

Vanguard Briefing

Sport England Active People Survey 7

Introduction

Managed by Sport England, the Active People Survey (APS) continuously measures the number of people participating in sport across the nation. Sport England has been providing comparative data since 2005/6 with particular focus on analyses of demographical factors such as gender, social class, ethnicity, age and disability. In addition, the tool tracks sport volunteering, club membership, involvement in competition and levels of tuition or coaching. The APS captures data from over 160,000 adults (aged 16 and over) thus making it the largest survey of sport and activity ever to be carried out in Europe.

Key Measures

The key measure is the '1 x 30' indicator. This is defined as the percentage of the adult population participating in sport, at moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes on at least four days out of the last four weeks.

The indicator does not include recreational walking or recreational cycling, however more strenuous walking activities such as hillwalking, rambling and powerwalking are considered.

For those aged 65 and over, the survey includes light intensity activities such as yoga, bowls, archery and croquet.

It should be noted that the APS7 does not follow the previous '3 x 30' indicator which was used to measure levels of sport participation previous surveys. .

Active People Survey 7

Sport England released the latest APS results in June 2013 which covers the 12 month period from April 2012 to April 2013. There has been a visible increase in the number of adults who play sport, however just over half of all adults do not engage in sport at all. Below is an outline of the key results:

Once a week Sport Participation

- 15.3 million people (35.2%) played sport at least once a week. The latest result represents a 1.4 million increase since 2005/06 (APS1).
- Compared with October 2011 (APS5), the period just before the Olympic year and the start of the new strategy for sport, there are now over 530,000 more people playing sport regularly.

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Seasonality of sports participation

Overall sports participation has a natural seasonal pattern with more people playing during the summer and fewer playing during the winter. Monthly analysis of APS 1x30 sports reveals:

- Higher than average levels of participation in the late summer period of 2012, immediately after the Olympic Games.
- Resilience in participation despite poor weather conditions, with people continuing to play sport throughout a particularly cold and wet year. Only faced with the exceptionally wet spring of 2012 and cold March of 2013, did participation fall below average, but retaining most of the increase achieved.

Other frequencies of participation

- 20.7 million adults played sport at least once a month. This result is a 2,123,600 increase on APS1i.
- 7.3 million played sport at least three times a week. This result is a 1,055,000 increase on APS1i.

Once a week sport: key demographics

The following shows the APS7 results for key demographic groups, highlighting changes from APS1 (April 2005 – April 2006).

Gender

- 8.507 million men (40.1%) played sport once a week. This result is a 816,000 increase on APS1i.
- 6.785 million women (30.5%) played sport once a week. This result is a 536,600 increase on APS1i.

Age Groups

- 3.856 million 16-25 year olds (54.7%) played sport once a week. This age group had been flat lining (with rates of 54% in 2011 and 2012), but is now showing signs of growth.
- 11.436 million adults aged 26 years or older (31.4%) played sport once a week. This result is a 1,147,500 increase on APS1i. However this age group recorded a decline of over 280,000 compared with the October 2012 result and accounts for the reduction recorded this period.

Ethnicity

- 12.634 million people describing themselves as White – British (34.9%) played sport once a week. This result is a 812,300 increase on APS1i.
- 2.658 million people from black and minority ethnic groups (36.7%) played sport once a week. This result is a 531,300 increase on APS1i.

Disability

- 1.670 million people with a long term limiting illness or disability (18.2%) played sport once a week. This result is a 353,100 increase on APS1i.

Socio-economic groups

- Participation among adults from socio-economic groups NS-SEC 1-2 (managerial/professional) and NS-SEC 3 (intermediate) has increased from APS1 to APS7Q2i.
- During the period April 2012-April 2013 there were also more people from NS-SEC 4 (small employers/own account workers) and NS-SEC 5-8 (lower supervisory/technical /routine/semi-routine/never worked/long term unemployed) playing sport once a week but these changes were not statistically significant.

Once a week sports participation: by region

Between APS1 (October 2005 – October 2006) and APS7Q2 (April 2012 – April 2013) there has been a statistically significant increase in once a week sports participation in five of the nine regions:

1. North East
2. North West
3. Yorkshire
4. London
5. South West

In the remaining four regions (East Midlands, West Midlands, East, South East) there were more people playing sport once a week than in 2005/06.

How People are Involved in Sport

- Volunteering – 3,040,500 (7%) – increase since APS2
- Club membership – 9,578,000 (22%) – decreased since APS2
- Tuition – 7,133,300 (16.4%) – decreased since APS2
- Competition – 6,006,100 (13.8%) – decreased since APS2
- Organised Sport – 14,916,100 (34.3%) – decreased since APS2

Player numbers by sport

- Swimming is England's most popular sport, followed by athletics, football and cycling.
- Nearly 2.9 million people were swimming once a week in 2012/13, making it the top sport by a significant margin.
- The number of people taking part in athletics weekly has risen from 1.4 million in 2005-06 to nearly 2 million today.
- Football is part of the weekly routine for over 1.9 million people, while the number of weekly cyclists is just under 1.9 million.
- Other sports becoming more popular – though from a lower base – include boxing and netball.