



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY  
CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF SPORT

# YOUR MOVEMENT MATTERS

## INDOOR AND OUTDOOR CLIMBING ACTIVITIES

Tier 1 – Report

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The Your Movement Matters project was initiated by eight of the UK's leading walking, climbing and outdoor leisure organisations from the British Mountaineering Council's Partners Assembly.

Through an online survey, 4,538 individuals' experiences of walking, climbing and mountaineering activities have been documented. Creating an evidence base of what participation looks like and means for those individuals. Their stories, motivations, barriers, opportunities to undertake the activities and desires to try new ones. This key data provides an understanding which can inform practice and drive policy change to develop and implement evidence-based diversity and inclusion strategies within the funding organisations.

These documents summarise the data analysis done to date. Opportunities for further comparative analysis to be conducted still exist as there are hundreds of

intersectional characteristics of the respondents that can be studied. The survey ran from 28th April 2021 to 8th June 2021. Participation was open to all aged 16 + in the UK and Ireland.

This document presents the key information, analysis, interpretations, as well as implications and potential next steps in the context of climbing activities. Content in this document has been derived from survey data related to the five climbing activity groups that our research participants were asked to comment on:

- Indoor bouldering
- Indoor roped climbing
- Outdoor bouldering
- Outdoor sport climbing
- Trad climbing

**IN FOCUS** - 1,091 of our respondents have bouldered, or rope climbed *indoors* in the last 12 months.  
1,132 of our respondents have bouldered, sport climbed or trad climbed *outdoors* in the last 12 months.

1,091 people participate in at least one of the following activities:

Of those participants who indoor boulder or indoor rope climb, indoor bouldering is the predominant style of indoor climbing. Of our respondents who told us that they climb indoors, 84% indoor boulder and just 73% indoor rope climb.

1,132 people participate in one of the following activities.

Outdoor Climbing	Percentage of those who participate out of all survey respondents (4,538)
Outdoor Bouldering	14.65% (665)
Outdoor Sport Climbing	13.62% (618)
Trad Climbing	18.33% (832)

Of those who told us they participate in any of the three types of outdoor climbing (outdoor bouldering, outdoor sport climbing, trad climbing), trad climbing is the most common style of outdoor climbing amongst our respondents (73%), followed by outdoor bouldering (59%), and lastly outdoor sport climbing (55%). Just 26% had taken part in all three styles of outdoor climbing.

### Frequency of participation - Indoor Climbing

20% of all respondents indicated that they have indoor bouldered in the last 12 months. Of these, 21% indoor boulder three times or more per week. The majority of these individuals (79%) indoor boulder less than twice a week.



Participation in Indoor Bouldering	Frequency of participation in Indoor Bouldering (3490 responses)
5 + times per week	0.50% (17)
3 – 5 times per week	6.16% (209)
1 – 2 times per week	9.26% (314)
Between 1 – 5 times per month	6.37% (314)
Every 2 – 3 months	4.69% (159)
Once per year	1.65% (56)
I have not done this activity in the past 12 months	18.69% (634)
I do not participate in this activity	52.39% (1777)
I participate in this activity seasonally (i.e., when there is ice)	0.29% (10)

[Table shows responses from all survey participants]

The number of individuals who stated that they have participated in indoor roped climbing in the last 12 months is 791, this represents 17% of all survey respondents. Of these, 10% indoor rope climb three times or more per week, but the majority do so less than twice a week (90%). Those who indoor rope climb, do so less frequently than those who indoor boulder.



Participation in Indoor Roped Climbing	Frequency of participation in Indoor Climbing (3386 responses)
5 + times per week	0.27% (9)
3 – 5 times per week	2.36% (80)
1 – 2 times per week	8.74% (296)
Between 1 – 5 times per month	7.56% (256)
Every 2 – 3 months	5.49% (186)
Once per year	2.33% (79)
I have not done this activity in the past 12 months	21.53% (729)
I do not participate in this activity	51.33% (1738)
I participate in this activity seasonally (i.e., when there is ice)	0.38% (13)

[Table shows responses from all survey participants]

When comparing indoor bouldering and indoor roped climbing, participating more than three or more times per week is more common in indoor bouldering (21%) than indoor roped climbing (10%).

### Frequency of participation - Outdoor Climbing

The percentage of individuals who stated that they have participated in outdoor bouldering in the last 12 months is 14% of everybody who participated in the survey. Of our respondents, 17% boulder more than once a week and 83% boulder less than once a week.



Photo by Hannah Morris

Participation in Outdoor Bouldering	Frequency of participation in Outdoor Climbing (3349 responses)
5 + times per week	0.03% (1)
3 – 5 times per week	0.96% (32)
1 – 2 times per week	3.90% (97)
Between 1 – 5 times per month	6.84% (229)
Every 2 – 3 months	8.78% (294)
Once per year	3.11% (104)
I have not done this activity in the past 12 months	18.12% (607)
I do not participate in this activity	58.76% (1968)
I participate in this activity seasonally (i.e., when there is ice)	0.51% (17)

[Table shows responses from all survey participants]

The number of individuals who stated that they have participated in outdoor sport climbing in the last 12 months represents 16% of everybody who participated in the survey. Of these respondents, 13% participate at least once a week, 87% participate less than once a week.



Participation in Outdoor Sport Climbing	Frequency of participation in Outdoor Sport Climbing (3344 responses)
5 + times per week	0.12% (4)
3 – 5 times per week	0.51% (17)
1 – 2 times per week	2.24% (75)
Between 1 – 5 times per month	7.12% (238)
Every 2 – 3 months	7.69% (257)
Once per year	3.95% (132)
I have not done this activity in the past 12 months	18.75% (627)
I do not participate in this activity	59.06% (1975)
I participate in this activity seasonally (i.e., when there is ice)	0.57% (19)

[Table shows responses from all survey participants]

The number of individuals who have indicated that they have participated in trad climbing in the last 12 months represents 20% of everybody who participated in the survey. Of these, 4% trad climb three times or more per week, but the majority do so less than twice a week (96%).



Participation in Trad Climbing	Frequency of participation in Trad Climbing (3344 responses)
5 + times per week	0.24% (8)
3 – 5 times per week	0.85% (29)
1 – 2 times per week	4.01% (136)
Between 1 – 5 times per month	10.43% (354)
Every 2 – 3 months	7.07% (240)
Once per year	3.68% (125)
I have not done this activity in the past 12 months	17.36% (589)
I do not participate in this activity	55.91% (1897)
I participate in this activity seasonally (i.e., when there is ice)	0.44% (15)

[Table shows responses from all survey participants]

For each outdoor climbing activity, the number of those who participate more than three times per week is significantly less than those who participate less than three times per week. The most common frequency for outdoor bouldering and outdoor sport was every 2-3 months and for trad climbing 1-5 times a month?



## Age

The highest number of people who **indoor climb** (36%) fall into the 25-34 age category, the lowest number of people fell into the 65+ age category at 5%.

15% of our indoor climbers fall within the 16-24 year age group, participation rates increase to 26% for the next age category of 25-34 years. Future research could investigate which factors encourage those in the 25-34 age group to indoor climb. The participation rates decline for each age group beyond 25-34. There were 26% more outdoor climbers over the age of 45 than indoor climbers, indicating an age disparity between the two climbing styles.

The first two age brackets represent larger proportions of indoor climbers than outdoor climbers and all age brackets above 35-44 represent larger proportions of outdoor climbers than indoor climbers. They only decrease beyond the 25-34 peak. And more 55-64 year olds climb outdoors than 16-24 year olds. – this opens an opportunity up for indoor climbing organisations to explore the reasons for this downward trend, and to tackle this decline in participation through age focused interventions.

Age	Percentage of those who 'indoor climb' (1090 responses)	Percentage of those who 'outdoor climb' (1132 responses)
16 – 24	15.50% (169)	11.93% (135)
25 – 34	35.60% (388)	31.63% (358)
35 – 44	17.71% (193)	18.46% (209)
45 – 54	14.86% (162)	17.40% (197)
55 – 64	10.73% (117)	14.22% (161)
65 +	5.41% (59)	6.01% (68)
I would prefer not to say	0.18% (2)	0.35% (4)

*[Table shows responses from all survey participants]*

The largest number of people who **outdoor climb** (32%) fall into the 25-34 age category, the lowest number of people fall into the 65+ age category at 6%.

Similar to those who indoor climb, 12% of these respondents fall within the 16-24 year age group, increasing to 32% for the next age category of 25-34 years. Again, as with indoor climbing, participation rates for each age group decrease as our participants age – this opens an opportunity for outdoor climbing organisations to explore the reasons for this downward trend, and to tackle this decline in participation through age focused interventions.

**IN FOCUS - Lifelong participation.** Future campaigns and research into maintaining participation as climbers age would be beneficial. Skills and experience in these activities are built up over years and participants should be encouraged to adjust their involvement to remain engaged.



## Gender

Looking at the data for those who identify male or female, the male to female ratio is fairly similar for those who **indoor climb** (F: 48%, M: 52%). Looking at the overall respondents for indoor climbing, those who identify as gender fluid, non-binary, trans-male, trans-female and other account for 3%.

Gender	Percentage of those who 'indoor climb' (1091 responses)	Percentage of those who 'outdoor climb' (1131 responses)
Female	46.29% (505)	38.99% (441)
Gender Fluid	0.64% (7)	0.62% (7)
Male	50.41%(550)	58.18% (658)
Non-Binary	1.19%(13)	0.80% (9)
Trans-Female	0.18% (2)	0.27% (3)
Trans-Male	0.37% (4)	0.27% (3)
I like to use another term	0.37% (4)	0.35% (4)
I would prefer not to say	0.55% (6)	0.53% (6)

Looking at male and female data only for **outdoor climbing**, there is greater disparity between the male to female ratio (F: 40%, M: 60%). Looking at the overall respondents for outdoor climbing, gender fluid, non-binary, trans-male, trans-female and others account for 3% of our outdoor climbing respondents.

**IN FOCUS** – 8% fewer of our female respondents climb outdoors than indoors.

## Sexual Orientation

18% (n=183) of indoor climbing respondents identified as being from the LGBTIA+ community, compared to 79% identifying as heterosexual.

**IN FOCUS** – Our indoor climbing respondents are the most diverse in their sexual orientations of all the activity types the YMM survey investigated.

Sexual Orientation	Percentage of those who 'indoor climb' (1089 responses)	Percentage of those who 'outdoor climb' (1131 responses)
Asexual	1.84% (20)	2.21% (25)
Bisexual	8.54% (93)	6.81% (77)
Gay/Lesbian	4.41% (48)	3.09% (35)
Pansexual	1.93% (21)	1.86% (21)
Heterosexual/Straight	78.97% (860)	81.79% (925)
I would prefer not to say	2.75% (30)	2.83% (32)
I like to use another term	1.56% (17)	1.41% (16)

15% of **outdoor climbing** respondents identified as being from the LGBTIA+ community, compared to 82% identifying as heterosexual.

## Disability and/or long-term health condition

Do you consider yourself as having a disability and/or a long-term health condition? (excluding mental health at this stage)	Percentage of those who 'indoor climb' (1092 responses)	Percentage of those who 'outdoor climb' (1131 responses)
Yes	12.27% (134)	11.84% (134)
No	86.72% (947)	87.01% (985)
I would prefer not to say	1.01% (11)	1.15% (13)

**IN FOCUS** – There is no significant difference in participation rates in indoor and outdoor climbing by those who identify as having a disability and/or long-term health condition - 12% of indoor and outdoor climbers identify as having a disability and/or long-term health condition.

## Indoor Climbing with a mental health condition or illness

Almost 20% of those who indicated that they indoor climb identified as having a mental health condition or illness. Of those, 44% were aged 25 to 34 and 22% aged 16 to 24.

A higher number of females (57%) compared to males (39%) reported a mental health condition or illness. For both of these genders, those in the 25 to 34 age category reported the highest prevalence of mental health illness/conditions with 29% of females vs 12% of males.

This is not necessarily representative of actual prevalence of mental health conditions or illness for the genders of female and male, but it does indicate that females tend to be more willing to disclose their mental health status compared to males. This relates to a wider conversation about de-stigmatising conversations around mental health.

Do you identify as having a mental health condition or illness?	Percentage of those who 'indoor climb' (1073 responses to this question)
Yes (538)	19.11% (205)
No (3,729)	78.66% (844)
I would prefer not to say (83)	2.24% (24)



### Further Analysis - Indoor Climbing with a mental health condition or illness

Age group	Percentage of those who indoor climb with a mental health condition/illness (n=205)
16-24	22.43% (46)
25-34	44.39% (91)
35-44	20% (41)
45-54	8.29% (17)
55-64	4.39%(9)
65+	0.49% (1)

Gender	Percentage of those who indoor climb with a mental illness/condition (n=204)
Female	56.86% (116)
Male	38.73% (79)
Gender fluid	0.98% (2)
Non-binary	1.47% (3)
Trans-female	0.49% (1)
Trans-male	0.49% (1)
Other	0.98% (2)

#### Gender breakdown by age of those with a mental health condition/illness (n= 204)

Age group	Female	Male	Gender fluid, non-binary, trans-male, trans-female and other
16-24	15.68% (32)	5.39% (11)	1.47% (3)
25-34	28.92% (59)	12.25% (25)	2.94% (6)
35-44	9.80% (20)	10.29% (21)	(0)
45-54	1.96% (4)	6.37% (13)	(0)
55-64	0.05% (1)	3.92% (8)	(0)
65+	(0)	0.49% (1)	(0)



### Outdoor Climbing with a mental health condition or illness

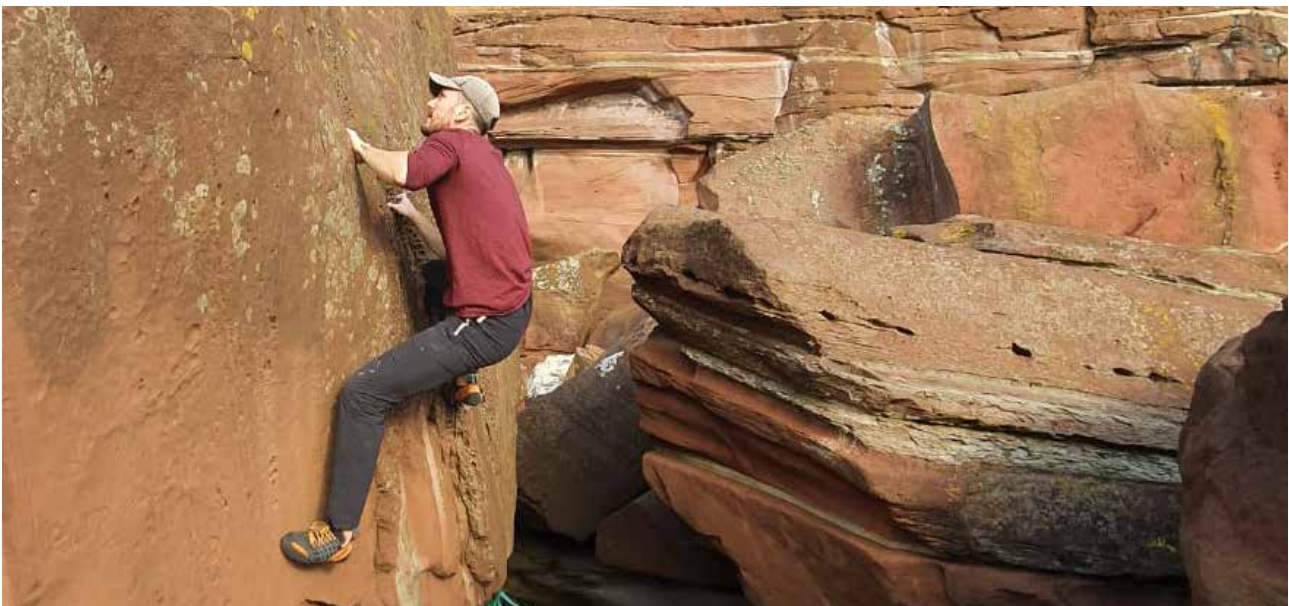
16% of those who indicated that they outdoor climb identified as having a mental health condition or illness. Of those, 42% were aged 25 to 34 and 23% aged 35-44.

A higher number of females (52%) compared to males (42%) reported a mental health condition or illness. For females, those in the 25 to 34 age category reported the highest prevalence of mental health illness/conditions (65% of females), for males, 32% aged 35-44 reported the highest prevalence.

Do you identify as having a mental health condition or illness?	Percentage of those who 'outdoor climb' (1112 responses to these questions)
Yes	16.19% [180]
No	81.47% [906]
I would prefer not to say	2.34% [26]

### Further Analysis - Outdoor Climbing with a mental health condition or illness

Age group	Percentage of those who outdoor climb with a mental health condition/illness (n=180)
16-24	16.67% [30]
25-34	42.22% [76]
35-44	23.33% [42]
45-54	10.56% [19]
55-64	6.67% [12]
65+	0.56% [1]



Gender	Percentage of those who <b>outdoor climb</b> with a mental illness/condition (n=180)
Female	52.22% [94]
Male	42.22% [76]
Gender fluid	1.67% [3]
Non-binary	1.67% [3]
Trans-female	0.56% [1]
Trans-male	[0]
Other	1.11% [2]

**Gender breakdown by age of those with a mental health condition/illness (n=180)**

Age group	Female	Male	Gender fluid, non-binary, trans-male, trans-female and other
16-24	11.11% [20]	5.33% [8]	1.11% [2]
25-34	44.44% [80]	10.56% [19]	1.85% [6]
35-44	10.00% [18]	13.33% [24]	[0]
45-54	2.22% [4]	8.33% [15]	[0]
55-64	1.11% [2]	5.00% [9]	0.55% [1]
65+	[0]	0.55% [1]	[0]

**IN FOCUS** – when asked “what motivates you to participate in the activity that you are most passionate about?” 71% of our indoor climbing respondents and 66% of our outdoor climbing respondents told us that they participate for their mental health.





## Location of Respondents

Where do you live?	Percentage of those who 'indoor climb' (1085 responses)	Percentage of those who 'outdoor climb' (1123 responses)
North West (England)	13.36% (145)	15.85% (178)
Yorkshire and the Humber (England)	11.34% (123)	11.67% (131)
South West (England)	17.60% (191)	15.67% (176)
Central (Scotland)	5.71% (62)	6.06% (68)
South East (England)	10.51% (114)	6.95% (78)
North Wales	3.23% (35)	4.72% (53)
East Midlands (England)	6.82% (74)	6.95% (78)
South Wales	2.95% (32)	2.67% (30)
West Midlands (England)	5.16% (56)	4.10% (46)
Highlands & Islands (Scotland)	1.47% (16)	3.56% (40)
North East (England)	3.13% (34)	3.29% (37)
Greater London (England)	7.83% (85)	6.50% (73)
Northern Ireland	1.20% (13)	1.78% (20)
Grampian (Scotland)	0.83% (9)	1.25% (14)
East of England	2.58% (28)	1.87% (21)
Dublin (Ireland)	1.01% (11)	1.16% (13)
Strathclyde (Scotland)	1.47% (16)	1.60% (18)
Lothian (Scotland)	1.29% (14)	0.89% (10)
Mid Wales	0.46% (5)	0.71% (8)
West (Ireland)	0.72% (15)	0.53% (6)
Midland East (Ireland)	0.37% (4)	0.45% (5)
South East (Ireland)	0.18% (2)	0.27% (3)
Cork-Kerry (Ireland)	0.18% (2)	0.36% (4)
West Wales	0.28% (3)	0.36% (4)
Borders (Scotland)	0.38% (8)	0.27% (3)
North West (Ireland)	0.18% (2)	0.18% (2)
Dumfries & Galloway (Scotland)	0.28% (3)	0.27% (3)
Shannon (Ireland)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)

## Ethnic Heritage - Indoor Climbing

**IN FOCUS** - Indoor climbing was found to be most ethnically diverse activity of all activities that our Your Movement Matters respondents were asked about. 93% of all respondents who indoor climb are of White ethnic heritage, with 7% accounting for Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritages.

(n=880) answers

<b>White (Total)</b>	<b>English/Welsh/ Scottish/North Irish/British</b>	<b>Irish</b>	<b>Gypsy or Irish Traveller</b>	<b>Any other White background</b>	
93.75% (825)	82.39% (725)	4.09% (36)	0.11% (1)	7.16% (63)	
<b>Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (Total)</b>	<b>White and Black Caribbean</b>	<b>White and Black African</b>	<b>White and Asian</b>	<b>Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background</b>	
3.07% (27)	0.68% (6)	0.45% (4)	0.68% (6)	1.25% (11)	
<b>Asian Asian British (Total)</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Pakistani</b>	<b>Bangladeshi</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Any other Asian Background</b>
2.16% (19)	0.57% (5)	0.23% (2)	0.11% (1)	0.57% (5)	0.68% (6)
<b>Black, African, Caribbean or Black British (Total)</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Caribbean</b>	<b>Any other Black, Caribbean or Black British</b>		
0.23% (2)	(0)	0.00% (0)	0.23% (2)		
<b>Other ethnicities</b>	<b>Other ethnicities</b>				
0.80% (7)	0.80% (7)				





## Ethnic Heritage - Outdoor Climbing

(n=911) answers

<b>White (Total)</b>	<b>English/Welsh/ Scottish/North Irish/British</b>	<b>Irish</b>	<b>Gypsy or Irish Traveller</b>	<b>Any other White background</b>	
94.40% (860)	84.52% (770)	3.72% (34)	0.11% (1)	6.04% (55)	
<b>Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (Total)</b>	<b>White and Black Caribbean</b>	<b>White and Black African</b>	<b>White and Asian</b>	<b>Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background</b>	
2.85% (26)	0.77% (7)	0.11% (1)	0.55% (5)	1.43% (13)	
<b>Asian Asian British (Total)</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Pakistani</b>	<b>Bangladeshi</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Any other Asian Background</b>
1.65% (15)	0.33% (3)	0.22% (2)	0.11% (1)	0.44% (4)	0.55% (5)
<b>Black, African, Caribbean or Black British (Total)</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Caribbean</b>	<b>Any other Black, Caribbean or Black British</b>		
0.22% (2)	0.22% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)		
<b>Other ethnicities</b>	<b>Other ethnicities</b>				
0.88% (8)	0.88% (8)				

## First Language

First Language	Percentage of first language spoken by those who 'indoor climb' (total responses 1069)	Percentage of first language spoken by those who 'outdoor climb' (total responses 1144)
English	93%	93%
Other	4.75%	3.60%
German	1.00%	1.00%
French	0.75%	0.80%
Cymraeg [Welsh]	0.50%	0.60%

**IN FOCUS** – 93% of respondents who climb (both indoor and outdoor) have English as a first language, almost 7% of our respondents have languages other than English as their first language.



## Religion or Faith

14% of **indoor climbers** follow a religion or faith, the vast majority do not at 84%. Of those that do, Christianity is the most common religion with 82% of respondents selecting this option.

Do you follow a religion or faith?	Responses for those who 'indoor climb' (1089)	Responses for those who 'outdoor climb' (1130)
Yes	13.96% (152)	14.42% (163)
No	84.30% (918)	83.98% (949)
I would prefer not to say	1.74% (19)	1.59% (18)

14% of those who **outdoor climb** follow a religion or faith and 84% do not. Of those who do follow a religion or faith, there is a slightly higher proportion of those who follow Christianity in our outdoor climbing respondents (83%) when compared to our indoor climbing respondents (82%).

Religion or Faith	Percentage of those who 'indoor climb' who follow a religion or faith (149)	Percentage of those who 'outdoor climb' who follow a religion or faith (159)
Christian	81.88% (122)	83.39% (131)
I follow another religion or faith, please write your answer below	8.72% (13)	9.45% (15)
Buddhist	2.01% (3)	1.26% (2)
I would prefer not to say	1.34% (2)	1.89% (3)
Muslim	2.68% (4)	2.52% (4)
Jewish	2.01% (3)	1.89% (3)
Sikh	0.67% (1)	0.63% (1)
Hindu	0.67% (1)	0.00% (0)

**IN FOCUS** – Our indoor and outdoor climbing respondents show a similar degree of religious diversity, with the proportions of indoor climbers and outdoor climbers who have a faith or religion following Christianity being 82% and 83% respectively.





## Participant and Dependents

**IN FOCUS** – The dependents of respondents who climb indoors are less likely to also participate, compared to those who climb outdoors.

Response	Does your dependent participate in the same activity styles as you? 'Indoor climbers' (332)	Does your dependent participate in the same activity styles as you? 'Outdoor climbers' (249)
Yes	21.39% (71)	28.51% (71)
No	34.04% (113)	64.26% (160)
I would prefer not to say	13.55% (45)	7.23% (198)
They participate in some of the same activity styles as me	31.02% (103)	0.00% (0)

*[Table shows responses to the question: If you are a parent, guardian or carer for a dependent(s) under the age of 16, does your dependent participate in the same activity styles as you?]*

This report has showcased a brief insight into the findings of the Your Movement Matters survey. For more detailed insight, please see the Tier 2 reports which explore this novel data further <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/centre-of-social-justice-in-sport-and-society/investigating-equity-and-diversity-in-climbing-and-walking-activities>

To reference this report: Chris Kay, Emily Ankers and Suzanne Bond, Your Movement Matters: Mountain Activities, Tier 1 Report, Carnegie School of Sport, Leeds Beckett University, August 2021

### YMM research team

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- Prof. Leanne Norman - Director of the Research Centre for Social Justice in Sport