

Calls 4 Action: Sports Participation and Disability

Why are we focussing on people with a disability?

Sport Wales is seeking to generate positive action to address the issues of inequality within sport. We know that children, young people and adults who have a disability or impairment are less likely to take part in sport than people who don't regard themselves as having a disability. We believe that everyone should enjoy the positive benefits that participation in sport brings, regardless of background and circumstances, and want to see inclusive provision embedded throughout the sports sector in Wales.

The Welsh Government has identified a range of evidence highlighting inequalities for people who have a disability. This evidence shows that people with disabilities can be at a disadvantage in terms of physical and mental health and well-being, education achievement and income levels. Households containing one or more disabled adults are more likely to have a low income than other households. Several forms of impairment are more prevalent in people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These include progressive wear and tear from manual occupations, and higher rates of obesity, predisposing to musculoskeletal problems and Type 2 diabetes. Disabled people and those with limiting long-term illness are twice as likely as people who are not disabled to suffer poor mental health¹. Evidence from our School Sport Survey and Active Adults Survey shows that people on lower income also have lower participation rates - coupled with having a disability, this can present a major barrier to participation in sport.

Inclusive school and community sports provision for young people is particularly important given that the majority of pupils with a disability are in mainstream schools – only 4% (4,319) attended special schools in 2012-13. In 2012/2013, there were 103,791 pupils with a Special Educational Need (SEN) in Welsh Schools². We need to ensure that all pupils are able to access sporting opportunities from an early age, and enjoy the lifelong benefits that taking part in sport can provide.

The current picture of participation

Since 2011, the School Sport Survey has captured frequency of participation, allowing us to explore the number of occasions per week pupils take part in organised sport and recreation, outside of the curriculum. In Wales, 40% of pupils across Years 3 to 11 take part in organised activity other than in curriculum time (i.e. extracurricular or club sport) on three or more occasions per week. The Vision for Sport in Wales refers to this as being '*hooked on sport*'.

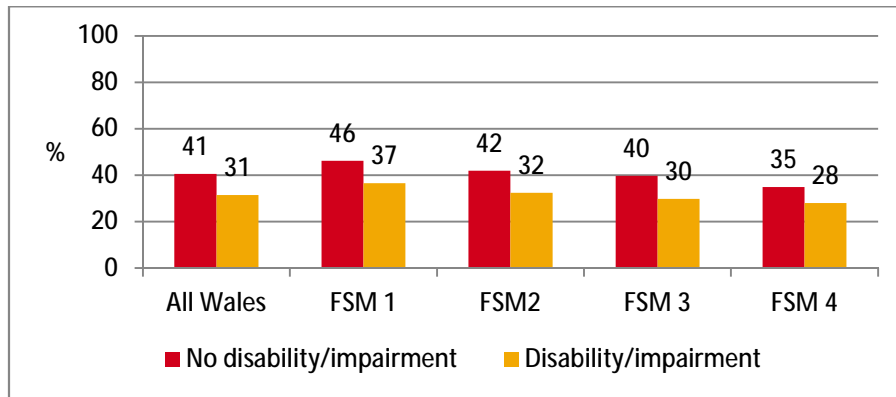
Figure 1 below shows the proportion of pupils who are hooked on sport according to disability and relative level of deprivation, where 'Receipt of a free school meal' is used as a proxy measure of the socio-economic

¹ Welsh Government. Equality and diversity: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/equality/publications/5503306/?lang=en>

² Stats Wales: <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Special-Educational-Needs/PupilsSEN-by-LocalAuthorityRegion-MajorNeed>

status. Using data provided from the Welsh Government Pupil Level Annual School Census³, schools in the survey are placed into a Free School Meal (FSM) quartile. FSM quartile 1 has a low percentage of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal and FSM 4 has a high percentage of pupils who are eligible, and can be considered relatively more deprived.

Figure 1: Percentage of pupils who are 'hooked on sport' and disability and income.



Pupils with a disability are less likely to be hooked on sport - there is a ten percentage point difference - and there is also a difference according to free school meal status.

Schools provide an important opportunity for disadvantaged pupils to have access to sport that may not be available with their families or in a community setting. Although almost three quarters of pupils with a disability had taken part in some extracurricular sport or sport with a club outside of school, (a similar percentage to Wales as a whole) they take part less frequently, and are more likely to say 'I don't do sport when I'm not at school'.

What do we know about pupils with a disability and their attitudes to sport?

Evidence from the School Sport Survey shows that among pupils in Wales, higher levels of enjoyment, ability and confidence are associated with more frequent participation in sport and physical activity. These are not surprising associations, but it is concerning that certain groups of pupils are telling us they have the exact opposite attitudes to sport – they don't enjoy it, they don't feel they are good at it, they lack confidence and they don't feel comfortable taking part. Regardless of gender, disability, level of deprivation or ethnic background, if pupils don't enjoy their experience of sport in school and feel they have the skills and confidence to take part, then they are unlikely to continue to participate and enjoy the lifelong benefits of sport.

When pupils were asked about their barriers and motivations for taking part in sport, similar answers were given regardless of whether pupils had a disability/impairment or not.

Positively, the majority of pupils – both with and without a disability - report that they enjoy PE lessons. However, there are some differences when it comes to extracurricular sport. Pupils with a disability are less likely to say they enjoy doing sport in school clubs (66% of pupils with a disability enjoyed sport in school clubs compared with 80% of pupils without a disability) and they are more likely to say they 'never' felt

³ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/schooldata/ims/datacollections/pupillevelannualschoolcensus/?lang=en>

comfortable doing PE and sport compared with others - nearly a fifth (18%) of pupils with a disability said this was an issue compared with 7% of other pupils.

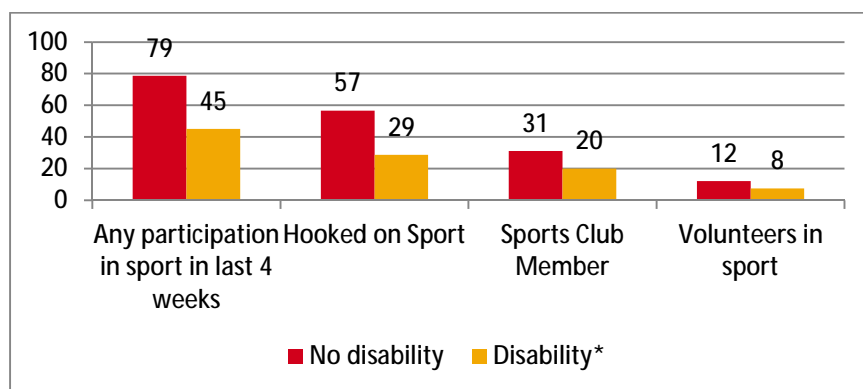
One of the clearest barriers to participation is related to a lack of confidence. When asked *'How confident are you in trying new activities without worrying?'* around two fifths of pupils with a disability weren't confident to try new activities without worrying, compared with one fifth across Wales. In the School Sport Survey, secondary school age pupils are given some statements about their sport and asked to rate their perceptions of how true that statement is for them. Whereas half of pupils with no disability say it is 'always true' that they feel good about themselves when they take part in sport, only around a third of pupils with a disability give this answer. The experience of sport is not as good as it should be for pupils with a disability and we need to ensure that pupil voice is taken account of. If we are not taking account of the needs of our customers, we are unlikely to increase participation among under-represented groups.

Given these findings, increasing the emphasis we place on listening to and understanding the needs of different pupils is likely to have a positive impact on participation levels in schools and in the longer term, and should routinely be part of the teaching, coaching, planning and delivery of sport.

Adults

Evidence from the Active Adults Survey 2012 tells us that these participation gaps persist according to whether an adult responded that they had a long term illness, health problem or disability. Figure 2 shows the differences in participation levels in a number of key measures. For adults, we classify someone as being hooked on sport if they take part on average three or more occasions a week in sport or physical recreation.

Figure 2: Percentage of adults participating in sport related activity in Wales and disability



* Disability is defined as physical or mental health conditions, illnesses or impairments expected to last 12 months or more.

Rates of disability increase throughout lifespan and differences in participation according to disability are more extreme in comparison with children and young people of school age, except in terms of sports club membership, which are not as pronounced as general participation levels.

Sports participation and regular physical activity has a positive impact on health and well-being, but evidence clearly points to the fact that opportunities to take part in sport are not as accessible to people with disabilities as they could be. We do not accept that any barrier is insurmountable when it comes to providing

high quality sporting opportunities to our communities, although we recognise that it will take time and a focussed commitment to overcome them.

What are we doing to address these issues?

Wales benefits from the work of the Federation of Disability Sport Wales (Disability Sport Wales), a body which is recognised by the Welsh Government as its lead organisation for the development of sport and physical activities for disabled people. The Disability Sport Wales National Development Programme is a joint initiative between the Sports Council for Wales, the Federation of Disability Sport Wales and the 22 local authorities across Wales. The scheme is aimed at developing quality community based sporting and recreational opportunities for disabled people throughout Wales. The programme is promoted and delivered through a network of Disability Sport Wales Development Officers located across every Local Authority in Wales.

insport are FDSW programmes which intend to support National Governing Bodies of Sport (insport NGB), Local Authorities (insport Development), and clubs (insport Club) to provide inclusive, quality sessions to disabled people within their communities and at a level of their choice or potential⁴.

Calls 4 Action Funding

Via the *Calls 4 Action* programme, Sport Wales is now seeking applications to fund innovative, high impact projects that will make a real difference in breaking down the barriers that prevent these underrepresented groups from regularly participating in sport, creating a lasting legacy opportunity from Glasgow 2014 for everybody in Wales. Sport Wales wants bold, new approaches, and wants to provide assistance to individuals and organisations that bring fresh ideas and ways of getting more people involved in sport.

Inequality in participation between differing groups is not inevitable and can and must be tackled. This year the whole of Wales has the opportunity to get behind our Commonwealth Team and be part of a team three million strong. *Calls 4 Action* will look to ensure that everyone one of us also has the opportunity to take part in sport on a grassroots level.

For further information, please go to the Calls 4 Action webpages:

<http://www.sportwales.org.uk/funding--support/our-grants/calls-for-action.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.disabilitysportwales.org/>