

Sport and physical activity

The reasons why people do, or do not, play sport are complex and cannot be easily answered through a simple analysis of demographics. Sport England has developed a sports equity index which demonstrates the impact of multiple indicators on an individual's propensity to participate in sport¹. The Active People Survey 3, suggests disabled people play sport less regularly, and participation rates are declining². They are also under-represented in volunteering, club membership and tuition.

Barriers to participation in sport for disabled people are significant³ and can include:

- Practical barriers – lack of accessible facilities or competitions, lack of suitably qualified staff, lack of suitable equipment, lack of transport to and from sporting facilities and venues, lack of information about what is available.
- Social and cultural barriers – lack of role models, prejudiced attitudes and behaviour, harassment, parental influence, lack of media coverage
- Personal barriers – body image, clothing and equipment, lack of self esteem, fear for personal safety,
- Institutional barriers – activities organised around medical model of disability, rather than a social model.

What we have done

Inclusive and Active' commissioned in 2007 by the Greater London Authority, Sport England London Region and London Sports Forum for Disabled People helped to highlight inequalities in provision, opportunity and participation in sport and physical activity by disabled people. It also set out a number of positive actions and direction for all partners involved in the delivery of sport and active recreation in order to start tackling and addressing the challenges that disabled people face.

In April 2009, the Mayor published 'A Sporting Future for London'⁴, a plan for increasing participation generally across London. Over 400 people from 150 organisations have been consulted on the plan, including key strategic partners, national governing bodies of sport, community sports organisations and forums, and Interactive (formerly known as the London Sports Forum for Disabled People). The plan identifies as a key priority to increase participation levels for disabled people through:

- a requirement in contracts and funding agreements to promote equality and combat discrimination
- a requirement for all projects to supply monitoring data that details the diversity of project beneficiaries
- a tailored marketing strategy that uses positive imagery to promote strong role models from diverse communities.

What we plan to do

In June 2010, 'Inclusive and Active 2' is being published. 'Inclusive and Active 2' is focused on working with cross sector stakeholders (such as sport, leisure, education) as

¹ Participation in Sport in England: Sports Equity Index 2002, Sport England

² Sport England Active People Survey 3, 2008/09

³ A Sporting Future for London, The Mayor's Sports Legacy Plan for London 2012, Equality Impact Assessment, August 2009

⁴ <http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/mayor/publications/olympics-and-sport/sporting-future-london>

well as with disabled people's organisations, to create bespoke 'action plans' for increasing participation amongst disabled people.

£15.5 million of funding for the delivery of programmes associated with 'A Sporting Future for London' has been secured. It is expected that an additional £15 million of match funding will be raised from other sources to create a total fund of some £30 million to be invested in grass-roots sport. Three funding streams have been identified for Inclusive and Active 2:

- Facility improvement fund to support the refurbishment and development of community sports facilities across London
- Sporting interventions fund is aimed at increasing participation in sport and physical activity for all Londoners, and also to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and health inequalities.
- Training and Development Fund will provide skills training for Londoners to become coaches, technical officials and sports volunteers

Several pilot projects have been funded including:

- The Panathlon Challenge caters exclusively for children and young people with serious physical or mental disabilities, providing a programme of competitive sport
- The Mayor's Mobile Pools programme takes swimming pools into the heart of the communities that need it most, including specialist schools. The nature of these pools – small, quiet, safe and well staffed – makes them accessible for those who would not usually feel comfortable participating.

The Mayor will use the London 2012 Equality and Diversity Forum to promote equal access to sport and encourage increased physical activity⁵. The Forum will also review the Sports Strategy to ensure it is meeting equality and diversity standards.

For further information visit

<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/publications/2009/docs/sporting-future-2009.pdf>

The Mayor is committed to ensure fitness facilities become more inclusive and accessible. He supports the Inclusive Fitness Mark (IFI Mark), which gives recognition for the work fitness facilities have achieved in meeting the needs of disabled people⁶

⁵ <http://www.london.gov.uk/archive/mayor/publications/2009/docs/sporting-future-2009.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.inclusivefitness.org/inclusive-fitness-mark>