

Engagement through research and insight

Research and insight is vital to every organisation. It ensures that programmes, support and services meet the needs of the audience and promote the organisation's aims effectively.

Activity Alliance's focus on research and insight has enabled us to have a comprehensive understanding of disabled people and activity. This includes disabled people's lifestyles, barriers and motivations as well as their influencers.

We have created a number of engagement resources that encourage you to think about the ways you include disabled people. This sheet provides top tips on how to be more effective in research and insight. In turn, this will help you meet your organisational objectives.





Why do we need research and insight?

Research and insight helps us to understand which sport and physical activities disabled people currently enjoy, which they do not and what they would like to take part in if given the opportunity.

If research and insight is not carried out, or not carried out effectively, there is a substantial risk. Your offers may not meet the needs of your service-users and therefore may not be as successful as they could be.

What research already exists that can help you understand what disabled people want?

There is a lot of research conducted by others (secondary research) around effective delivery for disabled people. This could answer many of the main questions you have, an important step before considering undertaking your own studies. Existing research includes insight around which sport and activities disabled people enjoy doing and how you can provide something better which appeals to them.

Activity Alliance's research page contains relevant research, including all studies commissioned, published and released by the charity or in partnership.

Are disabled people interested in being active? How does it fit into their lives?

Activity Alliance's 2013 Lifestyle Survey showed that 7 in 10 disabled people want to do more sport or activity. The same research provides insight into disabled people's lives and where sport and physical activity fits. It also revealed the types of activities disabled people find interesting and how they want to take part in them. For example, two thirds said they prefer to take part with a mix of disabled and non-disabled people.

What prevents disabled people from being active?

Activity Alliance's 2012 Understanding the Barriers to Participation in Sport study identified that the main barriers preventing disabled people from being more active can be grouped into three categories. These are physical, logistical and psychological barriers, with psychological the strongest.

The psychological barriers refer to disabled and non-disabled people's perceptions and opinions. They include perceptions around disabled people's capability to take part in activities and the suitability of activities for disabled people. The report also indicates which barriers are more prevalent for people with certain impairment types.



How many disabled people currently take part in sport or active recreation?

Sport England's Active Lives Survey provides comprehensive, nationally representative data every six months around participation levels. According to May 2017/2018 data:

Disabled people (**42%**) are **twice as likely** as non-disabled people (**21%**) to be inactive.



Inactive means that they do less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week. You can analyse the data yourself using [Sport England's online interactive tool](#).

[Sport England's Mapping Disability: The Facts](#) gives greater detail on the disabled population, including on specific impairment types and health conditions. [The Department for Work and Pensions' Family Resources Survey](#) provides an annual estimate of the overall disabled population.

How do we encourage disabled people to try our sport?

Feedback from disabled people has shown that in order to offer activities that are most likely to appeal, it is important to focus on them as an individual, not their impairment. Try to link your activity to their values - things that they hold important in life.

[Activity Alliance's Talk to Me report](#) outlines [10 Principles](#) that providers can follow to make their activity more attractive to disabled people. Our [Principles in Action resource](#) gives examples of how other providers have applied the principles successfully. Videos explaining the Principles further can be found on our [YouTube channel](#).

What successful opportunities have other people delivered?

There are a number of case studies for all the reports mentioned above. They give examples of ways in which providers are already successfully offering activities to disabled people. [Activity Alliance's Active Together report](#) offers more examples of inclusive provision - disabled and non-disabled people taking part together.

[The Get Out Get Active programme](#) is built on Activity Alliance's research and insight and its website holds further news, resources and stories about successful inclusive activity.

[Activity Alliance's news page](#) includes blogs and other stories about disabled people's experiences of sport and physical activity.



Do you know what disabled people think about what you currently provide?

- Think about conducting some monitoring and evaluation of your activities. Look at our Insight into Action and Performance Measurement and Learning [resources](#) for further advice in this area.
- Sport England has a comprehensive [research guide](#) that covers the basics of undertaking and using research. Also see their [Evaluation Framework](#) for in-depth guidance on evaluation and monitoring.
- Make sure that your evaluation methods are accessible by using our [Inclusive Communications Guide](#) and providing alternative formats. E.g. easy read, British Sign Language.

- Use membership forms to capture whether or not people consider themselves to be disabled and their impairment types. If you would like some guidance on formulating your disability and impairment questions, please contact research@activityalliance.org.uk.
- Provide participants with a way to give feedback about the activity to understand what you are doing well and areas where you could improve.

Do you know how to make changes to your offer to make them more appealing?

Sport England and Activity Alliance released [Mapping Disability - Engaging disabled people: the research](#). This provides evidence-based tips on effective communication and design of a first session.

However, you need to ask disabled people what they think about new ideas and how they could be more appealing.

- Consult with disabled people in your local area. Perhaps talk to some people who are already taking part or approach local disability groups or charities. Share your ideas and ask for their feedback of what they would like to see.
- Think about asking other relevant stakeholders (such as coaches or teachers) for their opinions too.
- As people change, over their lifetime, their likes and dislikes change too. Remember to review your insight regularly to assess trends or changes among different groups, for example age or impairment.

Find all our research on our website, this sheet is part of our engagement resource.

Read all the sheets here activityalliance.org.uk/engagement

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This document is available in Word format. Please contact us if you need support. Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. Registered Charity no. 1075180