

IRONMAN[®]

70.3[®] STAFFORDSHIRE ENGLAND

IRONMAN Evaluation, Analysis of Results, July 2015

Produced by:



Staffordshire
County Council

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Title	Ironman Evaluation, Analysis of Results, July 2015.
Description	The purpose of this document is to analyse the feedback provided by participants of Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 to ascertain the benefits of the event upon participants and the wider Staffordshire Community.
Date created	July 2015
Produced by	Heather Collier, Research Co-ordinator, Insight, Planning & Performance Team, Staffordshire County Council
Time Period	June-July 2015
Usage statement	If you wish to reproduce this document either in whole, or in part, please acknowledge the source and the author(s).
Copyright and disclaimer	<p>This product is the property of Staffordshire County Council. If you wish to reproduce this document either in whole, or in part, please acknowledge the source and the author(s).</p> <p>Staffordshire County Council, while believing the information in this publication to be correct, does not guarantee its accuracy nor does the County Council accept any liability for any direct or indirect loss or damage or other consequences, however arising from the use of such information supplied.</p>

CONTENTS

1.	Executive Summary and Recommendations	4
2.1.	Introduction	6
2.2.	Methodology	6
2.3.	Responses	7
2.4.	Profile of respondents	7
3.	Reasons for participation	9
4.	Economic impact of Ironman	10
5.	Health impacts of Ironman	13
6.	Overall perceptions of Ironman	21
7.	Ironkids	23

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over 2000 people participated in and completed Ironman Staffordshire 70.3¹. 21% of these took the opportunity to share their views about their experiences in Staffordshire County Council's pre and post event surveys. In these, participants were invited to share their experiences of the health and economic impacts of participation as well as their overall perceptions of Staffordshire.

I.1 Participation

Whilst 61% of competitors in the event overall described themselves as novices, fewer survey respondents said the same. This was the case in both the pre and post event surveys. 42% in the pre event survey and 32% in the post event survey said this was the case. This therefore means that the results are more representative of the views of those athletes who described themselves as 'experienced' in Ironman or similar such events. As this could have implications for the health impact questions, these have been analysed by 'experience' to understand the difference in views between the two groups.

80% of competitors were male and similarly 75% and 79% of pre and post survey respondents were male which therefore means that the survey results are representative by gender. Interestingly the number of competitors who were women and who took part in the surveys was higher than is usual for an Ironman event. By age group participants were most likely to be in the 35-49 age categories and this is reflective of the make up of the Ironman competitors overall.

I.2 Health impact

79% had increased the amount of physical activity they undertook as a result of committing to Ironman. This is unsurprising considering the challenging nature of the event. Novices to the event were more likely to say this was the case (93%) than experienced athletes were (69%). It was generally common for participants to say they had increased the structure, volume and frequency of their training.

Training was most likely to have had an impact on nutrition (81%) and diet (76%). 60% also agreed it had impacted on their level of alcohol consumption. Experienced athletes were more likely to agree that they had made positive lifestyle choices whilst they were training.

On completion of the event, the majority of participants agreed that training for Ironman had improved their general health and wellbeing. Whilst both experienced and novice athletes were in agreement with this, novices agreed they benefited slightly more than experienced athletes did. 89% of novices agreed they benefited compared to 79% of experienced athletes. *"Losing weight"* and *"feeling fitter and healthier"* were common comments from novice athletes.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were likely to continue with the positive lifestyle changes they had made after the event. These for example included changes to fitness, nutrition, diet, alcohol consumption and smoking. The majority of respondents either said yes they would continue with these or there was no change, for example where participants were already exhibiting positive lifestyles.

When asked about the impacts of Ironman, it was most common for respondents to say: I feel *"fitter and healthier"*, am *"happier"*, have *"more energy"* and *"higher levels of self esteem"*, I developed *"friendships"* and the event provided *"a clear focus for my training"*.

¹ A total of 2012 took part in and completed either Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 or Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 Relay

1.3 Economic impact

Whilst the amount of money spent on training in the lead up to the event varied greatly between participants (ranging from £0-£20,000) the average spend per competitor was £2,000. 1 in 7 competitors were Staffordshire based and therefore it is estimated that spend on training and equipment in Staffordshire, prior to the event, could be up to £574,000.

For the duration of the event, it is estimated that overall spend for all competitors and their families is £346,000 for travel and accommodation, £179,000 for food and drink and £40,000 for attractions/entertainment. Total estimated spend by competitors and the families as a result of taking part in the event is estimated to be at £1,012,000. This is based on the average spend of survey respondents who were participants in the event and comprises spend on known costs of travel, accommodation, food and drink as well as individuals and families other personal costs.

1.4 Perceptions of Staffordshire

74% of survey respondents said that they had needed to stay over in Staffordshire in order to complete the Ironman event. Those participants who had stayed over in Staffordshire were asked to rate their stay and to share their wider perceptions of Staffordshire as a place to visit.

The majority provided positive feedback about their stay with 87% rating it as 'good' or 'very good'. This compares similarly with previous Staffordshire County Council overnight visitor surveys. What is noticeable however is that participants of Ironman were more likely to rate their stay as average when compared to Staffordshire's Overnight Visitor Surveys. This may be indicative of their expectations and/or may be a reflection of the accommodation they stayed in during a period of high demand for Staffordshire.

The majority of those who stayed over did say that they would visit Staffordshire again (86%) and they would recommend Staffordshire to others (85%). 15% would be unlikely to recommend Staffordshire and 14% wouldn't visit Staffordshire again. It was less common for visitors to Staffordshire to say the same in the Staffordshire Overnight Visitors Survey but it is likely that these differences are influenced by choice. Ironman competitors visited Staffordshire to participate in the event whilst Overnight Visitors chose to visit Staffordshire, perhaps because of their interest in the county and the attractions on offer.

Participants commented on what they thought of Staffordshire generally and they tended to provide positive feedback. The most commonly mentioned words and phrases used to describe the county were: it's "*a beautiful county*", it's "*lovely*" and it contains "*lots of countryside*".

1.5 Recommendations

- Give consideration to respondents inspirational stories and use these to encourage more Staffordshire novices to participate in next years Ironman event. The adjustments which participants, and particularly novice participants, need to make to their health and lifestyle to effectively train for events such as Ironman have short and potentially long term health benefits both for participants and for their families and friends.
- It is important to recognise the economic benefits that hosting large scale events such as Ironman can bring to the county. Consideration should be given to maximise opportunities for spend in the lead up to and during future Ironman events. Also recognise the benefits of and seek out further opportunities for hosting similar such events in the future.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Ironman chose Staffordshire to host a World Champion qualifier event. Ironman Staffordshire 70.3, was a triathlon event which incorporated a 1.2 mile swim, a 56 mile bike ride and a 13.1 mile run. Taking place on Sunday 14th June 2015, it was a challenging event open to both novices and experienced athletes, many of whom were seeking to achieve personal bests and entry into the world champion event.

Ironman was accompanied by Ironkids. This was a running event for children between the ages of 3-14 and was held in the grounds of the Shugborough Hall Estate on Saturday 13th June. This family event aimed to encourage fun and healthy living for children.

It was expected that the events would attract significant numbers of people to Staffordshire both in the run up, during and after the event. And this in turn was expected to bring many positive benefits to Staffordshire and its communities. These were expected to include economic and health benefits. For the economy, it was estimated that over £2.7 million would be spent during the annual occasion and for health, benefits were expected for those athletes involved, with the event also being viewed as an excellent opportunity to introduce people to active, healthy lifestyles.

To fully understand the impacts of Ironman 70.3 upon Staffordshire and its communities, participants were asked to share their opinions both prior to and after participation. They were asked to share their overall perceptions as well as their views on the health and economic impacts of the events. Their responses have been summarised in this report.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

Over 2,000 participants² took part in Ironman Staffordshire 70.3. All participants were encouraged to share their views both before and after the event as part of an evaluation to better understand the Impacts of the event.

Pre event, participants were invited to share their views through an online survey. The survey was developed within the Insight, Planning and Performance Team on behalf of Staffordshire County Council's Sportshire Coordinator and it incorporated valuable feedback from Public Health and Place representatives.

The pre event survey commenced in the week beginning 25th May 2015 and views were accepted up until the day of the event on Sunday 14th June 2015. All participants were then invited to share their feedback post event. Feedback was sought from the week commencing 15th June 2015 and responses were accepted up until Thursday 9th July 2015.

Additional feedback from participants event entry forms has also been included to highlight key points where these are representative of wider themes. These include respondents case studies/inspirational stories of why they chose to participate in the event.

² 2012 participants completed Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 and Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 Relay

2.3 RESPONSES

Over 800 survey responses were received from competitors. 414 shared their views pre event and a further 418 responded to the post event evaluation survey. This equated to a response rate of 21% for each of the two surveys. This is a statistically representative response at the 95% confidence level. This means that if the surveys were repeated, in 95 out of 100 cases, the same responses would be achieved. The surveys have a confidence interval of +/- 4%, meaning that the percentage response given to any question could fall up to 4% higher or 4% lower than the actual response received. A confidence interval of +/-3-4% is fairly typical for a robust survey.

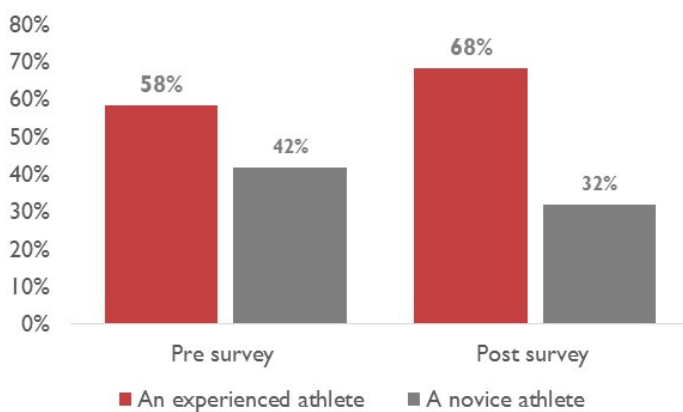
Responses received in addition to this included participants who shared their stories of why they chose to participate in the events and the impact that participation has had upon themselves and their families. Social media was also used widely before, during and after the event both by event coordinators and by participants who shared their views on the Staffordshire Ironman 70.3 Facebook page. These expand upon, and provide understanding and depth to the quantitative survey responses.

2.4 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Experience

414 responded to the pre event survey and 418 responded to the post event evaluation survey. Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 had the largest percentage of novices in an Ironman branded race. 61% of all registered entrants were novices. Athletes were more likely to describe themselves as novices in the pre event survey and more likely to describe themselves as experienced athletes post event. It is likely that some respondents who classed themselves as novices before the event classed themselves as experienced athletes on completion of the challenge.

Figure 2.1: Pre and Post survey responses by experience



Gender

By gender the majority of participants were male in both the pre and post surveys. This is reflective of the general make up of Ironman events. When comparing gender in both the pre and post surveys, males were slightly more likely than females to respond to the post event survey. However, Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 did have the highest proportion of registered females for any Ironman branded event. 25% of registered participants were female.

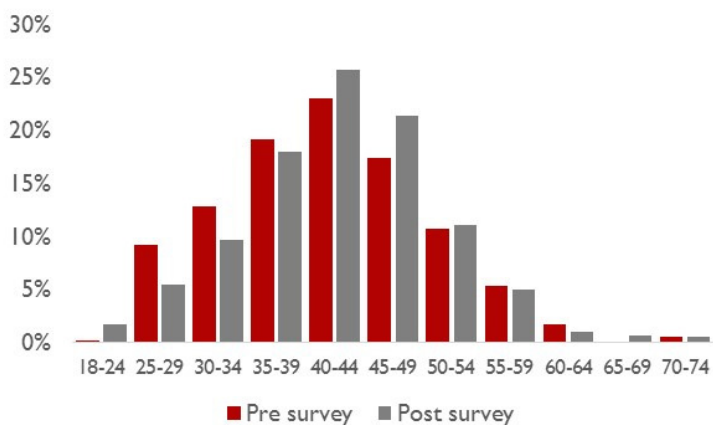
Figure 2.2: Response by gender



Age

Participants of both the pre and post survey were more likely to be between the ages of 35-49. This is consistent with the profile of participants overall and for Ironman competitions in general.

Figure 2.3: Pre and Post survey responses by age group



Additional profile information

- 14% (58 respondents) were a member of a sports club/recreational facilities and of these 58 respondents, 80% (43 respondents) undertook training for Ironman at a sports club/recreational facility.
- 11% of survey respondents had a child who was participating in Ironkids.

3. REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION

The principle reason people gave for undertaking the Ironman event was the desire to complete the course (59%), 39% also felt it was a brilliant opportunity to become fitter and healthier. Other reasons people gave for wanting to participate included “*the challenge*”, it’s a good opportunity to “*raise money for charity*” and preparing for the event “*helps with training for other events.*” People’s reasons for wanting to participate are outlined in the figure below.

Figure 3.1: Reasons for participation in Ironman



In their pre event registration forms, contenders were also invited to describe their motivations for wanting to participate in Ironman. Becoming fitter and healthier and raising money for charity were also outlined as common reasons for participation here. For example:

- “*I would like to raise money for Scope a charity close to my heart. I am 40 in 2015 and want to do something different to challenge myself.*”
- “*This is my local Ironman and it would be a dream come true to take part. Since losing my dad to a heart attack I have started keeping fit, I have completed sprint triathlons this year. I am insulin dependant and want to show other diabetics that this condition doesn't stop you doing what you want to.*”

4. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF IRONMAN

4.1 Monies spent on training

The amount of money competitors spent on Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 varied greatly between participants. Participants were asked to calculate spend and to include training equipment and sports club fees in their calculations. Spend ranged from £0 to £20,000 with the average spend per competitor being £2,000. It was common for this spend to include new purchases, for example, the purchase of a new bike- £2000 was a common amount to spend on a new bike.

Purchasing of a new bike for training and event participation was a common spend



Spending £2,000 on a new bike was common

1 in 7 competitors were Staffordshire based and therefore spend on training and equipment in Staffordshire is estimated to be at over half a million pounds (£575,000)³.

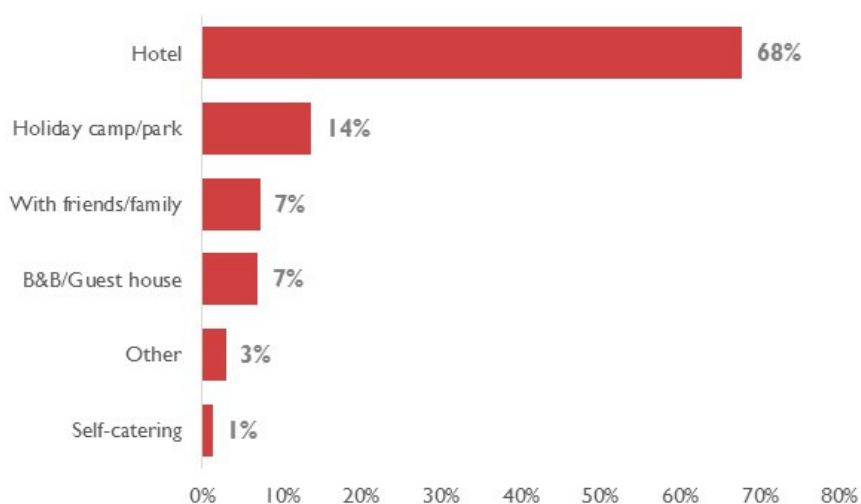
4.2 Visiting Staffordshire attractions

From participants responses, it is clear that the Ironman event did not result in the majority visiting any other Staffordshire attractions. 83% of survey respondents said they did not visit any other attractions in Staffordshire. However, 17% (or seventy people) said that the event had resulted in them visiting other attractions in Staffordshire. Those attractions that people spent time exploring included; the Shugborough Estate, Chasewater, Lichfield, Alton Towers, Trentham Gardens and the National Memorial Arboretum. If 17% of participants who took part in the event overall had visited somewhere in Staffordshire, this would equate to a total of 342 Ironman participants visiting other attractions during the event weekend.

4.3 Staying over in Staffordshire

Nearly three quarters of those participants who shared their views did say that they stayed over in Staffordshire to enable them to compete in the event. This equated to 74% (or 307 of survey participants). If the same number of overall participants in the event stayed over in Staffordshire, this would equate to 1488 of competitors staying over in Staffordshire during the Ironman weekend.

4.1: Where respondents stayed in their visit to Staffordshire



³ Based on numbers participating in and completing Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 and Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 Relays (Total completions: 2012).

4.3 Staying over in Staffordshire continued...

Of those competitors who shared their views about where they stayed, it was most common for them to have stayed in a hotel (68%). Holiday camps/parks were also used by 14% of competitors. Participants accommodation choices are outlined in figure 4.1.

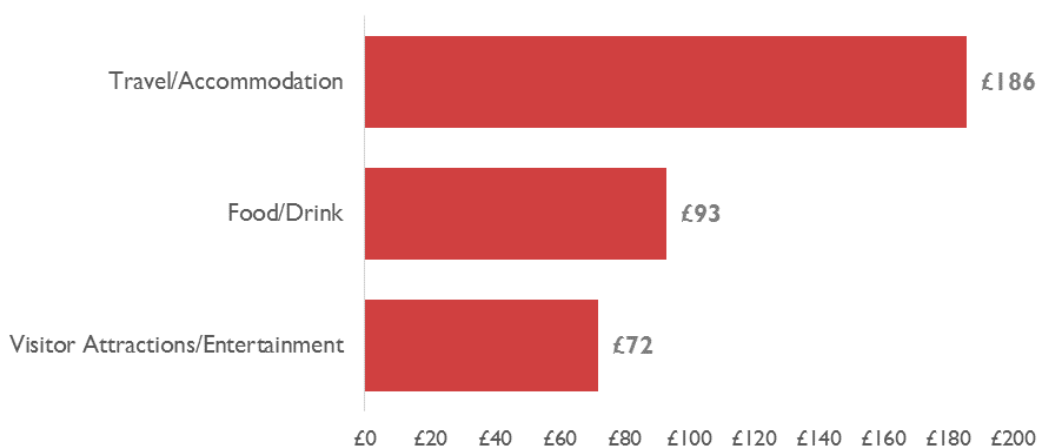
4.4 Monies spent during the event

Participants spent the most on their travel/accommodation costs. Spend on travel and accommodation for competitors and their families ranged from £0 to £3000 per survey respondent with the average spend per respondent and their families standing at £186. If we take into account those survey respondents and their families who did not spend, the average spend drops to £172 a person and their family. Using this average of £172, we can estimate total spend on travel and accommodation by all participants and their families to be £346,000.

Spend on food and drink was half that which was spent on travel and accommodation. Spend on food and drink ranged from £0-£1000 per respondent and their family with the average spend per respondent and their family (by those who said they spent at least something) standing at £93. Once again if we take into account those survey respondents who did not spend anything on food and drink, the average spend drops to £89 per survey respondent and their family. Similarly, if we use this average of £89 a person and their family, we can estimate total spend on food and drink of £179,000.

Spend on visitor attractions/entertainment was unsurprisingly lower as three quarters of survey respondents had already cited that they had not visited any Staffordshire attractions during their stay. Not having “enough time” was the most commonly mentioned reason for this. Spend on visitor attractions/entertainment per respondent and their families, like with other spend, varied greatly between £0 and £700. The average spend per respondent and their families (for those respondents and their families who said they at least spent something) was £72. If we take into account the vast majority of survey respondents and their families who did not spend anything, the average reduces to £20 per survey respondent and their family. If we use this average of £20, we can estimate total spend on visitor attractions/entertainment of all competitors in Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 to be at £40,000.

Figure 4.2:
Average spend per respondent (and their families) as a result of taking part in Staffordshire Ironman 70.3



Base: All survey respondents

Total spend by survey respondents and their families varied between £0—£4,500. Average total spend (by those survey respondents and their families who were spending) stood at £510.

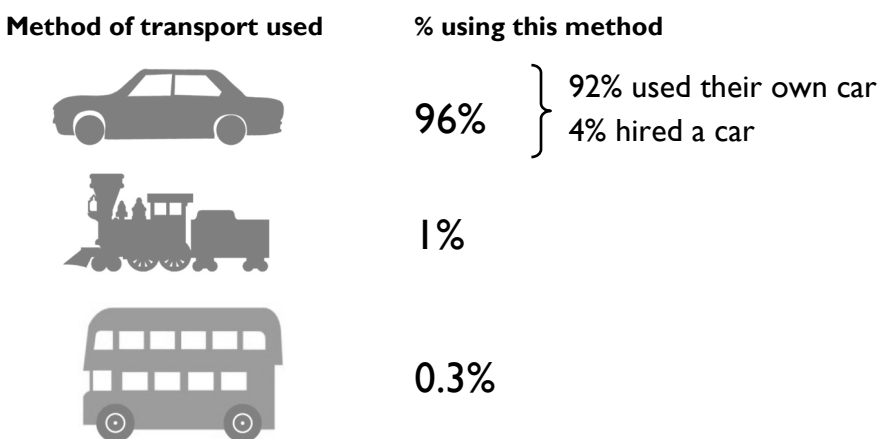
The average total spend dropped slightly to £503 per respondent and their family when those respondents and their families who spent nothing were included. If we use this average of £503 per competitor and their family, we can estimate the total average spend by competitors and their families to be £1,012,000. This is based on the average spend of survey respondents who were participants in the event and comprises spend on known costs of travel, accommodation, food and drink as well as individuals and families other personal costs.

Figure 4.3: Estimated spend in Staffordshire—overall spend and spend by type



4.5 Transport used to travel to and from Staffordshire

The most commonly used mode of transport which people used to travel to and from the Ironman event was the car. Train and bus were only used by a small minority of participants. 2.6% used another form of transport to get to and from Staffordshire. These forms included camper vans, motor homes, horse boxes and aeroplanes.



5. HEALTH IMPACTS OF IRONMAN

5.1 Pre Ironman physical activity levels

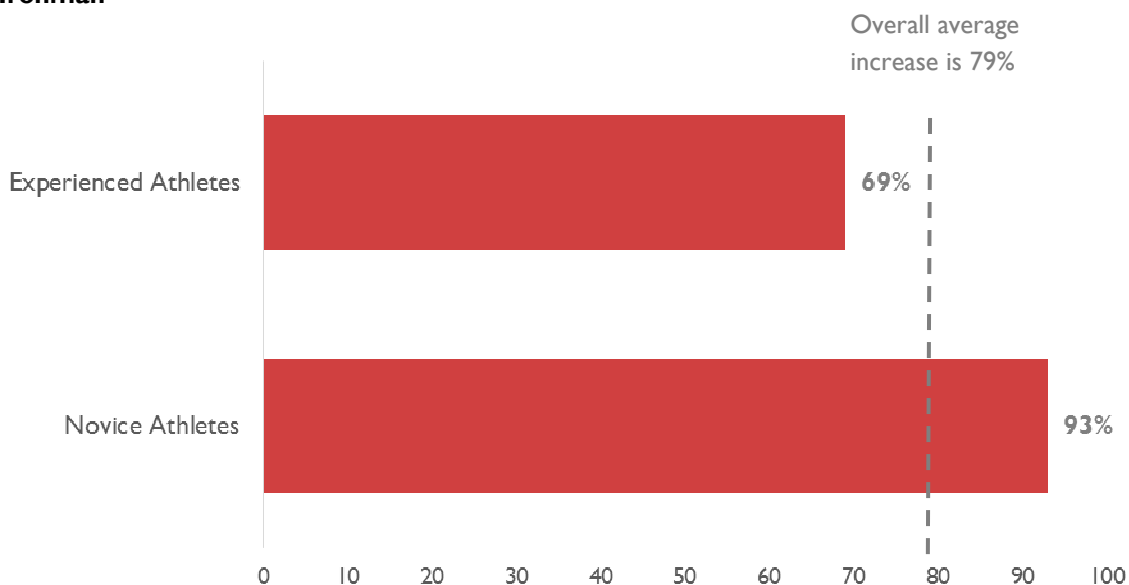
Survey respondents were invited to share their views on the health impacts of participation in Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 both pre and post event. Pre event, respondents were invited to share their views on whether they had increased the amount of physical activity they had undertaken since training for Ironman and to describe how this had changed since committing to the event.

The majority of participants did say that they had increased the amount of physical activity they had undertaken as a result of committing to Ironman. It would generally be expected for participants to need to increase their levels of activity prior to an event which was as challenging as Ironman.

“79% had increased the amount of physical activity they undertook as a result of committing to Ironman”.

What is interesting is that 61% of all registered competitors considered themselves to be novices to Ironman, prior to the event, and novice athletes tackling the distance/event/sport for the first time were far more likely to say that they had increased their physical activity level since committing to Ironman. In their survey responses, 93% of novices said they had increased their activity level compared to 69% of experienced athletes who were used to competing in Ironman or similar such events.

Figure 5.1: % who had increased the amount of physical activity they undertook as a result of committing to Ironman



Bringing Ironman to Staffordshire has encouraged more Staffordshire residents to become healthier. 185 participants indicated in their pre registration forms that they were both from Staffordshire and were new to the event and it is likely that 93% or 172 of these increased their levels of physical activity as a result of committing to Ironman.

5.2 Training for Ironman

Since committing to Ironman, it was common for survey respondents to say that they were undertaking more “swimming, running and cycling”. Some said they had started “open water swimming” and some also said they were doing other types of training for example “circuits”, at the “gym” or “taking up an extra sport so I am able to do all three”.

In terms of how respondents activity levels had changed since they had signed up to Ironman, the most commonly mentioned changes were to the structure, volume and frequency of their training. For example;

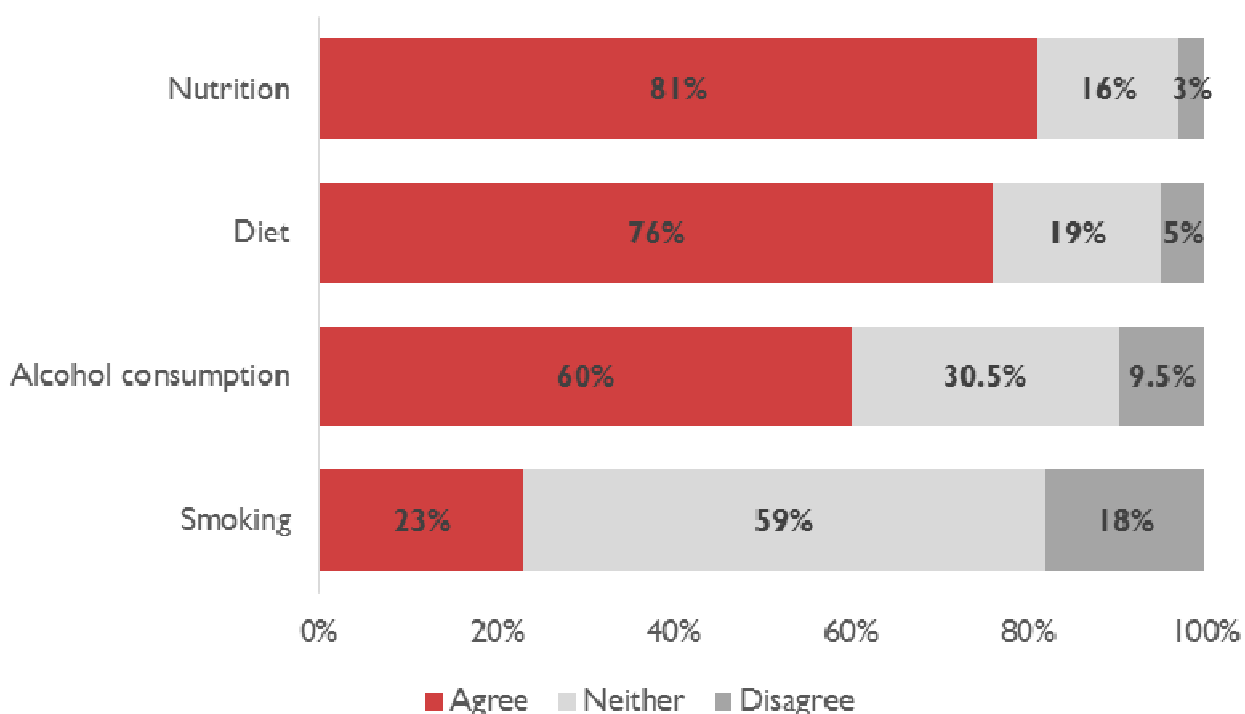
- “Around 10 hours a week total across 7 or 8 months. Training increased from 5 - 8 hours a week to a structured 15 hours a week programme”.
- “Training for each discipline has increased due to distance of event”.
- “I have learnt to swim front crawl and now regularly swim and cycle whereas in the past I mainly just ran”.
- “I am now coached full time”.

5.3 The impact training has had on participants lifestyle choices

Training for Ironman Staffordshire has clearly had a positive impact on the majority of survey respondents lifestyle choices. This is most evident in relation to nutrition and diet. 81% said that training had impacted on their nutrition and 76% said it had impacted on their diet. 60% also agreed training had encouraged healthier lifestyle choices and had impacted positively on the amount of alcohol they drunk.

Whilst the largest majority did not feel that training had made a difference to the amount they smoked, this is most likely to be because the majority of survey respondents who were training for Ironman were already non-smokers.

5.2: The impact of training for Ironman on participants lifestyle choices.



Experienced athletes, used to competing in Ironman or similar events, were more likely to agree that they had made positive lifestyle choices in their training.

For example:

- 80% of experienced athletes had made changes to their diet compared to 71% of novices athletes. This could for example suggest that there are some novice athletes that may need advice and guidance on their dietary choices to ensure they are making the right choices whilst undertaking training.
- Similarly, experienced athletes overall were more likely to agree that training for Ironman had encouraged them to make positive lifestyle changes than novice athletes were. 88% of experienced athletes agreed that training had encouraged them to make positive lifestyle choices compared to 80% of novice athletes.

Survey respondents participating in Ironman provided numerous examples of how Ironman had made a difference to their lifestyle. Below is a summary of all written responses. The most commonly mentioned responses are represented by a larger font size. Time for training was key and whilst this was generally regarded as positive because it encouraged people to become fitter and healthier, a few respondents did say that it impacted on their social life. For example there was less time for them to be able to socialise and spend time with their families.

5.3: How Ironman has made a difference to participants



5.4 Overall health and wellbeing of participants before the event

Since training for Ironman, participants who were surveyed were asked to indicate whether in general they felt their health and wellbeing had improved. 83% of those surveyed agreed that since training for the event, their health and wellbeing had improved. Fewer than 2% disagreed.

“The majority of participants agreed that their training for Ironman had improved their general health and wellbeing”.

Whilst both experienced athletes and novice athletes agreed that their Ironman training had improved their general health and wellbeing, novices agreed they benefited from it slightly more than experienced athletes did. Whilst 89% of novices felt they benefited, slightly fewer experienced athletes (79%) said the same.

Respondents were also invited to share examples of how their health and wellbeing had improved since they had begun undertaking training for the event. Losing weight and feeling fitter and healthier were commonly mentioned benefits and these for example included the specific comments outlined below:

- *“My average pace, overall fitness and weight have all improved”.*
- *“I have more energy and relax better”.*
- *“Predominately it is my general health and wellbeing that has improved”.*

Comments received from all respondents are documented in the attached wordle. The most frequently mentioned words are shown in a larger font.

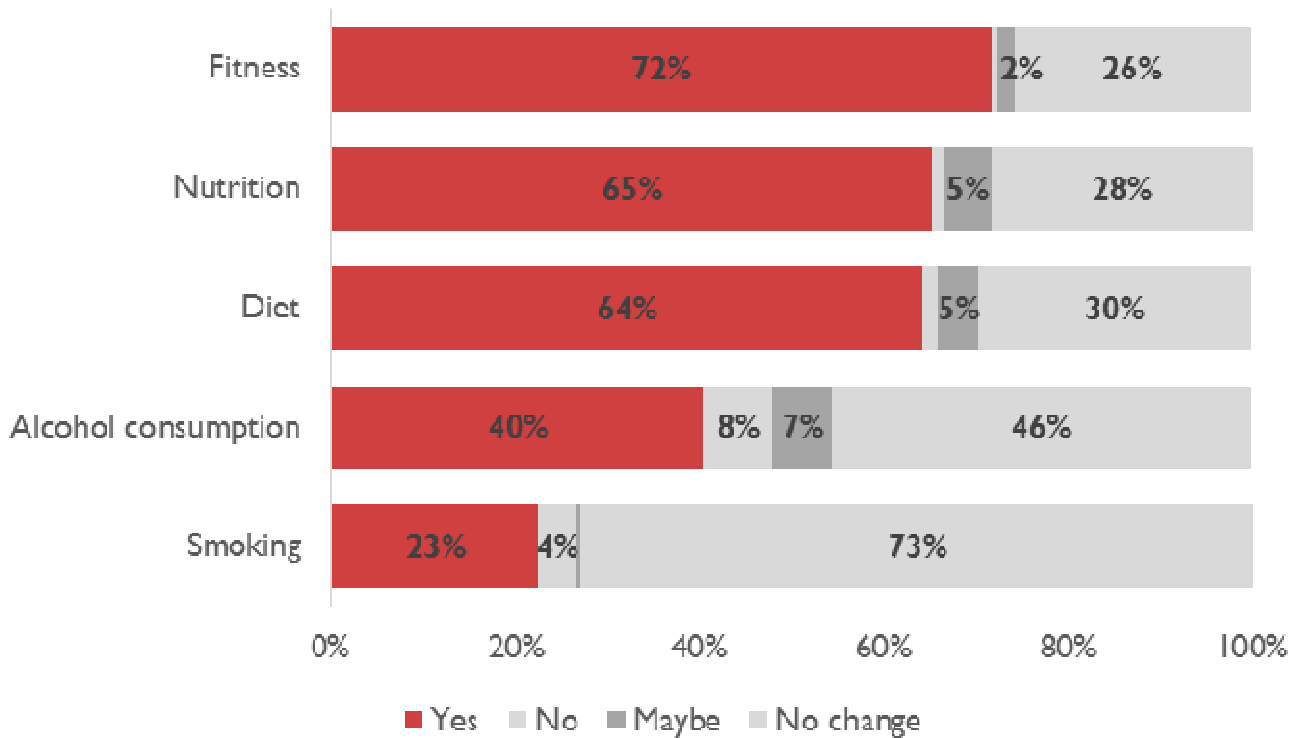
5.4 Comments shared by respondents on how their health and wellbeing has improved



5.5 Maintaining positive lifestyle changes post event

Respondents were likely to say that 'yes' they would continue with positive lifestyle changes if they did not already have these in place prior to the Ironman event. The event was most likely to encourage participants to continue with the positive changes they had made to their fitness levels (72%).

5.5 Continuing with positive lifestyle changes after the event



*Percentages of 1% or less are included on the bar graph but their numerical values are not included due to limitations of space

Whilst the event saw no change to the majority of participants behaviour in terms of smoking, nearly a quarter (23%) still acknowledged that they had made positive changes which they would continue with after the event. Similarly, 40% also said they would continue with positive changes they had made to their levels of alcohol consumption.

82% agreed that since training for Ironman their general health and wellbeing has improved. Only 2% disagreed.

5.6 The impact of Ironman upon people's lives

“I feel fitter, healthier, happier and have more energy”.

63% (265 respondents) commented on the impacts of Ironman. The vast majority of participants commenting were positive with participants saying they felt “fitter” and “healthier”, were “happier” had “more energy” and “higher levels of self esteem”. A case study from a participant which is reflective of this desire to become fitter and healthier is outlined below.

Case Study:

Sam* is in his late fifties and lives in the wider London area. He is an experienced athlete who has been competing in triathlons for over four years now. He plans to continue to take part in more!

His training for Ironman Staffordshire has encouraged him to eat healthier, to choose more nutritionally balanced food and to drink less alcohol.

He feels Ironman has helped him to improve his general level of fitness. During the last four years, he has lost three stone and his blood pressure has gone from being very high to that of a twenty year old. This is all down to his event training!

He looks better, feels better mentally and he sleeps well. He also thoroughly enjoyed participating in Ironman Staffordshire because he grew up in the County and has family ties here.

“It provided a clear focus for my training!”

Seasoned athletes commented that this type of event was useful for them because it provided “a clear focus for their training” and enabled them to “maintain” the lifestyle which they have already worked hard to achieve. This point is exemplified through the case study below.

Case Study:

In her late thirties, Dawn* is an experienced athlete who is used to competing in Ironman or similar such events. She has competed in over seven such events in recent years.

Dawn* already lives a very healthy lifestyle. She eats healthily and doesn't smoke and only drinks alcohol occasionally. She is a member of a sports club in the London area where she lives and she undertook some of her training for the event there.

Once she had signed up to the Staffordshire Ironman event, Dawn* found that this provided her with a clear aim. It helped to focus her training and gave her a clear goal to work towards. She found this to be particularly important at times where she needed to juggle training with both work and personal demands.

Training for and participating in the event gave her the balance she needed in her life and this in turn has made her feel fitter and happier.

* All names have been changed to protect the identity of athletes participating in the event.

“My family and friends have been inspired by Ironman”

The commitment to training was recognised to be *“time intensive”* and for some whilst this meant there were opportunities to develop *“new friendships”* others felt that the time spent training had meant that they had needed to sacrifice *“family time”*. Some competitors with families took the opportunity to involve their families and this had encouraged these families to become *“fitter and healthier together”*. The below case study is reflective of those families who have been inspired by Ironman to become fitter and healthier.

Case Study:

Carly*, is a female in her early forties. Until recently she had no interest in sport. That is until a year and a half ago when her husband who is an Ironman competitor bought her entry into Ironman Staffordshire 70.3 as a Christmas present.

Since then, her whole family have been inspired by Ironman. Her two children ages 4 and 6 love to attend training sessions, playing in the water during the open water training sessions and going on cycle rides at the weekend. They took part in Ironkids and both aim to be Ironmen when they are older. Seeing their parents experiences and having the opportunity to accompany their parents at training sessions has inspired them and has helped them develop a healthy outdoors lifestyle and to make healthier eating choices.

“I developed lifelong friendships!”

Participants also commented that training and participation in the event had provided the opportunity to *“meet new people”* and in some cases to *“develop life long friendships”*.

Case Study:

James* is an experienced athlete from the Birmingham area used to competing in triathlons. He has competed in seven or more such events in recent years. He also undertakes runs up to and including marathon level. James* is in his late forties and has found that training for Ironman and similar such events has enabled him to meet so many likeminded people and in some cases to develop lifelong friendships, which he greatly values.

“I overcame personal fears and challenges”

The event was *“challenging”* for many and for some it also provided the opportunity to overcome personal challenges or fears, for example *“getting back in the water and swimming”* having been fearful of the water for years.

Case Study:

Jodie* is a female in her early forties and she was a novice Ironman participant, tackling both the event and all three sports for the first time. Before participating in Ironman she had been afraid of water and was unable to swim. With the help of her husband and a personal trainer, she learnt to swim and began training in the open water near to her home in the West Country. She is now a strong and confident swimmer. She is so proud that she has overcome one of her greatest fears and has successfully completed her first Ironman event. She described the event as an amazing experience.

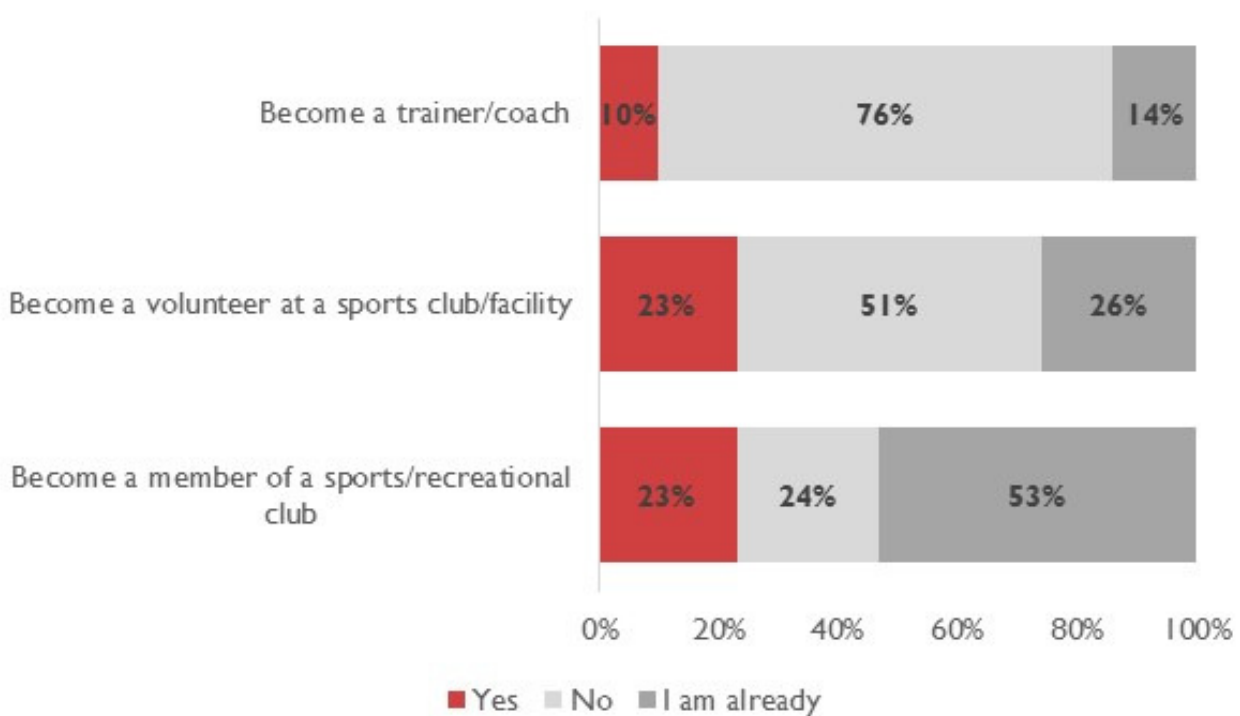
5.7 Additional impacts of participation

Survey respondents indicated that Ironman Staffordshire has encouraged them to become involved with sports/recreational clubs. Whilst a sizeable proportion of respondents indicated that they were already a member of a sports/recreational club, nearly one quarter (23%) had felt encouraged to do so whilst they were participating in Ironman.

Nearly one quarter (23%) also said that the event had encouraged them to volunteer at a sports club/facility. 10% had also been encouraged to become a trainer/coach as a result of participating in Ironman Staffordshire.

92% of those participating in the event indicated that they would like to take part in future triathlons or other races. Comments included “*I love these events*”, they are “*great fun*” and “*the sense of achievement at the end is amazing.*”

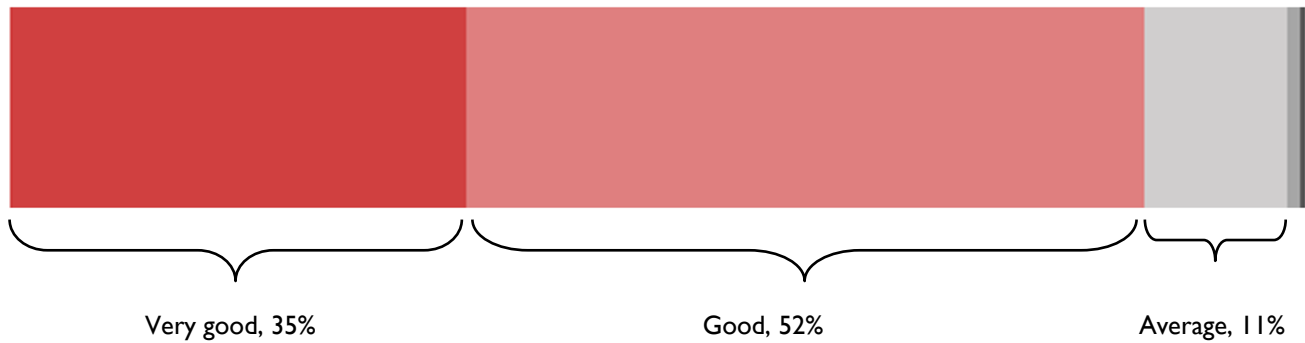
5.6: Additional impacts of participation in Ironman Staffordshire



6. OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF STAFFORDSHIRE

Those respondents who were staying over in Staffordshire were invited to rate what they thought of their stay. The majority rated their stay as either good or very good (87%). Less than 2% said their stay was poor or very poor.

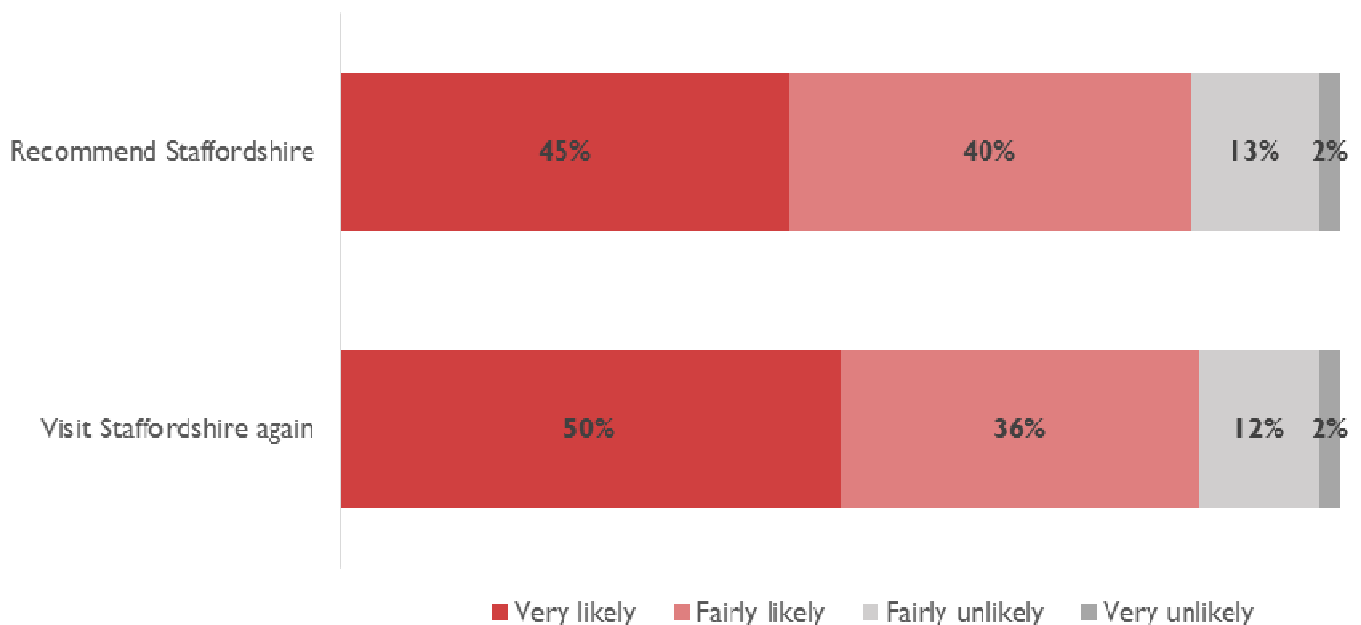
Figure 6.1: Rating Staffordshire as a place to stay - participants who had stayed over in Staffordshire (%)



This compares similarly to the Staffordshire Overnight Visitor Survey 2013, in which less than 1% rated Staffordshire's accommodation as poor or very poor. No respondents rated Staffordshire as a place to visit as poor. Ironman participants were however more likely to rate Staffordshire as a place to stay as average (11%). In comparison, no respondents to the Overnight Visitor Survey said their accommodation was average and only 4% rated Staffordshire as a place to stay as average.

The majority of respondents who had stayed over in Staffordshire did say that they would both recommend Staffordshire to others as a place to visit (85%) and would visit Staffordshire again themselves (86%). The comparative survey information available in the Overnight Visitor Survey does suggest that those survey respondents who participated in Ironman were slightly less likely to recommend their accommodation or to recommend Staffordshire to their friends and family. 15% of Ironman survey respondents were unlikely to recommend Staffordshire with less than 2% saying the same in the Staffordshire Overnight Visitor Survey.

Figure 6.2: How likely it was for Ironman participants to say they would... (%)



Survey respondents shared many comments about Staffordshire as a place to visit. All the comments shared by them are outlined in the wordle below. The most frequently mentioned words are shown in a larger font. For example Staffordshire was described as a “beautiful county”, it’s “lovely” and it contains “lots of countryside”.

6.3: What participants said about their visit to Staffordshire



7. IRONKIDS

7.1 Participation

Pre event, 10% of survey respondents (43 respondents) had a child or children who were participating in Ironkids. Post event, 9% of survey respondents (36 respondents) said that they had a child or children who were participating in Ironkids.

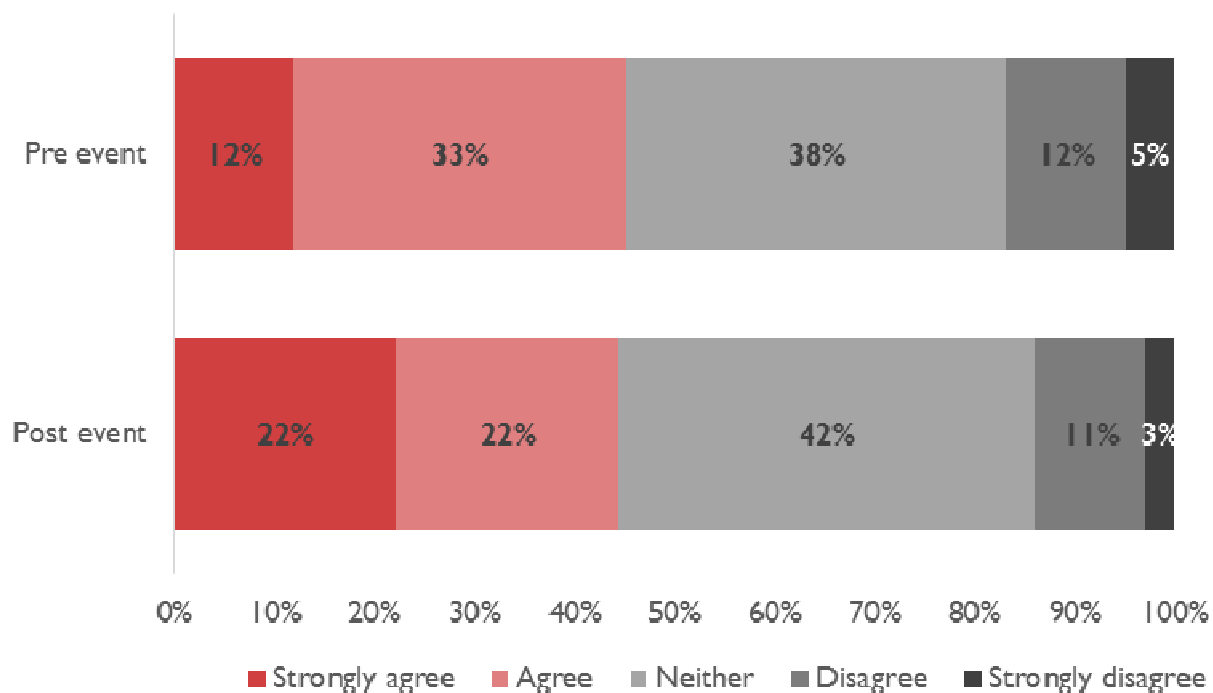
The age range of participating children was 3-14. In both surveys, it was most common for survey respondents to say that their children were between the ages of 5-11. 43 out of 59 children were in this age range in the pre event survey and 46 children out of 57 were within this age range in the post event survey.

7.2 Levels of physical activity

Both pre and post event, the largest proportion of respondents (just under half) agreed that Ironkids had encouraged their children to increase their level of physical activity. Post event, parents were more likely to strongly agree with this (22%) than they were prior to the event (12%).

The second largest proportion of respondents (both pre and post event) did not feel that the event had encouraged their children to increase their levels of physical activity. Respondents views are documented in the figure below.

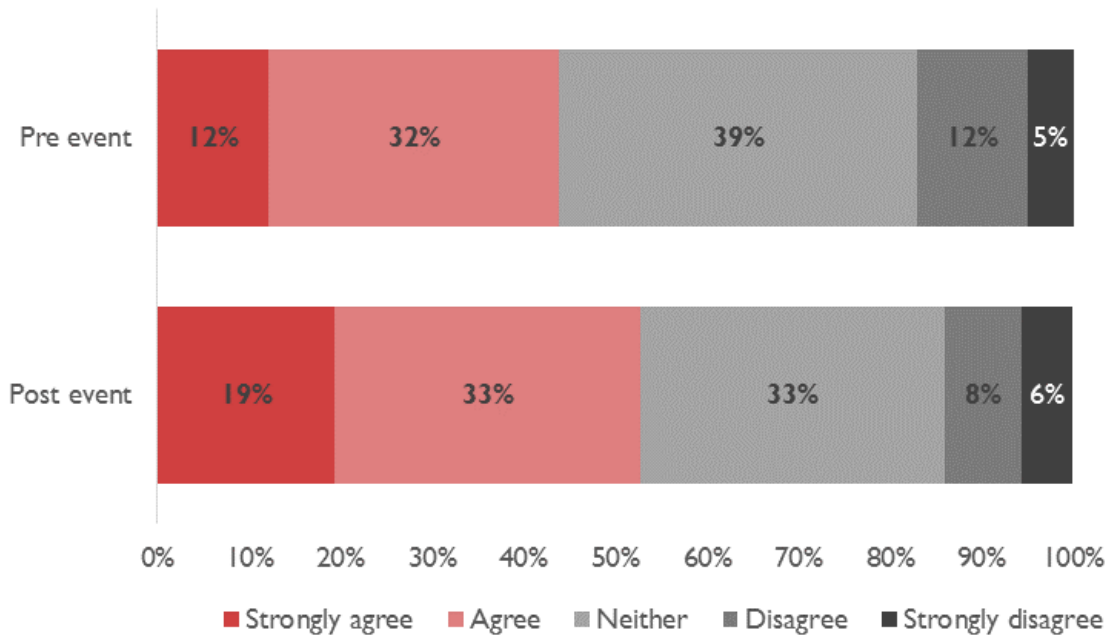
Figure 7.1: Respondents views on whether Ironkids has encouraged children to increase their level of physical activity (%)



7.3 Positive lifestyle changes

The largest proportion of respondents, both pre and post event, agreed that Ironkids had encouraged their children to make positive lifestyle changes. These changes were most likely post event, where over half of all respondents (52%) agreed that their children had been encouraged to make positive lifestyle changes. The second largest proportion of respondents in both the pre and post survey did not feel that the event had encouraged their children to make positive lifestyle changes. Respondents views are outlined in the figure below.

Figure 7.2: Respondents views on whether Ironkids has encouraged their children to make positive lifestyle changes (%)



Respondents who felt that Ironkids had encouraged their children to make positive lifestyle changes were asked to indicate what these changes were. Respondents were most likely to say that their children were participating in sports. Running and swimming were popular sports mentioned most frequently. It was also common for respondents to say that their children were generally being more active and participating in sports at the evening and weekends. All comments shared have been summarised below. Those responses in the largest font are those which were mentioned most frequently.

Figure 7.3: Parents comments on the physical activities which their children were participating in after taking part in Ironkids

