

EFDS Report Disabled People's Lifestyle Survey September 2013



Understanding disabled people's lifestyles in relation to sport. Defining current participation, preferences and engagement to provide more attractive offers in sport.

Contents

Introduction

04

Notes on the survey

05

Executive Summary

06

Developing relevant offers for disabled people

1. Key findings: Hobbies and interests 06
2. Key findings: What people find important in life 07
3. Key findings: Previous experience of sport 08
4. Key findings: Attitudes to sport 09
5. Key findings: Reasons for not doing sport 10
6. Key findings: Reasons for playing sport Key 11
7. Key findings: Sport played 12
8. Key findings: Time spent on sport 13
9. Key findings: The setting in which sport is played 14
10. Key findings: Who disabled people currently play sport with and who they would prefer to play with 15
11. Key findings: Ideal sporting environment 16

How to attract more disabled people

1. Key findings: Promoting new activities 18
2. Key findings: Terminology in sport 20
3. Key findings: Role models 21

By understanding the hobbies and interests of disabled people, the things that are important to them and the things that influence them, suggestions can be made as to how sport and physical activity can be adapted and improved to become more appealing.

If these changes are made, taking into account different preferences of different demographic groups, this should result in more disabled people taking part in sport and physical activity.

This document provides an executive summary of a research project conducted by the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS).

Details about the sample and methodology of the study can be found at the end of the document with the full report available on the EFDS website at www.efds.co.uk



Report findings based on market research conducted in November - December 2012 by English Federation of Disability Sport.

Report written By Emma Spring, on behalf of the English Federation of Disability Sport in April 2013.

Sample

The research is based on a total sample of n=476 disabled people. This was a mixture of disabled people and representatives of disabled people for those whose impairment was too profound to complete the survey without support. The total sample is a combination of two surveys and there were two survey types. A sample of 382 - the majority of results - are drawn from the main survey, conducted with people with all impairment types. In addition, to ensure people with all impairment types were accurately represented, there was an easy read version of the survey. This was conducted with people with a learning disability (n=94). It contained fewer questions and more images to help explain the content.

In line with current Sport England work, the sample focused on disabled people aged 14 and over. It represented all impairment groups and had a geographic spread across England.

Methodology

To ensure people with all impairment types could take part in the survey it could be completed in a number of ways. There was an online link which was distributed through EFDS social media channels and by direct emails to disability groups. There was also the option to complete the survey by telephone or face to face. The easy read questionnaires were all completed face to face.

For more information on sample or methodology please look at the full report available on the EFDS website www.efds.co.uk

If you require further details please contact Emma Spring, Research and Insight Manager, email espring@efds.co.uk



Executive Summary

Developing relevant offers for disabled people

1. Key findings: Hobbies and interests

- Listening to music, watching TV and socialising are the most common hobbies for disabled people overall.
- 3 of the top 10 hobbies of disabled people are sport and physical activity related.
 - Sport and physical activity related hobbies are much more prevalent among young disabled people aged 14 to 25, disabled men and disabled people who attended a special school.
- For the majority of the demographic groups, exercise is the most common sport and physical activity related hobby chosen by over 4 in 10 (46 percent).
 - This is even more prevalent amongst disabled men where it is the most popular hobby overall chosen by almost 6 in 10 (57 percent) people.
 - However, for young disabled people aged 14 to 25 'doing sport competitively' is more common than exercise (chosen by 46 percent and 39 percent respectively).
- Sport and physical activity related hobbies are much less common among disabled people who are not active, with 'watching sport' the only related hobby in their top 10.

What does this mean...

- Although sport and exercise related hobbies are quite common, there are still other hobbies which disabled people find more appealing.
- Opportunities may become more appealing, if we use aspects from the more popular hobbies incorporated in to the sport and physical activity.
 - For example, linking activities in some way to the popular chart music or TV shows or focus more on socialising.
- This is particularly important in those groups where sport and physical activity are much less prevalent (women and people who are currently not active).
 - It may be useful in these groups to consider ways to engage disabled people in other roles than participating in the sport itself. For example, encouraging them to volunteer at sporting events is another way to get them involved without taking part in the sport.

2. Key findings: What people find important in life

- Keeping healthy (86 percent), spending time with family (85 percent) and having time for hobbies and interests are the things disabled people chose as being most important to them.
- Playing sport and being active was ranked seventh out of the 15 options in terms of importance, selected by 69 percent.
 - Significantly more disabled people who attended a special school found it important (selected by 80 percent).
 - However, for disabled people who are not active, only half the proportion of people (35 percent) thought it was important. They are more likely to prefer spending time with their friends.
 - People with a mental health issue are also less likely to find playing sport and being active as worthy (46 percent), preferring to learn new skills instead.

What does this mean...

- Opportunities could be more appealing by promoting offers for sports and physical activity with messaging focused on the things people find most important.
 - For example: promoting the opportunity using messages about the key health benefits it can provide or offering opportunities where families can take part together.



3. Key findings: Previous experience of sport

- Disabled people were more likely to have enjoyed taking part in sport and physical activity in situations outside of school rather than at school.
 - 7 in 10 enjoyed taking part outside of school with less than 5 in 10 enjoying taking part in sport at school.
 - People with a learning disability are more likely to enjoy sport in school, with 79 percent agreeing that they did.
 - Whereas people with visual impairments or mental health issues were even less likely to enjoy experiences at school.
- PE was the least enjoyable experience of sport at school, with only 51 percent of people enjoying it.
 - 53 percent enjoyed playing sport in a school team and 54 percent enjoyed playing sport in breaks at school.

What does this mean...

- PE is the one area where the majority of people will gain exposure to sport and physical activity. It is therefore worrying that this is the least enjoyable area.
 - This could have a significant impact on disabled people's likelihood to want to continue taking part after their school days.
- EFDS are aware of this and are involved in a number of initiatives. These aim to improve the provision of sport and physical activity for disabled children in school and the community- building on the skill base of teachers and other providers.
- We encourage other organisations within the sector to take this into consideration too. So they can develop interventions that will improve disabled people's experiences of sport and physical activity.

4. Key findings: Attitudes to sport

- 8 in 10 (78 percent) disabled people really enjoyed the last time that they played sport.
 - Although this is much less likely among people who are not active (57 percent) and people with mental health issues (56 percent).
- 7 in 10 disabled people said that they would like to do more sport and physical activity every week.

What does this mean...

- For those groups who are much less likely to have not enjoyed the last time that they played sport, this could be one of the main reasons as to why they do not currently play sport.
 - A greater understanding of why they did not enjoy the last time they played is needed. This helps improve opportunities to ensure that they or others do not encounter the same experiences in the future.
- There appears to be significant latent demand to take part in sport and physical activity among disabled people. This means there is a market available if the right opportunities are made available.

5. Key findings: Reasons for not doing sport

- As seen in other research, disability and health are the main barriers to participation for 70 percent of the sample.
- However, lack of opportunities and awareness of opportunities are also significant barriers, impacting on two thirds of the sample.
 - These are even more restricting for disabled people who attended a special school or those with a congenital impairment.
- There are also notable differences to barriers by age:
 - Younger people aged 14 to 35 more likely to be limited by lack of awareness.
 - People aged 36-45 are more likely to be impacted by injury or illness.
 - Older people aged over 45 are more restricted by their health and disability.
- Differences can also be seen across other demographic groups.
 - People with a visual impairment and those with a learning disability or social or behavioural issues are more likely to be limited by the fact that they need support to take part in sport and physical activity.

What does this mean...

- Increasing awareness of the opportunities available and making sure that communication reaches the relevant disabled people is vital to maximise participation.
- Time and resource investment is needed to improve current promotional activities to achieve this.

6. Key findings: Reasons for playing sport key

- The top three reasons which motivate disabled people to take part in sport or physical activity were because it is fun (80 percent), to improve health (68 percent) and to get fit (60 percent).
- 'Because it is fun' is the main driver for all demographic groups.
 - Although less common among people with mental health issues and those aged 56 to 65, who primarily take part to improve their health.
- Although improving health is the second most important driver for the majority of people, it is less influential for young disabled people aged 14 to 25 and people with a learning disability.
- Getting fit is less influential for disabled people who completed the survey through representatives, young disabled people aged 14 to 25, people with a learning disability and people with social or behavioural problems.

What does this mean...

- Opportunities must be fun to appeal to the widest market.
- However effort needs to be made to understand what disabled people determine as 'fun' with the understanding that this may differ across different groups.
 - In addition to being fun, promoting sports as offering health and fitness benefits should also encourage people to take part.
 - This may only appeal to certain people, so it is important to understand which disabled people are the target audience for the opportunity.



7. Key findings: Sport played

- Swimming was the most popular activity among those that took part in the survey. This mirrors the findings of Sport England Active People Survey.
 - Nearly half of the sample said that they currently swim, (46 percent) which was significantly higher than any other activity.
 - It is particularly popular with disabled people who completed the survey through representatives (67 percent), disabled people who attended a special school (57 percent), people with a learning disability (63 percent), and people with social or behavioural problems (66 percent)
- Going to the gym was the second most popular activity, with cycling and walking next.

What does this mean...

- Whilst the sample size of this survey means that the results in terms of sport participation are not representative, it does provide additional evidence that swimming is a popular sport for disabled people.
- Swimming is often used by disabled people as physiotherapy or rehabilitation. Is there something more we can provide via water-based activities?



8. Key findings: Time spent on sport

- On average disabled people said that they spend five hours per week taking part in sport and physical activity.
- They are willing to travel for over an hour (1.1 hours) to generally take part and are willing to travel for a considerably longer amount of time to take part in competitions (3.3 hours).
- Whilst there are minor differences among demographic groups, the most notable is with people with mental health issues.
 - They are much less willing to commit time to taking part or travelling to take part in sport or physical activity.
 - On average they spend 3.4 hours per week taking part.
 - They are willing to travel for 0.6 hours (almost half that of the average) to generally take part and 2.0 hours to take part in competitions.

What does this mean...

- It seems that once disabled people do take part in sport, they are willing to commit a significant amount of time to it.
 - However, the extended time spent travelling could be a reflection of a lack of suitable opportunities in the local area which requires disabled people to travel further to find opportunities which they can take part in.



9. Key findings: The setting in which sport is played

- The most common setting to take part in sport is in a club, selected by almost half of the sample (47 percent).
 - This is much less common among people with mental health issues, with only two out of ten (20 percent) taking part in a club setting.
 - They are much more likely to take part socially, with nearly five in ten (47 percent) preferring this, higher than the overall average of 39 percent.
- A quarter of respondents stated that they take part alone.
 - This was not a direct option in the question to select; instead respondents used the 'other' box to highlight this.
 - This is particularly prevalent among people with mental health issues, where twice the number of people took part alone than the national average.

What does this mean...

- Results suggest that club settings play an important role in how disabled people take part in sport. It is therefore important to ensure that clubs are prepared to welcome and engage disabled people in the activities. Tools like EFDS's free online www.inclusion-club-hub.co.uk play an important part to support this provider.
- Taking part in sport or physical activity alone also seems common suggesting a gap in the market for interventions that exploit this – such as providing advice and guidance on independent activities.

10. Key findings: Who disabled people currently play sport with and who they would prefer to play with

- Around half (51 percent) of the sample currently play with a mix of disabled and non-disabled people.
 - However, two thirds (64 percent) would prefer to play this way.
 - Across all the demographic groups at least 10 percent more people prefer to play with a mix of disabled and non-disabled people than the proportion that currently do.
- 2 in 10 people say they currently take part alone, however, only 1 in 10 prefer to take part alone.
- 9 percent of people currently take part in groups with mixed impairments, which is three times more people than the 3 percent want to take part this way.
- People with a hearing impairment showed notable differences to other demographic groups.
 - Whilst they follow the general trend of the sample, currently and preferring to take part in groups of mixed backgrounds, they are significantly less likely to take part this way.
- They are much more likely to currently take part alone or in groups with other people with hearing impairments.

What does this mean...

- There is a notable mismatch between the people that disabled people currently play with and the people that they would prefer to play with.
 - This suggests there is a lack of opportunities for disabled people to take part in their preferred setting.
- The majority of disabled people would prefer to take part in a setting where disabled and non-disabled people participate together.
 - More opportunities which allow disabled people to take part this way would be beneficial in increasing numbers.
 - However this may not be realistic or suitable in certain situations such as talent progression.



11. Key findings: Ideal sporting environment

- For the majority, the ideal sport or physical activity would be something which is flexible, allowing them to take part when they want and pay as they attend.
- They want things which are moderately energetic and focused on fun and enjoyment. Activities should be things that can be done with friends in groups with mixed gender, background and disabled and non-disabled people.
- Whilst the general outline of an ideal activity is the same across the groups, some demographic groups seek other benefits from sport.
 - Disabled men, disabled people who are currently active, people whose impairment is congenital, people with a visual impairment and people aged 14 to 36 are much more likely to find something which is really energetic and allows people to learn a new skill appealing.
 - Activities which are competitive are more likely to appeal to disabled men, people whose impairment is congenital and people aged 26 to 35.
 - More structured activities which are at the same time every week in a formal indoor setting are more likely to appeal to disabled people who completed the survey through representatives and people with social/ and behavioural issues.
 - People with a hearing impairment, disabled people who are not active and people with social and behavioural issues are more likely to seek activities where the people who attend are less diverse (have the same gender, background and are also disabled).
 - Activities that can be done alone are more likely to appeal to people with mental health issues, people with social and behavioural issues and disabled people who are not active.
 - Activities with music are more likely to appeal to disabled people who completed the survey through representatives, young disabled people aged 14 to 25, disabled women, disabled people who are not active and people with a learning disability or social and behavioural issues.
 - People with mental health issues look for more things which require minimal commitment, something they can do alone, at a time that suits them, in an informal setting, focused on fun, that they turn up to take part. They are less interested in social aspects.

What does this mean...

- Different groups of disabled people find different aspects of sport and physical activity appealing.
- It is important to determine which disabled people you are targeting and amend you offers to match the criteria that appeal most to them.



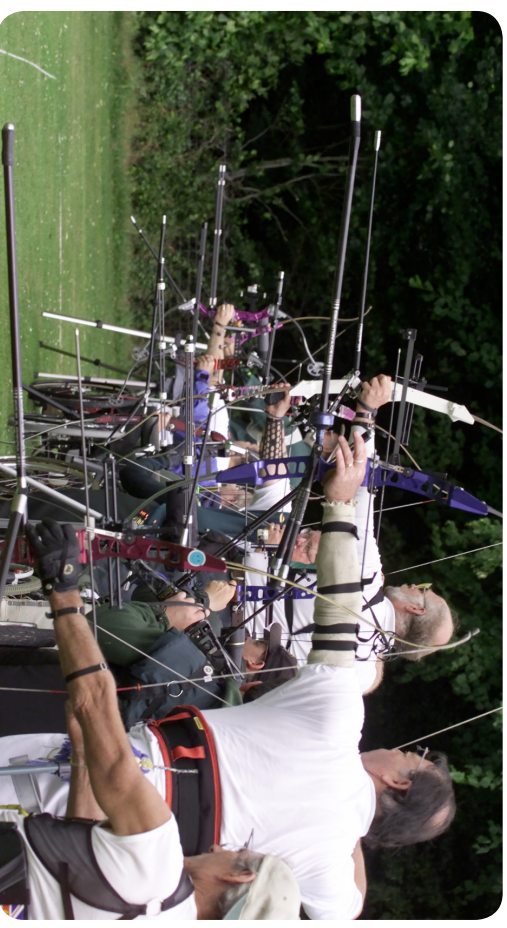
How to attract more disabled people

1. Key findings: Promoting new activities

- With 8 in 10 (78 percent) saying they use the internet to find about new hobbies and interests it is the most common method to seek information.
 - However it is a less common method for disabled people who completed the survey through representatives; people with a learning disability, people with a social or behavioural issue; people from a special school or young disabled people aged 14 to 25.
- Although the majority of people use a computer to research hobbies on the internet, smart phones and tablets are also common.
 - Half of people with smart phones and a third of people with tablets research hobbies and interests on these devices.
- Charities or disabled people's organisations are the second most way to seek information (used by 4 in 10).
 - However generally disabled people are frustrated with the level of support they can provide regarding hobbies and interests with only 4 in 10 rating them as useful.
- Specific publications for disabled people are read by 6 in 10 people.
 - However people with social issues; a learning disability; disabled people who completed the survey through representatives; people with a visual impairment and those who attended a special school are less likely to read such publications.
- Printed newspapers are a common source of information for non-active people, with 6 in 10 people reading them.

What does this mean...

- As the internet is the primary source of information gathering for the majority of people, for maximum exposure any new opportunities for disabled people in sport should be promoted across the internet.
 - However it must be remembered that any websites or information need to be in an accessible format to be visible on alternative devices such as tablets or smart phones.
 - Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) must also be maximised for the opportunity to be found too.
 - Internet includes social media, so starting Facebook groups or Twitter pages could be beneficial.
- Whilst internet search sites do play a big role in seeking information, it is important to note that the ONS Internet Access Quarterly Update (June 2012) showed that 1 in 3 disabled adults have never used the internet.
 - It is therefore important to ensure opportunities are communicated through other channels to reach those disabled people who do not use or do not have access to the internet.
- Alternative ways in which opportunities could be promoted can include articles / coverage in specific publications for disabled people or the use of newspapers (national, regional and local).



2. Key findings: Terminology in sport

- There are a number of different terms that can be used to describe sport and physical activity opportunities- all of which have different meanings to disabled people.
 - 'Sport' is perceived as something which is competitive that is game based.
 - 'Exercise' is activity that is done to keep fit.
 - 'Physical activity' is movement which increases the heart rate, not necessarily sport related, often as simple as completing daily tasks.
 - 'Recreation' refers to something done in your spare time which is fun and an enjoyable hobby.
 - 'Fitness' is being healthy and having the ability to do exercise.
- Overall, sport is the preferred for the majority of groups in the sample. However disabled women and people who are not currently active prefer the term recreation.

What does this mean...

- When communicating any opportunities it is important to use the language which will appeal most to the relevant audience.
- Considering the clear differentiation of the terms used, the decision of which to use when describing a new opportunity should be based on motivations to take part. For example:
 - Young disabled people and men more likely to be driven by competition and would therefore prefer 'sport'.
 - Disabled women are more likely to want fun and enjoyment so therefore react more favourably to 'recreation'.
 - People with a mental health issue are more likely to be driven to take part to improve their health so may be more open to 'fitness'.

3. Key findings: Role models

- Overall, 6 in 10 disabled people have a role model of some kind.
 - It is more common among young disabled people aged 14 to 25 (8 in 10), disabled women and people from a special school (7 in 10).
- The most common role model is a family member.
- On average only 2 in 10 people say that a sportsperson is their role model. However, young disabled people aged 14 to 25 are almost twice as likely to have a sportsperson as a role model.

What does this mean...

- Role models do not have to do sport to have an influence on disabled people to be active. Disabled people find their role models through experience, lifestyle, hobbies and future goals.
- If any role model believes in or sees a value in sport or physical activity they could be influential in encouraging disabled people to take part.
- Using family members within campaigns or wider messaging may have more strength than using sports people for opportunities.
- The survey suggests that using a sportsperson to promote new activities may not be as influential as using family members, who are much more likely to be role models for disabled people.
- It is most important to gain buy-in from family members to ensure that they see the value of a new opportunity and encourage other people to take part.



**English Federation
of Disability Sport**

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