

# People with a disability or long-term illness and outdoor recreation



A deep-dive report  
providing additional  
analysis of POMNI data  
(Nov 2020-Oct 2021)

# Overview of People in the Outdoors Monitor for Northern Ireland

The People in the Outdoors Monitor for Northern Ireland (POMNI) is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and Sport Northern Ireland to support the work of the cross-government Strategic Outdoor Recreation Group (SORG). Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland was commissioned to undertake this survey and partnered with 56 Degree Insight to make it happen.

The evidence and data provided in the report below comes from six waves of surveying the Northern Ireland adult population during the following months:

- November 2020 – 1,001 interviews
- December 2020 – 1,008 interviews
- March 2021 – 1,002 interviews
- April 2021 – 1,030 interviews
- August 2021 – 1,007 interviews
- October 2021 – 1,000 interviews

In total 6,048 interviews were undertaken providing robust data accurate to +/-1% at the 95% levels of confidence. When using the results, it is important to bear in mind that surveying was undertaken during the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic including periods of 'lockdown' when restrictions were in place which impacted upon levels of participation in outdoor recreation.

Information on the survey approach, fieldwork timings and how these related to different levels of Coronavirus related restrictions during each period of fieldwork are provided in the Appendix of the POMNI 2020-2021 Report.

Given the substantive sample size, deep-dive analyses were undertaken by 56 Degree Insight on three topics: the impact of deprivation on outdoor recreation, urban-rural disparities in outdoor recreation, and the experiences of outdoor recreation for people with a disability or long-term illness. This report focuses on the latter.

# The primary focus of this analysis is on the experiences of outdoor recreation for people with disability or long-term illness.

This analysis reports on survey responses on the basis of whether or not individuals consider themselves as having a long-term illness and/or disability. This information was collected using the question shown on the right. In some cases, results are also shown for people who selected 'someone else in household'.

***The Disability Discrimination Act defines 'disabled' as: "A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities."***

***This definition is intended to include all forms of physical and mental disability, including sensory impairment, mental illness and learning disabilities.***

***Having heard the above definition, do you consider yourself or someone else in the household to have a disability?***

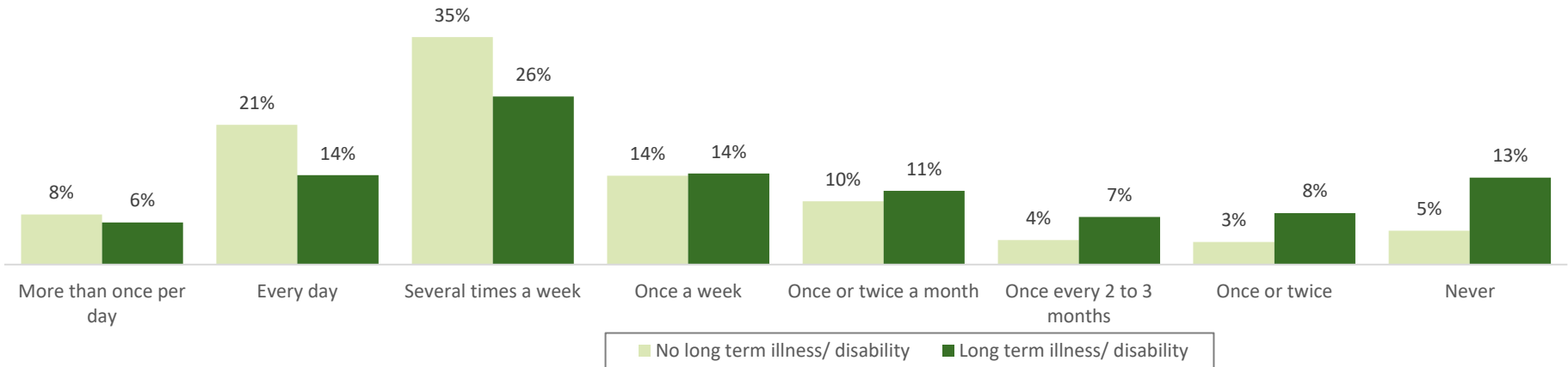
- 1: Myself***
- 2: Someone else in Household***
- 3: None of the above***
- 4: Prefer not to say***

On average people with a disability are less likely to visit the outdoors at least once a week while 13% never take visits.

Figure 1 – Frequency of visits to the outdoors in the last 12 months

At least once a week:  
60% with a long-term illness/ disability  
78% with no long-term illness/ disability

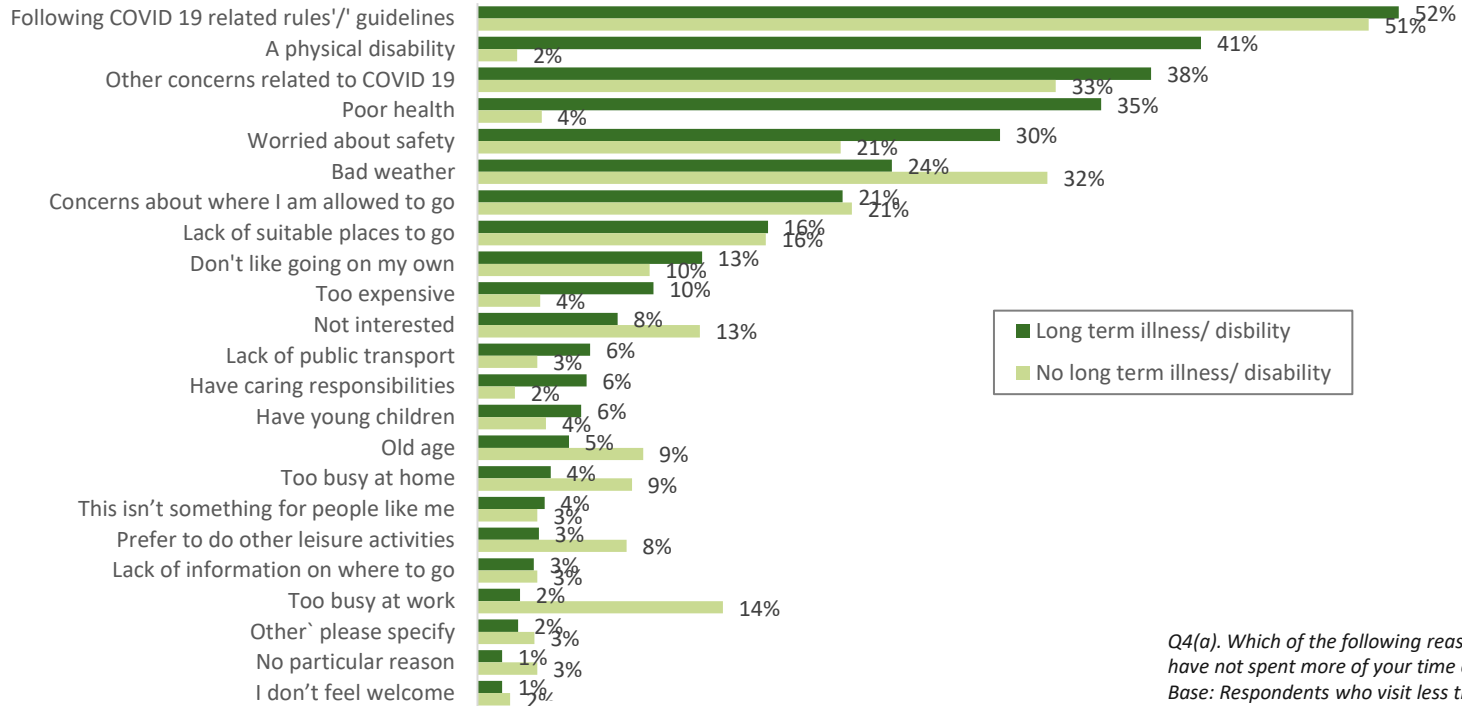
- 68% of people with someone else in the household with a long-term illness/ disability visit the outdoors at least once a week



Q1. Thinking about the last 12 months, how often, on average, have you spent your leisure time out of doors, away from your home?  
Base: Respondents with or without a long term illness/ disability (1,173/4,319)

# People with a disability are more likely to have not visited the outdoors because of a physical disability, poor health, worries about safety or because it is too expensive.

**Figure 2 – Reasons for not visiting the outdoors more often during last 12 months (those who visited less than once a month)**



Q4(a). Which of the following reasons, if any, describe why you have not spent more of your time out of doors?

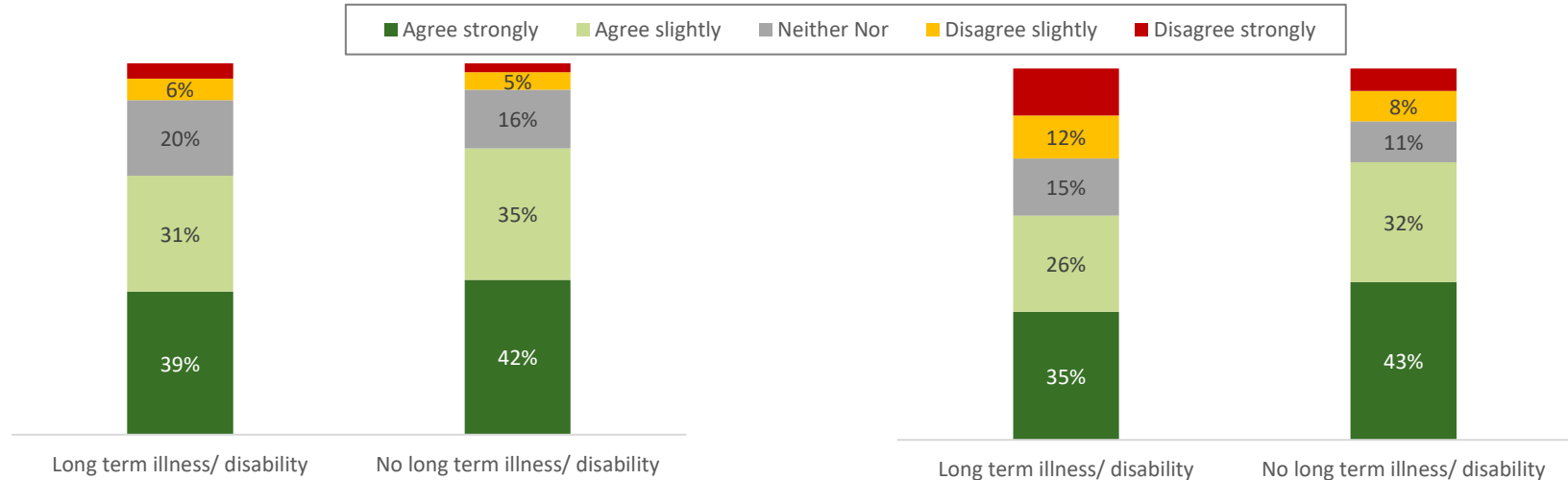
Base: Respondents who visit less than once a month (312, 734)

# On average people with a disability rated access to local greenspaces less positively.

Figure 3 – Rating of local greenspaces

*My local greenspaces are of a high enough standard to want to use them*

*My local greenspaces are within easy walking distance from my house*



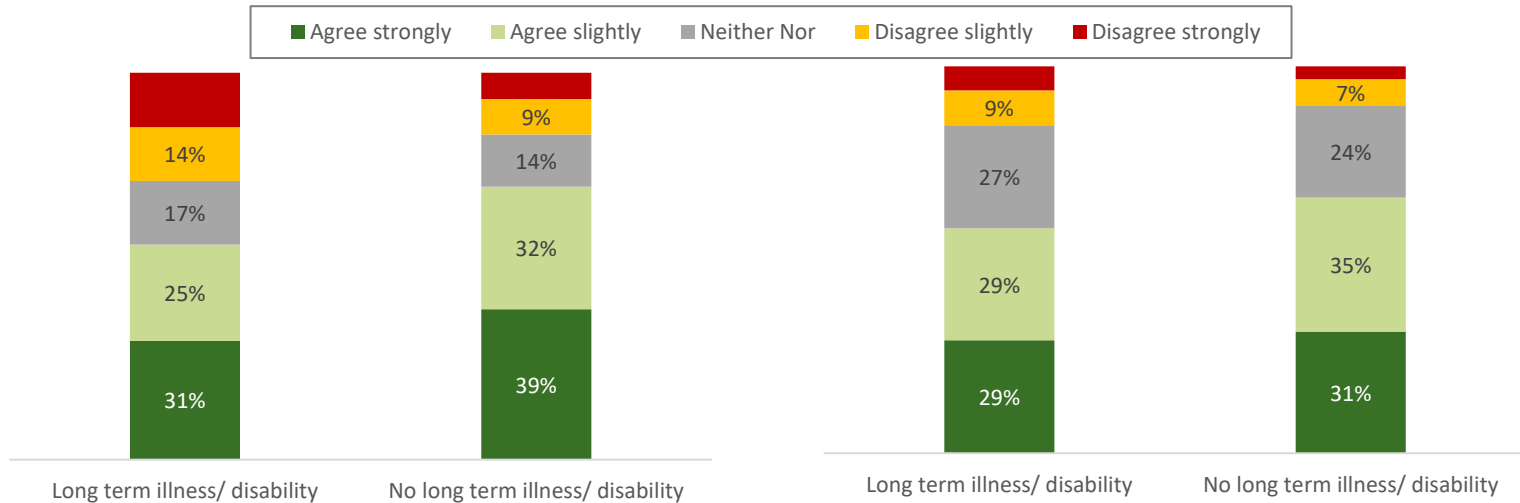
Q16 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to your nearest greenspace areas and paths and trails? Base: Respondents with or without a long-term illness/ disability (1,173/ 4,319)

Similarly, people with a disability provided less positive ratings for access to and the quality of trails in their local area.

Figure 4 – Rating of local greenspaces

*My local paths and trails for walking` running and cycling are within easy walking distance from my house*

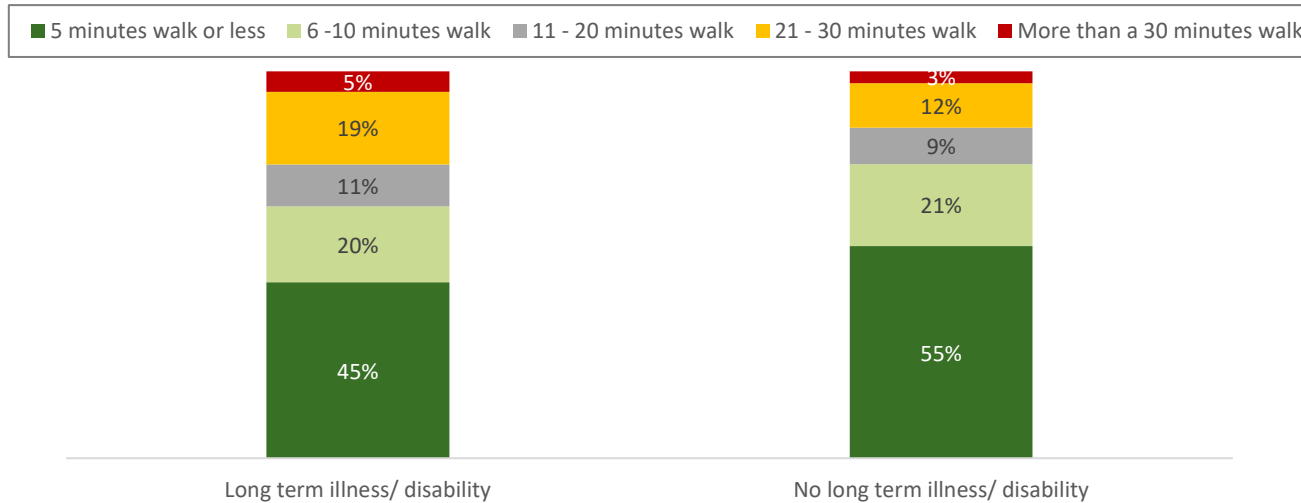
*My local off-road paths and trails are of a high enough standard to want to use them*



Q16 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to your nearest greenspace areas and paths and trails? Base: Respondents with or without a long term illness/ disability (1,173/ 4,319)

55% of members of people with a disability stated that they had open spaces within a 10-minute walk of home, a much lower percentage than amongst the rest of the population (76%).

Figure 5 – Perceived distance to local green or blue spaces

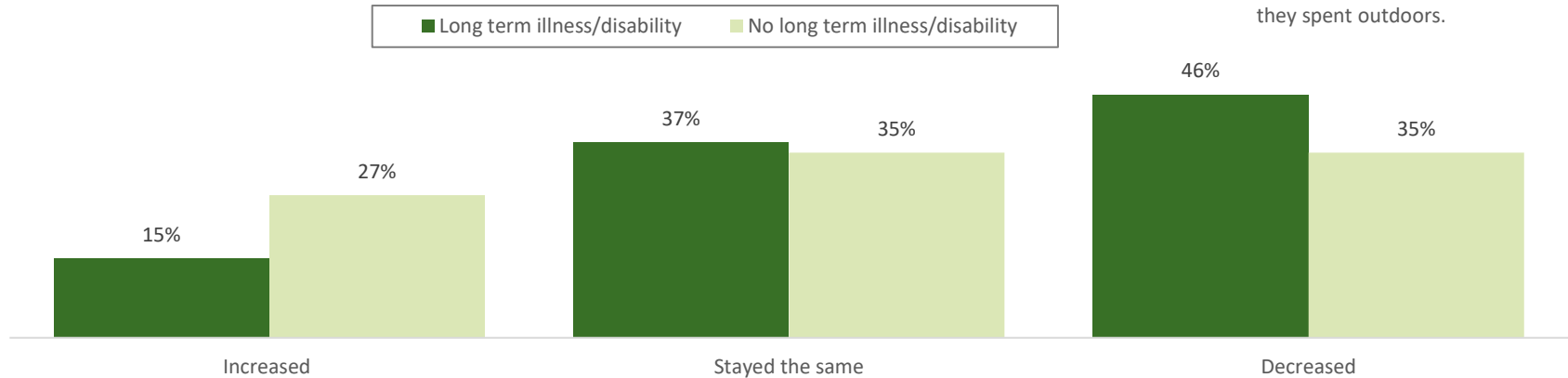


'Q17. How far away from your home is your nearest green or blue space area? By this we mean any open space areas such as parks` playing fields` woodland` beaches or rivers or other natural places you could spent time in Base: Respondents with or without a long-term illness/ disability (778/ 2,893)



# People with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to have decreased their frequency of participation in outdoor recreation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 6 – Frequency of visits to outdoors compared to this time last year – overall and by key demographics

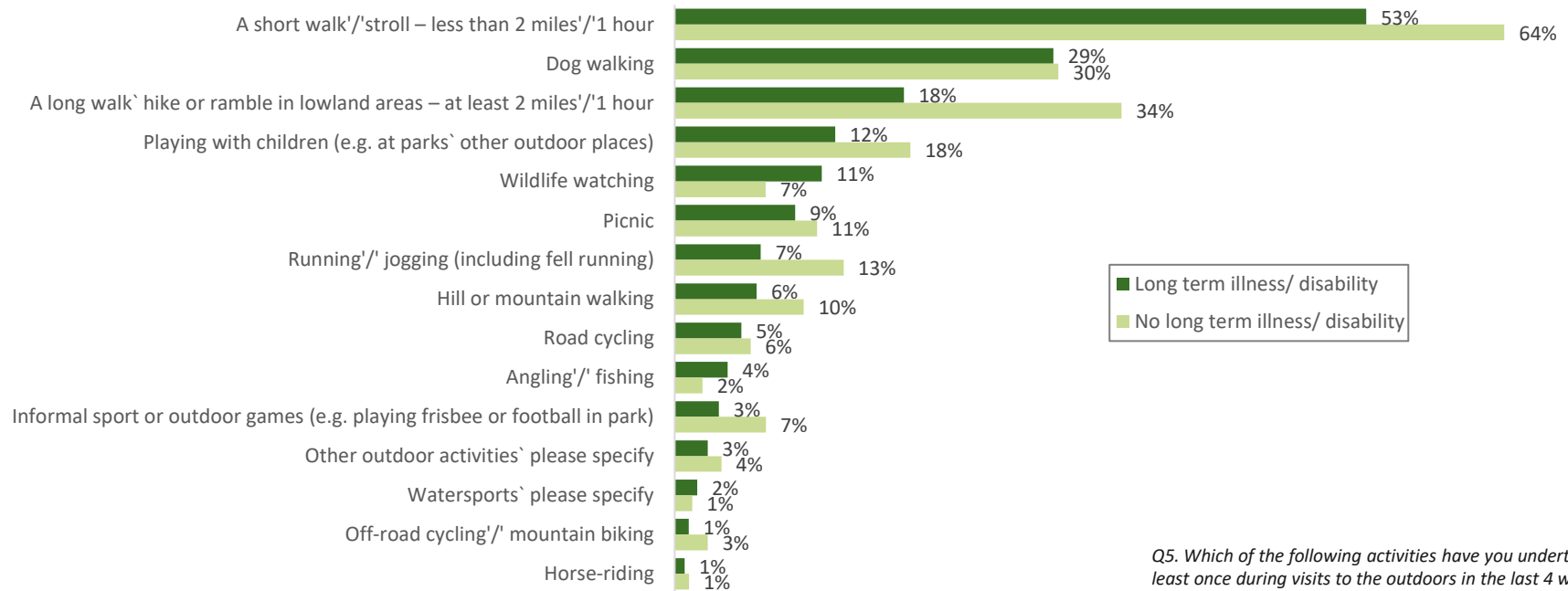


- 41% of people who has someone else in their household with a long-term illness or disability decreased the amount of time they spent outdoors.

Q2. Compared to this time last year, has the frequency that you spend your leisure time out of doors, away from home, increased, decreased or stayed the same? Base: Respondents with or without a long term illness/ disability (1,173/ 4,319)

# People with a long-term illness or disability were less likely to have undertaken a number of outdoor activities with the exception of dog walking and wildlife watching.

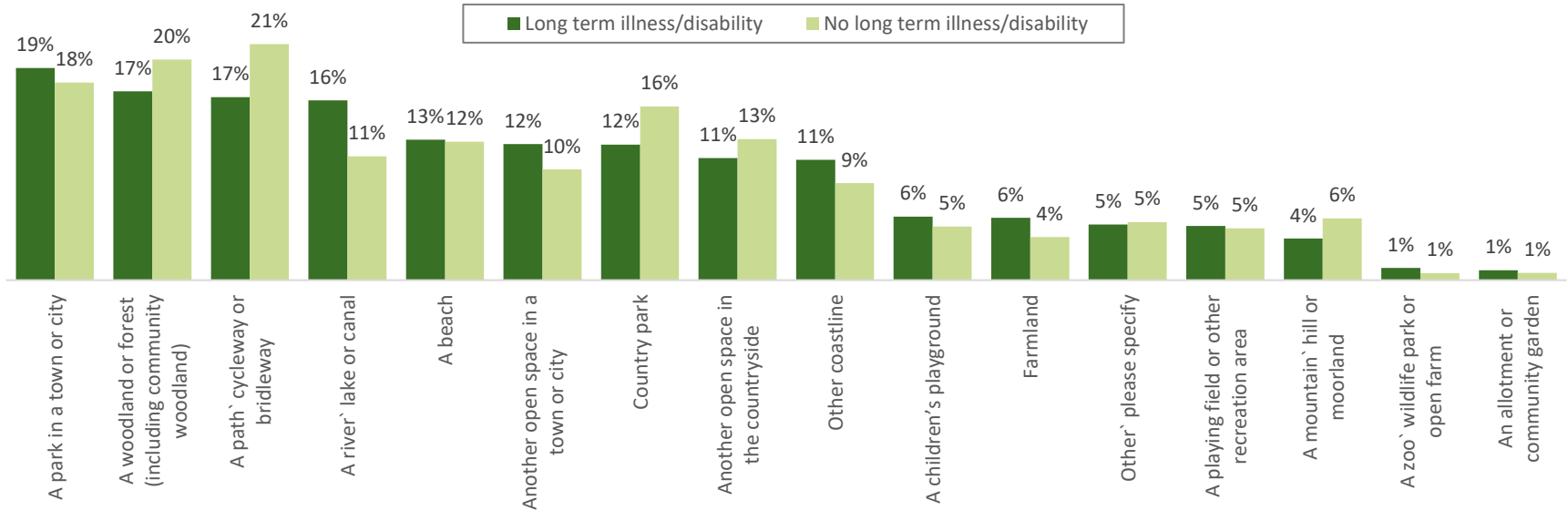
**Figure 7 – Activities undertaken on visits to outdoors taken in the last 4 weeks (amongst those ever visiting outdoors)**



Q5. Which of the following activities have you undertaken at least once during visits to the outdoors in the last 4 weeks?  
Base: Respondents with or without a long term illness/disability (1,173/4,319)

During outdoor recreation visits people with a long-term illness or disability were more to spend time in an urban park/space or by a river, lake or canal but less likely to visit woodland.

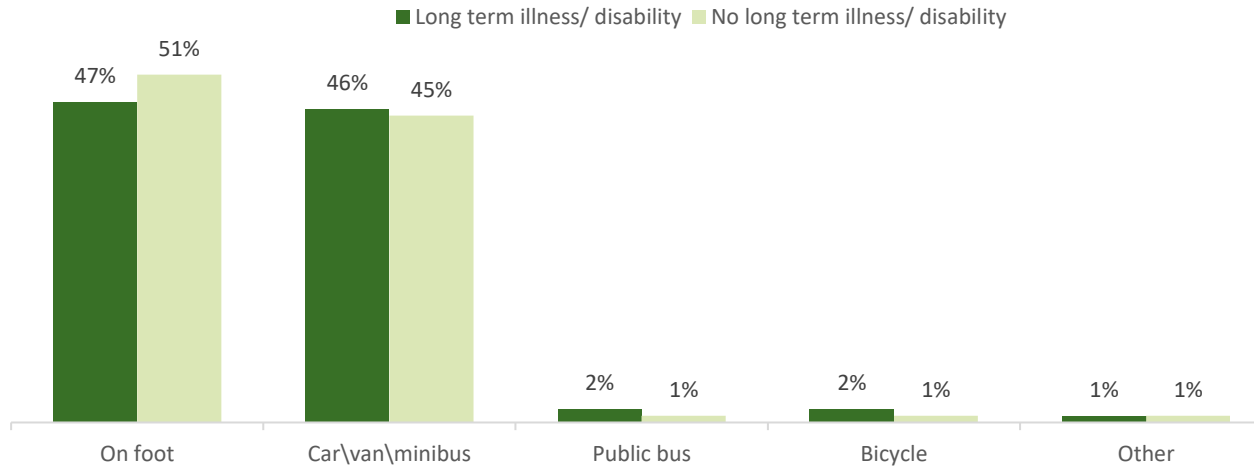
Figure 8 – Places visited during visits



Q9. On this last visit to the outdoors for leisure and recreation, what types of location or destination did you go to? Base: Respondents with or without a long term illness/ disability (1,173/ 4,319)

Fairly equal percentages of visits taken by people with a long-term illness or disability were on foot or taken by car.

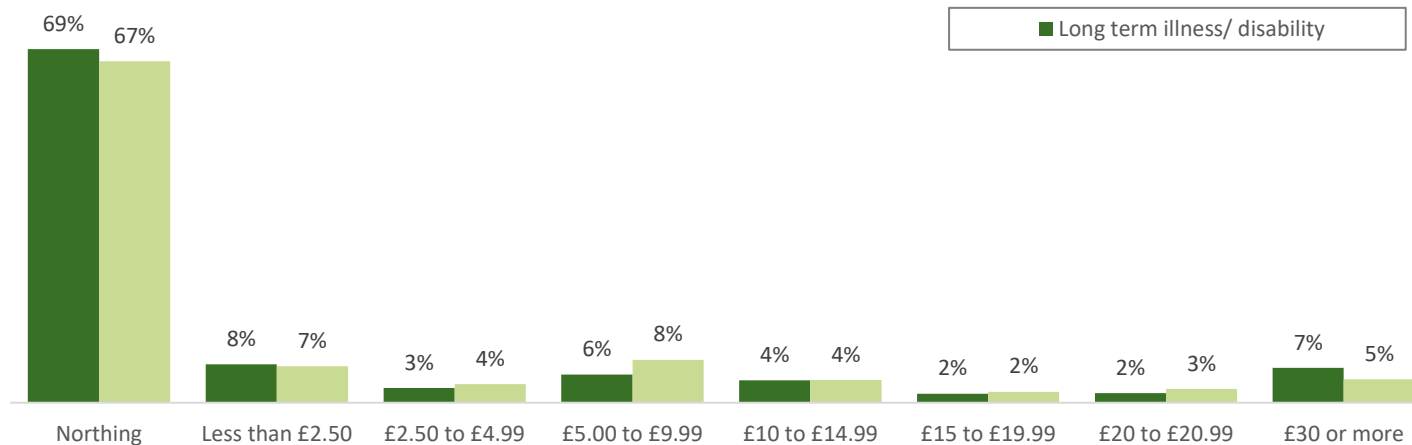
Figure 9 – Transport used to reach place visited



Q11. What was the main mode of transport you used to reach this place?  
Base: Respondents with or without a long term illness/ disability (1,173/4,319)

41% of people with a long-term illness or disability spent any money during outdoor recreation visits, a similar percentage to the rest of the population.

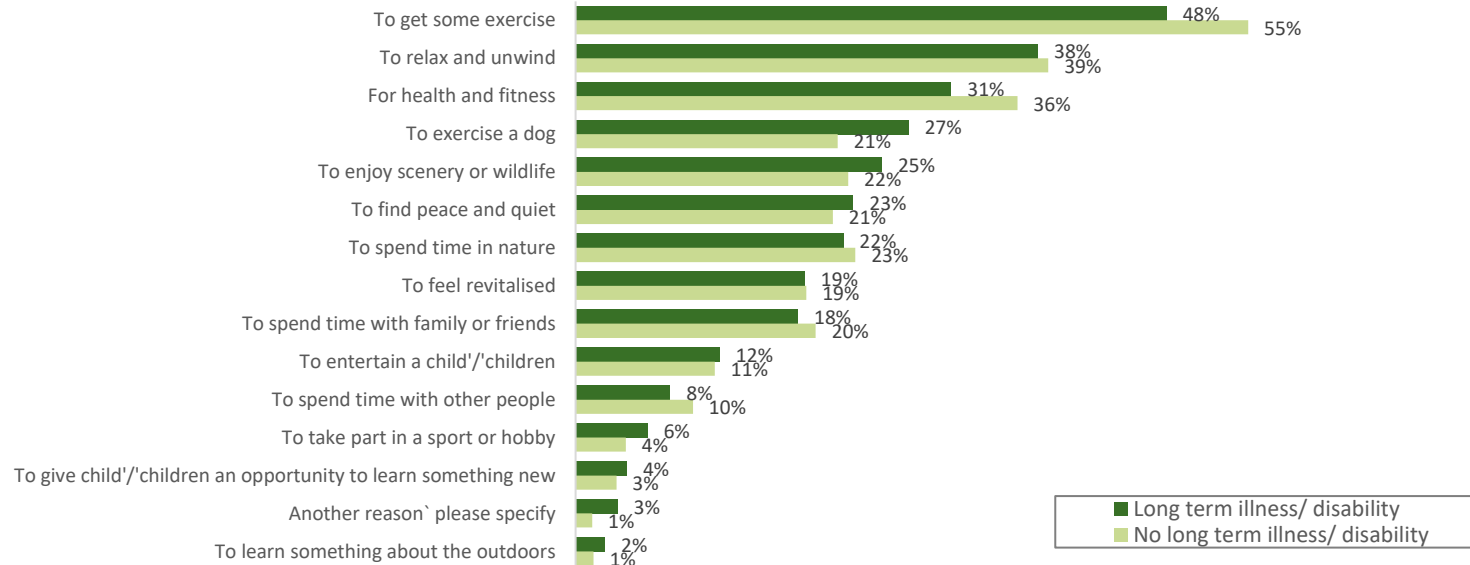
Figure 10– Expenditure during visits taken



Q14 In total how much, if anything did you personally spend during this visit to the outdoors. This would include any money you spent on yourself or others on the following items Base: Respondents with or without a long term illness/ disability (1,173/4,319)

# Getting exercise and relaxing were the most common motivation amongst both people with and without a long-term illness or disability.

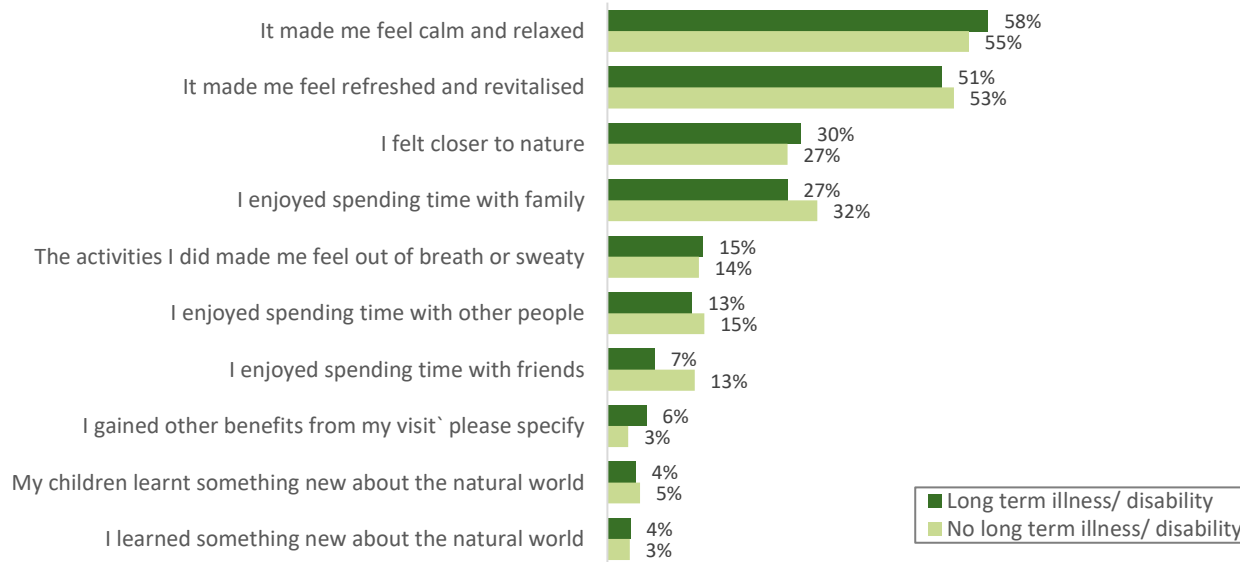
Figure 11 – Reasons for taking most recent visit to the outdoors



Q13(a). Which of the following reasons, if any, best describe why you made your last visit to the outdoors? Base: Respondents with or without a long term illness/ disability (1,173/ 4,319)

# The positive outcomes gained from outdoor visits were similar amongst both people with and without a long-term illness or disability.

Figure 12 – Statements which apply to most recent visit to the outdoors

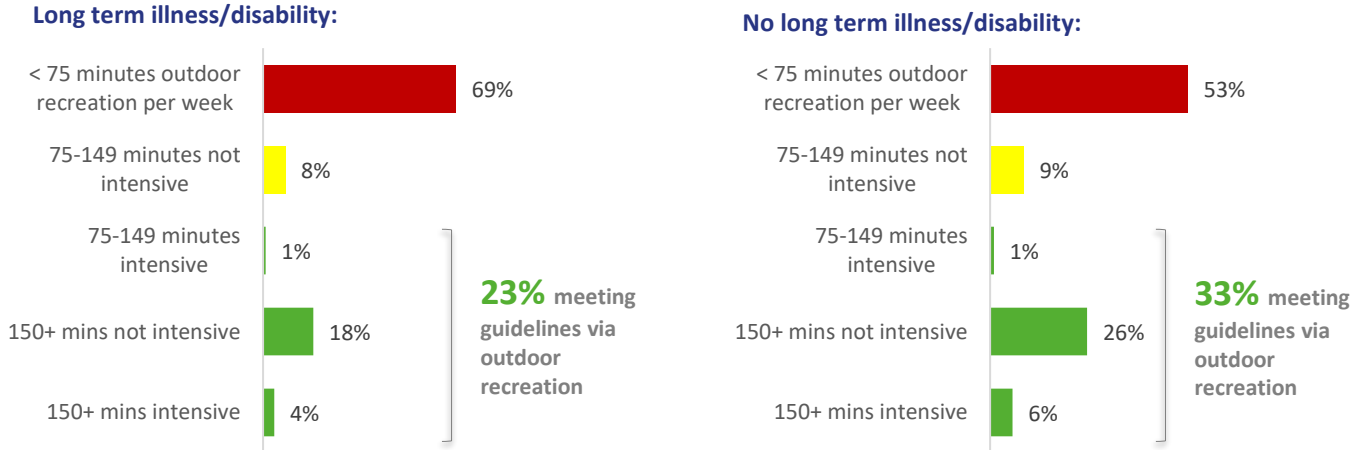


Q15. From the list of statements below select any which applied to your last visit to the outdoors? Base: Respondents with or without a long term illness/ disability (1,173/4,319)

# A much lower percentage of people with a long-term illness or disability achieve the CMO recommended levels of exercise through outdoor recreation.

## Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guideline for adults:

Adults should aim to be active every day and do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity every week. You can split this into 30 minutes of activity most days each week. If you prefer, you can do 75 minutes of vigorous activity every week





People in the Outdoors Monitor for Northern Ireland (POMNI) was undertaken by ORNI and 56 Degree Insight, with support from SORG, DAERA, and Sport NI.

For more information visit: [www.outdoorrecreationni.com/POMNI](http://www.outdoorrecreationni.com/POMNI)

