

Learning note: Equality in the clubs and communities environment

Introduction

This learning note explores lessons learned about equality in **sportscotland** supported work in the clubs and communities environment.

It draws on 2018 evaluation reports undertaken by Research Scotland.

The learning note is for people working in these environments, to encourage reflection on practice and sharing of learning between **sportscotland** supported staff and external partners.

Women and girls



Overall, there are more male than female participants in **sportscotland** supported clubs – at both adult and junior level.

However, clubs supported by **sportscotland** have seen membership of young women increase at a slightly faster rate than that of young men.

Club leaders are reasonably confident about engaging with girls and women. However, some were keen to introduce more women-only sessions, but were restricted by:

- time;
- facilities; and
- availability of coaches.

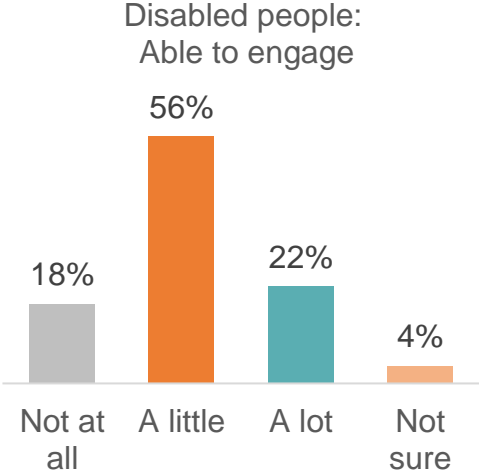
The survey of 3,000 club members attracted broadly equal numbers of responses from men and women.

Disabled people

Information is not gathered on the overall number of disabled members of **sportscotland** supported clubs. However, the survey of club members attracted low levels of responses from disabled people when compared to the Scottish population – with six per cent stating they have a disability.

Club leaders were not very confident about their ability to engage disabled people. Most felt they were only able to do this a little or not at all. There was demand for:

- better facilities;
- accessing specialist equipment;
- identifying experienced coaches;
- training existing coaches; and
- recruiting more volunteers and staff.



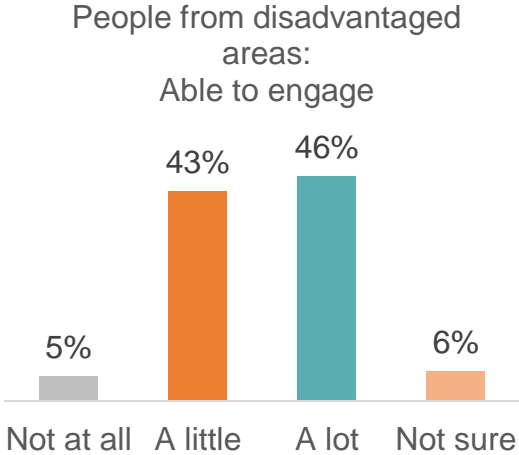
People from disadvantaged areas

Information is not gathered on the overall number of club members in **sportscotland** supported clubs that are from disadvantaged areas. However, the survey of club members attracted low levels of responses from people living in disadvantaged areas – with six per cent of respondents being from the 20 per cent most deprived areas in Scotland.

Club leaders were mixed in their confidence about their ability to engage with people from areas of socio-economic deprivation. Around half felt they could engage a lot, and around half felt they could engage a little or not at all.

The main barriers that club leaders identified were:

- cost – with few able to offer reduced fees; and
- access to transport.



Successful approaches

Working in partnership

Partnership working has helped some clubs to successfully diversify and increase their membership, by reaching out to people that wouldn't normally engage in sport.

Example:

Clubs in one area were involved in a 'Get Active' project involving clubs, youth groups, a mental health charity and a charity working with disabled adults. The links to these groups helped to engage people in new activities and identify inactive people in the community.

Training for deliverers

Clubs have developed their knowledge and awareness of equalities issues through training from equalities organisations. This has been particularly important for developing skills around working with and engaging disabled people in clubs.

Example:

One Community Sport Hub organised a Disability Inclusion Course, which was delivered by Scottish Disability Sport and the local leisure trust. This helped clubs to improve their knowledge and understanding of disability sport, and learn to encourage inclusion within their environment.

Targeted work with specific groups

Some clubs had identified under-represented groups, and tried specific approaches to involve people in their activity. For example, this included supporting women to come back to sports they had been involved in when they were younger; developing a welcoming and open atmosphere in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

Example:

In one local authority area the Community Sport Hubs work across 65 clubs in distinct geographic clusters. The hubs engaged in specific work with target groups in each area, including people living in poverty; looked after children; disabled people; and women and girls. This has helped club participation levels, particularly of women and people living in poverty, to increase.

Reducing cost related barriers to participation

Including bursary schemes/ waived membership fees/ reduced cost or free activities/ free equipment. Works best when supported with resources to allow clubs to offer free activities, and delivered in partnership with other agencies.

Example:

A number of boxing clubs in one local authority area have accessed funding to develop sessions for women and young people, and to offer free sessions to those who cannot afford to join the club. Some boxing clubs have started to work in partnership with disengaged young people, through Activity Agreements. One club received funding to offer a 'Get Fit for Free' programme, which will offer boxing training for up to 200 people.

Developing accessible facilities

Clubs and groups emphasised how important it was to have accessible facilities, particularly in engaging with disabled people and women. In addition, one club was supported to install facilities in a local mosque, which has increased participation from people in the local Muslim community.

Example:

Sports Facilities funding for one rugby club has helped the club develop new changing room facilities. There are now separate changing rooms for males and females, allowing men's and women's teams to play at the same time. This has resulted in increased interest in participation among women.

Impact on equalities groups

A connected survey of 3,000 club members across Scotland found that club members across equalities characteristics had high physical activity levels, and club membership had increased activity levels across all equalities characteristics.

However, the survey also found some differences in experience:

- fewer people in areas of deprivation were members of more than one sports or activity club; and
- disabled people were slightly less likely to feel that they were developing their sporting skills and sporting confidence.

People in areas of deprivation and disabled people were also under-represented in the survey responses, when compared to the Scottish population. More work is needed to understand whether this is representative of membership of **sportscotland** supported clubs.

Overarching messages

Across all equalities groups, the key approaches that were successful were:

- working in partnership;
- training deliverers;
- targeted work with specific groups;
- reducing cost related barriers to participation; and
- developing accessible facilities.

Everyone should have the opportunity to participate in sport. In order to increase diversity and reduce inequalities, it is important to understand who is currently participating.



Find out more...

Equality and sport research

sportscotland commissioned research into equality in sport

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/about-us/equality-at-sportscotland/equality-and-sport-research/>

sportscotland equality outcomes

What sportscotland as an organisation aims to achieve in terms of equality

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/media/2591/equality-outcomes-2017.pdf>

Active Girls

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/schools/active-girls/>

Inclusive Community Resources

Help to be inclusive, open to everyone and attract under-represented groups.

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/clubs/help-for-clubs/people/inclusive-community/>

SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)

An introduction to the SIMD is available at

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00504809.pdf>

Further SIMD tools and resources available at

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>