



LONDON 2012 GAMES LEGACY REPORT

Impressions towards the London 2012
Olympic and Paralympic Games legacy, and
the impact of the rising cost of living



INTRODUCTION

To mark the 10-year anniversary of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, London Sport commissioned a poll to better understand how the public and the grassroots sports & physical activity sector perceived the 'legacy' of the Games. Topics posed to these groups were wide ranging, from questions about local sporting facilities to perceptions of disabled athletes. The poll also asked questions about the cost of living crisis and how it is affecting people in London and across the UK. This report details the findings of the research, using survey data to make assumptions about those who have benefitted from the London 2012 Games.

We carried out separate surveys to explore varying perceptions amongst:

- UK and London-based adults via an independently commissioned Opinium poll (n=2000 and n=253 respectively).
- And key sport and physical activity sector representatives engaged with our organisation (n=48).

To complement this research, London Sport also reviewed London borough's physical activity and deprivation levels from 2012 and compared them to the most recent statistics available. This research was conducted with the aim to understand if any of the boroughs, particularly the six 'London Growth Boroughs' (Barking and Dagenham, Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest – synonymous with the 2012 host boroughs), had seen a significant change in activity levels in the past decade.

ABOUT LONDON SPORT

London Sport is a charity working to ensure more Londoners live happier, healthier lives through sport and physical activity.

Supported by Sport England and the Mayor of London, we collaborate with those who share our vision, running and supporting projects that help children, young people and the least active adults to embed sport and physical activity into their lives.

We focus unashamedly on supporting those from under-represented and underserved communities who face the most barriers to being active.

The logo for London Sport, featuring the words "LONDON SPORT" in white, bold, uppercase letters on a red shield-shaped background. A large red abstract shape is visible in the bottom left corner of the page.

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FOREWORD FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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In 2012, along with millions of other people in the UK, I witnessed one of the country's greatest sporting spectacles and could already feel how the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games might benefit London and the rest of the country in the years to follow.

The events of 2012 undoubtedly boosted the mood of the nation, increased tourism and international perceptions of the UK, improved public transport, and created state of the art sporting facilities. However, as a charity focussed on tackling inequality and inactivity, it is our role at London Sport to understand the full extent of legacy for the sports and physical activity sector, particularly in the nation's capital.

The purpose of this research is to better comprehend how the legacy of the London 2012 Games affected physical activity levels, the sports and physical activity sector more widely, and what the legacy means in the context of a cost of living crisis.

This report does not exist to place blame for any negative results uncovered, but rather to highlight that we still have a long way to go to help every person and community reap the benefits of being active.

Our research shows the Games did leave a wonderful legacy in many areas and for many people, but that positivity was not shared by the whole country. We know that not everyone has access to sport and physical activity, and that for too long being active has depended on a person's background, postcode and bank account.

Being active is not a luxury, it is essential to the health and wellbeing of the nation. With physical inactivity responsible for one in six premature deaths in the UK and costing the NHS and taxpayers billions of pounds every year, it is vital that we break the link between inequality and inactivity, and open up more opportunities for communities to access sport and physical activity.

The next 10 years present an opportunity to learn, improve, and make a impact in our sector. Together, we can help Londoners live happier and healthier lives through being active.

Let's get London moving.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Emily Robinson'.

Emily Robinson, London Sport CEO

KEY FINDINGS

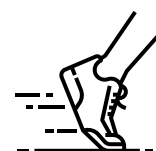
1: Impressions towards the legacy

- Two thirds of London adults agree that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games has left a positive legacy.
- This is the case for roughly half of UK adults. Perceptions are broadly positive but less favourable for lower income household representatives.
- Describing the legacy in their own words, people cite positive memories, sporting facility development and the regeneration of the Olympic Park. In particular, societal attitudes towards disabled athletes have improved, with survey respondents highlighting their abilities and achievements.
- Those critical of the Games tend to highlight the costs associated with hosting the Games and that London benefitted far more than the rest of the UK.
- Similar to London adults, two thirds of sector representatives believe the Games has left a positive legacy, however, roughly a quarter disagree. In particular, the long-term impact on local sport clubs and lower income earners is called into question.



2: Participation in the London Growth Boroughs

- Ten years after the Games the same demographic groups remain more likely to be inactive compared to the adult population as a whole.
- However, whilst the London Growth Boroughs continue to rank amongst the most deprived in London, Greenwich and Hackney no longer rank amongst the most inactive, likely owing to programmes and investment designed to increase activity including leisure facilities and improving green spaces.



3: Impact of the rising cost of living

- Half of London adults have cut back on all of the aspects of spend considered in our survey including sport and leisure aspects. This compares to just a third of UK adults indicating greater overall impact in London. Council-run leisure centres run a high level of risk of closure in the capital due to this ongoing impact.



London 2012 Legacy: Public Perspectives

Some of the key positive legacy themes highlighted by UK adults include:

Positively impacted perceptions of disabled people

A general sense of pride in
the showcasing of the
nation's talents

Facility development in and
around the Olympic Park

General improvement to facilities in
local communities and surrounding
London Boroughs

Enhanced perceptions of the
nation overall

What did people have to say?

"...the Paralympics put disabled people in the front rooms of the nation. This led to more disabled people being on TV over the years and a better understanding of [their] needs and wants..."

"It gave people a sense of achievement and national pride."

"A community improvement that provides enjoyment and living requirements to the whole area."

"Great Britain got a lot of recognition all around the world."

"New facilities and infrastructure."



Open-ended response - To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with the following statement? The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games left a positive legacy for London and its people. (n=1,080 UK adults)

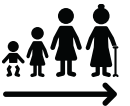


London 2012 Legacy: Public Perspectives

Two thirds of Londoners believe that the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games left a positive legacy for London and its people.

66% of adults in London agree this is the case
Vs. **53%** of UK adults more broadly

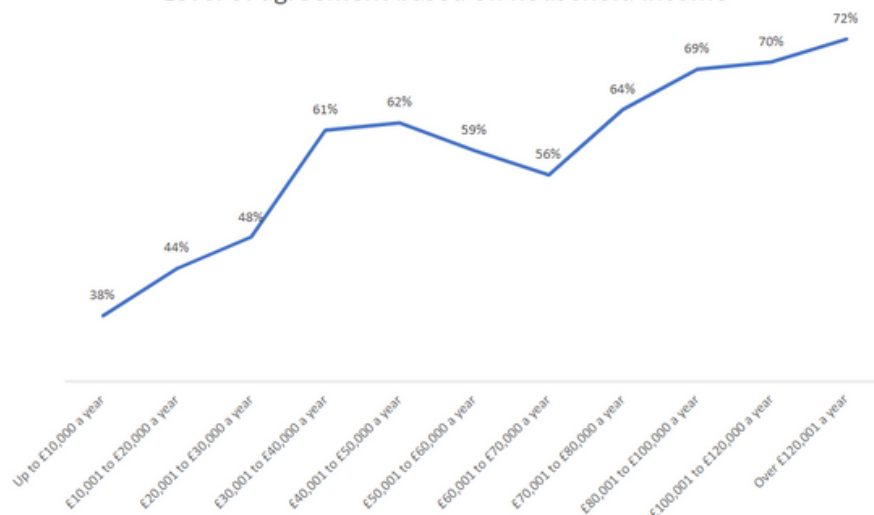
A generational difference was markedly apparent in London with three quarters of adults under 44 agreeing with the statement, compared to 57% of those aged 45 or older. Across the UK this difference was less marked but still apparent for 18-44-year-olds (57%) compared to those aged 45+ (49%).



Just **9%** of Londoners disagree
Vs. **11%** of UK adults

Legacy perceptions vary, however, they are more favourable amongst higher compared to lower income household representatives, with just 38% and 44% of those earning under £10k and £20k agreeing that the Games left a positive legacy.

Level of agreement based on household income



London 2012 Legacy: Public Perspectives

Those more critical towards the legacy suggested that only London benefited from the Games, and that the Games were not worth the cost:

**Benefits were not experienced
by the entire nation**

**Only Londoners and those in
surrounding areas benefitted**

**The money could have been
better spent**

What did people have to say?

..."It's London and I don't live there so what does it matter to me I don't get to benefit anyway?"

"Utter and unconscionable waste of taxpayers money."



Open-ended response - To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with the following statement? The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games left a positive legacy for London and its people. (n=1,080 UK adults)



ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABLED ATHLETES



1: Impressions towards the legacy

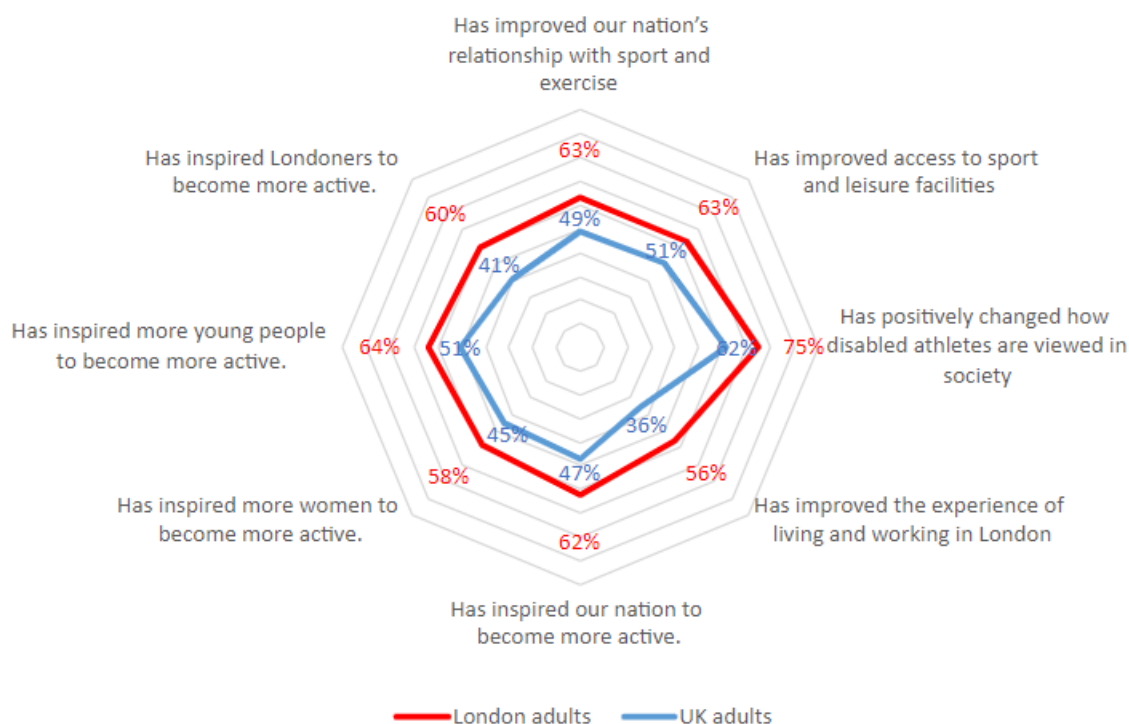
When prompted, three quarters of Londoners agree that views towards disabled athletes have improved due to the games.

Most are also positive towards other aspects of the legacy, including ‘inspired our nation to become more active’.

75% of Londoners agree that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games positively changed how disabled athletes are viewed in society. More than six in ten Londoners also agree that the London 2012 Games have inspired more young people to become more active (64%) and have inspired the nation to become more active (62%).

Across the UK the statements with the highest levels of agreement were that the Games have positively changed how disabled athletes are viewed in society (62%), have inspired more young people to become more active (51%) and have improved access to sport and leisure facilities (51%).

Agreement summary – key aspects of the legacy (London and UK Adults)



ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABLED PEOPLE

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1: Impressions towards the legacy

The experience of watching disabled athletes compete has shifted and improved understanding of disabled people and their capabilities through:

Greater awareness of what disabled people can do

Making disabled people more visible

Emphasising what disabled people are capable of achieving

An opportunity to demonstrate the qualities of disabled people

What did people have to say?



“More people became aware of what disabled people could do.”

“More disabled sportspersons are still visible...”

“It showed that those with disabilities can perform athletically on the world stage.”

“As a result of London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games ‘legacy’ perspectives of disabled young people are changing.”

“It gave disabled people the right to compete and to prove their qualities.”

“More visibility of disabled people.”

PERSPECTIVE ON THE LEGACY: SPORT SECTOR

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66% of sector representatives believe that the Games left a positive legacy for London and its people...

However... **26%** Disagree

Positive impressions from the sector towards the legacy include...

Inspirational event

Team GB achievements

**Facility development
/ regeneration**

Whilst others in the sector were more cynical about the legacy...

**Community sport
legacy in question**

**Cynicism regarding impact
for lower income groups**

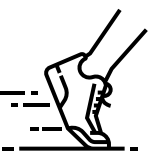
Lack of community consultation

"For the community in the east and south-east London great. Facilities awesome but not cheap to use."

Open-ended response - How would you describe the London Olympic and Paralympic 'legacy' in your own words. (n = 47)

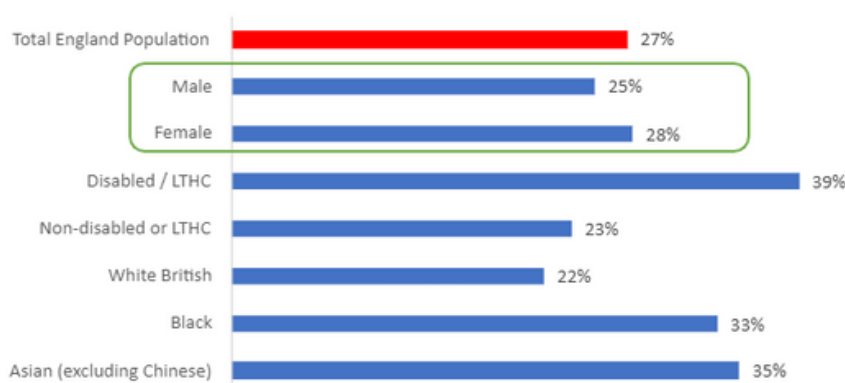


PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN LONDON SINCE 2012

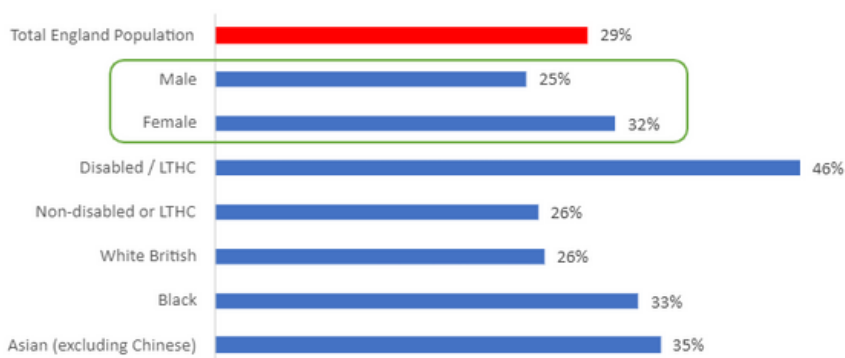


Ten years after the Games, there are still large gaps between different groups, particular for some minority ethnic groups and disabled people who remain more inactive compared to adults as a whole. However, the gender gap has encouragingly diminished (7% to 3%) and the gap between disabled people and non-disabled people, while still significant, has also decreased (20% to 16%).

Inactive (active less than 30 minutes a week)
Active Lives Survey
(Nov 2020-21)



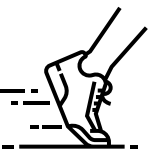
Inactive (active less than 30 minutes a week)
Active People Survey
(Mid-Jan 2012-2013)



Sources: Sport England bi-annual 'Active Lives Survey' (November 2020-21 wave); Sport England 'Active People Survey' (Mid-January 2012 to Mid-January 2013 wave). To note, activity data from 2012 is not directly comparable with how Sport England currently measures activity and sports participation levels in the Active Lives survey - therefore we can only examine trends and comparisons within sub groups.



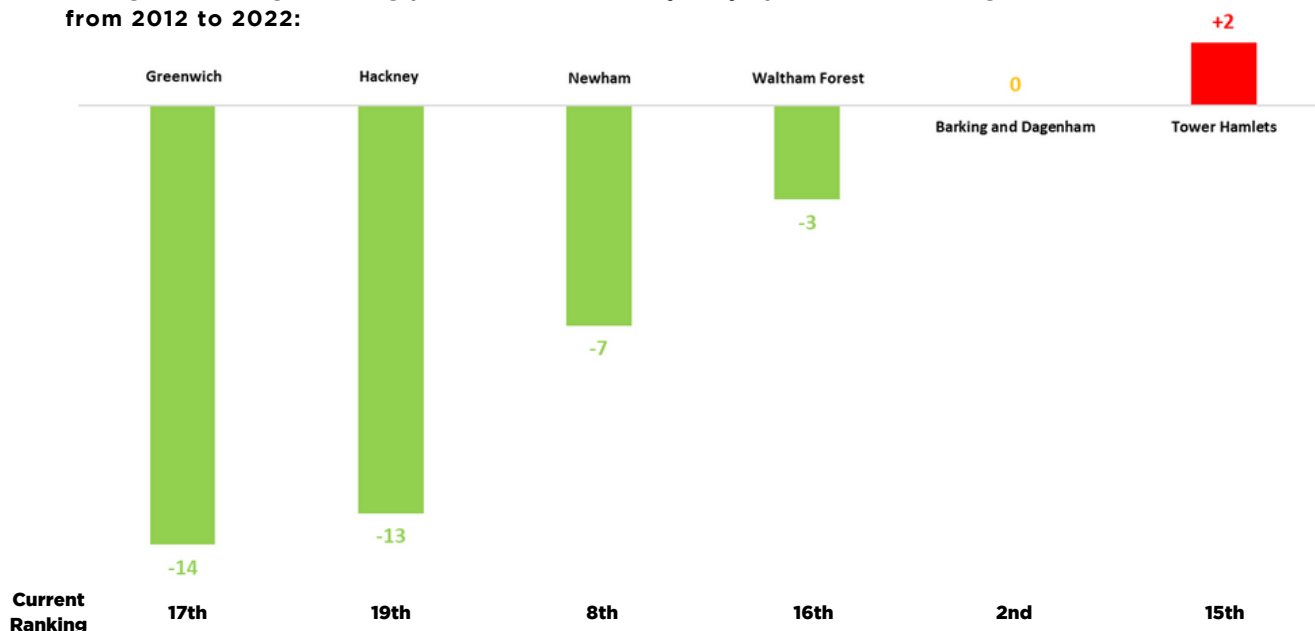
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN LONDON SINCE 2012



Whilst Olympic Growth Boroughs still rank amongst the most deprived in London, Greenwich and Hackney no longer rank amongst the most inactive.

Olympic growth borough	2012 Borough deprivation rank	2019 Borough deprivation rank	2012 Borough Inactive rank	2022 Borough Inactive rank
Hackney	1 st	2 nd	6 th	19 th
Newham	2 nd	3 rd	1 st	8 th
Tower Hamlets	3 rd	4 th	17 th	15 th
Waltham Forest	5 th	10 th	13 th	16 th
Barking and Dagenham	6 th	1 st	2 nd	2 nd
Greenwich	10 th	13 th	3 rd	17 th

Change in borough ranking position for inactivity (Olympic Growth Boroughs) from 2012 to 2022:



2: Participation in the London Growth Boroughs

“ The Council has always recognised the value of investing in sport and physical activity for our residents. Over the last 10 years we have made significant investments in active travel, leisure facilities, our green spaces and programmes such as Hackney Marshes Saturday Youth Football League, Kings Park Moving Together, New Age Games and Personal Bests, to try and make an impact on activity levels in the borough.

A great example of this is the award winning new Britannia Leisure Centre in Hoxton that has been a huge success in its first year seeing a more than 100% increase in usage compared with the old leisure centre and member rates doubling. It’s now one of Hackney’s most inclusive public buildings, with accessible changing areas, pool pods for wheelchair users, and a pool with sensory and interactive light features. An expanded activity programme now has more fitness classes by the week, a partnership with the Black Swimming Association to teach water safety to underrepresented groups, alongside free and low cost physical activity sessions for over 50s.

We will continue investing in Hackney to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents through improved access to sport and physical activity.

Cllr Caroline Woodley (Hackney)
Cabinet Member for Families, Parks and Leisure

Sources: Sport England bi-annual ‘Active Lives Survey’ (November 2020-21 wave); Sport England ‘Active People Survey’ (Mid-January 2012 to Mid-January 2013 wave). To note, activity data from 2012 is not directly comparable with how Sport England currently measures activity and sports participation levels in the Active Lives survey - therefore we can only examine trends and comparisons within sub groups.

COST OF LIVING: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS



The rising cost of living has caused Londoners in particular to cut back on all aspects of spend including sport and leisure.

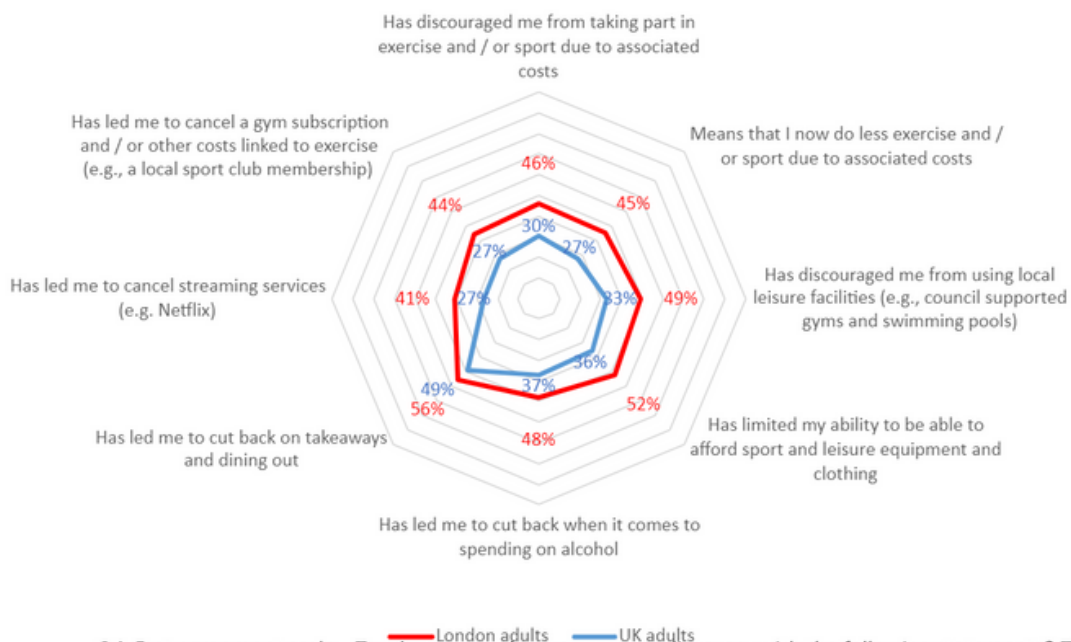
Between 40-50% of Londoners have cut back on different aspects of spend, compared to a third of UK adults, indicating a greater overall impact on the capital. For Londoners earning between £20-30k, this figures rises to nearly 8 in 10 (78%).

Agreement that the cost of living has limited ability to afford sport and leisure equipment was notably higher among UK adults aged 18-44 (50%) compared to those aged 45 or over (26%).

Half of Londoners (49%) also agree that this has discouraged them from using local leisure facilities (compared to a third of adults across the UK - 33%). Again, perceptions amongst age groups vary with 49% of 18-44-year-olds agreeing with this statement, compared to 22% of those aged 45 or over.

The cost of living crisis has also left 45% of Londoners doing less exercise or sport due to the associated cost. Across the UK, 27% of adults agree with this statement, although agreement was much higher among 18-44-year-olds (41%) compared to those 45+ (17%).

Agreement summary – recent impact of the rising cost of living (London and UK Adults)



COST OF LIVING: THE SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SECTOR

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The rising cost of living has seen reduced activity participation numbers in sports clubs, fitness providers and other sector organisations...

43% of sector representatives state this is the case

Whereas only **24%** disagree

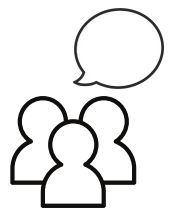
Sector representatives describe how the rising cost of living is impacting upon club participation, together with strain being placed on delivery:

People struggling to afford to take part due to costs

Financial strain on delivery

Help requested to cover costs of taking part (e.g. membership fees)

What did people have to say?



“It is causing issues for those who are struggling to make ends meet. It will force people to give up sports which are too costly.”

“Cost of living and energy crisis is affecting not only participation but the cost of service delivery which is too great to be passed onto the user. Further subsidies are required which will put a strain on services...”

“More people are asking for discounts to help them to participate in classes.”

CONTACTS

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If you would like further detail on this report and the data presented, or you would like get in touch with London Sport to see how we can work together to improve the lives of Londoners through sport and physical activity, please contact the relevant member of staff below.

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