

March 2024

Insights: The role of kit in community sports



Introduction

This small research project had a clearly defined scope and aims to provide insights into

- the role sports/physical activity has for the self-confidence and self-esteem of children and young people.
- the impact that financial barriers to new/the correct kit may have on participation in sports/physical activities.
- an understanding of support community groups need with solutions to mitigate the barriers and prevent negative impacts of lack of kit.

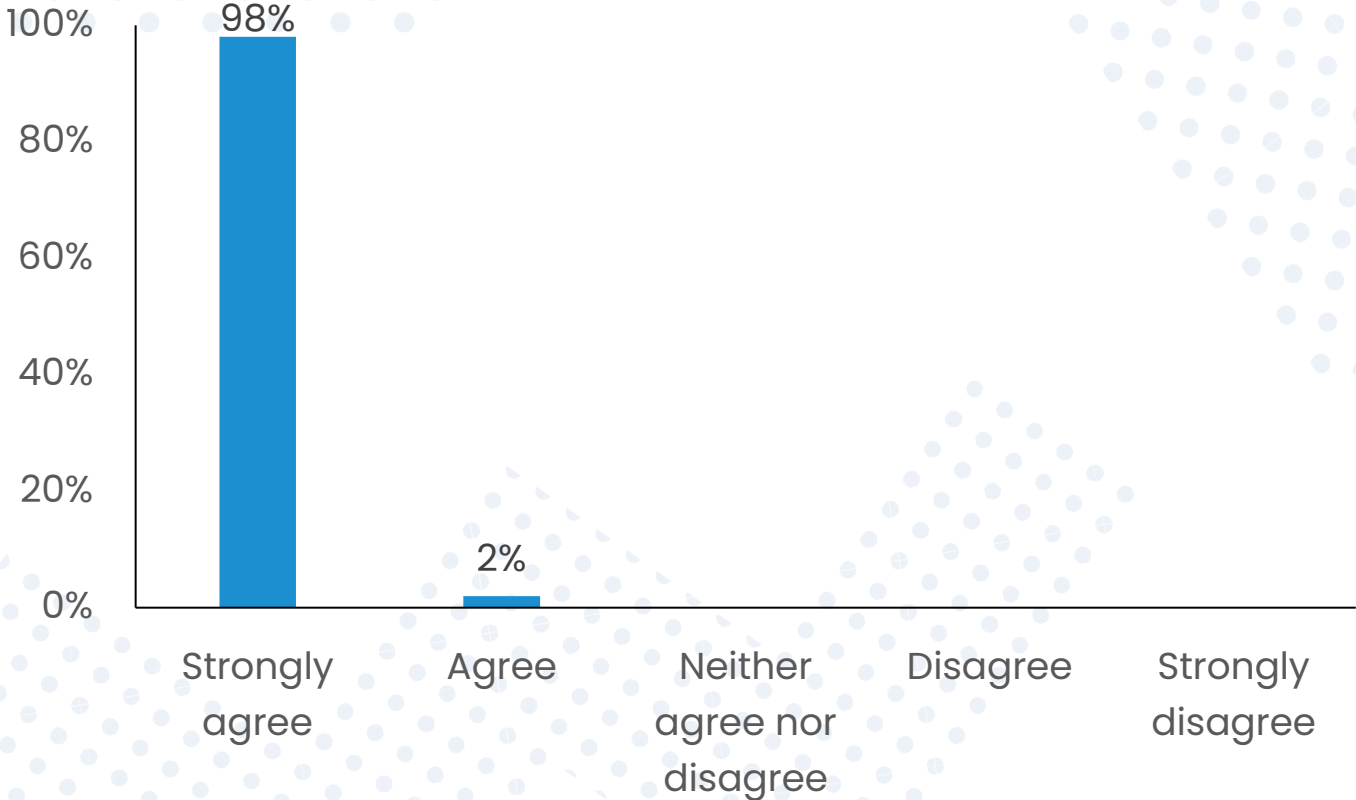
This research project was commissioned by Cif, one of the UK's much-loved household cleaning brands. The aim is to provide insights for its Re-Kicks campaign, a nationwide initiative that is collecting second-hand, unused football boots and re-distributing them to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds across the UK.

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that sports/physical activity boosts confidence and playing in the right kit has a role to play in that.

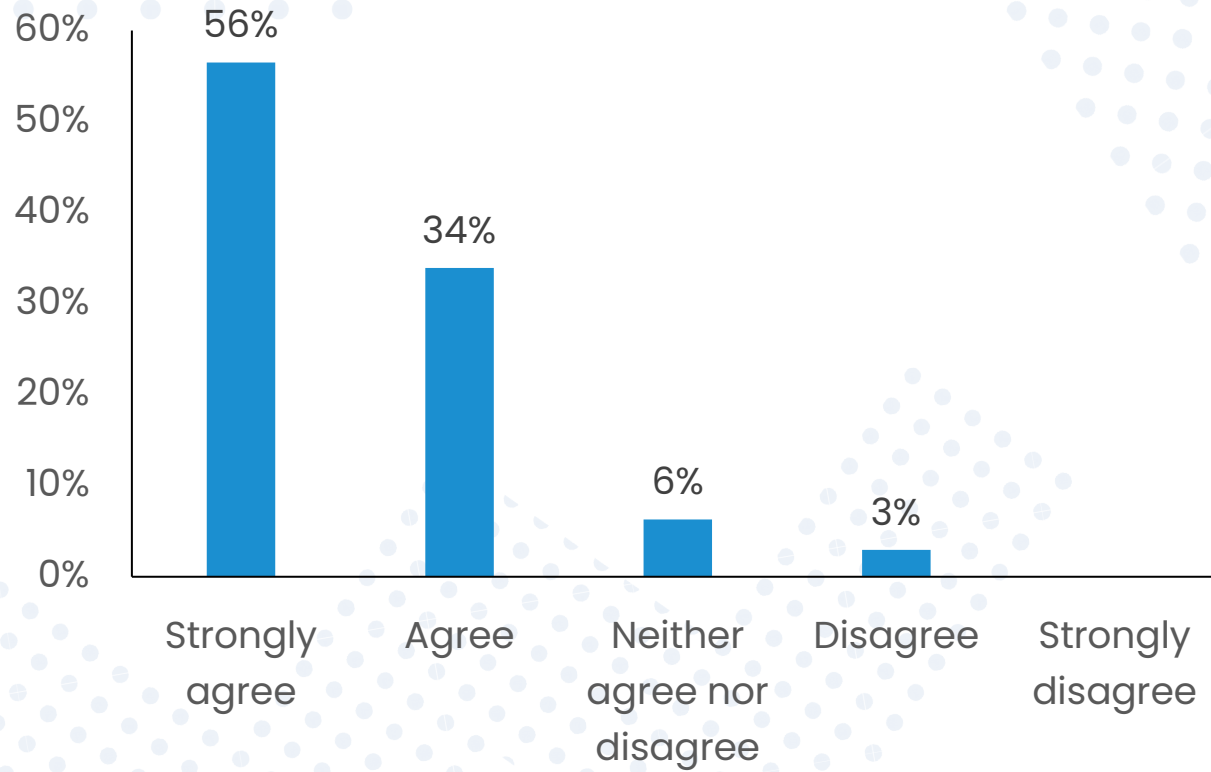
Almost all respondents also agreed that families face financial barriers, cost-of-living challenges, to accessing kit, including footwear

Key Findings

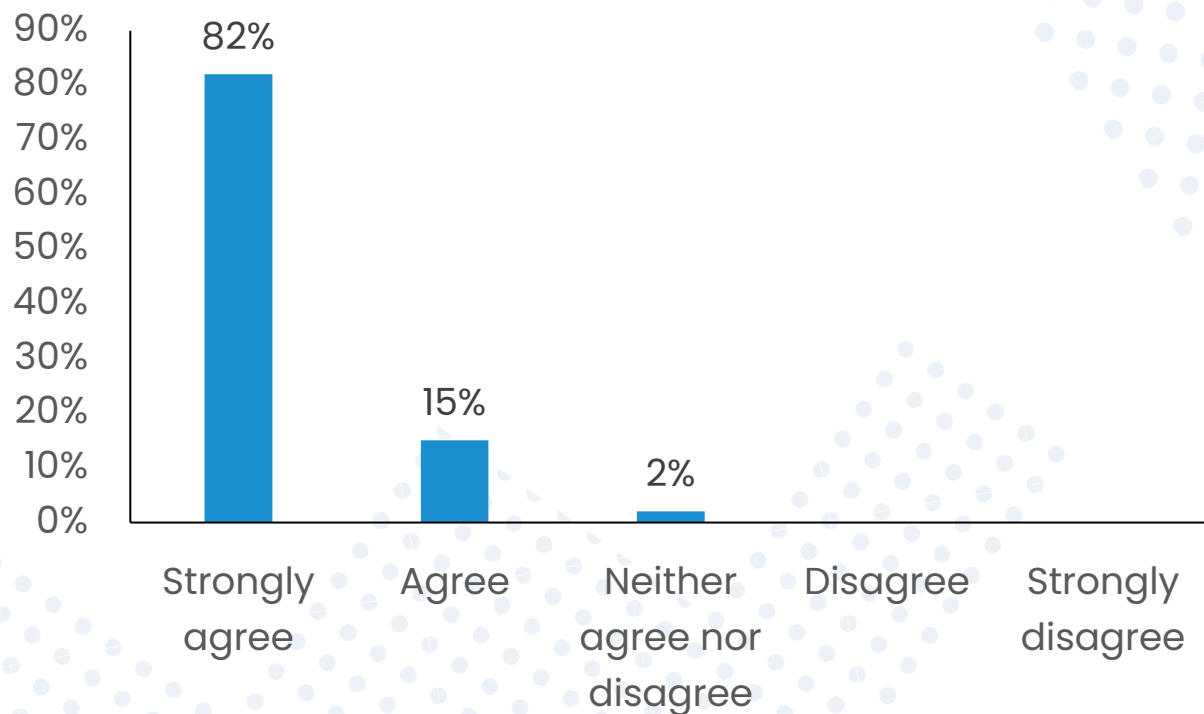
Question 1: To what extent do you agree that sports and physical activities play an important role in building confidence and self-esteem in children?



Question 2. To what extent do you agree that young people at your group are confident when taking part in physical activities/sports at your group?

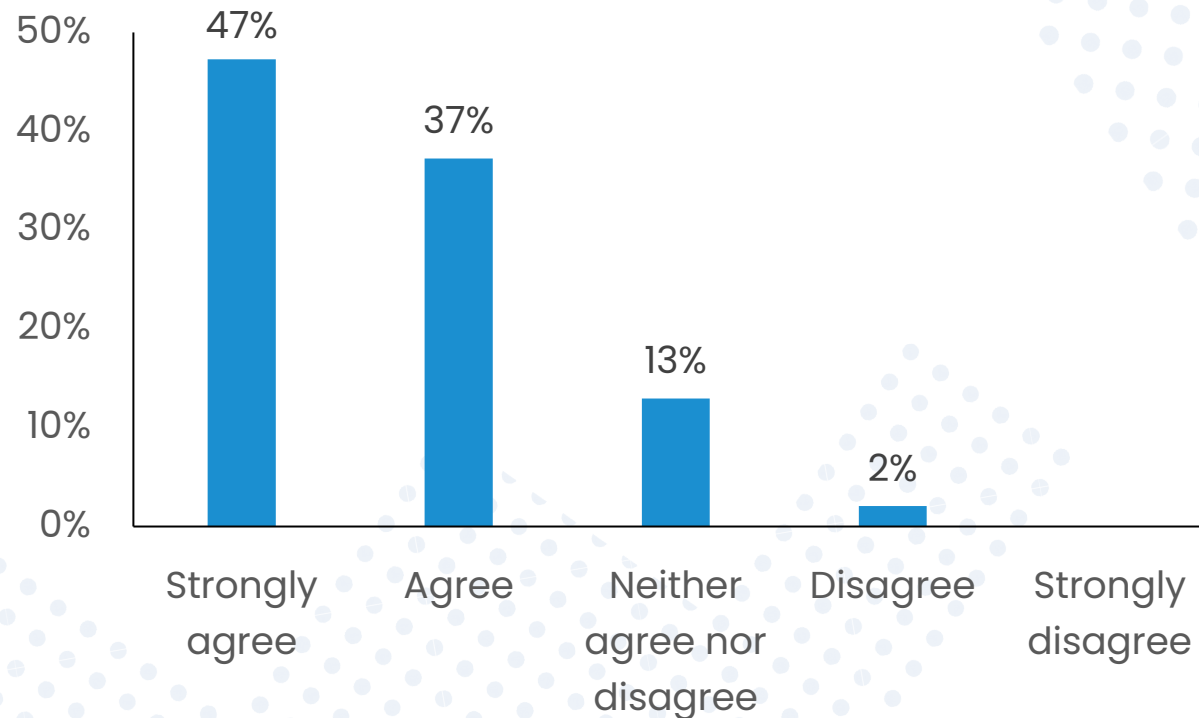


Question 3: To what extent do you agree that young people at your group are more confident taking part in physical activities/sports when they have the right kit to play in?

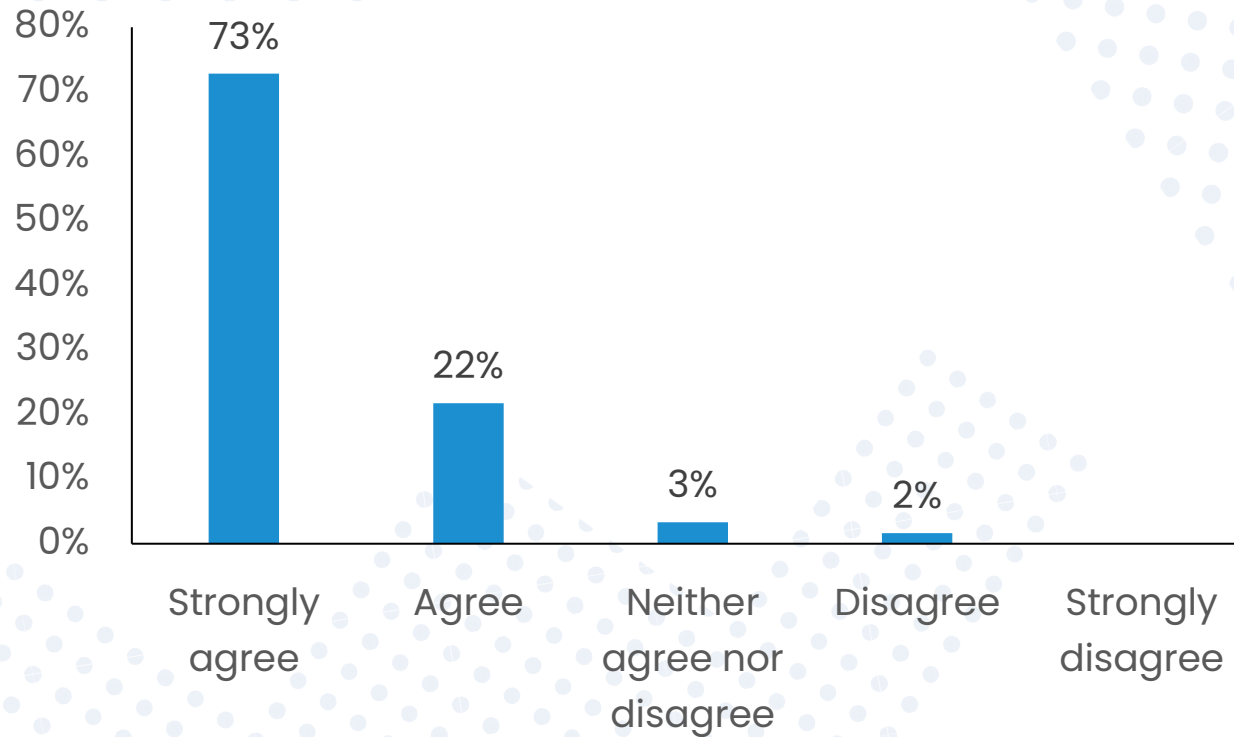


0% is included as it is a rounded figure from 1 response

Question 4: To what extent do you agree that young people at your group are less likely to participate in physical activities/sports when they don't have the correct kit?

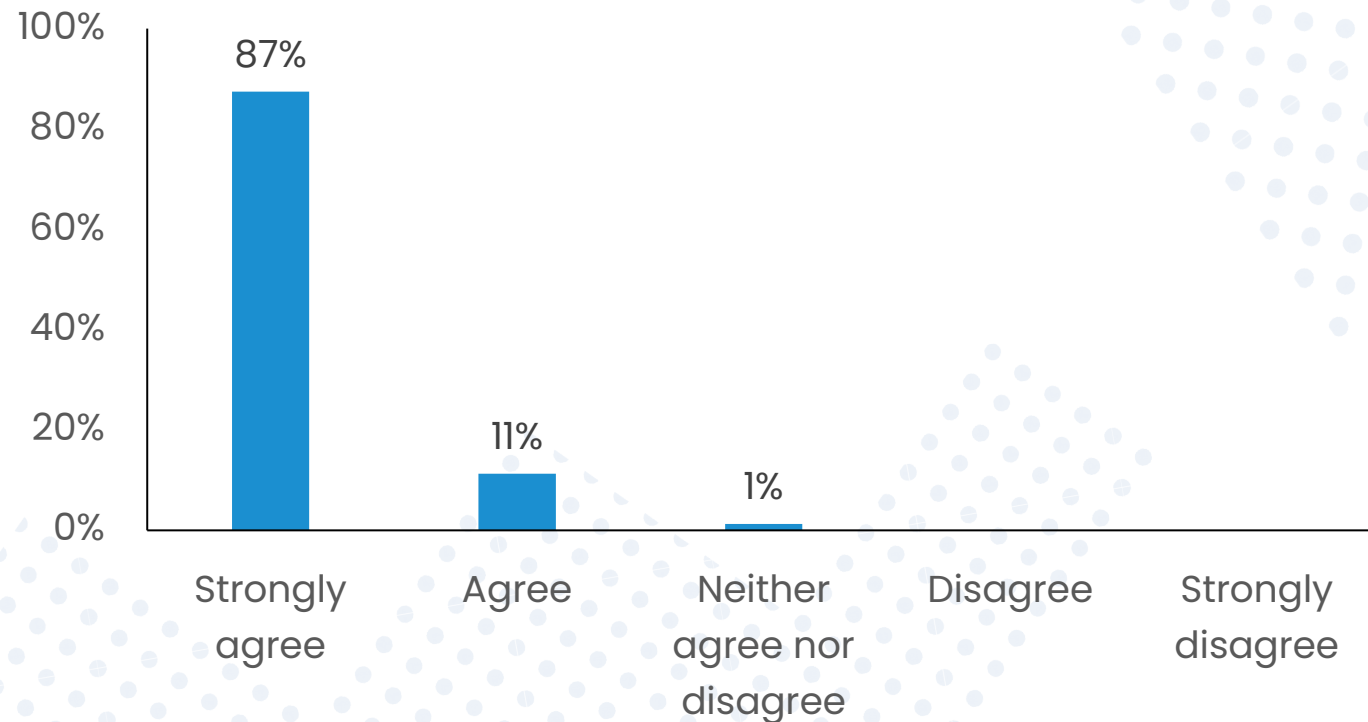


Question 5: To what extent do you agree that there are families at your group who find it difficult to get the right kit?



0% is included as it is a rounded figure from 1 response

Question 6: To what extent do you agree that the cost of new specialised footwear, such as football boots, is a cost-of-living challenge for families at your group



The researchers found some very clear themes in the qualitative survey data which were further supported by the in-depth interviews. These key themes highlighted were:

- particular benefits of sports/physical activity
 - Social skills
 - Leadership skills
 - Community pride
 - Sense of belonging
 - Positive impact on wellbeing
 - Transferable skills into school and, in the future, the workplace
- specific challenges that the barrier to participation of lack of correct kit and footwear
 - negative impact on all the areas listed above
 - a sense of shame or embarrassment
 - stigma

"We are one community and that's what we want to do and that's something that we've done with football"

"If we charge any more, any more money than this, we won't get people there. You know, people won't pay, will not be able to pay"

The financial challenges faced by families and clubs was a key issue for almost all of the groups. Key themes and points raised include:

- families are struggling with the cost of core bills, kit for children cannot be a priority
- increased demand for support from clubs/groups while they are faced with the challenge of increased difficulty of getting funds or sources of support to meet that demand. That results in an increased workload for groups too
- Creative solutions for meeting the demand is encouraging donations of items and redistributing them as prizes or allowing non-monetary payment such as voluntary work.
- These solutions may counter-balance the negative impacts on families of not being able to buy new kit – pride, rather than shame, inclusion and contributing rather than exclusion.

"The priority will always be a roof over your head and food on the table with even day to day footwear and clothing being a cost challenge before recreational footwear, clothing and accessories"

"Due to the cost of living crisis etc some families find it hard to buy kit for their children and some feel isolated within the group and at times leave due to this."

Conclusion

The findings from this research project are aligned with the broader body of relevant research literature, further affirming the reliability of these specific research findings. Overall, this research provides a strong indication that there is a need, in community sports, for support and facilitation of collecting and redistributing kit such as football boots.