local green spaces.
- Concern for the environment, including local green spaces, was generally higher amongst people aged 65 and over than amongst the rest of the population.



Aged 65 and over - Positive outcomes of visits

- Respondents were also asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements regarding the potential positive outcomes of their visit to the natural environment. The chart illustrates the proportions strongly agreeing with each statement.
- Agreement with the following statements was stronger amongst those aged 65 and over:
 - I enjoyed it
 - I felt close to nature
 - I took time to appreciate surroundings
- These variations suggest that people aged 65 and over often had a more positive experience than those in younger age groups.

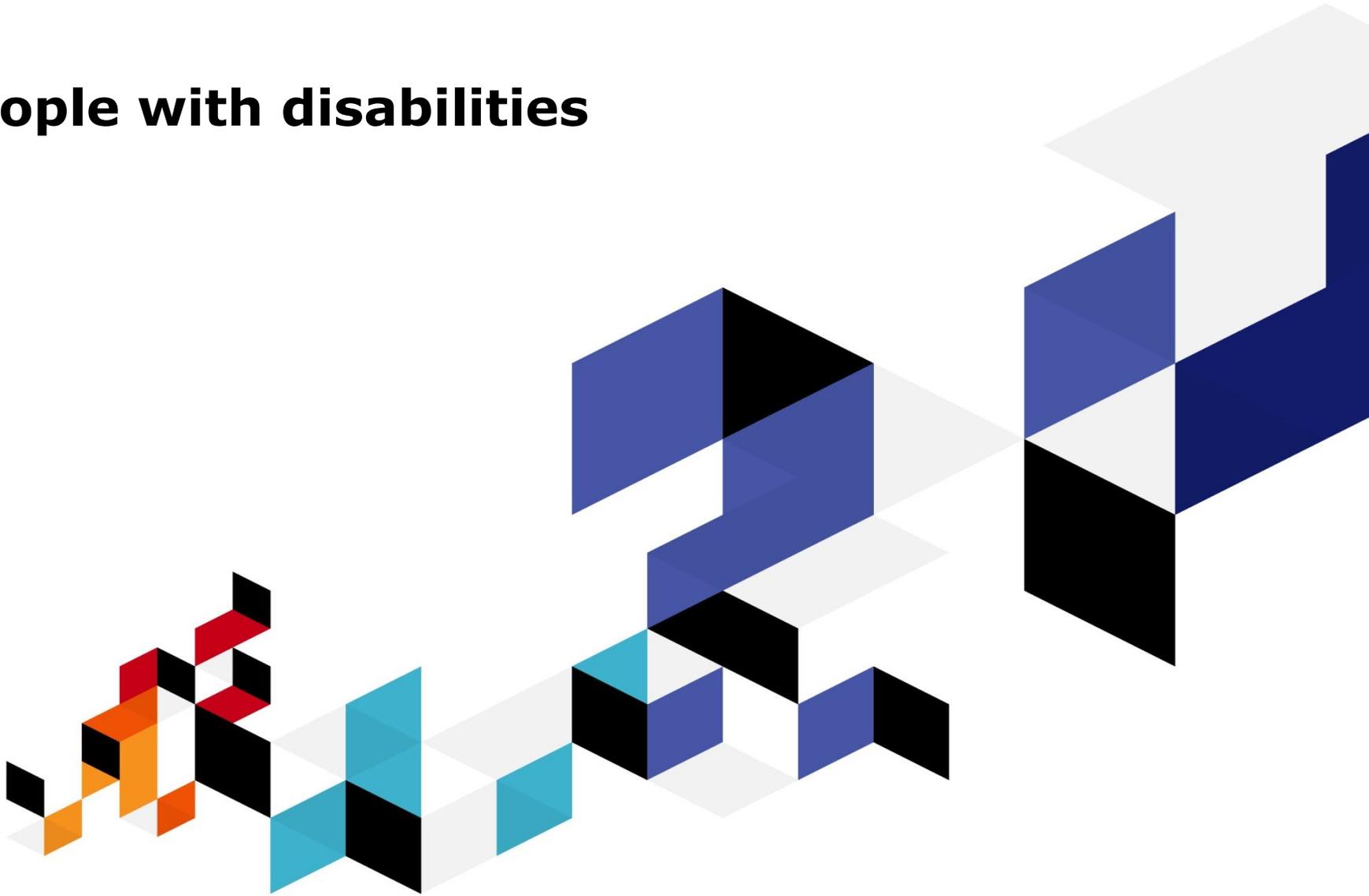
Positive outcomes of visits – strong agreement regarding visit



Aged 65 and over - Summary of key findings

- **Population size:** c.8.1 million adults (19% of adult population).
- **Population profile:** around two-fifths of this group have a long term illness or disability and, compared to the rest of the population, people in this age band are less likely to have access to a car. Around a quarter live in rural or urban fringe locations, a higher proportion than amongst younger age groups.
- **Frequency of visits:** average of 55 visits per year – less than amongst the rest of the population (67 visits).
- **Places visited:** visits to the natural environment are more likely, compared to rest of the population, to have a destination in the countryside or on the coast. Also visits are more likely to be taken closer to home.
- **Motivations of visits:** while a large proportion of visits involve dog walking, visits taken by this group are more likely than those taken by the rest of the population to involve walking without a dog and to be motivated by health and exercise and/or enjoyment of scenery and wildlife.
- **Barriers to visits:** old age and physical disability are the main reasons for not taking visits to the natural environment while other barriers are less likely to be given by members of this age group.
- **Attitudes and outcomes of visits:** compared to the rest of the population, members of this age group are more likely to feel concerned about the natural environment. Also members of this age group generally report more positive outcomes from their visits, especially in terms of enjoyment, feeling close to nature and appreciating surroundings.

People with disabilities

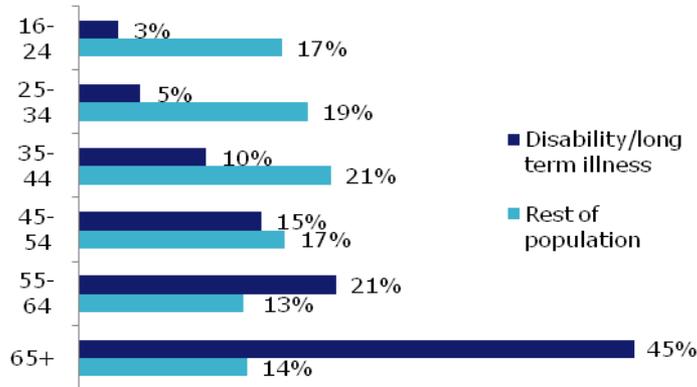


Disabled people

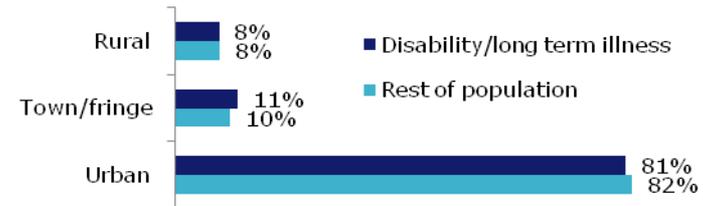
Demographic profile

- An estimated 7.4 million adults are in this group – 18% of the population in England.
- There is a large overlap between this group and the elderly group with 45% of disabled people aged 65+.
- The profile of members of this group is similar to the rest of the population in terms of the urban/rural distribution of place of residence.
- However members of this group are less likely than the rest of the population to have children in their household (13% v 32%) and a lower proportion have access to a car (64% compared to 76%).

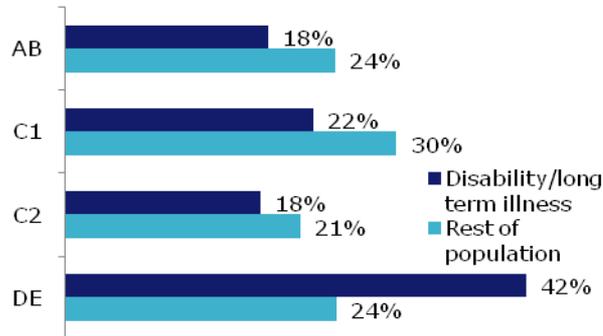
Age profile



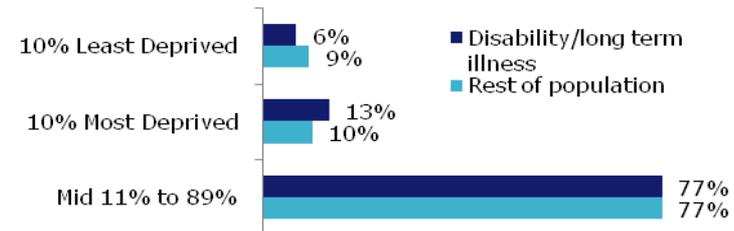
Place of residence – urban/rural ONS classification



Socio-economic profile



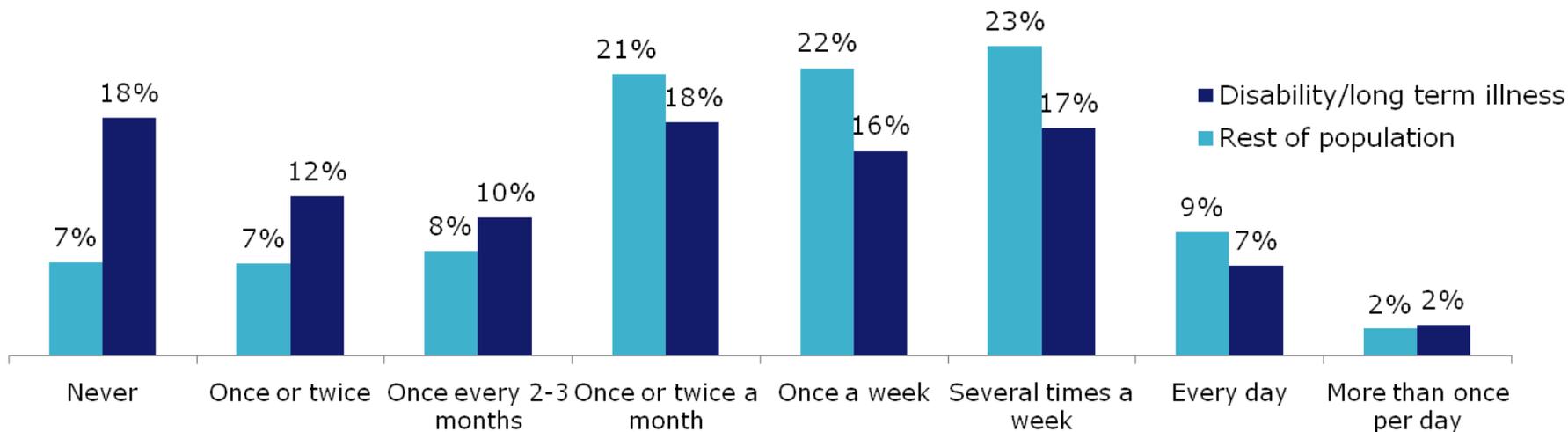
Place of residence – Index of multiple deprivation



Disabled people - participation

- The average number of visits taken per person per year is **56** - 16% less than amongst the rest of the adult population (average 66 visits per person, per year).
- **18%** normally never visit the natural environment and **12%** visit once or twice a year at the most. **42%** normally visit every week.
- Amongst those aged 35 and over, people with a disability or long term illness are less likely to take visits to the natural environment than those without. However it is notable that amongst people aged under 35, those with a disability or long term illness are no less likely than those without to take such visits.

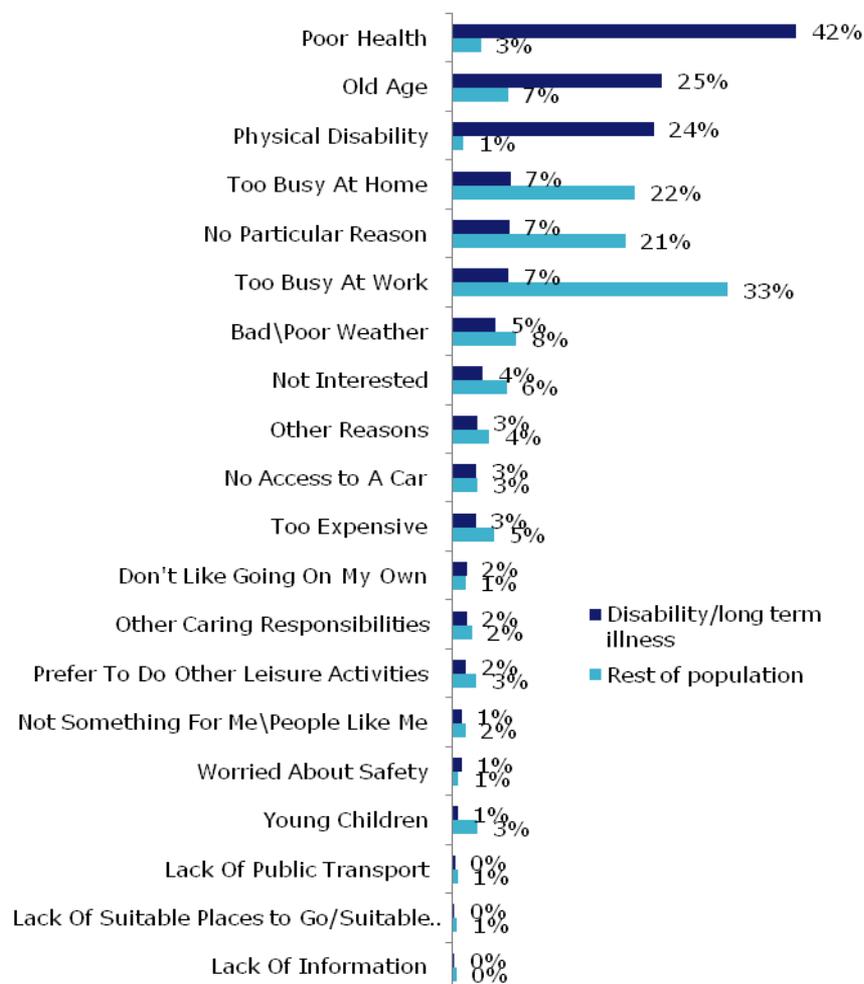
Frequency of visits to the natural environment



Disabled people - Barriers to visits

- Those people with a disability or a long term illness who normally took visits less than once a month were asked to specify reasons for not visiting more often.
- As would be expected amongst this group, the reasons were most likely to relate to poor health (42%), old age (25%) and/or physical disability (24%).
- Conversely other reasons such as being too busy or having no particular reason were less likely to be mentioned by members of this group.

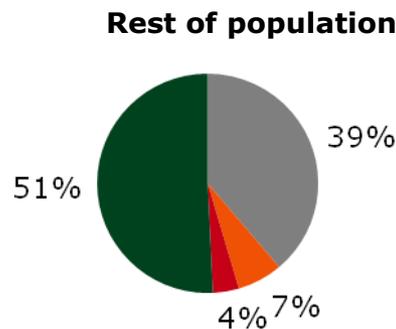
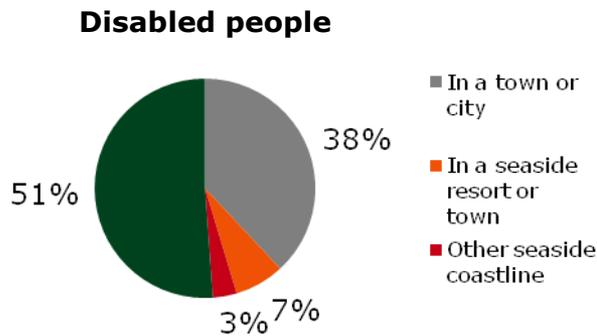
Reasons for not visiting



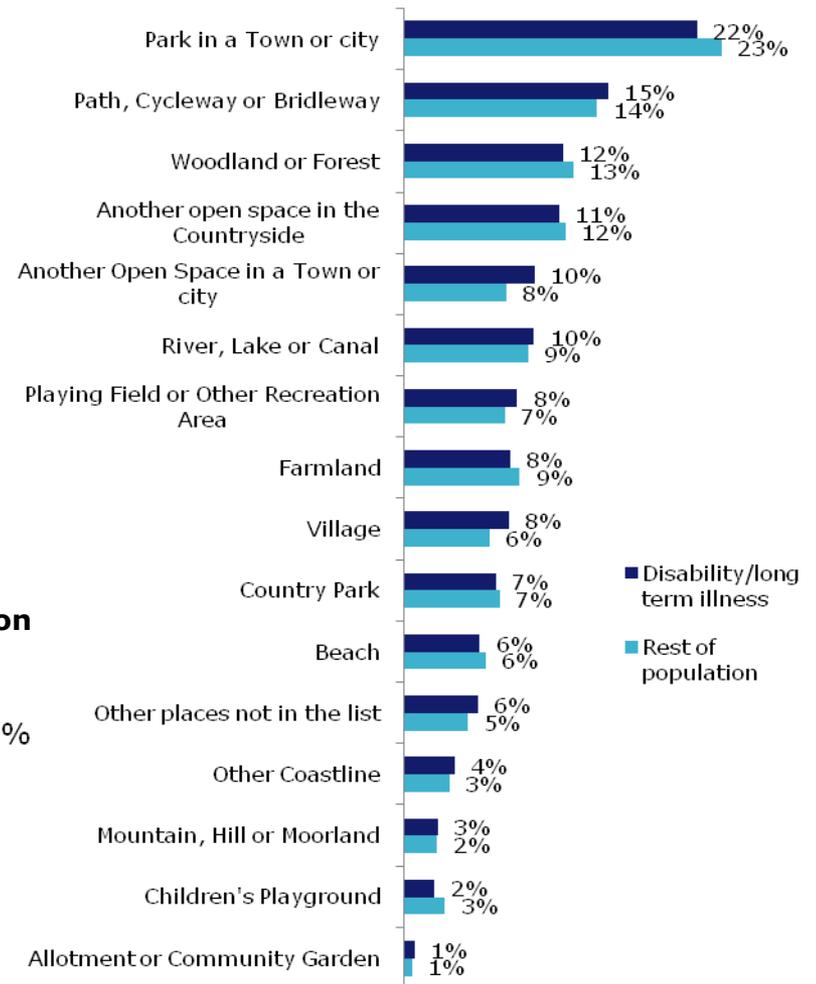
Disabled people - Places visited

- The types of place visited by people with a disability or long term illness were similar to those for the rest of the adult population. Around half of all visits were taken to urban locations (51%), 38% were taken to the countryside while the remaining 10% were taken to the coast.
- 44% of visits taken by people with a disability or long term illness were within 1 miles of home, a slightly higher proportion than recorded amongst the rest of the adult population (40%). This may relate to lower levels of car access or physical disabilities reducing the distances that can be walked to reach local green spaces.
- 64% of visits were taken on foot and 30% by car, similar proportions to the rest of the adult population.

Places included on visits to the natural environment



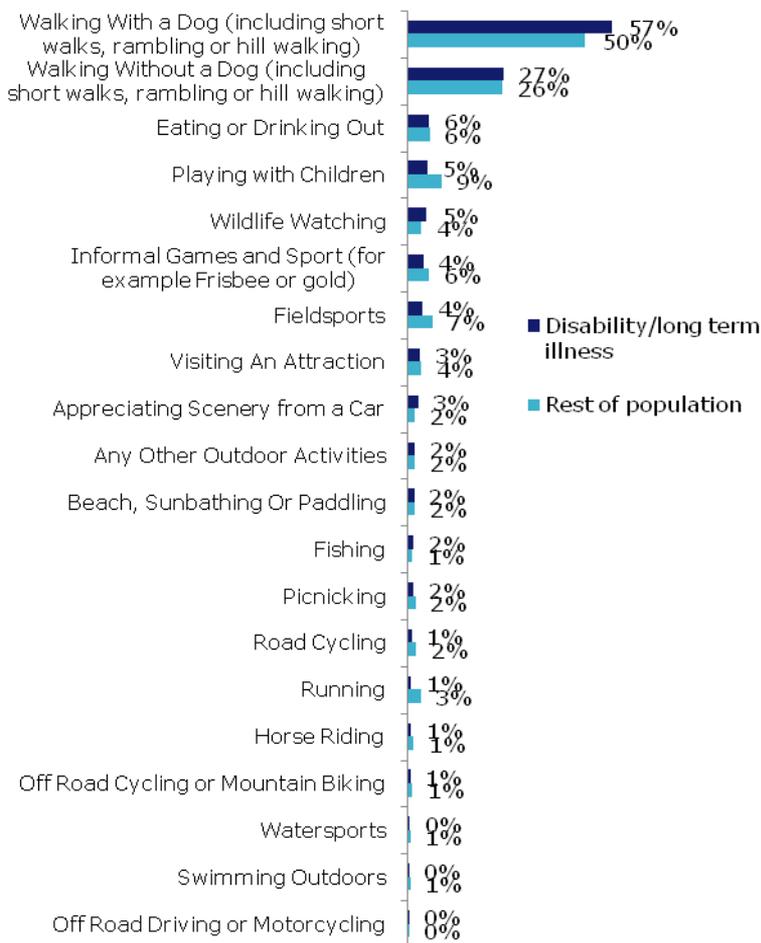
Places included on visits to the natural environment



Disabled people - Activities undertaken

Activities undertaken during visits to the natural environment

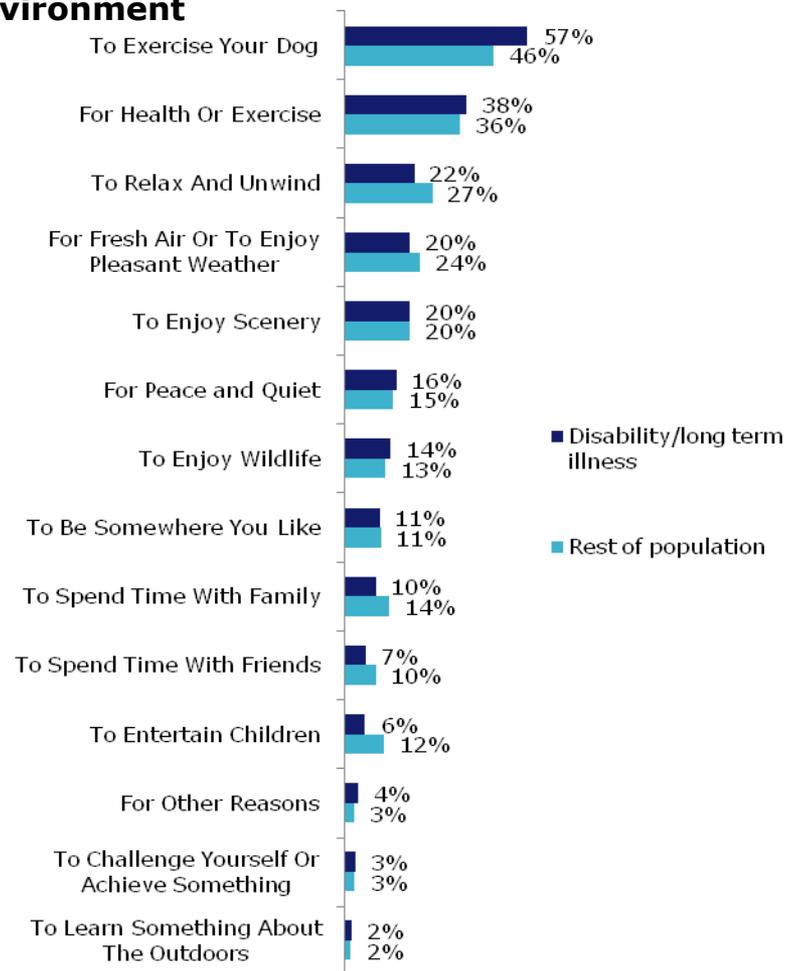
- Over half of the visits taken by people with a disability or long term illness (57%) involved dog walking, a higher proportion than amongst the remainder of the population (50%).
- 27% of visits involved other walking and 5% involved wildlife watching, similar to the proportion amongst the rest of the population. However, smaller proportions participated in any of the other activities listed.



Disabled people - Reasons for visits

- Reflecting the profile of activities undertaken, the motivation for more than half of visits taken by people with a long term illness or disability was to exercise a dog (57%). This proportion is higher than amongst visits taken by the rest of the population (46%).
- A number of the other reasons were mentioned by similar proportions of disabled people as amongst the rest of the population including for health and exercise, enjoying scenery, peace and quiet and enjoying wildlife.

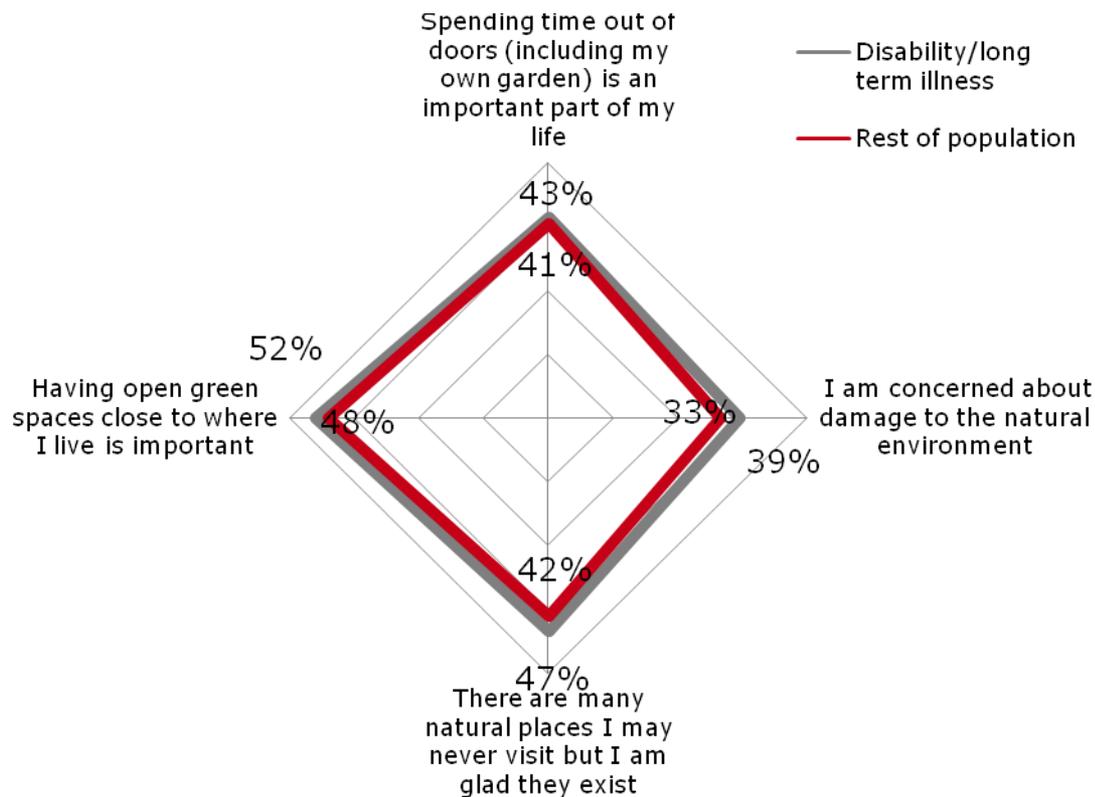
Reasons for taking visits to the natural environment



Disabled people - Attitudes towards the environment

Strong agreement with statements regarding the environment

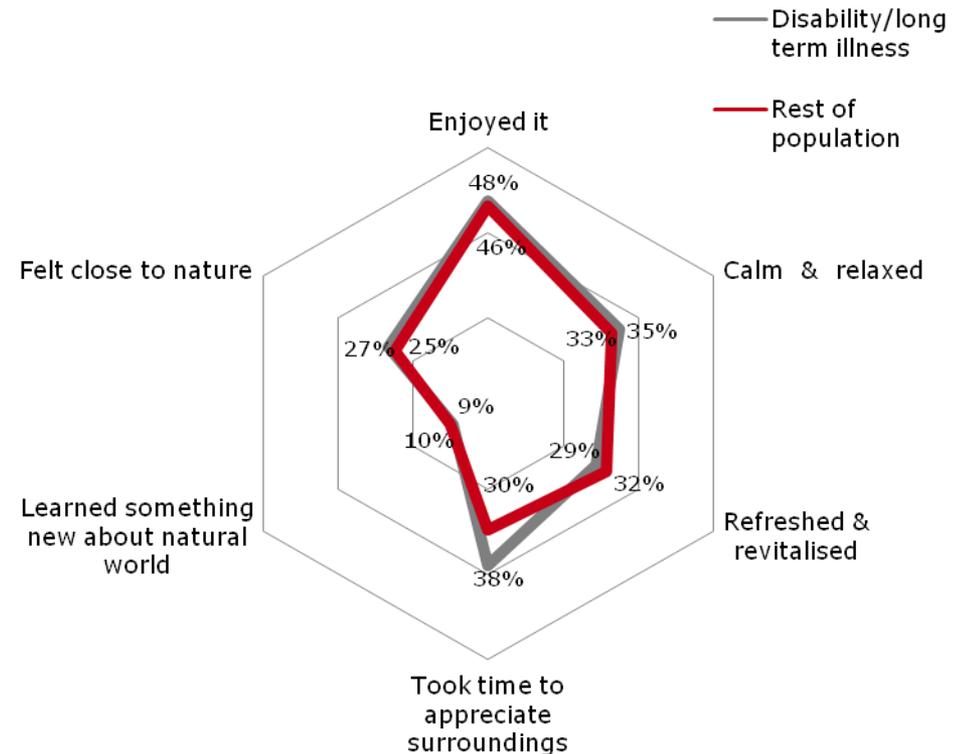
- Respondents were also asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements regarding concerns for the natural environment, including the importance of local green spaces.
- Disabled people were generally more likely than the rest of the population to be concerned about the natural environment and to value the existence of natural places, including those that they may never visit.



Disabled people - Positive outcomes of visits

Positive outcomes of visits – strong agreement regarding visit

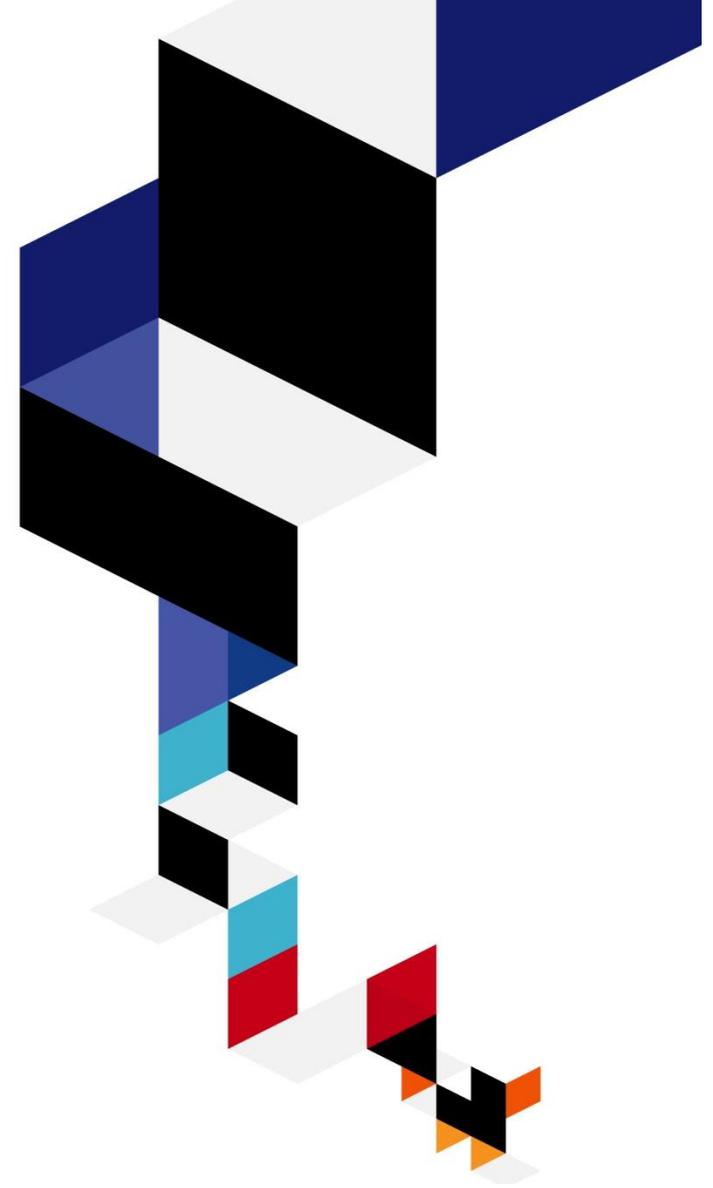
- Respondents were also asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements regarding the potential positive outcomes of their visit to the natural environment.
- The chart illustrates the proportions strongly agreeing with each statement, comparing responses amongst those visits taken by people with a disability or long term illness and those taken by other people, without a disability or illness.
- Results for Disabled people were similar to the rest of the population with around 50% agreeing strongly that they enjoyed their visits but less than 10% agreeing strongly that they learned something new about the natural world.
- The main variation related to the statement 'I took time to appreciate my surroundings' which 38% of people with a disability or long term illness agreed strongly with compared to just 30% of the rest of the adult population.



Disabled people - Summary of key findings

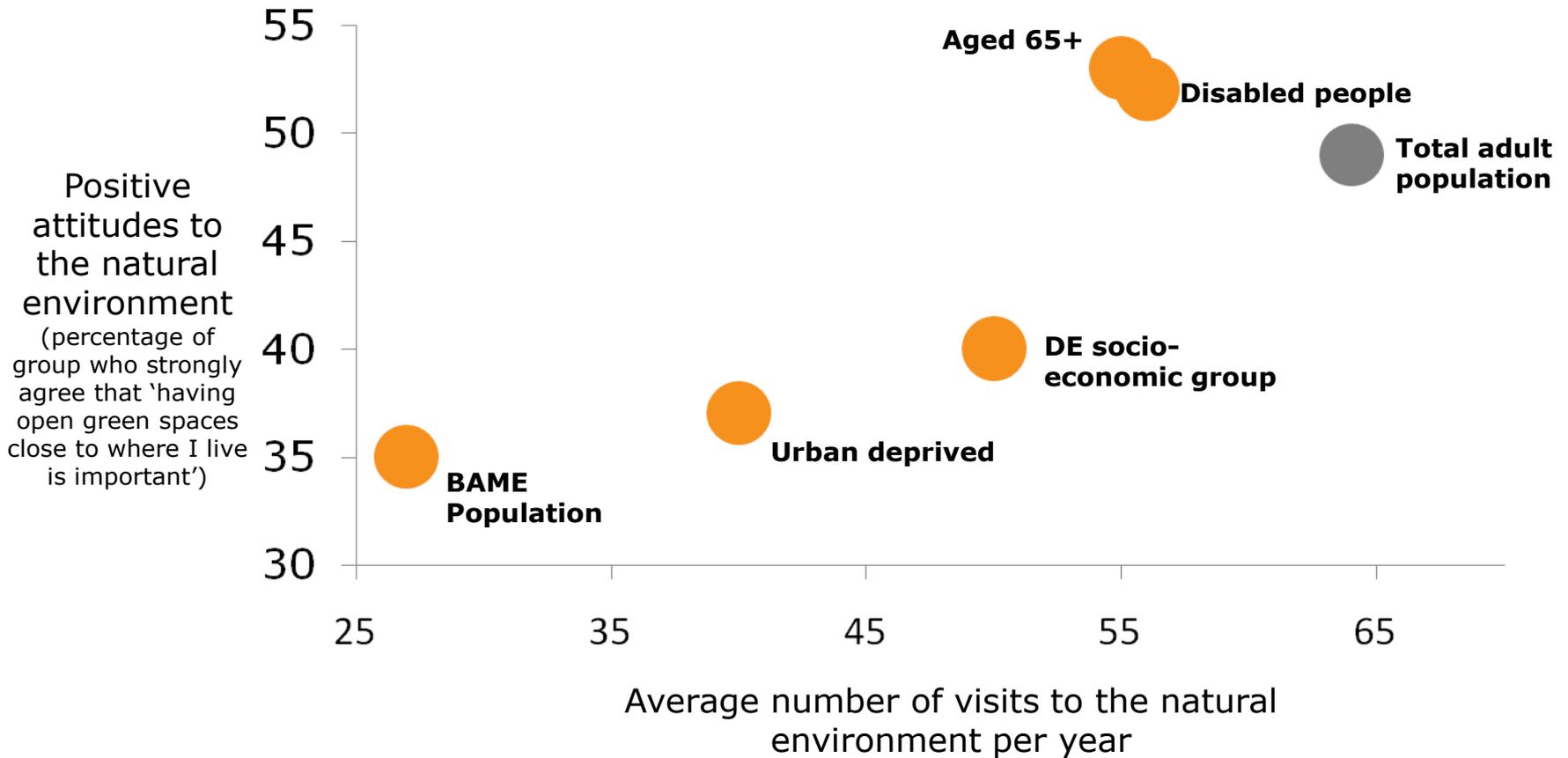
- **Population size:** c.7.4 million adults (18% of adult population).
- **Population profile:** their urban-rural distribution and dog ownership levels were similar to the rest of the population, however they were less likely to have children in their household or to have access to a car.
- **Frequency of visits:** average of 56 visits per year – less than amongst the rest of the population (66 visits).
- **Places visited:** a slightly higher proportion of visits taken by this group are within 1 mile of home. However the profile of types of place visited is very similar to the rest of the population.
- **Motivations of visits:** compared to the rest of the population a larger proportion of visits taken by people with a disability or long term illness involved dog walking. Health and exercise is the second most frequently motivation.
- **Barriers to visit taking:** old age and physical disability are the main reasons for not taking visits to the natural environment while other barriers are less likely to be given by members of this group.
- **Attitude and outcomes of visits:** people with a disability or long term illness were more likely to report positive outcomes from their visits, especially in terms of taking time to appreciate surroundings. They were also found to be more concerned about the natural environment than the rest of the population.

3 Relationships between the population groups



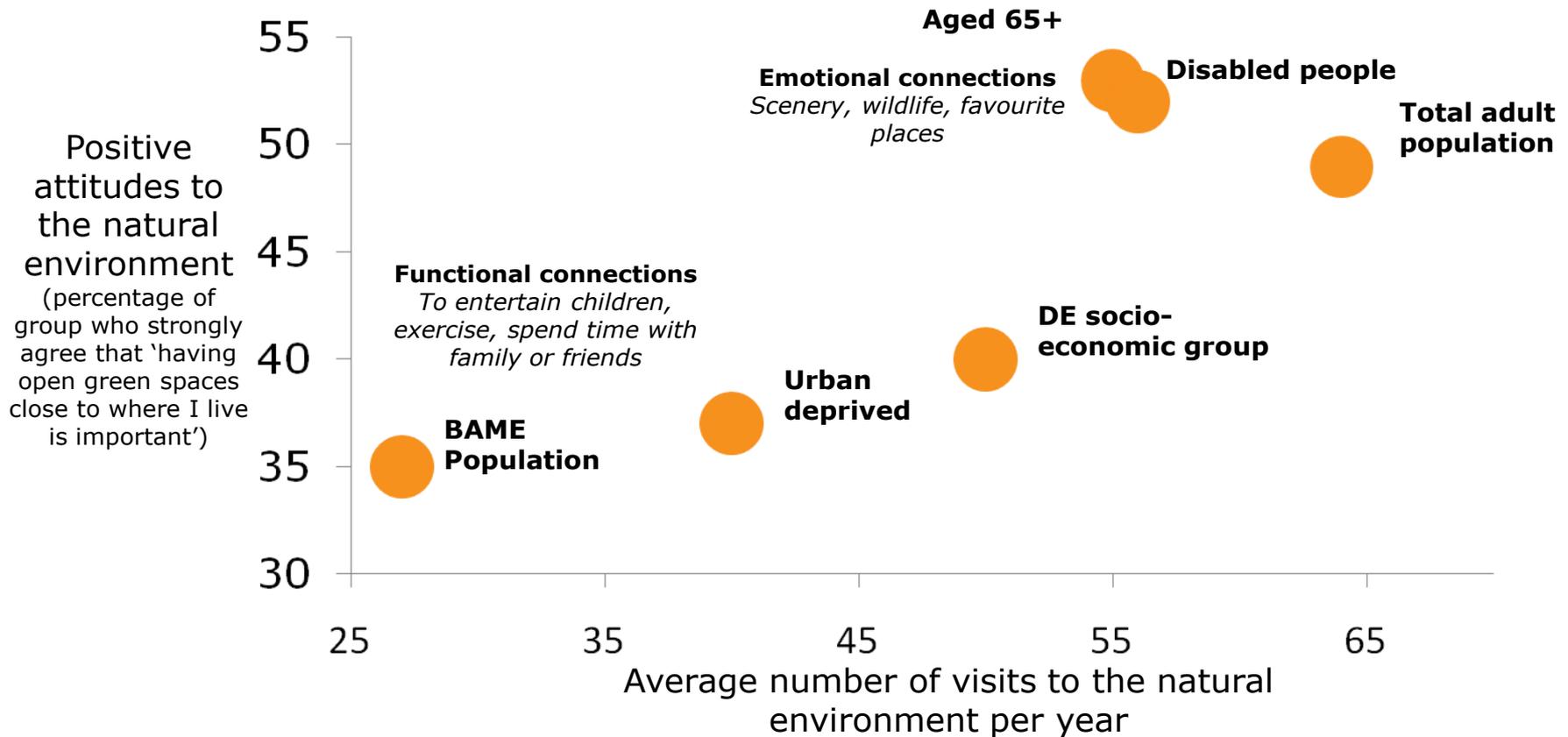
Frequency of visits compared with attitudes to the natural environment

The elderly (aged 65+) and People with disabilities and long term illnesses visit the natural environment the most frequently of the five population groups and have the most positive attitudes to the natural environment. For comparison, results relating to the average across the total adult population are also shown (i.e. all adults aged 16 and over).



Frequency of visits, attitudes and reasons for visiting the natural environment

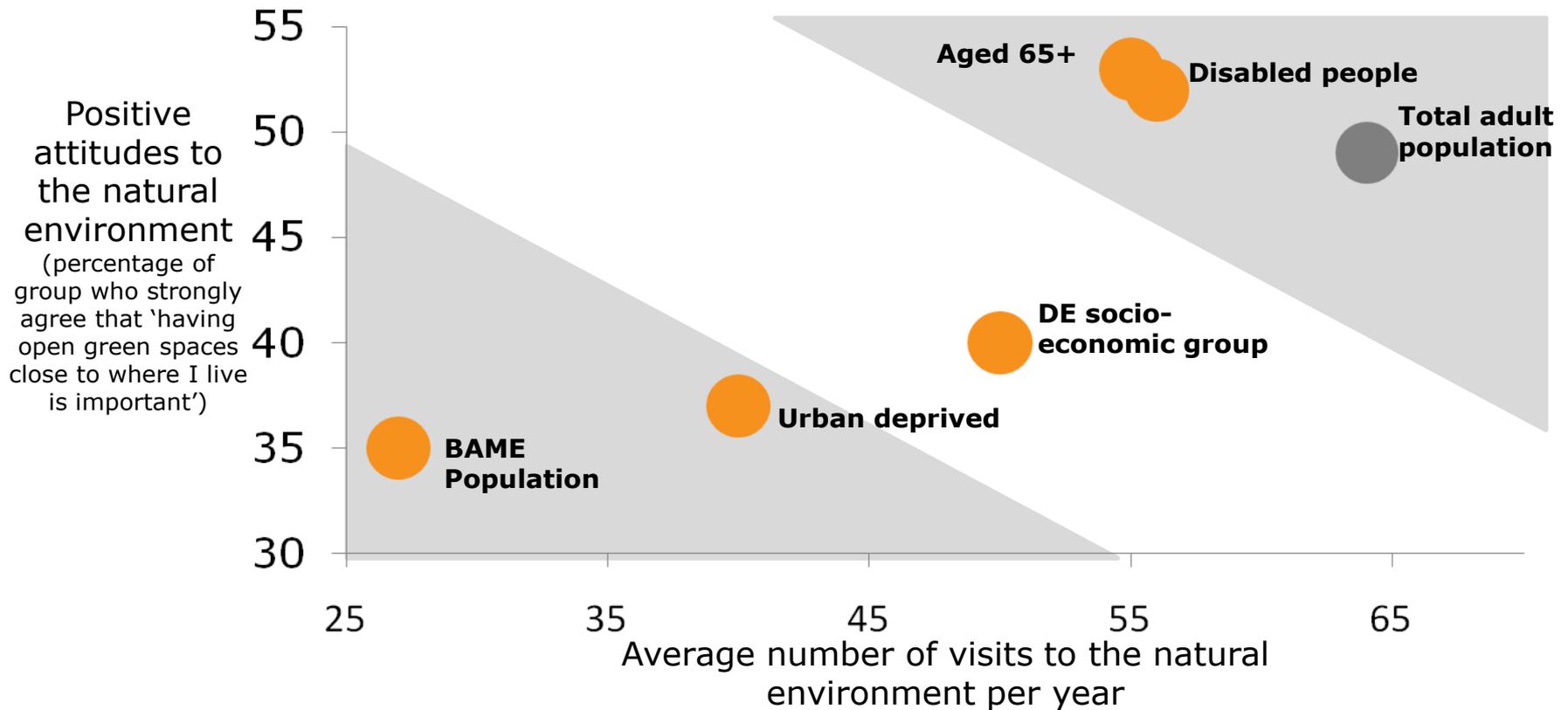
The groups within the population that visit the natural environment most frequently have the most positive attitudes to the natural environment and their connection with the natural environment tends to be more emotional involving enjoyment of scenery and wildlife at favourite places. In contrast, those groups of people that visit the natural environment less frequently have less positive attitudes and their connection is more functional, involving activities such as entertaining children, exercising or socialising with family and friends.



Similarities between the groups

There are similarities in the profile, behaviours and attitudes of some of the population groups:

- the **urban deprived and BAME population groups** take the fewest visits and are least positive towards the natural environment. Both of these groups tend to live in urban areas, have low car access and regard a lack of time as a barrier. Their visits tend to be to more urban locations and taken for more functional purposes.
 - **disabled and elderly people** are more positive towards the natural environment and enjoy the visits they take. Visits are more likely to be taken in rural locations and driven by emotional purposes such as enjoying favourite places.
- Understanding these similarities between groups can inform and increase the efficiency of interventions which aim to develop participation in visits to the natural environment.



Considering similarities between the groups

Compared to the total population, both the BAME and Urban deprived populations tend to be younger and are more likely to have children at home, live in urban areas and have lower than average car access. In contrast, both those aged 65+ and disabled people are similar in that they are less likely to have children in the household, are more positive towards the natural environment but are likely to state that old age or poor health are barriers to taking visits. (For comparison results relating to the average across the total adult population are also included (i.e. all adults aged 16 and over)).

	BAME Population	Urban deprived	Total adult population	Aged 65+	Disabled people
Average number of visits to the natural environment per year	27	40	64	55	56
Positive attitudes to the natural environment (% Strongly agree 'having open green spaces close to where I live is important')	35	37	49	53	52
Age (%) Under 45	76	60	49	-	18
Place of residence (%) Urban Rural/fringe	98 2	100 -	78 22	76 24	81 18
Children in household (%)	43	35	29	1	13
Access to a car (%)	59	52	74	68	64
Barriers to taking visits (%)					
Too busy work	32	20	26	2	7
Too busy home	25	16	18	6	7
No particular reason	23	20	17	12	7
Old age	4	8	12	38	25
Poor health	5	14	14	31	42

Considering similarities between the groups

In terms of the details of visits taken, there were further similarities with both the BAME and Urban deprived populations much more likely to take visits in urban locations, for their visits to be motivated by entertaining children and to be taken on foot or using public transport. In contrast, the aged 65 and over and people with disabilities were more likely to take visits to rural or coastal locations, to take visits for the purpose of enjoying wildlife and nature and to strongly agree that they enjoyed their last visit.

	BAME Population	Urban deprived	Total adult population	Aged 65+	Disabled people
Visit destination (%)					
Urban	78	66	39	32	38
Countryside or coast	22	34	61	68	62
Motivations (%)					
Dog exercising	11	48	48	48	57
Entertaining children	22	11	3	3	6
Enjoy wildlife/nature (net)	16	33	43	43	34
Transport used					
On foot	59	68	63	63	64
By car	25	23	30	31	30
By public transport	12	6	2	3	3
% Strongly agree enjoyed last visit	41	43	46	46	48