

The impact of COVID-19 on disabled people

Summary of secondary
research

Updated October 2020

activityalliance.org.uk



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Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Wellbeing and support](#)
- [Shielding and self isolation](#)
- [Finances and benefits](#)
- [Impact on physical activity](#)

Introduction

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has caused significant challenges for many people, affecting our health, lifestyles, and wellbeing.

Disabled people face additional barriers in many areas of life, including being physically active.

This document, using a review of recent research, outlines the social impact of the pandemic and restriction measures on disabled people, and the impact on their physical activity levels. References to the relevant research can be found at the end of the document.

This is updated regularly with new figures. Last updated: 20/10/2020

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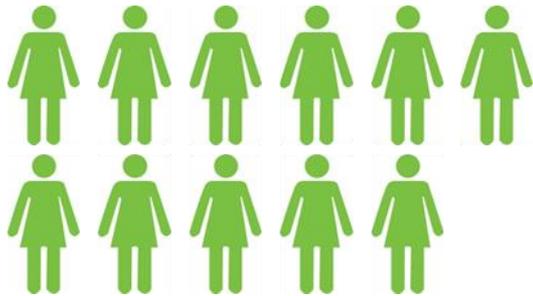
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Wellbeing and support

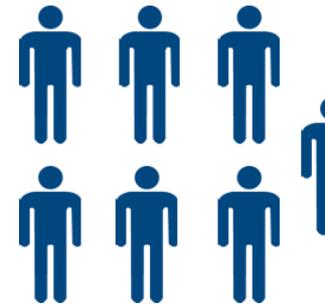
Disabled people were more likely to die from coronavirus



For every one non-disabled woman who dies
11 disabled women die



For every one non-disabled man who dies
6.5 disabled men die



Disabled people are more worried about the impact COVID-19 is having on their lives

79%

Over three quarters of disabled people are "very" or "somewhat" worried about the effect that coronavirus is having on their life

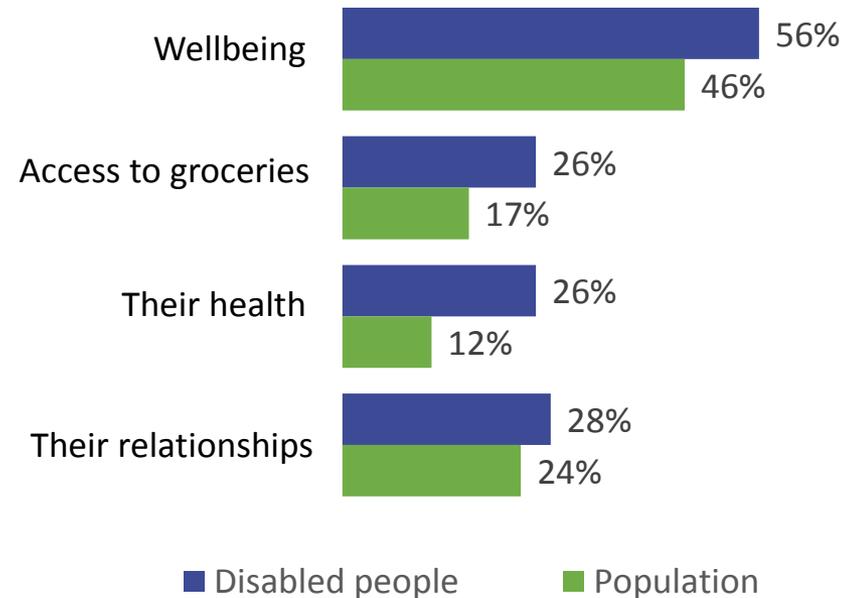
x2

People with a health condition are twice as likely to feel lonely than the overall population.

40%

Of people with a health condition report high levels of anxiety (compared to 33% of general population)

COVID-19 is having a greater impact on disabled people's ...



Compared to the data from July-September, disabled people are showing increase concern about the impact on their lives, wellbeing, and health

Disabled people were left without the social care they needed over lockdown

51%

Over half of disabled adults who previously received care are no longer receiving home visits from health care professionals. (June 2020)

31%

Almost one third of disabled people are concerned about the level of care they are currently receiving and how it is provided. (June 2020)

“The emergency coronavirus legislation relaxed the duty of care on local authorities. It also reduced the duty on local authorities on ECHP and the timeliness of assessments. Consequently, some disabled adults and children may be left without the care and support they need.” **Scope, June 2020**

The medical care of people with health conditions has also been affected, leading to a negative impact for many

33%

A third of people with a long-term health condition said they had been able to access the same level of medical care in October (an increase from 28% in September) as they had pre COVID.

36%

Over a third of those whose care had been reduced or cancelled said their health has gotten worse because of this (a decrease from 42% in September).

COVID-19 is having a negative impact on disabled children and their parent's health



Parents of disabled children report worsening emotional and mental health for both their children and themselves



Nearly half (45%) say their disabled children's physical health has declined

With just over half (54%) saying the same about their own health



Over two thirds (68%) say a health or social care assessment has been delayed due to the lockdown.

Parents of disabled children are frustrated at the impact COVID-19 has had on support



Compared to before lockdown:

8%

Less than 1 in 10 parents say support from the council or the NHS has stayed the same

76%

Over three quarters say all support from the council or the NHS has stopped

72%

Over 7 in 10 parents are having to do a lot more care

Since lockdown has eased:

51%

Over half of parents said short breaks or respite have not resumed

71%

More than 7 in 10 have said their child's therapies have not restarted

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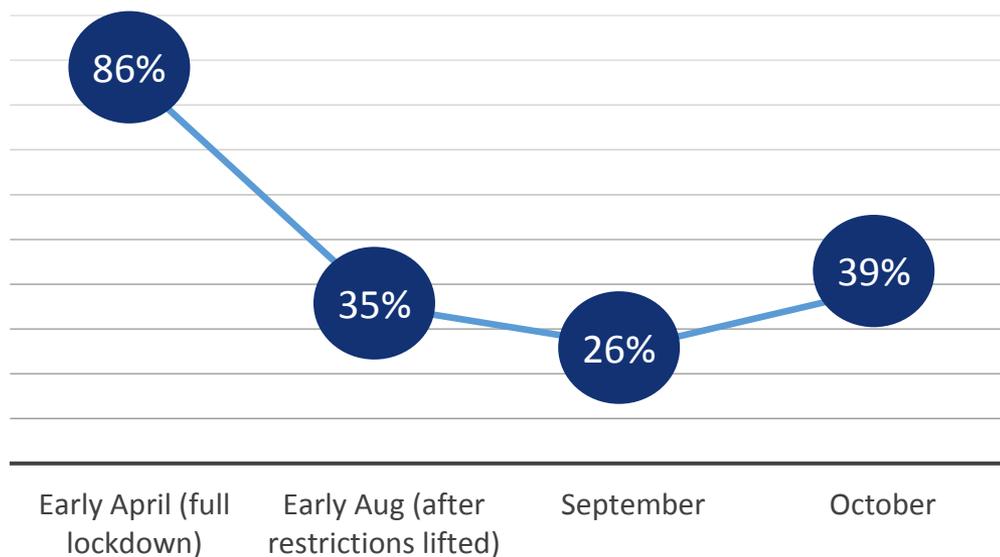
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Shielding and self isolation

Disabled people are more likely to be socially isolating or shielding



2.2 million people were classed as clinically extremely vulnerable by the Government. Guidance on shielding was paused in August, but in August the Government introduced additional formal restrictive measures for those in high alert areas.



The proportion of disabled people who are staying at home or only leaving for essential reasons is starting increase

Disabled people are more likely to continue feeling uncomfortable (50% compared to 31% of the general population) or unsafe (43% compared to 28% of the general population)

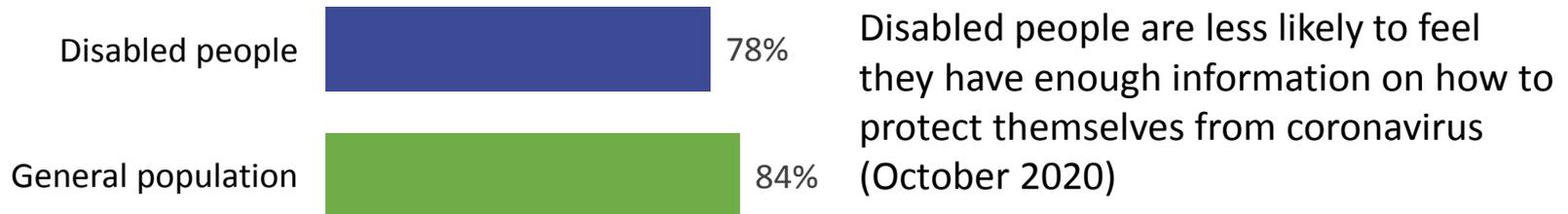
Disabled people are feeling unsupported and are less sure how to keep themselves safe

59%

Over a half of disabled people are concerned about feeling forgotten by the government (June 2020)

67%

Two-thirds think the government's plans for easing lockdown did not take their needs into consideration (June 2020)



Disabled people are less likely to feel they have enough information on how to protect themselves from coronavirus (October 2020)

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Finances, benefits, and work

Disabled people use benefits to support them day to day, including for being active



65%

Almost two thirds of disabled people rely on benefits to be active:

- Travel
- Paid for exercise
- Specialist equipment

3.5
million

3.5 million disabled people of working age receive benefits.

x2

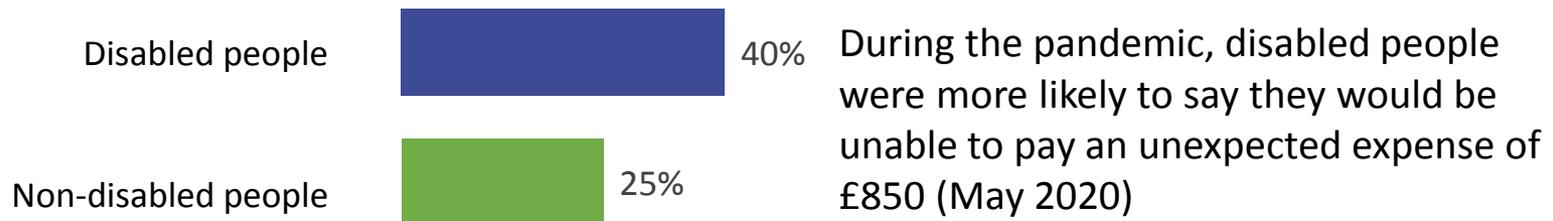
A disabled working-age adult is more than twice as likely to be in poverty than a non-disabled adult.

£538

Disabled people face over £500 a month in extra costs related to their impairment or condition.

“Difficulty in accessing benefits and delays in payments have often left disabled people financially insecure. The crisis has further highlighted existing flaws in the benefits system and the introduction of temporary changes creates uncertainty.” **Scope 2020**

Disabled people are more likely to face acute financial challenges because of coronavirus and have worries about work



During the pandemic, disabled people were more likely to say they would be unable to pay an unexpected expense of £850 (May 2020)

25%

A quarter of disabled people are worried about losing their jobs as a result of the pandemic (Aug 2020)

41% are anxious about not going back to work
48% are worried about using public transport
87% fear others won't respect social distancing rules, putting them at risk

Parents of disabled children also face additional financial pressure



Parents of disabled children are facing many financial pressures



With one fifth believing they will end up in debt because of coronavirus

61%

6 in 10 had seen an increase in costs (36% home schooling costs, 32% specialist equipment, 15% PPE)

39%

Almost two fifths had seen a reduction in income

76%

Over three quarters have had no increase in benefits

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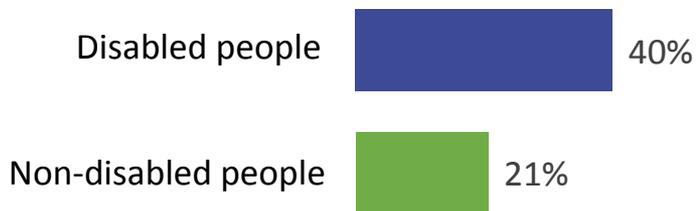
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Impact on physical activity

Activity levels among disabled people were increasing before coronavirus

Disabled people had seen an increase in activity levels, with a 2.5% increase from Nov 2018 to Nov 2019. However, they are still almost twice as likely to be inactive as non-disabled people

Proportion of people who are inactive (doing less than 30 mins of physical activity per week)



The most popular physical activities that disabled people participate in are:



Walking for leisure and travel



Fitness activities



Cycling for leisure and sport



Swimming

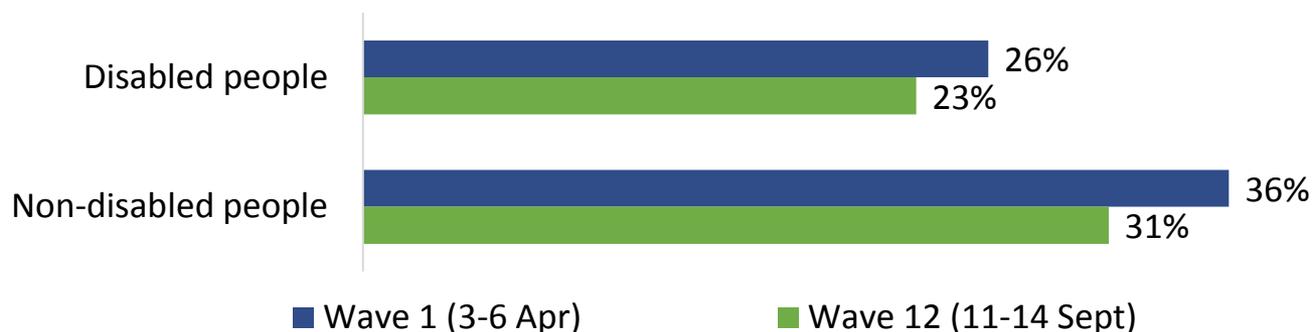


Fitness classes

During lockdown, disabled people were less likely to be active

Over the course of the pandemic, everyone has seen their activity levels drop:

Proportion of people doing at least 30 mins of physical activity 5 times or more in the last week



Other inequalities in activity levels have also worsened:

Between men and women, and different social grades

People who live alone, those without access to outdoor space, and people living in urban also showed inequalities in activity levels

Disabled people and people from BAME ethnic backgrounds continue to be the least active groups

Disabled people are less likely to feel they have the ability to be active because of coronavirus

53%

53% of disabled people feel they have the opportunity to be physically active (compared to 73% of non-disabled people)

50%

Half of disabled people worry about leaving their home to be active (compared to 55% of non-disabled people)

Disabled people were less likely than non-disabled people to:

Have found new ways to be active during the pandemic

Be using exercise to manage their physical or mental health

Have more time for physical activity

Attitudes and motivations to be active have fallen since August and are lower than non-disabled people



Proportion of disabled people who agree it's important to exercise regularly

August 2020

63%



October 2020

54%

70% for non-disabled people



Proportion of disabled people who exercise to manage physical health

70%



58%

70% for non-disabled people



Proportion of disabled people who exercise to manage mental health

64%

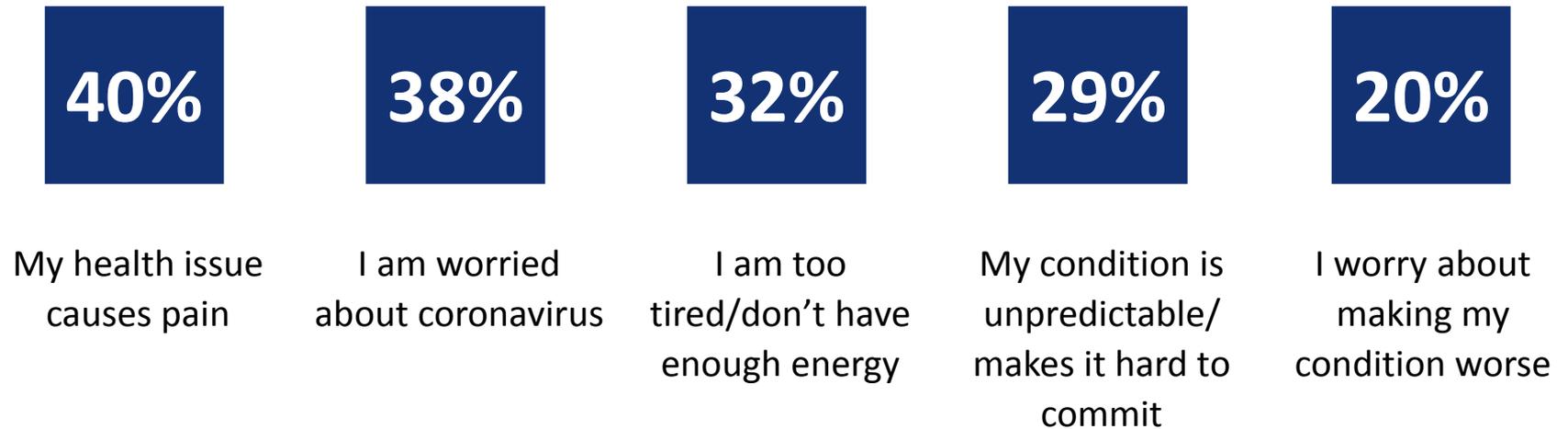


56%

62% for non-disabled people)

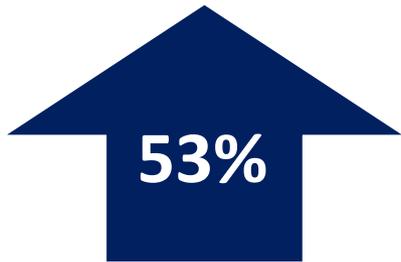
Coronavirus is an important additional barrier to activity for people with health conditions

Barriers to being active:



Those with a lung or mental health condition are more likely to say coronavirus is a barrier.

Disabled people want to be more active after lockdown/in the next few months



Over half of disabled people want to increase the amount of activity they do post lockdown (compared to 57% of non-disabled people)

However....

69% say they will feel safer exercising at home

67% are worried about exercising close to other people

39% feel coming out of lockdown will make it harder to be active

Participation in some activities did increase at the start of lockdown



Earlier in lockdown, levels of running, walking, and cycling increased for both disabled and non-disabled people, although levels of participation among disabled people were lower

		% of disabled people who completed each activity in the last week		% of non-disabled people who completed each activity in the last week	
		June 19-22	Sept 11-14	June 19-22	Sept 11-14
Running		13%	12%	26%	22%
Walking		55%	44%	67%	60%
Cycling		12%	12%	18%	16%

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Overcoming COVID-19 challenges: Case study and examples

Get Out Get Active, Activity Alliance

Get Out Get Active (GOGA) is a programme that runs across the UK. It supports the very least active disabled and non-disabled people to enjoy being active together.

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the different activities GOGA provides, but the teams across the country have come up with some helpful ways to continue to support people being active.

Examples of what has been offered:

- Personal telephone calls to offer words of encouragement and listen to what individuals have been doing to keep active.
- Weekly emails with information on home workouts (sourced locally or nationally).
- Exercise postcards mapping suitable exercise programmes for people to follow from their home.
- Social media accounts sharing exercise suggestions and online classes and activity challenges.
- Delivering equipment to care homes and individuals to help them be active (adapted bikes /badminton / foot golf).

#DSCathome, Disability Sports Coach

Disability Sports Coach empowers disabled people to lead more active lives by providing affordable weekly opportunities to get active and meet friends. The charity also trains coaches, leaders and teachers with the skills to deliver high quality accessible sport activities for disabled people.

Schools closing and lockdown meant they have had to cancel or postpone their regular coaching programmes and community clubs. To help with motivation and to keep participants active, they developed a programme using online and offline resources.

Examples of what has been offered:

- Sending out over 300 equipment packs to members of Community Clubs
- Provide bespoke activity card downloads online
- Running live Zoom activity sessions four times a week – including mindfulness, yoga, dance, and multi-sports
- A weekly social session and quiz on Zoom
- Weekly challenges for participants to achieve personal goals

The impact:

- Increasing connectedness and reducing social isolation
- Increased reach to new participants
- Ensured vulnerable participants continued to keep active during lockdown

Geddington Newton Bowls Club

The offer:

Following the easing of lockdown and the re-opening of the club, the committee realised many of their members were fearful of a return to bowls due to being at risk or unsure of mixing outside their own household.

- Therefore 'extra safe' bowling sessions were offered: Members could have the bowls green to themselves; the gates were opened ready for their arrival; equipment was put out and disinfected to minimise the need to touch any surfaces.
- Sessions have proved hugely popular with many feeling so satisfied with the safety measures in place that they have felt confident enough to book a regular session. A video has been made to demonstrate all the safety measures that have put in place at the club: <https://geddingtonbc.wixsite.com/bowls/gallery>

The impact:

- The club has enabled its members to return to the sport at their own pace, whilst gaining confidence to leave their homes and socialise in a safe environment
- The number of extra safe sessions being booked has now reduced as members feel comfortable with the safety measures in place
- A 'Buddy Scheme' has now been introduced, for individuals who want an opponent to be paired up
- Other clubs have implemented similar 'extra safe' models in order to encourage members who are wary of returning to the sport
- Committee members continue to meet regularly via Zoom so as to assess the club's progress and any arising issues

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