

Inclusive activity

Taking a person-centred approach



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Introduction

Research shows there are high levels of physical inactivity among certain populations. This includes disabled people, women and girls, older people and people from lower socioeconomic households.

Many organisations group inactive audiences by these standard demographics. This can lead to assumptions about their behaviour, motivations and barriers to being active.

Disabled people are a part of every demographic in society, motivated to be or not to be active for numerous reasons. For the sport and leisure sector to become truly inclusive for all, we must acknowledge this and treat disabled people as individuals.

Like everyone, disabled people's lives are influenced and shaped by many characteristics. This includes but is not limited to, age, race and religion or belief.

This is part of what is known as **'intersectionality'** - the theoretical framework for understanding how a person's social identities connect and overlap. Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and understand the differences in all of us.

This resource highlights intersectionality in relation to disabled people. It encourages the sport and leisure sector to look beyond standard demographics and take a person-centred approach in providing opportunities.

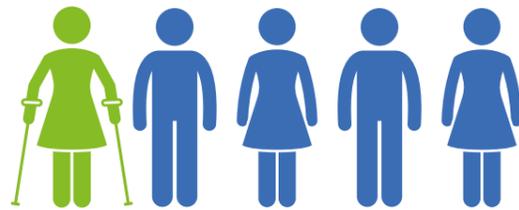


Taking a person-centred approach in activity begins with understanding your audience. The following statistics show how different factors come together to influence disabled people's lives and their activity levels.

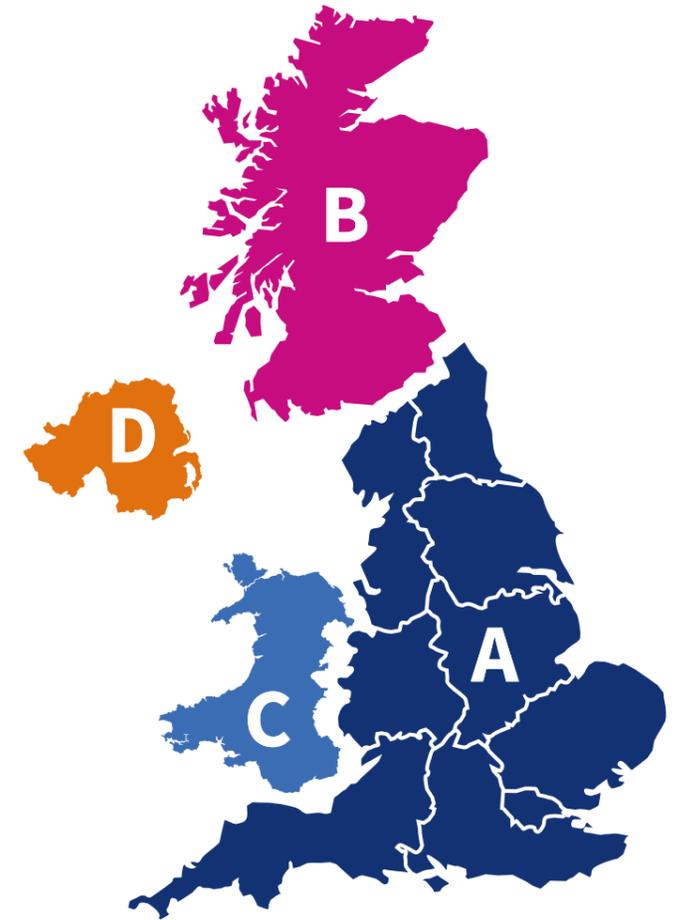
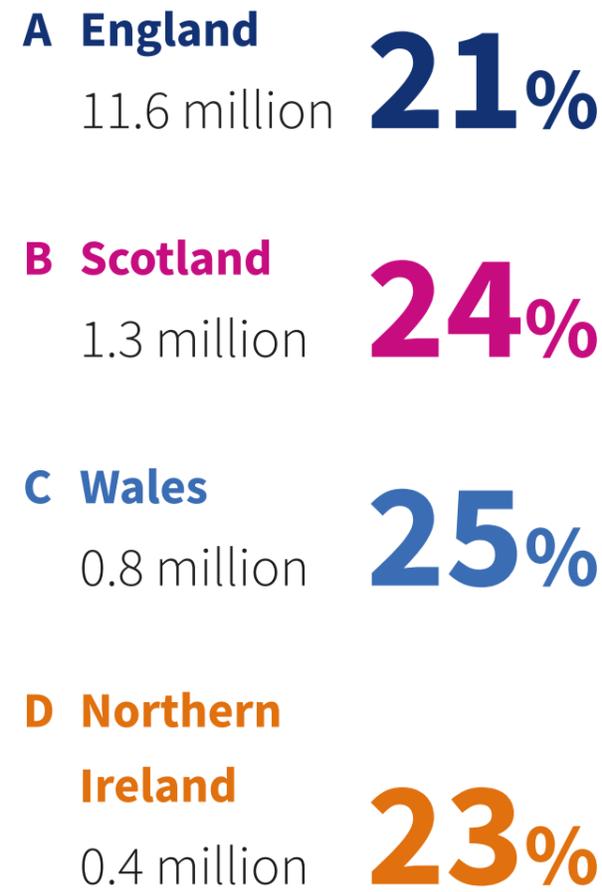
Disabled people in the UK

- There are **14.1 million** disabled people in the UK, accounting for one in five (**21%**) of the total population. ¹
- **23% of UK women** are disabled compared to **20% of men**. 7.7 million disabled women and 6.3 million disabled men. ²
- The prevalence of disability rises with age. **8%** of UK children, **19%** of working-age adults and **44%** of state pension age adults are disabled. ³
- **Three in five** disabled people (**62%**) in the UK are aged over 50. ⁴
- **17% of LGBT people** in the UK consider themselves to have a disability. ⁵
- **33% of trans people** in the UK consider themselves to have a disability. ⁶
- Available statistics show **13% of Black/Black British adults** and **12% of Asian/British Asian adults** are disabled. The proportion recording disability is shown to be less among people from a Chinese /other or a mixed ethnic background (**8%** and **7%**). ⁷

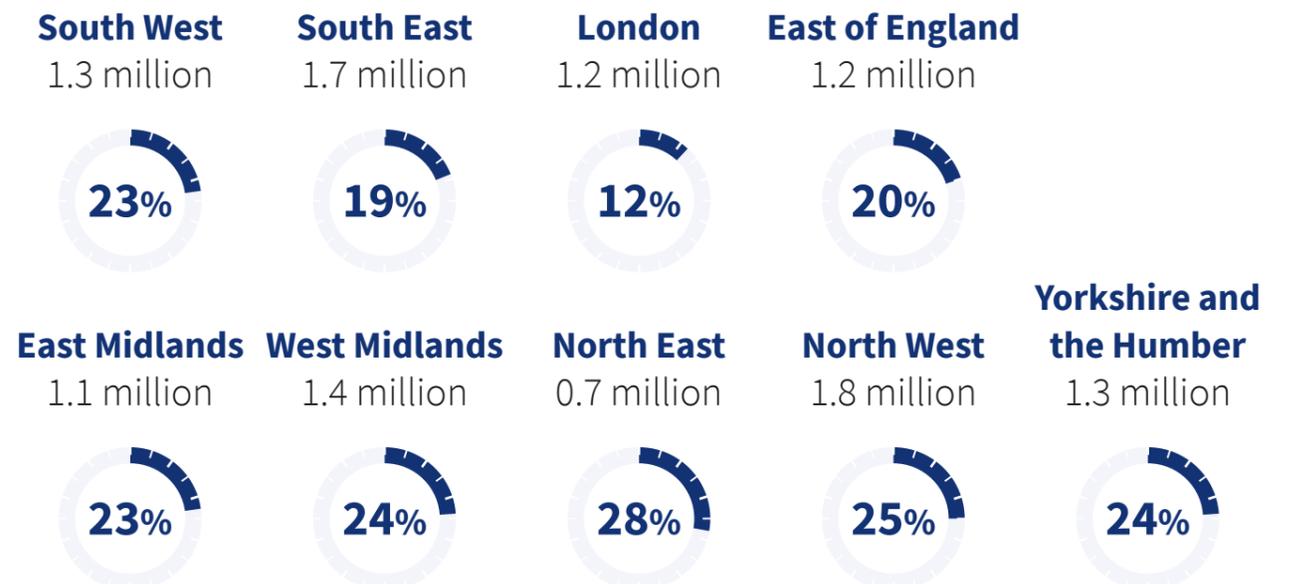
One in five of the total UK population are disabled.



Proportion of disabled people in UK home nation countries⁸



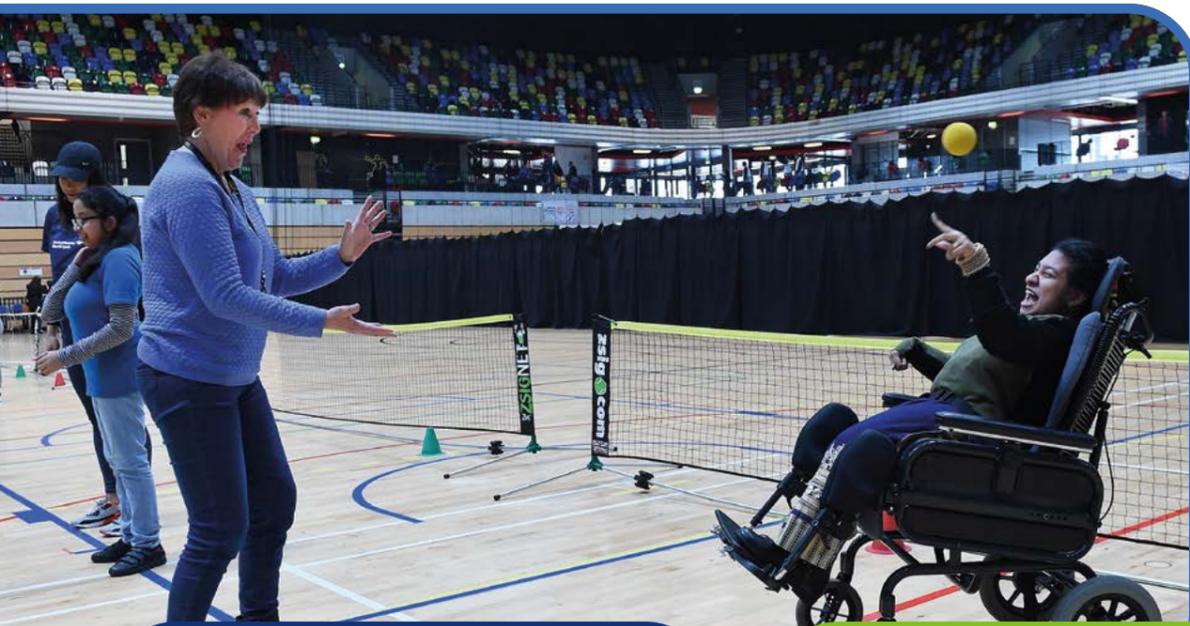
Proportion of disabled people in each English region⁸



Impairments and activity levels



- Disabled adults are **twice as likely** as non-disabled people to be physically inactive (**41%** vs **20%**).⁹
- **Four in five** disabled people (**81%**) would like to be more active.¹⁰
- **Seven in ten** disabled people (**70%**) are motivated to be active to improve or maintain their physical health.¹¹
- Almost **three quarters** of disabled people (**73%**) have more than one impairment.¹²
- Inactivity increases with the number of impairments an individual has. **51% of people with three or more impairments** are physically inactive compared to **31%** of people with one impairment.¹³
- **54%** of disabled people in England have long-term pain, **47%** have long-term health conditions e.g. diabetes and **36%** have mobility impairments.¹⁴



Four in five disabled people would like to be more active.



Seven in ten disabled people want to be active to improve their health.



Economy and living standards



- In 2017/18, **almost half** of all people in poverty were disabled or lived with a disabled person - that's around **7 million people**.¹⁵
- Disabled people from lower socioeconomic groups are more likely to be physically inactive than disabled people from higher socioeconomic groups (**43%** vs **28%**).¹⁶
- On average, disabled people face extra costs of **£583 per month**.¹⁷
- **Almost half** of disabled people (**47%**) we spoke to, who receive benefits, said they feared losing them if they were seen to be more active.¹⁸
- **Two in five** disabled people (**41%**) under the age of 40 cited finances as a barrier to being active.¹⁹
- Businesses could be missing out on a share of **£420 million each week** by not meeting the needs of disabled people.²⁰



By not meeting the needs of disabled people, businesses could be missing out on a share of **£420 million each week**.

Employment and education



- In 2019, disabled people were more than **twice as likely** as non-disabled people to be unemployed (**8%** vs **3%**).²¹
- Disabled people who are unemployed are much more likely than non-disabled people to be physically inactive (**41%** vs **26%**).²²
- Disabled people with no qualifications are **twice as likely** to be physically inactive as disabled people who have a higher education qualification (**62%** vs **31%**).²³
- In 2018, just **27%** of 19-year-old pupils with special educational needs attained a level 3 qualification (A level or equivalent) compared to **63%** of non-disabled pupils.²⁴
- More than **one in seven** of all school pupils in England (**15%**) have special educational needs (SEN). But, fewer than **one in ten** (**9%**) attend a state-funded special school.²⁵

What can I do? Tips on taking a person-centred approach



It is not fair or right that disabled people are the least active in our society. We all have a role to play in addressing this long-standing inequality.

We encourage you to consider the following in your work. Use the questions in each section to challenge and improve your organisation's commitment to inclusion.



Understand



Strong insight on people's preferences and needs, and their influencers is vital. It ensures that your programmes and services deliver positive experiences for everyone. Take time to understand your audience's lifestyles, motivations and barriers to being active. Remember, disabled people are a part of all target audiences.

Ask yourself:

- How robust is your insight on disabled people?
- Can you evidence this insight and how are you applying it in your work?

Helpful resources

Study Activity Alliance's research reports on disabled people's experiences and perceptions of physical activity. View online:

activityalliance.org.uk/research

Check out Activity Alliance's factsheet on gathering and using insight. Read online:

activityalliance.org.uk/engagement

Connect



There is no silver bullet when it comes to reaching people from diverse populations. Identify your audience's touchpoints/support services and connect them into your activity programmes. Give individuals, supporters and organisations a platform to share their views about your work.

Ask yourself:

- How connected are you currently with local support networks and organisations?
- Are your current partnerships reaching people effectively?
- How can disabled people's views and experiences shape your work going forward?

Helpful resources

Read Activity Alliance's resources on engagement, especially the effective engagement factsheet. Read online:

activityalliance.org.uk/engagement

Engage



Collaborate with your new connections. Use their expertise and lived experience to design and develop your opportunities. Activities that are fully inclusive and accessible benefit people from all backgrounds, not just disabled people.

Ask yourself:

- How inclusive and accessible are your current programmes?
- How does your organisation prioritise inclusion and diversity?

Helpful resources

Activity Alliance's Lead programme can improve your organisation's commitment to inclusion and disability equality at every level. Find out more about the programme:

activityalliance.org.uk/engagement

Learn and share



Review your programmes and processes regularly. Success isn't just a numbers game. Ask people what they value most about your sessions and what's missing from your offer. Use this feedback to adapt future practice to be more effective and better suited to the people you are serving. Share your impact and key learning with partners.

Ask yourself:

- Do you know what 'good service' looks like for your audience?
- Are your feedback methods accessible for people with different impairments?
- How does feedback and evaluation inform your programme design and development currently?

Helpful resources

Use Activity Alliance's ten principles to make your opportunities more appealing and accessible. Find out what disabled people value the most here:

activityalliance.org.uk/ten-principles

Read Activity Alliance's engagement factsheet on performance measurement and learning.

Read online: activityalliance.org.uk/engagement

How we help



Activity Alliance's aim is to close the gap between disabled people's level of inactivity and that of non-disabled people. We do this by changing attitudes towards disabled people in sport and activity. And helping organisations to embed inclusive practice.

For more information about us and how we can support your work please:

Visit our website at activityalliance.org.uk

Call us on **01509 227750**

Send us an email at info@activityalliance.org.uk



Reference list

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- 2** Department for Work and Pensions, Family Resources Survey 2018/19.
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Photo credits: British Blind Sport, Dwarf Sports Association UK, LimbPower, Special Olympics GB.

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This document is also available in Word format. Please contact us if you need more support.

Version one:

publication date September 2020

Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. Registered Charity Number 1075180.

