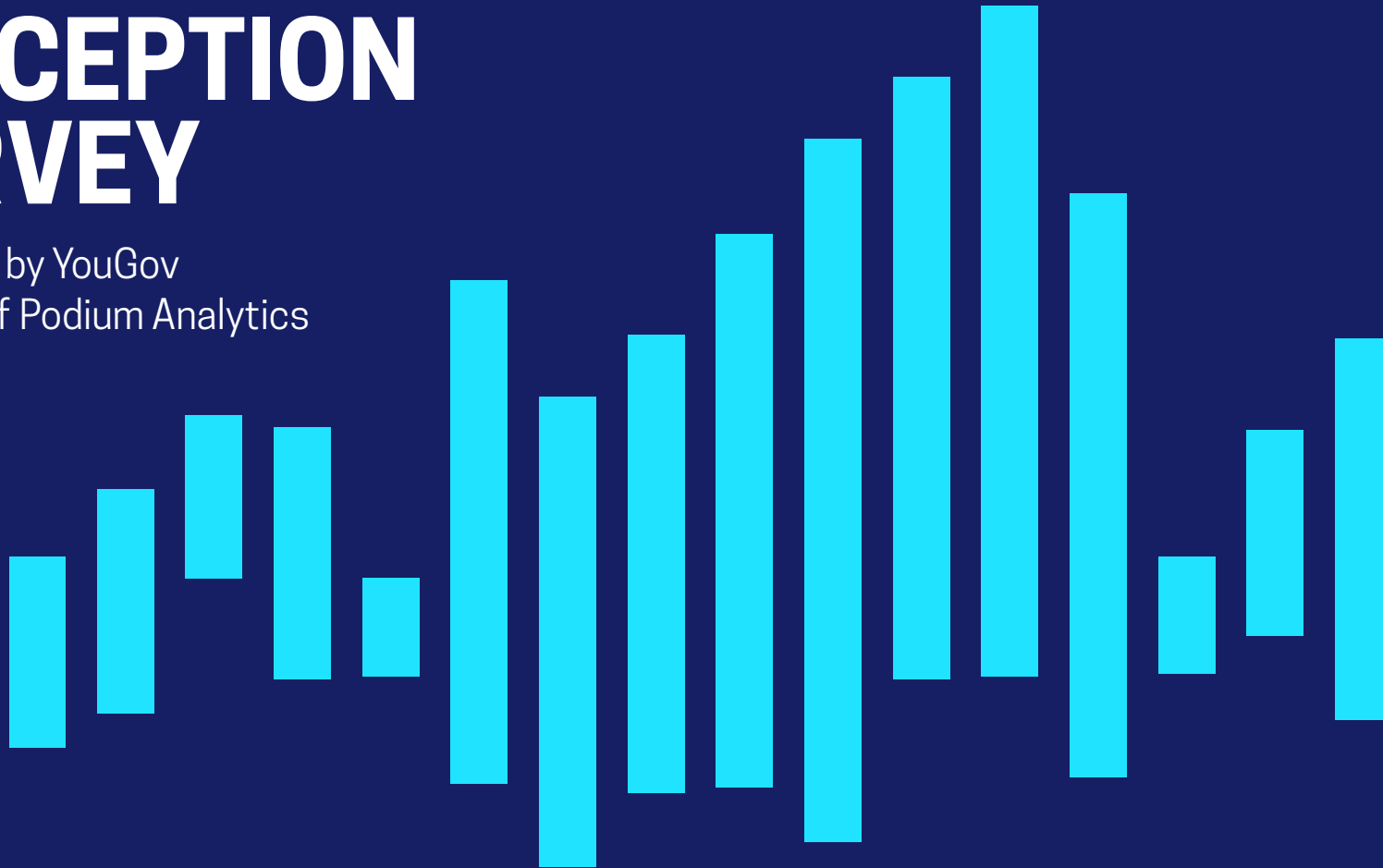


2025 SAFETY IN SPORT PERCEPTION SURVEY

Conducted by YouGov
on behalf of Podium Analytics



**MORE SPORT,
LESS INJURY**

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HEADLINES

Our annual Safety in Sport Perception Survey, conducted in collaboration with YouGov, explores public opinion on the issues that are central to the Podium Analytics mission: injury, safety and participation in sport.



This year, we asked 18 questions to 2,193 respondents across the nation:

- Eleven annual 'core' questions tracking changing perceptions of sport safety and injury risk.
- Four questions introduced in 2024, relating to concussion and the overall benefits of sport.
- Three new questions to understand public sentiment towards our vision of 'More Sport, Less Injury', and the appetite for risk in sport.

This year's key insights

**Courage over caution:
The importance of participation**

48%

of parents stated that, when watching their children participate in sport, a higher level of risk makes it less enjoyable to watch.

85%

of parents surveyed agreed that for young people, the benefits of sport outweigh the risk of injury.

85%

believe that helping young people avoid preventable sports injuries could support long-term participation, a key UK public health policy.

**A heartening trend:
Growing public awareness of head injury management**

Public support for NHS to record whether a head injury was sustained during sport remains high at

74%

On the ground, confidence in concussion management has grown since grassroots guidance was published in 2023.

72%

of those who belong to a sports club or team are confident their organisation would know how to manage a suspected concussion, up 6% since 2024.

57%

of respondents with a child at school are confident their school would know how to manage a suspected concussion, up from 54% in 2024.

Keep reading to find out more, and dig into the results of this year's survey



WHAT'S THE BROADER CONTEXT?

For the third year, opinions remain broadly the same across all the key issues we explore in our core questions. There are four key themes that underpin all our findings.

Sports injury is a common issue.

Almost one fifth (19%) of respondents say they have personally experienced some kind of sports injury in their lifetime.

Some 7% of adults say they have been injured during sport in the past 12 months.

Mental health is front of mind.

70% of adults think National Governing Bodies (NGBs) should consider physical and mental health equally important.

Public opinion strongly favours mandatory injury recording.

81% of all adults think it should be compulsory for schools and clubs to record sports injuries.

Rule changes to improve safety would have wide support.

Over half (54%) of the public support rule changes that aim to reduce the incidence of injury.

When it comes to addressing concussion, support for rule changes rises to 65% in rugby and to 59% in football.

HIGHLIGHTS

MORE SPORT, LESS INJURY: THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

Our mission is to reduce preventable injury so people can keep playing sport for longer.

This year, we explored whether enabling more participation in sport by reducing injury is a concept that resonates with the public.

An overwhelming **86%** agree that helping young people avoid preventable injuries is a worthwhile cause, and **85%** believe it could support long-term participation – a key UK public health policy.

A further **77%** agreed that people who are more physically active live healthier lives.

It's clear that public opinion supports participation and injury reduction. These opinions are reflected in health and economic evidence. Youth sport and physical activity participation delivers an estimated £8.6 billion a year in improved wellbeing, £1.3 billion in reduced GP visits and mental health service usage, and £9.3 billion in disease and chronic ill-health prevention.¹

But sport is inherently risky. Injuries are part of the game. So how does perceived risk of injury impact the public's enjoyment of sport? The answer is: it depends who's playing.

For parents, higher perceived risk makes watching their children play sport less enjoyable on balance: **18%** of all respondents said it had no impact, against **24%** who enjoy it less, and **1%** who enjoy it more (**57%** have no children or don't know).

When participating, higher perceived risk is less relevant: **30%** said it had no impact on enjoyment, while **24%** enjoy it less and **3%** enjoy it more (**43%** don't take part in sport or don't know).

When watching general and professional sport, **45%** said higher perceived risk did not affect enjoyment, while **23%** enjoyed it less and **5%** more (**27%** don't watch or don't know).

¹ Sport England, 2024. [Social Value of Sport Report](#)



HIGHLIGHTS

A HEARTENING TREND: GROWING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF HEAD INJURY MANAGEMENT

In April 2023, the new UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport were published, explaining how to recognise and manage concussion in non-elite sport.

Concurrently, our SportSmart Head Injury Tool, the first digital tool to support these new guidelines by enabling the recording and management of sport-related concussion, was launched.

This year's survey sees growing public confidence in the ability of schools and clubs to manage suspected concussions. Among parents with a child at school (n=876, 40% of the sample), **57%** were confident their school could manage a suspected concussion (up **3%** since 2024).

Of those who attend a sports club or team (n=857), **72%** were confident their club/team would know how to manage a suspected

concussion, up **6%** from last year and **4%** since 2023.

Public support for recording sport-related head injuries has grown. Three quarters (**74%**) agree that it should be compulsory for the NHS to keep a record of whether a head injury that receives medical attention was sustained during sport, up **2%** on last year.

We will continue to track how these perceptions shift over time, as we continue our work to raise awareness and develop tools to support youth and grassroots sport.

> Self-Assessment

QUESTION 1 OF 2

When resting do you feel the same, better or worse?

Same / Better >

Worse >

SportSmart: The free concussion management tool

We've recently launched our Concussion Recovery tool into the SportSmart injury management app, so you can easily follow the latest guidance and get players back to sport safely.

Register here >

My SportSmart

Home > Concussion Recovery

Hello Abigail,

You are currently in **Stage 1 of 6** of your return to activity and sport. You'll need to wait at least 24 hours from when the incident happened before proceeding to Stage 2.

Progress tracker

Stage 1/6

Stage 1 Guidance > Full Guidance

Relative rest period (24–48 hours)

Minimise activity to gentle 10–15-minute slots.

Keep screen time to an absolute minimum.

Start your recovery process

Home Organisations Reports Concussion



Establishing the baseline: A world-first multimodal concussion study

Gloucester Rugby, Gloucester-Hartpury and the Podium Institute at the University of Oxford have joined forces to better understand how concussion affects players.

Find out more here >

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Participant number and sex

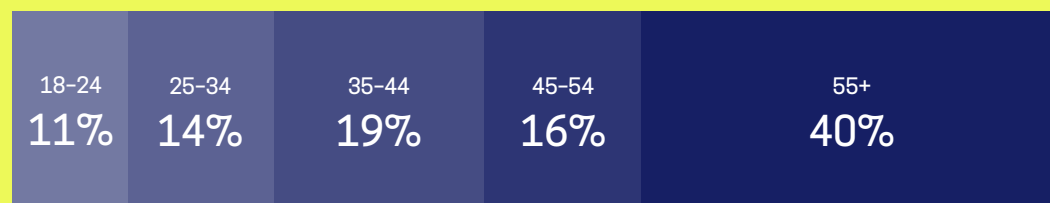
2,193
participants

48%
male

52%
female



Participant age



Participation in sport or physical activity



Parental status

54%
parents/guardians
of children of any age

46%
not a parent/
guardian of
children
of any age

24%
parent/
guardian
of a child aged
18 or under



Watched sport

66%
watch or
follow sport

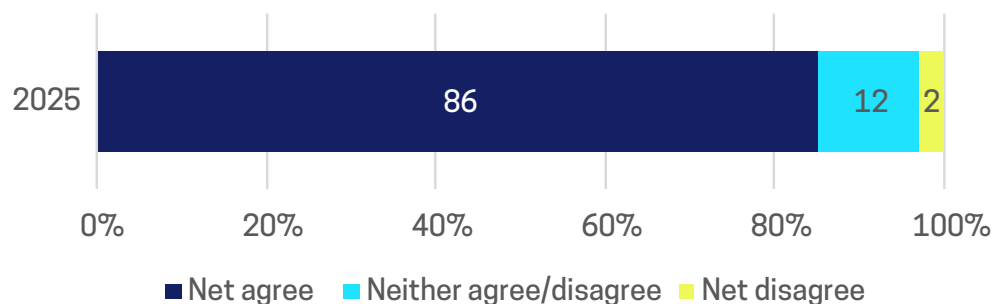
34%
do not watch
or follow sport

THE BENEFITS OF SPORT

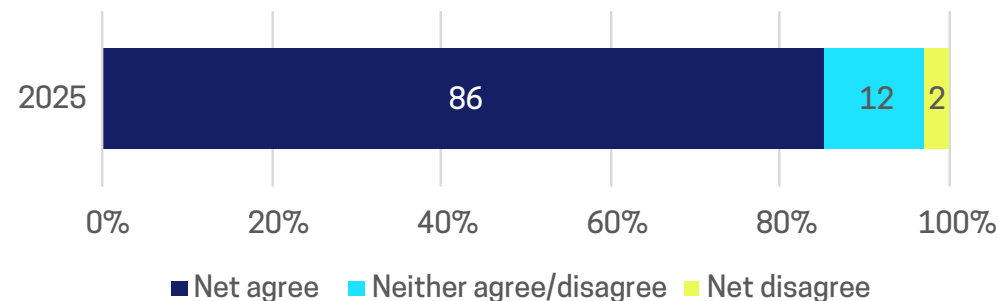
BENEFITS OF SPORT

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

“Helping young people avoid injury during sports is a worthwhile cause.”



“Helping young people avoid preventable injuries during sport could help improve their long-term participation.”



Podium’s charitable mission is to create a world with more sport and less injury, and the public agrees that this is a worthwhile cause.

There is overwhelming public support for preventing injury in youth sport. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed (**86%**) that helping young people avoid injury in sports is a worthwhile cause, with just **2%** net disagreeing. A further **12%** of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

At the same time, **85%** also agree that young people’s long-term participation in sport could be improved by helping them avoid preventable sports injuries. Just **2%** net disagreed, with **13%** neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement.

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BENEFITS OF SPORT

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

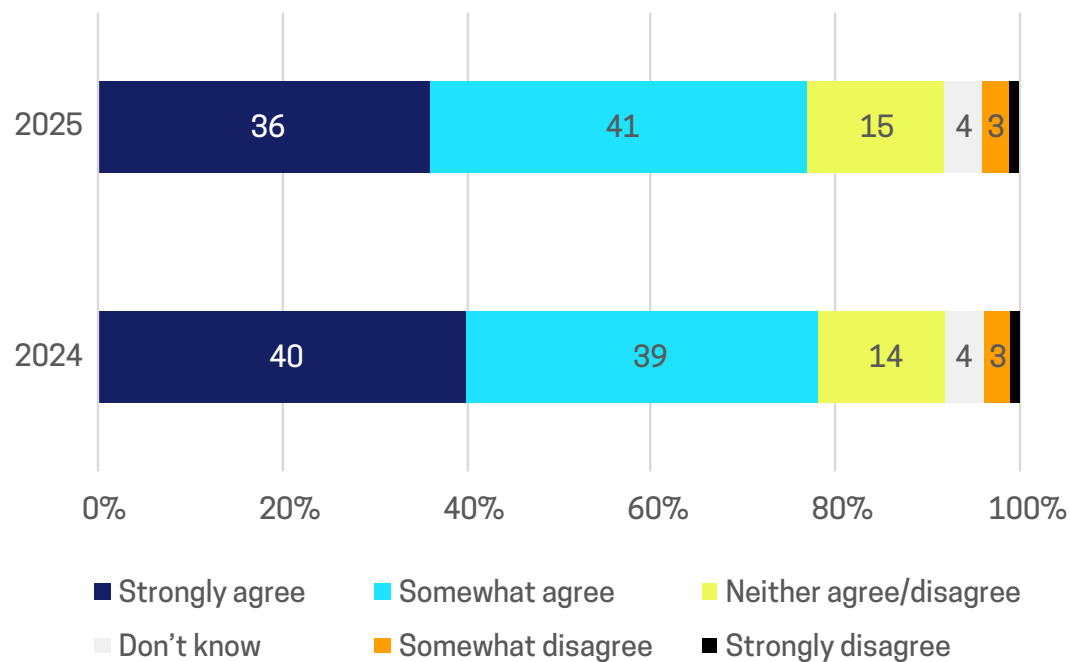
“People who are more physically active live healthier lives.”

The majority of the public (**78%**) either strongly or somewhat agree that people who are more physically active live healthier lives. A further **4%** slightly or strongly disagree.

But opinion is more divided according to physical activity profiles. Some **88%** of those who take part in sport or fitness activities agree with the statement (just **1%** disagree). Of those who do neither, only **70%** agree with the statement (**5%** disagree).

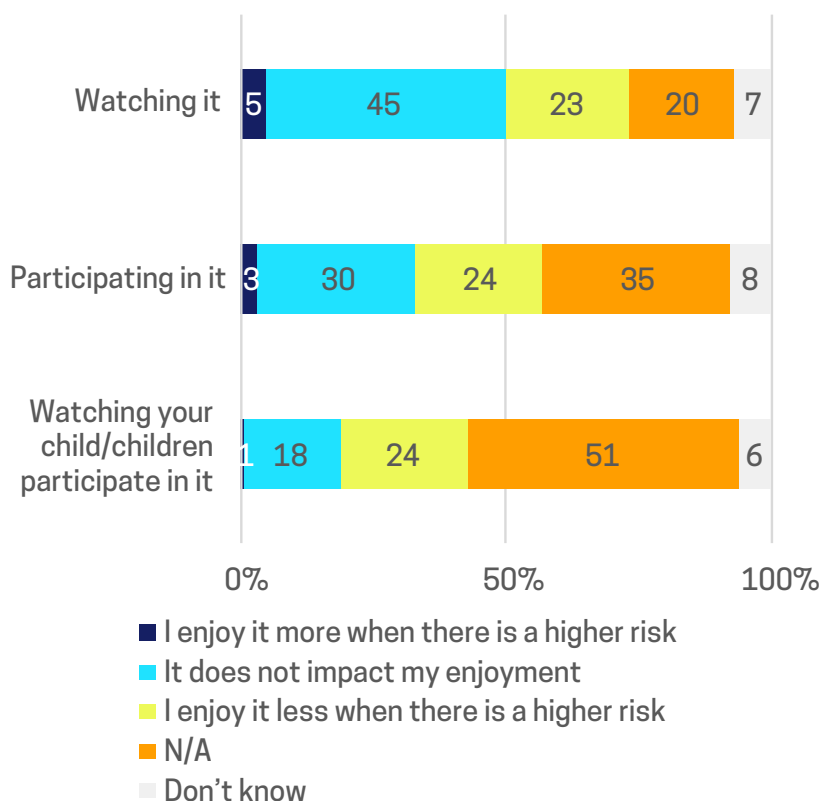
Sustaining a sports injury in the past 12 months does not appear to negatively impact people's perceptions of the health benefits of sport. In this group, agreement is high at **89%** (**1%** disagree).

This question was introduced in 2024.



BENEFITS OF SPORT

To what extent does the risk of someone getting injured during sport affect your enjoyment of the following activities?



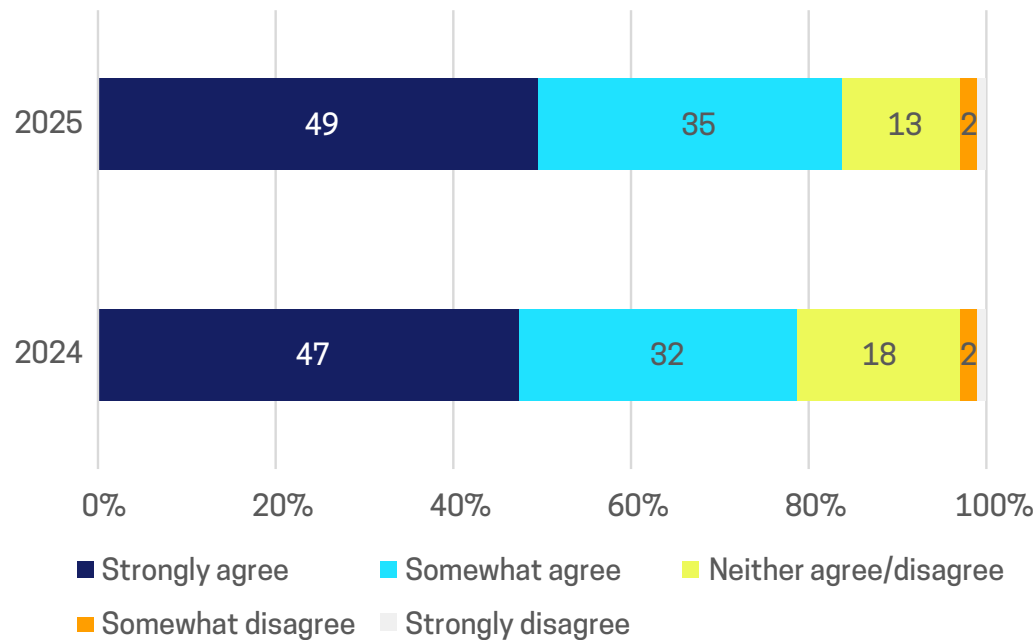
The public has little appetite for injury risk when watching sport: only **5%** of the overall sample said it heightened their enjoyment. Around a quarter said their enjoyment was diminished by injury risk (**23%** when watching sport generally and **24%** when watching their children).

Taking just the sample who watch sport (n=1755), **7%** said they enjoy watching more when injury risk is higher, against **29%** said they enjoyed watching less. In the sample of parents who watch their children play sport (n=1,081), **3%** enjoy it more and **48%** enjoy it less.

When it comes to playing sport, just **3%** of the public said they enjoyed it more when there was a higher injury risk, against **24%** who enjoyed it less. In the sample who played sport (n=1,403), **4%** enjoyed it more and **38%** enjoyed it less.

Women have a lower appetite for injury risk in sport than men. When watching, **3%** of women said higher risk increased enjoyment (**8%** of men) and **28%** of women said they enjoy it less (**17%** of men).

Results relating to whether or not respondents participate in sport are based on how respondents answered this question.



BENEFITS OF SPORT

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

“For young people, the benefits of sport participation outweigh the risks of injury.”

Once again, the majority of adults believe that the benefits of youth sport participation outweigh the injury risks. In the second year of posing this question, **84%** agree or strongly agree (up from **79%** last time), against **3%** who net disagree.

Overall support for the statement remains consistent across genders, even though our poll shows that fewer women than men take part in sport and physical activity*.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, agreement rose to **94%** among people who participate in sport with a club or team (n=191). For those who don't do any physical activity (n=1,250), just over three quarters (**79%**) net agreed with the statement.

*Our poll shows that 60% of women and 54% of men participate in no physical activity during a typical week. Just 5% of women and 12% of men participate in sport at a club/team during a typical week. For personal fitness activities in a typical week, participation rises to 37% of women and 39% of men.

CONCUSSION

CONCUSSION

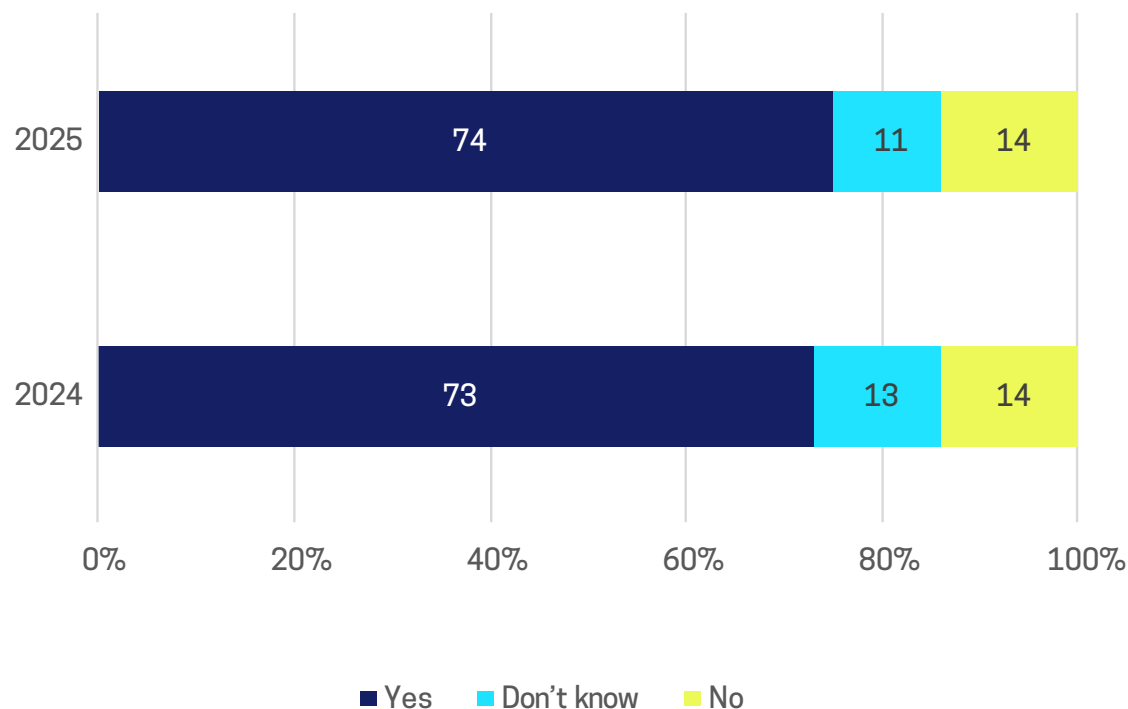
Should it be compulsory for the NHS to keep a record of whether a head injury that receives medical attention was sustained during sport (for example, in A&E or at a GP practice)?

One year after this question was first put to the public, there remains clear support for the NHS to record whether a head injury receiving medical attention was sustained during sport: **74%** said it should be compulsory, up **1%** on last year. Only 14% disagreed.

Agreement fell slightly to **73%** among people who have sustained a sports injury themselves and to **71%** of those who were not parents or guardians.

Systematically capturing this information could be an important step towards quantifying and analysing the problem of concussion in sport – and towards understanding its long-term health implications.

The present system used to classify injuries and diseases recorded in medical notes cannot specify sport as the cause of a head injury or concussion.



CONCUSSION

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“I am confident that my child/children’s school would know how to manage a suspected sport concussion.”

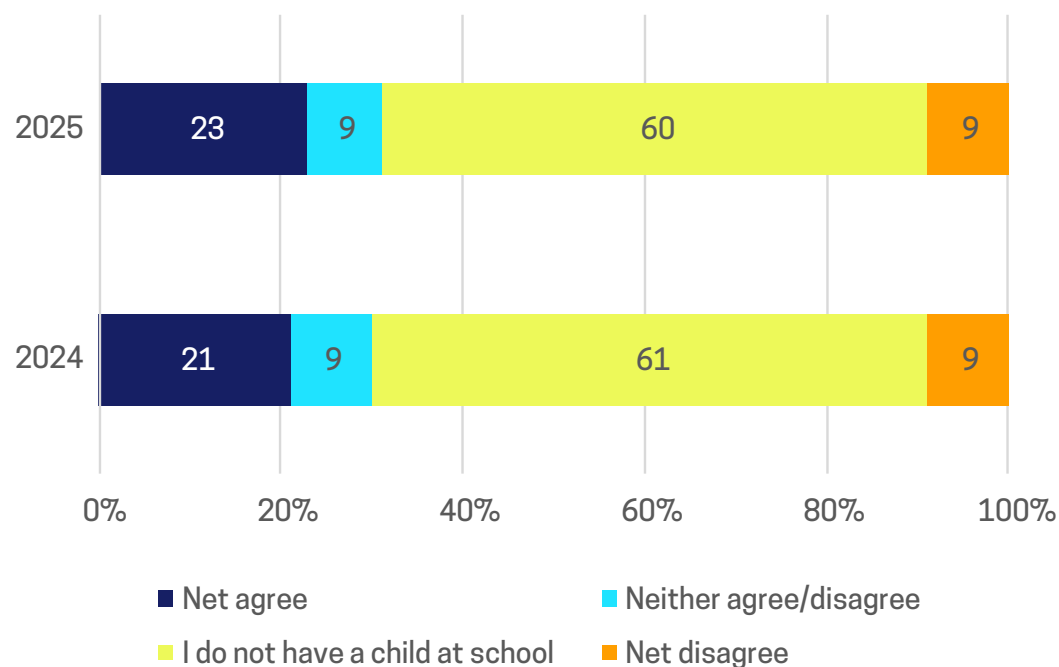
The Government, with the Sport and Recreation Alliance, published the UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport in April 2023 to help people identify, manage and prevent concussion in grassroots sport.

Now, over two years on, even more parents are more confident than not that their child’s school would know how to manage a suspected sport concussion. Nearly a quarter of the overall sample (23%, up from 21% last year) agreed with the statement, against just 9% who disagreed.

In the sample of parents with a child at school (n=874, 40% of the sample), 57% were confident their school could manage a suspected concussion (against 54% in 2024, n=848), while the proportion that was not confident has stayed constant at 22%.

Want to find out more about the six stages of getting back to activity and sport after a concussion?

Watch this animation 



Results relating to whether or not respondents have a child/children at school are based on how respondents answered this question.

CONCUSSION

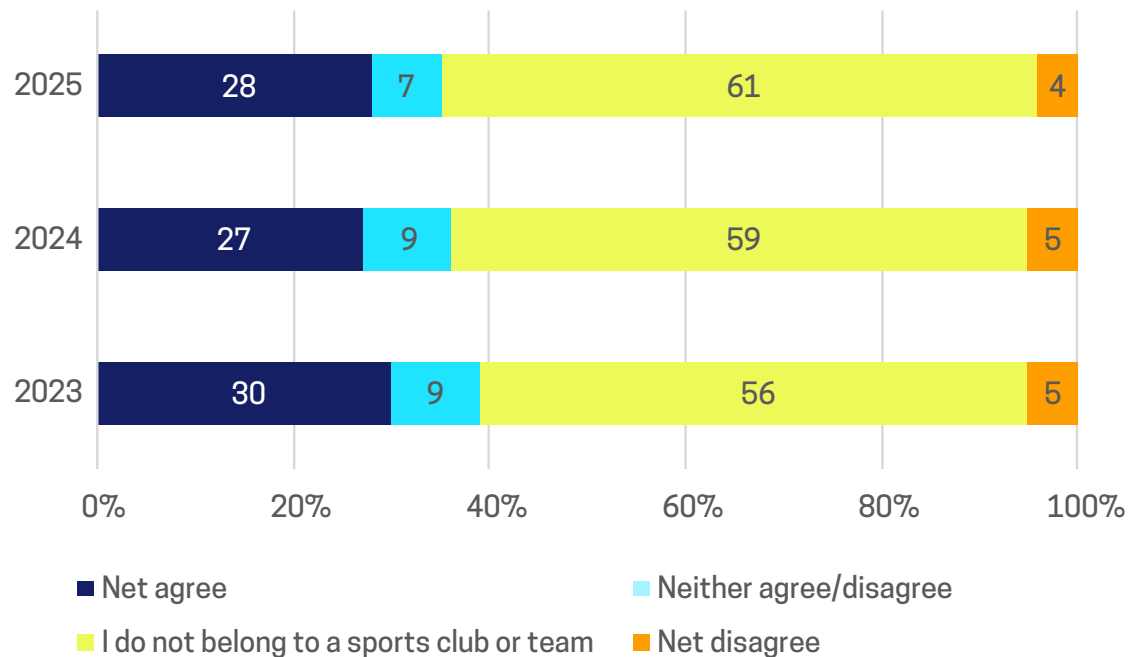
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“I am confident that my sports club or team would know how to manage a suspected sport concussion”

We asked a similar question to all adults about sports clubs or teams.

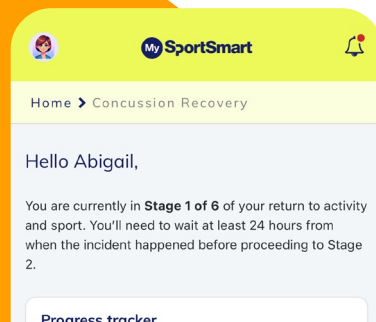
On balance, **28%** of all respondents are confident that any sports team or club they belong to would know how to manage a suspected concussion, while **4%** are not, indicating a slight improvement in the balance of confidence overall compared to last year. A further **7%** neither agree nor disagree.

Of those who do belong to a sports club or team (n=857, 39%), **72%** are confident their club/team would know how to manage a suspected concussion, up from **66%** last year (n=890, 41%). Strikingly, this is a **10%** increase since 2023 (n=1069, 50%), the year concussion guidance was introduced.



Register for the free SportSmart app for your school or club to make the most of our complete concussion management – from first knocks to full recovery.

Register here ➤



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CONCUSSION

To what extent would you support or oppose rule changes that aimed to reduce the incidence of concussion in the following sports?

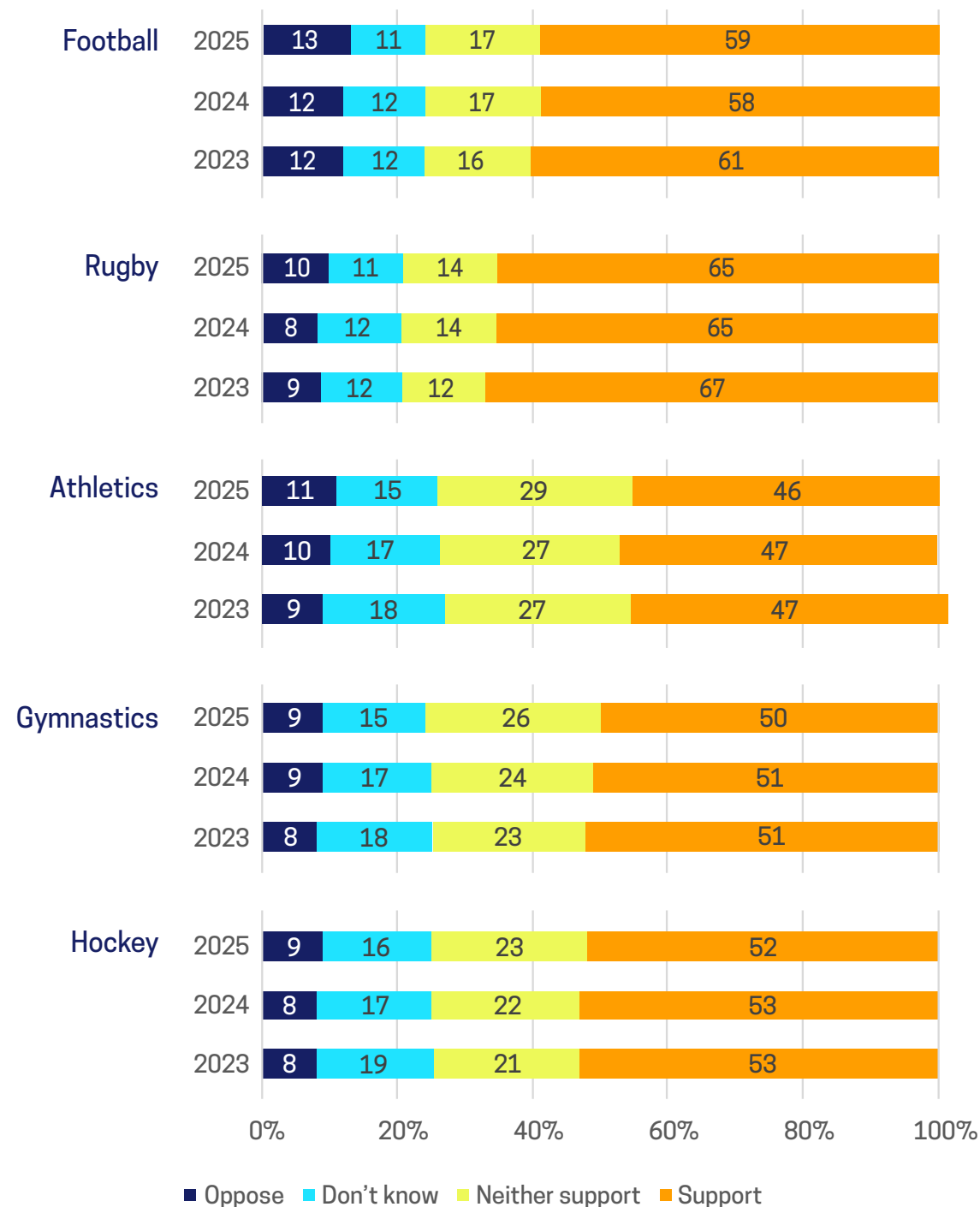
Public support for rule changes to reduce concussion incidence in rugby and football remains strong, consistent with previous years.

This year, **65%** of the public support rule changes in rugby, against **10%** who oppose. Of those who follow rugby union as a sport (n=364), net support for rule changes in rugby increases to **69%**, with **14%** of this group opposing changes. Among rugby league followers (n=119), **69%** supported rule changes against **21%** who oppose.

Some **59%** of the public support rule changes in football, against **13%** who oppose. Among those who follow football (n=731), support remains consistent at **58%**, while opposition rises to **21%**.

Public support for rule changes in athletics (46% vs. 11% oppose), gymnastics (50% vs. 9% oppose) and hockey (52% vs. 9% oppose) continues to outweigh opposition.

Across all sports, female respondents were in significantly greater support of rule changes that aim to reduce the incidence of concussion than males.



INJURY

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INJURY

Do you know anyone personally who has sustained an injury while doing sport?

For this study, injury is defined as one that interfered with daily activities for 24 hours or more during the past 12 months.

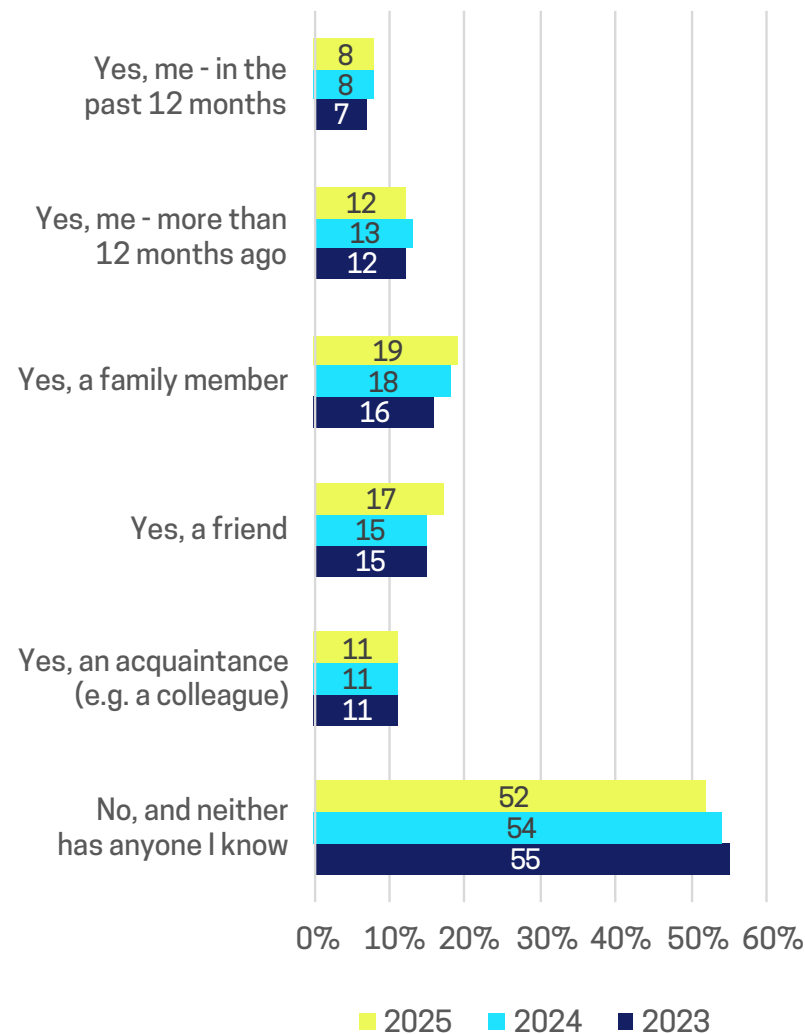
How relevant is the issue of sports injury to the general public, and how strongly does it resonate?

Our survey revealed that **8%** of adults have been injured during sport in the past 12 months, suggesting a strong and immediate connection with the associated issues. Some **12%** say they have been injured more than 12 months ago, implying an understanding of the problems that can follow.

A substantial minority of the adult population also has second-hand experience of sports injury: **17%** have a friend and **19%** a family member who has been injured at some time.

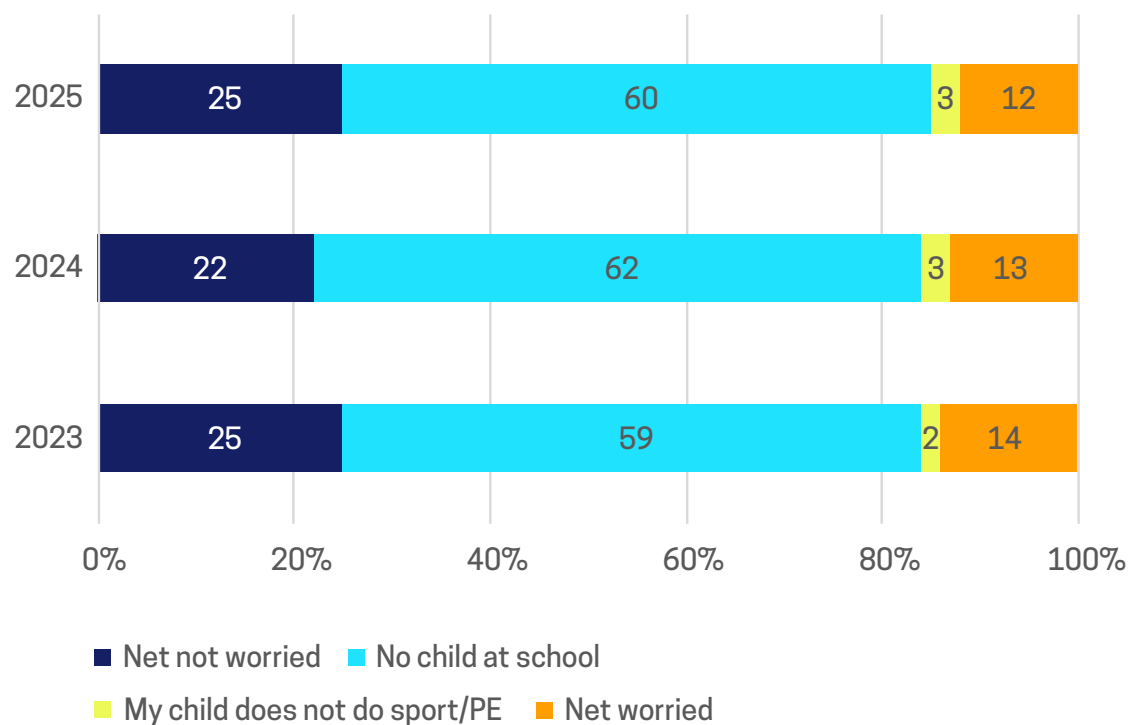
Of adults who participate in sport with a club or team (n=191), **30%** say they have been injured in the past 12 months against **16%** of those who participate in personal fitness activities (n=821).

There were more injuries reported among men, and among younger age groups compared to overall. Some **10%** of men said they had been injured in the past 12 months (**5%** of women), and **10%** of 18–24-year-olds, against **5%** of those aged 55+.



INJURY

To what extent, if at all, are you worried about your child or children under-18 getting injured while playing sport?



On balance, parents of under-18s are not worried about their children getting injured while playing sport: **12%** of all respondents had an under-18 child or children about whom they worry, while **25%** have a child or children and do not worry.*

Of parents of a child or children under 18 who played sport or PE (n=812), **33%** were worried about the child/children getting injured, suggesting that those who participate are more familiar with the inherent risks of sport.

*62% of respondents did not have a child under 18 and 3% had an under-18 who did not do any sport of PE.



INJURY

Which ONE of the following do you consider to be the most important issue facing sport today?

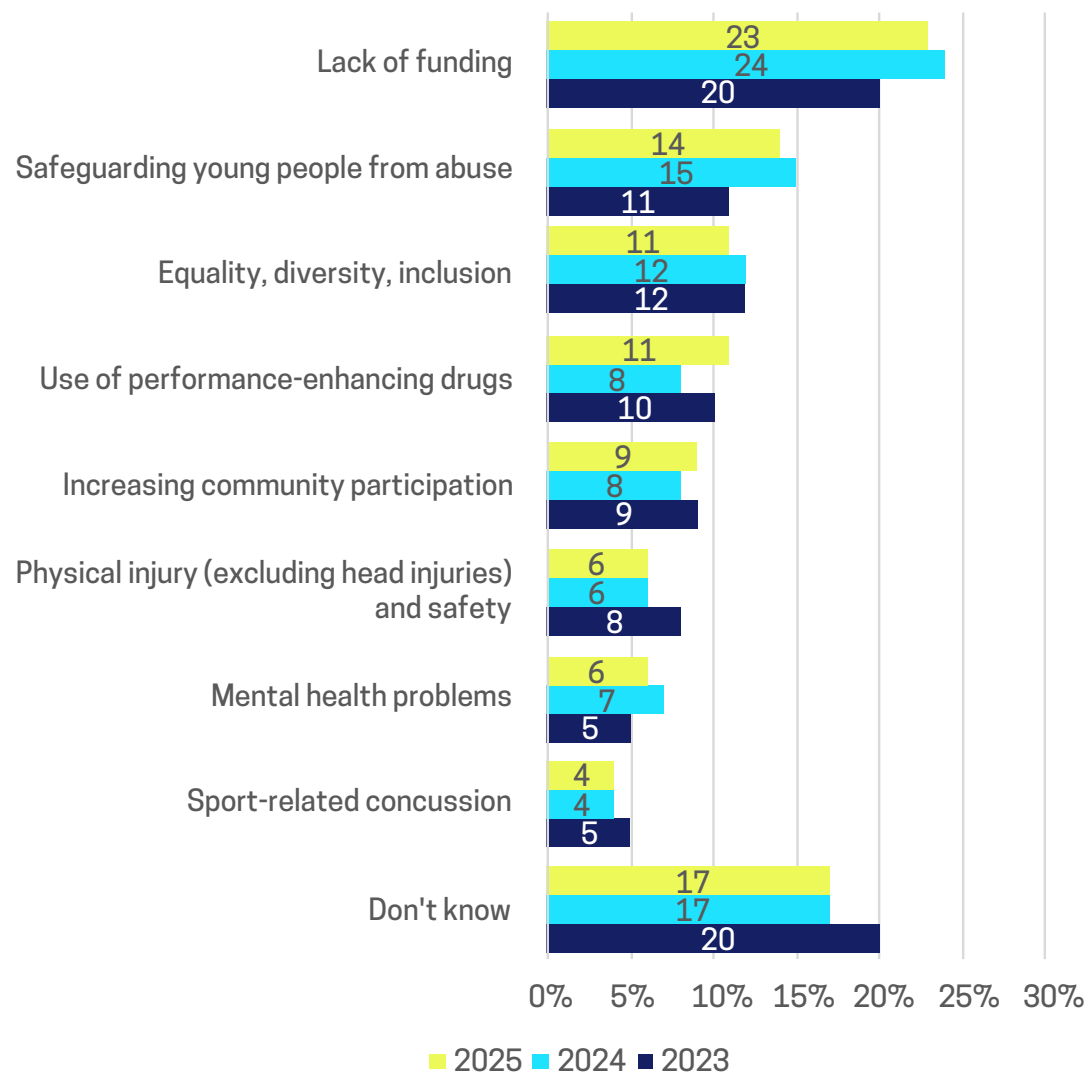
Public opinion about what is the single most important issue facing sport has remained broadly consistent, despite the 2024 survey taking part in an Olympic year.

Nearly a quarter of the public (**24%**) perceive 'lack of funding' as the most important issue facing sport today.

Some **14%** selected 'safeguarding young people from abuse' as the most important issue, down slightly from **15%** last year.

Physical injury (excluding head injuries) was ranked most important by **6%**, rising to **7%** among those who participate in sport themselves. Mental health was selected by **6%** overall.

Perceptions vary considerably by age: **16%** of the 55+ age category selected 'use of performance-enhancing drugs' (against **11%** overall) while **16%** of 18–24-year-olds ranked EDI as the most important issue facing sport today (against **11%** overall).



CONTENTS

INJURY

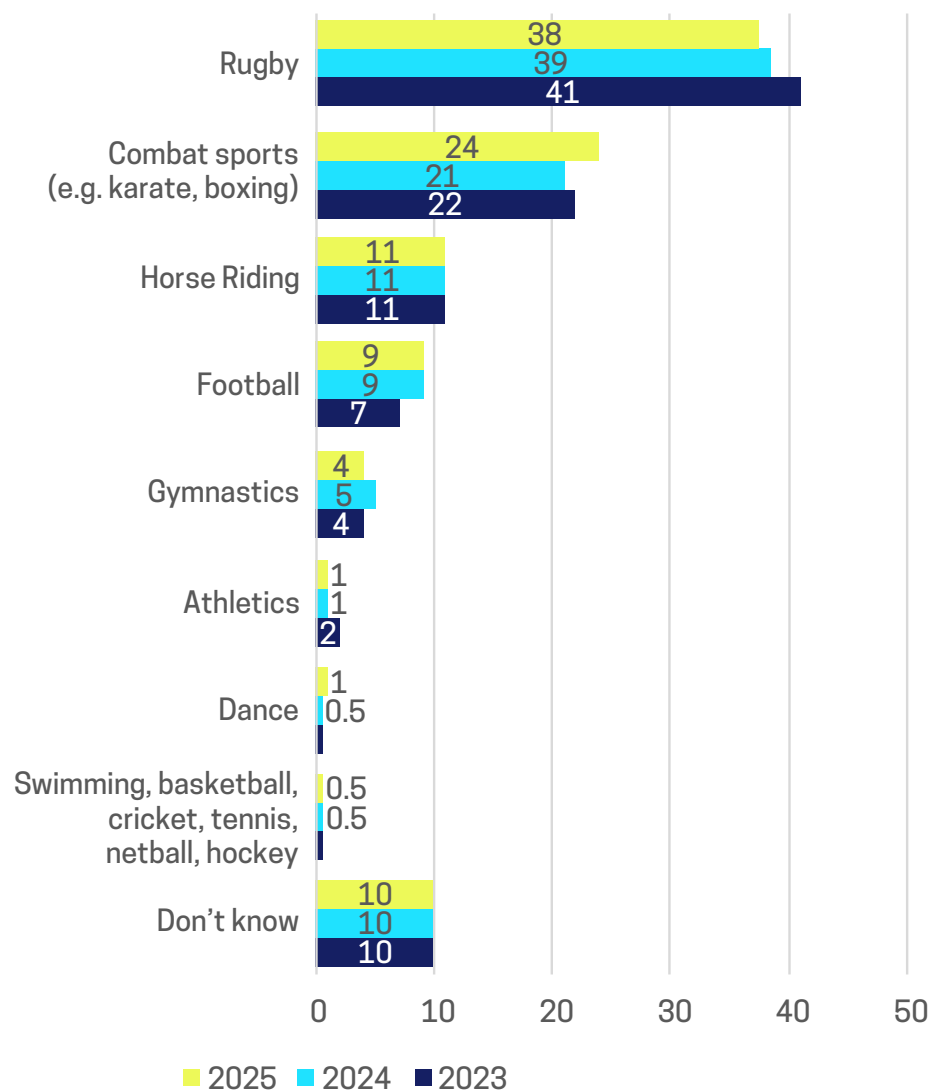
In which ONE of these sports do you think participants are most likely to get injured?

Public opinion about injury likelihood in different sports also remains broadly consistent with last year's findings.

Some **38%** of the public identify rugby as the sport in which participants are most likely to get injured, rising to **41%** of those who follow rugby union (n=364). But, overall, the proportion selecting rugby as top sport for injuries has fallen by **3%** since 2023, which could be linked to increased coverage of rugby's injury-prevention interventions, such as instrumented mouthguards and lowering the tackle height.

Around a quarter of respondents selected combat sports such as boxing and karate (**24%**), rising to **32%** of those who follow boxing (n=189) and **44%** of those who follow mixed martial arts (n=73).

A further **10%** selected horse riding (rising to **19%** of those who follow equestrian, n=75) and **9%** chose football (rising to **10%** of football fans, n=731).



INJURY

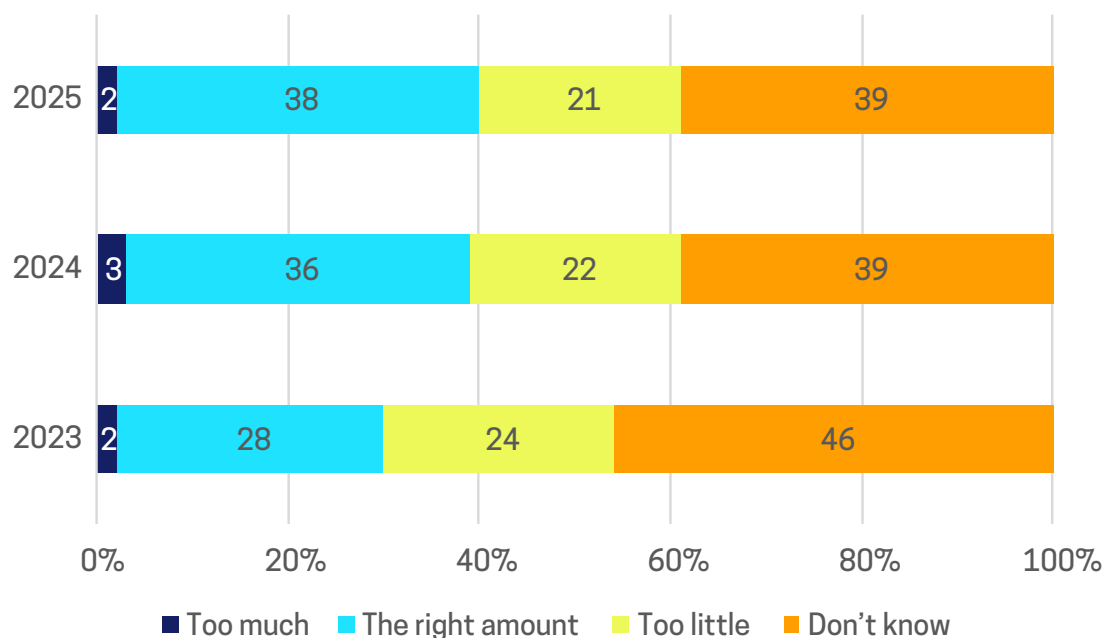
Do you think sports governing bodies are doing too little, too much or the right amount to reduce preventable sports injuries?

Governing bodies are organisations such as the Football Association (the FA), British Gymnastics and British Athletics, for example.

Consistent with last year's findings, over a third of respondents (**38%**) think governing bodies are doing 'the right amount' to reduce preventable sports injuries, but a larger proportion (**39%**) don't know. Around a fifth (**21%**) think too little is being done.

The large proportion of 'don't know' answers suggests that public awareness around the problems of injury in sport, and around prevention strategies, is low – although the figure has shown improvement since 2023, when **46%** selected 'don't know'.

One fifth (**20%**) of those who participate in sport with a club or team (n=191) think governing bodies do 'too little', against **62%** who say 'the right amount' (up from 52% in 2024) and just **14%** who don't know (down from 21% last year).



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INJURY

Thinking about sport in general, to what extent, if at all, do you support rule changes that aim to reduce the incidence of injury?

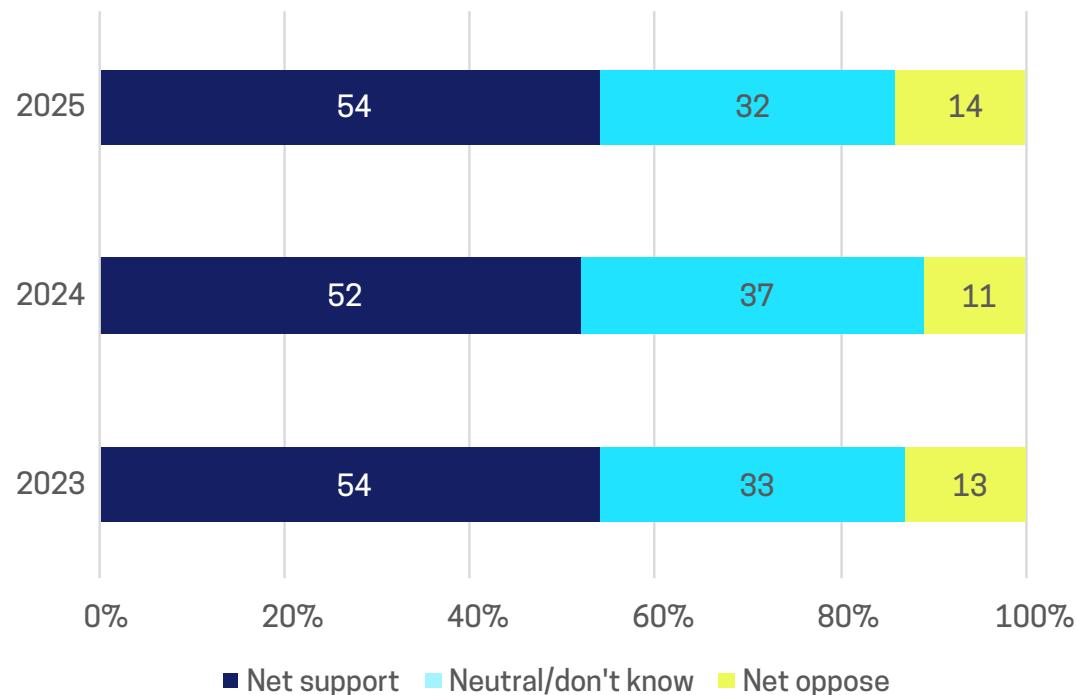
This might include, for example, a ban on heading the ball in football or banning above-the-navel tackles in rugby.

Our poll found majority support for rule changes to reduce injury incidence: **54%** either strongly or slightly supported changes, against **14%** who strongly or slightly oppose changes and **32%** who were neutral or did not know.

Among those who participate in team or club sport regularly, opposition rises to **18%**, while support is at **55%**.

Support among those who have sustained a sports injury in the last 12 months is notably higher at **66%**, while the proportion who oppose also rises to **16%**.

More women than men support rule changes: **60%** of women are in favour (strong support at **30%**) compared with **47%** of men (strong support at just **18%**).



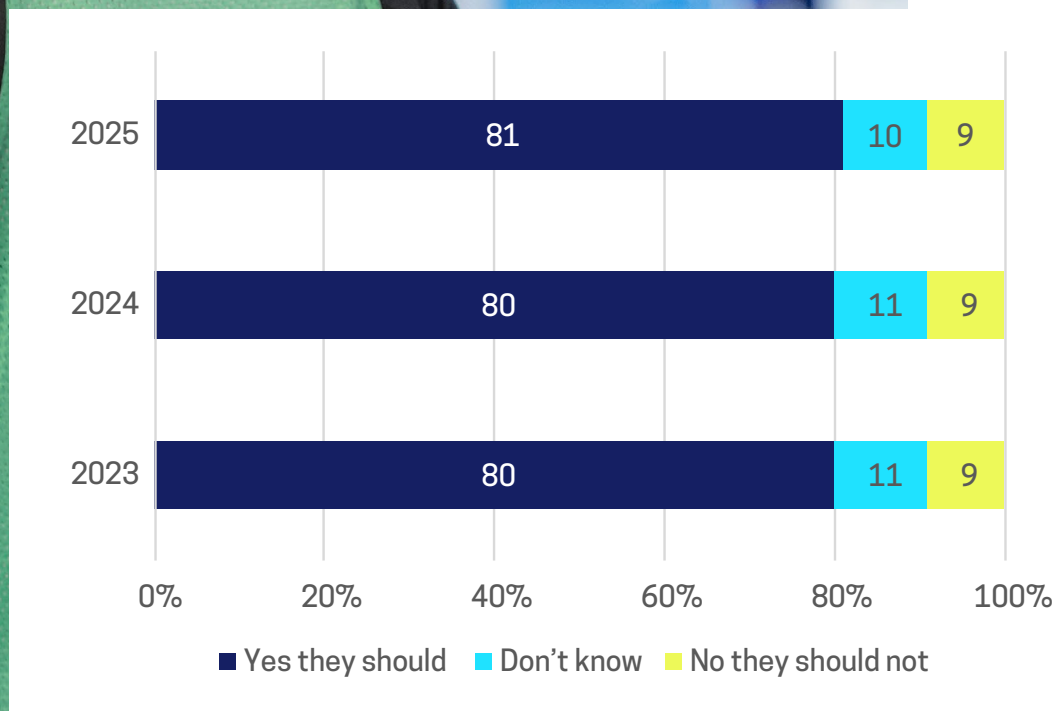
INJURY

Should it be compulsory for schools and sports clubs to keep a record of all sports injuries that happen during training and matches?

Public opinion remains strongly in favour of mandatory recording of injuries sustained playing sport in schools and clubs: **81%** believe it should be compulsory, against just **9%** who oppose.

This implies a strong level of support for establishing a National Sports Injury Database. A database would offer an accurate means of assessing the incidence of sports injuries, including head injuries and suspected head injuries, in youth and grassroots sport. Currently, only **2%** of the UK's schools and grassroots sports clubs have a system for recording and managing sport-related concussion.*

Support is consistently high among both parents/guardians of 18-and-under (**78%**) and non-parents/guardians (**77%**).



*This statistic is according to a Podium-conducted desktop review in 2024.

MENTAL HEALTH

The background is a solid dark blue. Overlaid on this are three thick, wavy, hand-drawn style lines. One line is light blue, another is yellow, and the third is orange. These lines meander across the page, with the light blue line starting high on the left and trending downwards, while the yellow and orange lines start lower and trend upwards, creating a dynamic, abstract composition.

MENTAL HEALTH

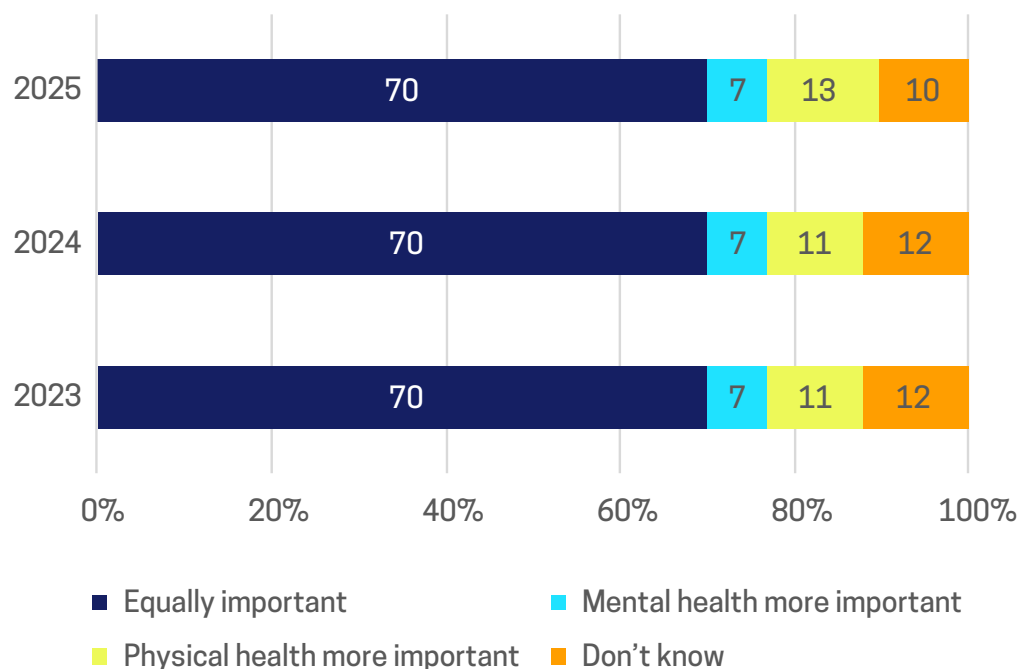
When thinking about mental health and physical health problems among people training and competing in sport, which, if any, of the following do you think sports governing bodies should consider?

Public support remains strong for the principle that Sports Governing Bodies should give physical and mental health problems equal priority among people training and competing in sport. Of all adults, **70%** support parity, while **7%** think mental health should be considered more important and **13%** think physical health should be prioritised.

Similar to last year, support for prioritising mental health rises among younger people, to **10%** among 18–24-year-olds and **12%** among 25–34-year-olds (against just **4%** of respondents aged 55+).

Of those who play sport with a club or team, **15%** think mental health problems should be considered more important, while **64%** support parity.

Among those who do not participate in any sport or personal fitness activities, just **5%** believe that mental health problems should be considered more important.



HOW THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

Based on a representative sample of the UK adult population, the Safety in Sport Perception Survey provides insight into the public's perceptions, attitudes and behaviours around sports safety and sports injury.

YouGov conducted the Podium Analytics 2025 Safety in Sport Perception Survey online: data for the adult survey were collected between 20th–21st August 2025.

The 2025 edition includes 18 questions for adults. We have retained core themes to track public perceptions of key injury and safety issues over time, although the measures themselves have been modified, and introduced new questions that address emerging themes.

Adult participants were drawn from the YouGov panel of registered users to achieve a nationally representative sample in terms of age, gender, social class and education: the demographic profile of respondents is presented on page 7. Raw data were statistically weighted to the national profile of all adults aged 18+, including people without internet access, to ensure an accurate representation of UK public opinion.

Throughout, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, which accounts for instances where breakdowns do not sum to 100%. On the advice of YouGov, we have not reported percentages based on group sizes of fewer than 50 respondents as these are not statistically reliable representations of public opinion.

You can learn more about YouGov's active sampling research methodology [here](#).

Did you know?

In 2023, we also launched the Youth Safety in Sport Perception Survey. We will be running this every three years (next in 2026) to track how perceptions are shifting over time. The youth survey is conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov panel who are identified as being 16 to 17 years old and have agreed to take part in surveys. The data and sample is not weighted and represents a natural fallout of respondents within this specific age group.

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The charity working to
reduce the incidence and
impact of injury in youth
and grassroots sport.

**MORE SPORT,
LESS INJURY**