## Activity Alliance response to Active Lives consultation

Sport England’s Active Lives Adult survey is a hugely valued resource for the sport and physical activity sector. Robust data on activity levels, participation, attitudes, and outcomes helps us all to understand trends over time, and the impact of Activity Alliance’s work. As the leading voice for disabled people in sport and activity, understanding differences between demographic groups is a key feature of the project for us, and key to tackling inequalities.

Sport England is running a consultation on the Active Lives survey for proposed changes on the sample allocation for local authorities. Local organisations will be most affected in terms of sample changes, whereas the changes have less impact on regional or national data. We encourage local authorities or other organisations (especially those who have high levels of inactivity or disabled people in their local area, or work with other demographic groups with high levels of inequality) to engage with the consultation. The consultation is an opportunity for you to review the impact on your local area, and tell Sport England your preferences or concerns.

* [You can read the proposal PDF, review the scenarios in Excel, and complete the link here.](https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/data/active-lives?section=local_sample_consultation)
* The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete.
* The survey will close on 30 July 2023.

Our research team has reviewed the proposed changes. Our preferred scenario was Scenario 7 (minimum 400, 25% on population size and 75% on need). Below, we explain our response. Disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are one of the least active groups in our society. They face ongoing challenges from the pandemic, the rising cost-of-living, and declining wellbeing. Disabled people are less likely to participate in almost all sports and activities - but face a range of barriers when they do, despite 77% wanting to be more active. Data and insight that includes disabled people is vital to achieve our vision - fairness for disabled people in sport and activity.

### Our consultation answers:

1. How important is it to…?
2. Maintain the minimum local authority sample at 500. **Somewhat important**
3. Allocate the biggest possible proportion of sample based on greatest need. **Very important**
4. Allocate the biggest possible proportion of sample based on population size. **Somewhat important**
5. What do you feel is the appropriate minimum number of responses to collect in each local authority area?

400 responses (enables more sample for allocation based on need/population)

1. Please share anything you think is important for us to consider when reviewing the minimum number of local authority responses.

We oppose reducing the target sample size to 300. This would prevent reporting on the data for disabled people versus non-disabled people. This is one of the largest inequalities in sport. It’s vital that local authorities can see and act on the scale of the issue in their area.

1. Do you think a proportion, all, or none of the additional available samples should be allocated based on greatest need and / or population size?
   1. Areas of greatest need. **75% allocation**
   2. Areas with the largest population. **25% allocation**
2. Please share with us why you have chosen this particular allocation.

Our response: We support reviewing the sample based on ‘greatest need’. Across the country, there are huge inequalities between different demographic groups. It is important to understand more about some of the least active groups and areas in our society. Reducing the minimum to 400 responses to allow more responses for re-allocation, would also still allow analysis for disability, age, gender, and socioeconomic status.

1. Please share anything you think is important for us to consider when we review increasing samples based on areas of greatest need.

Our response: We would like to understand more clearly how ‘greatest need’ is calculated, and for Sport England to help others use this metric. We support a focus on the areas with the most inequalities, as we know the demographics of a local area highly influence the level of inactivity. We would like outcomes such as the Health Index and Indices of Multiple Deprivation to be included. Measures used should include both personal outcomes and wellbeing, as well as social and environmental factors that influence health. We would like to understand how changes to the sample might impact on the ability to track changes over time. It’s also important that the Active Lives tool continues to provide intersectional data on regional and national levels.

1. Please share anything else you think is important for us to consider when we review increasing samples based on areas with the largest populations.

Our response: We feel cautious about increasing samples based on population. More populated areas, or cities, may be more likely to have more accurate data and insight. Increasing samples in this way may also disadvantage organisations working in less densely populated areas. However, we know cities and areas of larger populations have specific challenges, as well as opportunities in scale of impact. We encourage listening to their feedback to understand any negative effects the sample change might have.

1. Please share any other comments or suggestions you have about the Active Lives Adult Survey.

* We ask Sport England to include in Active Lives a question to determine ‘if a person’s gender is different from their sex assigned at birth’. It is currently not possible to review data for trans people. We know trans people are more likely to also be disabled and/or have a long term health condition, and that they face a range of barriers to being active. With its large sample, Active Lives provides an opportunity to understand inequalities in this group.
* We and others would find it useful to be able to select ‘activities’, ‘locations’, and ‘people’, rather than two combinations, though appreciate the sample size won’t allow for all combinations to be built.
* Active Lives provides a range of ways to complete the survey, and we encourage other projects to use accessible and positive language and formats (e.g. screen and text sizes, navigation through keyboard, speech recognition, and screen-readers, and BSL information), and paper copies. Alternative completion methods (e.g., telephone or SMS) and languages other than English could support a more inclusive project. Consideration for people with more complex access or communication requirements would be another improvement.
* There is a knowledge gap for data on ethnicity, both at regional and local scale, due to the smaller size of the population. It appears reallocation would not increase the sample size for most or all local authorities to the necessary level of 2,000. Currently, data on ethnicity is available at Active Partnership level. We encourage those who would benefit from this local data, and who are financially able, to boost their responses for a large enough sample to report on ethnicity.

### Useful resources:

* Our 2023 ‘[Annual Disability and Activity Survey’](https://www.activityalliance.org.uk/how-we-help/research/annual-survey) report provides a deeper understanding of disabled people’s experience and perceptions of being active. We will release a separate report later in the year, showing differences for different demographic groups of disabled people.
* We encourage people to explore data from 2021-22 [using Sport England’s](https://activelives.sportengland.org/Home/AdultData) online tool. This will help you to understand how many disabled people participate in your sport or activity, or how disability affects activity levels for people with different demographics.

**Please contact our research team to discuss the consultation or how you can use Active Lives data to support your work with disabled people.**[**Email research@activityalliance.org.uk**](mailto:research@activityalliance.org.uk)**or call 01509 227750.**