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# Annual Disability and Activity Survey Secondary analysis

Exploring regional differences in disabled people's lived experiences of being physically active.

**August 2025**



**Activity Alliance  
and Rose Fawcett**

[activityalliance.org.uk](https://activityalliance.org.uk)

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# About Activity Alliance

Activity Alliance is the leading voice for disabled people in sports and activities.

Established in 1998, we are a national charity with a vision to see a future where all disabled people feel they belong in sports and activities. Our mission is to improve opportunities to be active, empowering disabled people to get involved in sports and activities in the way they choose. We work with disabled people and an alliance of committed partners to do this and build a movement for change.

We lead research and insight on disabled people in sports and activities. Our Annual Disability and Activity Survey (ADAS) is the primary source of data for organisations working to increase disabled people's activity levels. It complements Sport England's Active Lives Adult Survey.

To find out more about Activity Alliance and view our previous ADAS reports, visit [activityalliance.org.uk/research](https://activityalliance.org.uk/research).



# Background

Since 2019, we have conducted the Annual Disability and Activity Survey (ADAS). The survey provides in-depth insights into issues that matter most to disabled people about sports and physical activity. With five years of data, we now have a valuable long-term dataset, allowing us to explore new trends and gain deeper insights that were previously unavailable due to smaller sample sizes.

This report is based on data from 10,411 people surveyed between 2019 to 2024, including 5,113 disabled people and 5,298 non-disabled people. Each year, different participants complete the survey from Sport England's Active Lives Survey and a pooled representative sample from research agency IFF, providing us with a comparable dataset rather than tracking the same people over time. We define respondents as disabled in line with the Equality Act 2010. This means, if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. The sample is representative of the UK profile of disabled people across demographics.

We worked with Rose Fawcett, a data analyst, to explore:

- How does participation and experiences in sport and physical activity vary for disabled people in different regional locations?
- How do regional differences and disabled people's individual experiences shape their preferred sources of advice and information on sport and physical activity?

Data from five years of ADAS were put together to create one overall data file. We used a statistical technique called multiple linear regression to understand attribution. Attribution is key in this type of research. It means we are looking at, as far as possible, whether a difference in people's experiences is associated with regional locations and not other factors, such as age or employment status. We report findings where the association with a region is significantly different to at least two other regions<sup>1</sup>. All findings within this report are statistically significant<sup>2</sup>. This means there's a 90% chance that the result reflects something real, and that the differences we observe between regions are something beyond chance or random fluctuation.

For further details or support in using the data, please [email Activity Alliance's research team](#) or call 0808 175 6991.

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid reporting all regions when one is the outlier.

<sup>2</sup> at the 10% level.

# Key findings

We explored how regions are associated with disabled people's participation and experiences of being active. Through the statistical technique, these findings consider several demographic factors and impairment types, such as age, gender, and socio-economic status.

## Opportunity, enjoyment, and participation of being active

**There are no regional differences in reported opportunities to be physically active.**

- Half (51%) of disabled people across all regions feel they have the opportunity to be as active as they want.

**Disabled people in the East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber, and Scotland are more likely to enjoy physical activity. Disabled people in the West Midlands are less likely to say they enjoy being active.**

- 72% of disabled people in the East Midlands, 73% in Yorkshire and Humber, and 75% in Scotland enjoyed their last experience of sport or physical activity when completing the survey.
- In comparison, 64% of disabled people in the West Midlands agree they enjoyed their last activity.
- Overall, just over two-thirds (69%) of disabled people enjoyed the last time they took part in sport or physical activity.

**Disabled people in the North West and East of England are more likely to say they want to be more active compared to other regions.**

- Eight in ten (80%) disabled people across all regions report they would like to do more activity.
- 82% of disabled people in the North West and 84% in the East of England would like to do more activity.

# Preferred sources of advice and information for disabled people

**Health and social care professionals are the most likely source of advice for being physically active for disabled people (79%).**

- Disabled people in the West Midlands (72%) are less likely to go to healthcare professionals for advice on being active than any other region.

**Online sources are the most likely source for disabled people to find information about sport or physical activity opportunities (53%).**

- Disabled people in the East Midlands (58%) are more likely to prefer looking for information on the internet than other regions.

**Personal contacts are the next highest information source (38%).**

- Disabled people in the North West (42%) are more likely to seek information from friends and family than those in the East of England (33%).

**Disabled people in the North East (42%) and Scotland (43%) are more likely to look for information at sports, leisure, and community organisations.**

- Those in Northern Ireland (31%), East of England (33%), West Midlands (34%), and London (35%) are less likely to use these sources.

**Disabled people in Yorkshire and Humber (33%) are more likely to use local news, media, radio, posters and leaflets**

- Disabled people in the North West (27%) are less likely to use local media and resources.

**Healthcare professionals are more likely to be preferred sources of information for disabled people in London (31%), Yorkshire and Humber (31%), and East Midlands (31%)**

- Healthcare professionals are less likely sources of information for disabled people in the East of England (26%) and the South East (26%).

# Moving forward with this insight

With insight collected over five years of the Disability and Activity Survey, we offer three recommendations for how we, at Activity Alliance, intend on using this information to support our work to ensure that sports and activities meet disabled people's needs in all regions across the UK. These recommendations extend to the wider sport and activity sector about how we can work together to tackle these inequalities.

## Recommendation 1: Further insight and learning across regions and place

- Experiences of being active across regions vary for disabled people. Activity Alliance will use this insight to influence our work at a regional level working with partners to advocate for disabled people and address barriers to being active.
- Partners and organisations in different regions should use this insight to explore the local barriers and opportunities that may influence disabled people's experiences of enjoyment and want to be more active in their respective areas. Organisations should work with Activity Alliance and together across regions to share best practices and develop insight that underpins disabled people's experiences at a local level. Where this insight is not yet available, we encourage organisations to work with Activity Alliance to develop and collect this insight.

## Recommendation 2: Develop intersectional insight and learning

- Activity Alliance will expand on this secondary analysis in future years by continuing to collect data through our Disability and Activity survey. We will share intersectional findings with our partners to continue to address gaps in the knowledge base. We will work across regions to listen to the needs of disabled people and organisations to ensure that the insight we gather adds value to the sector, resonates with disabled people's experiences and creates lasting impact in their local areas.
- We urge organisations in all regions to work with other committed partners across the sport and activity sector to adopt these insights to address inequalities. Where possible, we encourage partners to collaborate with Activity Alliance to further explore disabled people's experiences in sport and activity in their local areas, with a clear focus on demographic factors that highlight stark inequalities.

## Recommendation 3: Equip health and social care workers and ensure online activity information is relevant

- Disabled people rely on various sources of information on being active, with health and social care professionals being the most likely source of advice. Activity Alliance will work with partners to support them to better align resources and information with the regional preferences stated in this report, and share learning across regions of work that has effectively supported disabled people to access sport and activity opportunities. Our insight<sup>3</sup> reinforces understanding that healthcare professionals can play a pivotal role as trusted messengers in promoting activity. Connecting these professionals – and those across the wider health and social care sector – with sports and activity organisations across regions can enable a system whereby disabled people have greater opportunities to be active.
- Further to Activity Alliance’s manifesto for change<sup>4</sup>, equipping health and social care workers with better processes to support disabled people to use physical activity in ways which work best for them involves a concerted focus by Government, the NHS, and the wider sectors of sports and activity and health and social care respectively. Partners and other organisations, especially across the health and social care sector, must recognise the importance of their professions in being preferred sources of advice about physical activity for disabled people across regions and ensure they have the skills, resources and confidence to effectively promote sport and activity. Information about how and where to be active, especially online, must be relevant and kept up to date so disabled people know where to access local opportunities.



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<sup>3</sup> [The role of healthcare professionals in supporting disabled people into physical activity](#), Activity Alliance. 2025.

<sup>4</sup> [Fight for fairness, Disabled people’s right to sport and physical activity](#), Activity Alliance. 2024.

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**Please contact our research team  
to discuss how to access, interpret  
and use the data in this report.**



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Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport.  
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