

Play, move, belong:

Young disabled people with mental health problems

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This infographic shares insight from the report on young disabled people with mental health problems' experiences of sport and activity. One in four (24%) of the disabled people who took part had a mental health problem.

Survey research by Activity Alliance and supporting partners: Sport England, Access Sport, Loughborough University, ParalympicsGB, Youth Sport Trust (2025).

Our **Play, move, belong report** looks at young disabled people's experiences of playing sport and being physically active. Over 1,000 children aged 5 to 16 took part in the project – including 521 disabled and 506 non-disabled young people – and their parents, supporters or caregivers.

How active are young disabled people with mental health problems?



Almost half (49%) are active for less than 30 minutes per day over an average week.



They are the least active group compared to young disabled people with other impairments.



How do they feel about sports and activities?

Compared to people with other impairments they are:



Least likely to feel that sport and activity is for them.



Least likely to say that they feel confident when exercising and playing sport.



Just one in five can join in 'all of the time' with PE and school sports. One in three can join in 'some of the time'.

What motivates young disabled people with mental health problems to be active?



To stay healthy.



To support their mental wellbeing (feeling happier or less stressed).



To have fun and enjoy it.



To build their confidence.



To get fit.

What stops them, or makes it more difficult for them to be active?



Lack of confidence.



Not feeling comfortable.



Worried about how they look.



Not wanting to go/do it on their own.



Feeling like they won't belong.

What type of sports and activities do they like?



Fun activities.



Quiet activities.



Activities with others.



Outdoor activities.

Who do they like to be active with?



A mix of disabled and non-disabled children.



A mix of girls and boys.

Where do they like to be active?



At school.



Outdoor spaces like the park, seaside or street.



At a leisure centre or swimming pool.



At home.

What would young disabled people with mental health problems like to do more of?



Go to a leisure centre or swimming pool.



Park or play area.



Play at home or in their street.



Play at a friend's house.



Go to a class like karate or dance.

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Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. Registered Charity No. 1075180.

This document is a summary of key findings. The full research report with additional findings and data to support the insight presented here is available on Activity Alliance's website:

 activityalliance.org.uk

Please contact our research team to discuss how to access, interpret and use the data:

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