



Coaching in the UK, 2019

Coach Survey

Introduction

In 2019, UK Coaching commissioned YouGov to undertake the largest ever survey into coaches and coaching, building on a previous survey conducted in 2017. A nationally representative sample of over 50,000 adults and 2,000 children were surveyed about their experience of receiving coaching and their experience of being a coach.

This report presents a summary of the key findings from the coach section of the survey. It includes coaches who have recently coached sport or physical activity and those who have coached at some point in the past.

The full statistical report is available on the UK Coaching website and separate reports are available for coached participants.

Methodology

The survey aimed to measure the incidence of coaches and coached participants in the UK, to analyse any changes since the research was last conducted in 2017, and to develop an in-depth understanding of the characteristics and experience of the coaches and participants.

In 2017, a survey of 20,688 UK adults aged 18+ and 1,000 children aged 7 to 17 was conducted online between 2 and 21 August, 2017. The results were weighted to be representative of the UK population by gender, age, region and social grade.

In 2019, a similar approach was taken but with an increased sample size of 50,797 adults in the UK aged 18+ and 2,000 children aged 7 to 17. The research was carried out online from the 9 August to the 16 September 2019. The results are weighted to be representative of the UK population by gender, age, region, social grade and ethnicity.

For further details about the methodology, and a glossary of terms, please see the statistical report on the UK Coaching website.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by Sport England.

UK Coaching commissioned YouGov to undertake the survey fieldwork and analysis. The questionnaires were developed by UK Coaching, in consultation with other partners. UK Coaching would like to thank YouGov for their support and advice throughout the development process.

This report is written by UK Coaching, based on analysis of the data conducted by YouGov and additional analysis conducted by UK Coaching.

Incidence of coaching

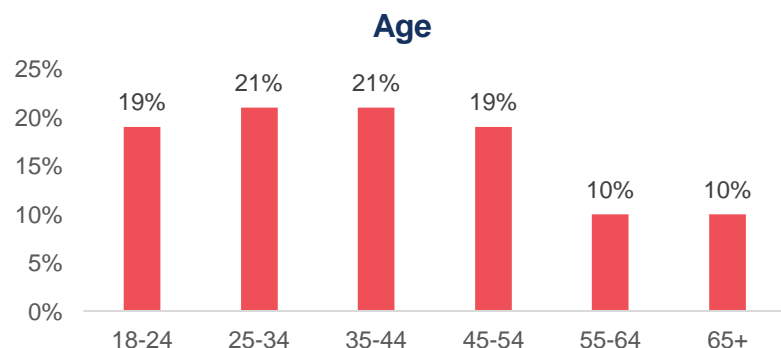
Six percent of UK adults reported that they had coached, instructed, trained, taught or led sport or physical activity in the 12 months prior to the survey.

This equates to an **estimated three million coaches** across the UK in 2019, a slight decrease from 2017.

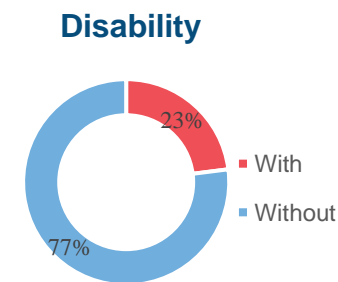
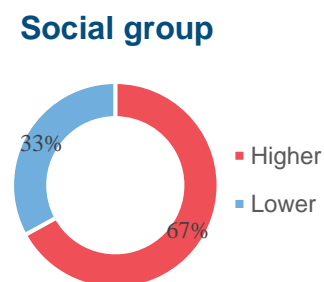
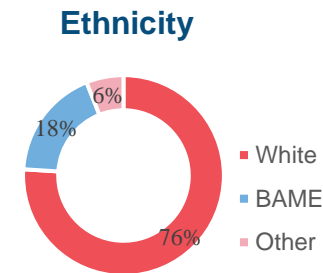
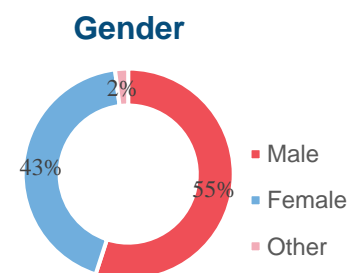
Demographic profile

Of those who coached in the previous 12 months of the survey, 55% are male and 43% are female. Around one-fifth are from a BAME background (18%), compared to the national average of 14%; and around a quarter have a disability or health condition (23%), compared to around 20% nationally.

Those from lower social groups are underrepresented in the coaching workforce: 33% compared to a national average of 43%. Coaches are most likely to be younger, and the likelihood of coaching decreases with age.



2017		2019	
Incidence	UK population estimate	Incidence	UK population estimate
6.47%	3,300,000	5.74%	3,000,000

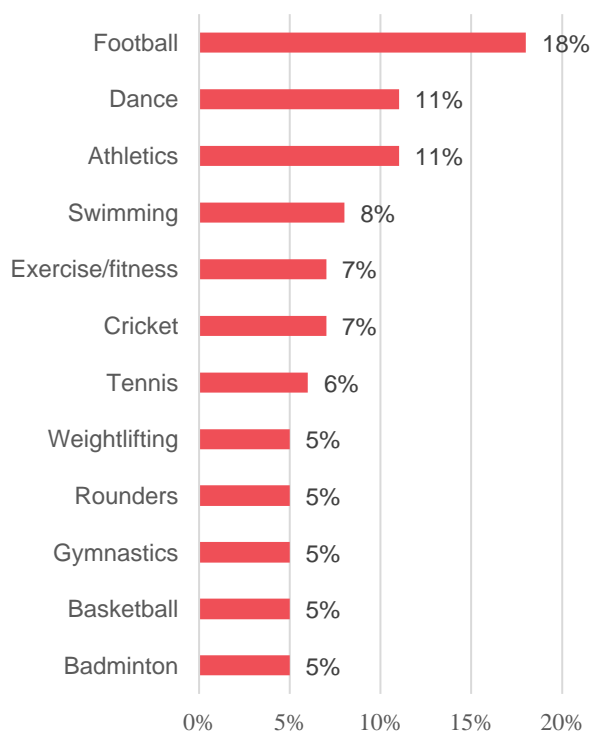


Between 2017 and 2019, there has been:

- a slight decrease in the proportion of coaches from lower social groups (by 2 percentage points).
- a slight decrease in the proportion of coaches who are female (by 3 percentage points).
- a decrease in the proportion of coaches from a BAME background (by 4 percentage points).

What do they coach?

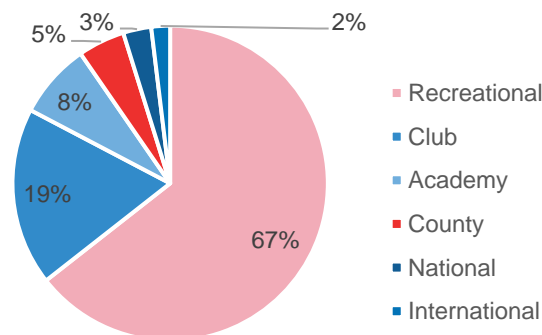
The most common activities coached are football (18%), dance (11%) and athletics (11%).



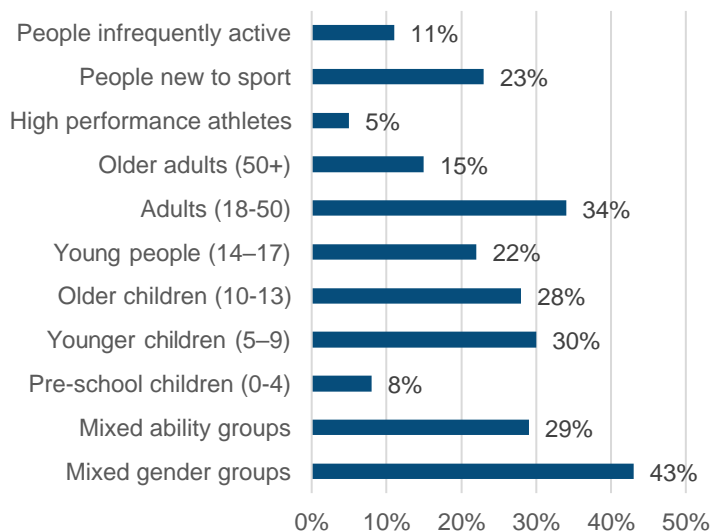
A third (32%) of male coaches coach invasion games, compared to 18% of female coaches; 19% of female coaches coach dance, compared to 5% of male coaches.

Who do they coach?

The majority of coaches are involved in coaching participants at a recreational level.



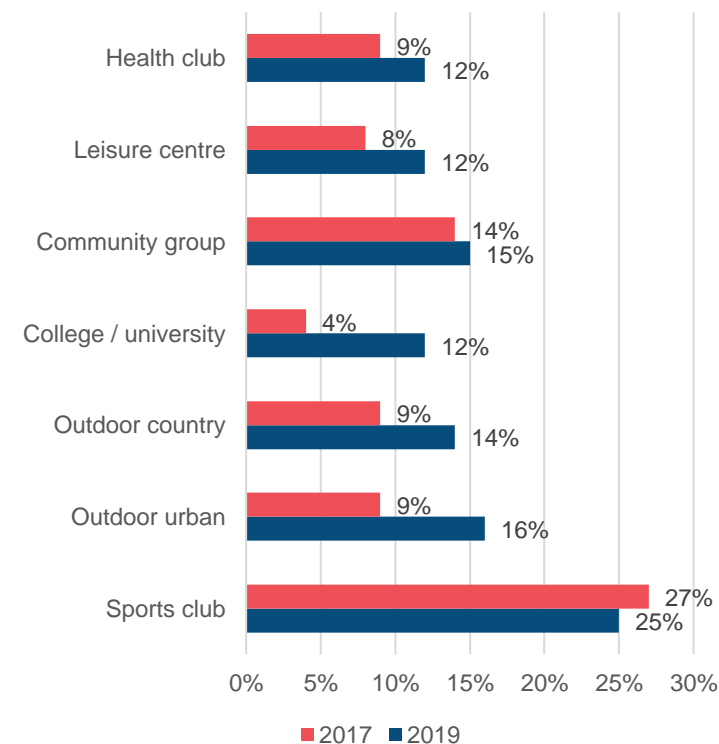
Coaches are most likely to state that they coach adults and mixed gender groups.



Where do they coach?

Coaches are most likely to coach in a sports club (25%), although this has reduced slightly since 2017 (27%).

Since 2017, there have been considerable increases in the proportion of coaches who coach in a college or university; outdoor urban spaces and outdoor countryside settings.

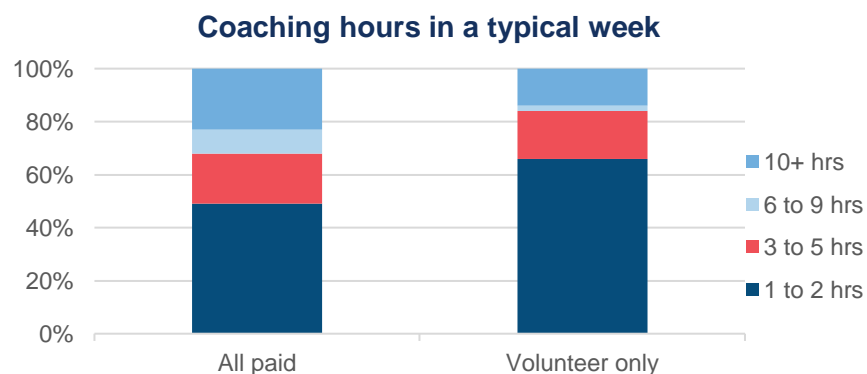


Coaching status

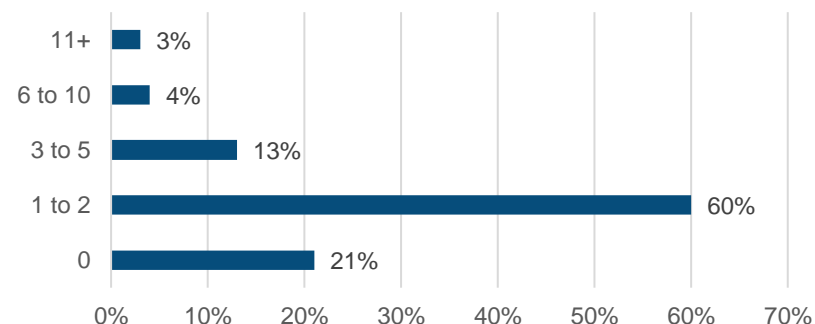
In 2019, just under half of coaches only coach in a volunteer capacity in a typical week; and a fifth only coach in a paid capacity. Although there has been no change since 2017 in the proportion of coaches who coach in a volunteer-only capacity, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of coaches who receive at least some pay.

Paid/volunteer coaching status	2017	2019
Paid only	19%	21%
Volunteer only	46%	46%
Paid and volunteer	15%	16%
Neither	20%	17%
Net: All paid	34%	37%

Female coaches are significantly more likely to receive some pay, with nearly half (45%) receiving some monetary compensation compared to a third (31%) of male coaches.



Number of coaching sessions in a typical week



As in 2017, coaches are most likely to refer themselves as a 'coach' in some way (43%). Males are more likely than females to refer to themselves as a 'coach' (51% compared to 32%).

Coaching titles	2017	2019
Activator/Facilitator	10%	10%
Advanced/Senior Coach	5%	5%
Assistant coach	14%	15%
Coach	18%	19%
Fitness or exercise instructor	9%	10%
Head Coach	5%	5%
Helper	25%	22%
PE teacher	8%	8%
Performance Coach	4%	4%
Personal trainer	6%	6%
Specialist Coach (e.g. positional, skills)	5%	5%
Sports Leader/Leader	10%	8%
Teacher (outside school)	8%	7%
Trainee coach	6%	4%

Whilst a fifth (21%) reported that they coach in a paid-only capacity, just 8% of coaches stated that coaching was their **primary occupation**.

Coach learning and development

Overall, over half (54%) of coaches do not have a specific coaching qualification. This has reduced significantly from 2017 (58%), by 4 percentage points.

Highest level of coaching qualification, grouped	2017	2019
No coaching qualification	58%	54%
Activator/ leader qualification	6%	8%
Level 1/2 (or equivalent)	19%	19%
Level 3/4 (or equivalent)	8%	9%
HE/FE Degree or Diploma, or above	5%	5%
Other	4%	4%
Net: Has listed qualification	38%	42%

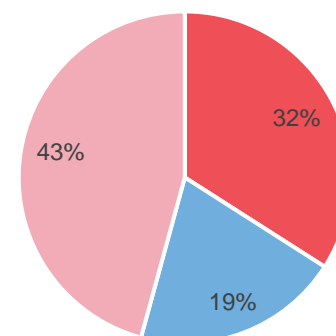
Since 2017, there has been an increase in the proportion of coaches who report having an Activator or Leader qualification, and a Level 3 or 4 qualification.

Whilst half of coaches have completed some type of learning or development in the last five years, a sizeable third (34%) have never done any at all.

Last time completed any informal or formal CPD related to coaching	
Within the last 12 months	27%
In the past 2 years	12%
In the past 3 years	6%
In the past 5 years	6%
Longer than 5 years ago	11%
Never	34%

Overall, 30% of coaches have never completed any type of coaching qualification, or any CPD (formal or informal).

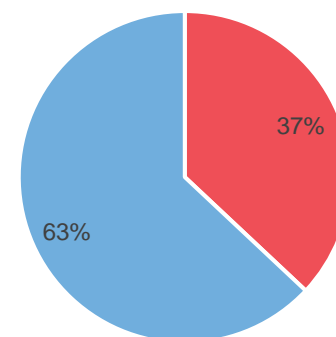
Half of coaches reported that they either currently have a mentor or have access to one should they want it. Whereas, 43% said they do not have access to a mentor.



Access to a mentor

- Yes - currently has access to a mentor
- Yes - has access but don't currently receive support
- No

Nearly two thirds (63%) of coaches are not a member of any sporting or activity body.



Member of a sporting body

- Yes
- No

Sixteen percent of coaches are a member of a national governing body of sport.

Experience of coaching

Coaches are generally very positive about their experience of coaching, with increases in 2019 in the proportion who feel they have the right resources or equipment to coach effectively; feel recognised for their contribution to helping others; and would recommend coaching to others.

Experience of coaching

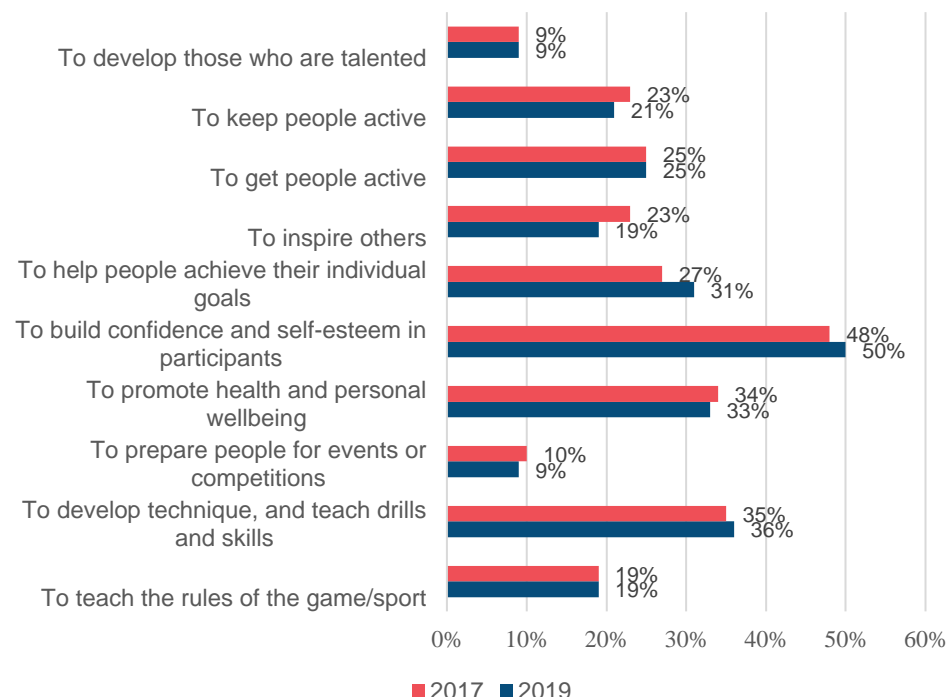


Male coaches are more likely to agree it is hard to balance coaching alongside their other commitments (42% of male coaches compared to 33% of female coaches).

Role of a coach

Coaches are most likely to agree that their role is to build confidence and self-esteem in their participants – a slight increase from 48% in 2017 to 50% in 2019.

Primary role of a coach



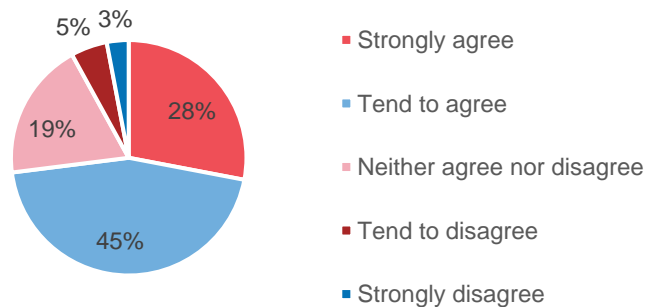
Barriers

The cost of qualifications and training, and balancing work/home life, remain the biggest barriers to coaching in the UK (36% respectively in 2019), although there has been a slight decrease in both since 2017.

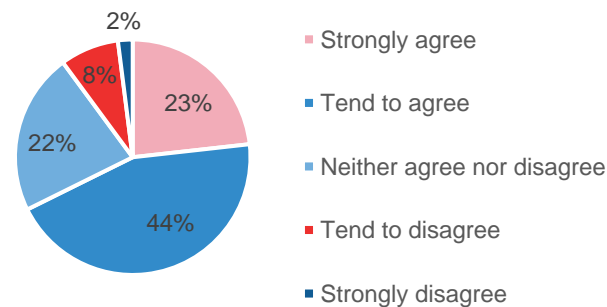
Competence and confidence

Three quarters (73%) of coaches agree that they feel confident when delivering sport or physical activity sessions and two thirds (68%) agree that they are able to coach to a standard they are pleased with. Only 8% and 10% of coaches disagreed with these statements respectively.

Confidence to deliver sport or physical activity sessions



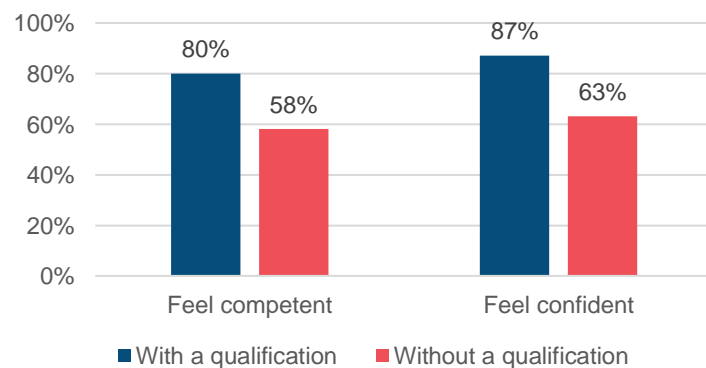
Competence to deliver to a standard they are pleased with



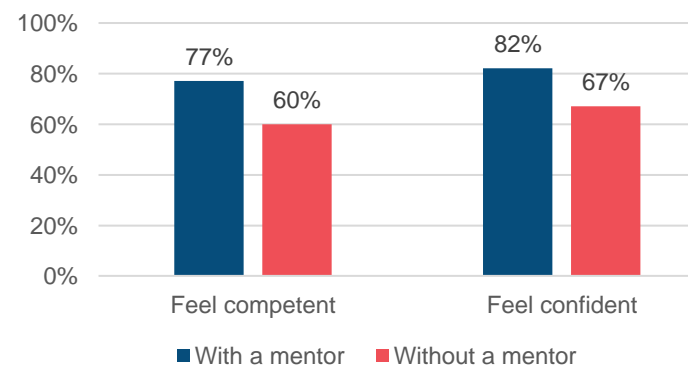
Male coaches are significantly more likely than female coaches to state they feel confident (78% male; 67% female) and competent (71% male; 64% of female) when delivering coaching sessions.

Overall, those who are most likely to agree they feel confident and competent delivering sport and physical activity are those coaching talented players or high performance athletes (97% and 88% respectively). Whereas those coaching younger aged children (age 5 to 9) are the least likely to agree they feel confident or competent (72% and 65% respectively).

Feel confident or competent with/without a qualification



Feel confident or competent with/without a coaching mentor



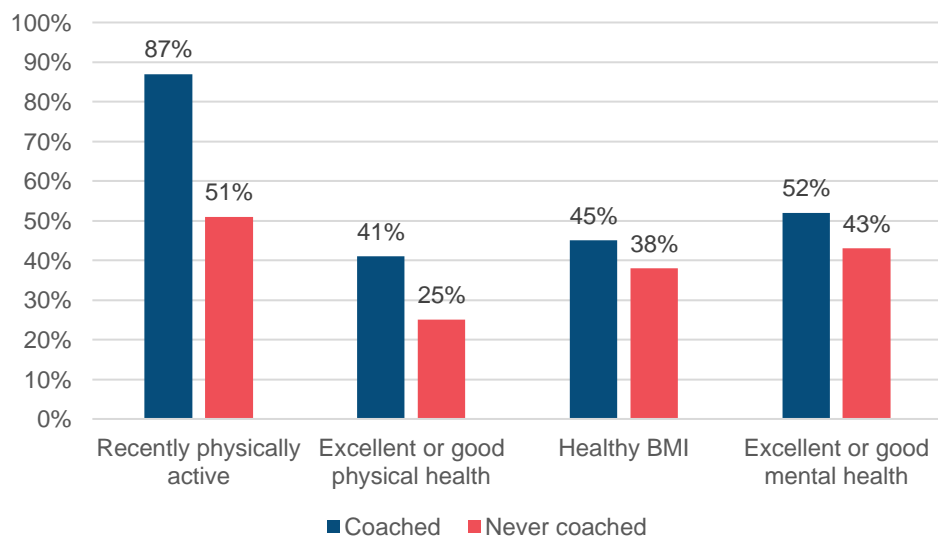
Coaches are more likely to agree that they feel confident and competent if they have at least one coaching qualification or if they receive support from a coaching mentor.

Impact of coaching

Compared to those who have never coached, coaches are significantly more likely to have taken part in any physical activity over the last year, to rate their physical health as excellent or good, to be a healthy BMI, and to rate their mental health as excellent or good.

Four in ten (41%) coaches would rate their physical health as excellent or good, compared to 27% of the UK population, or 25% of those who have never coached.

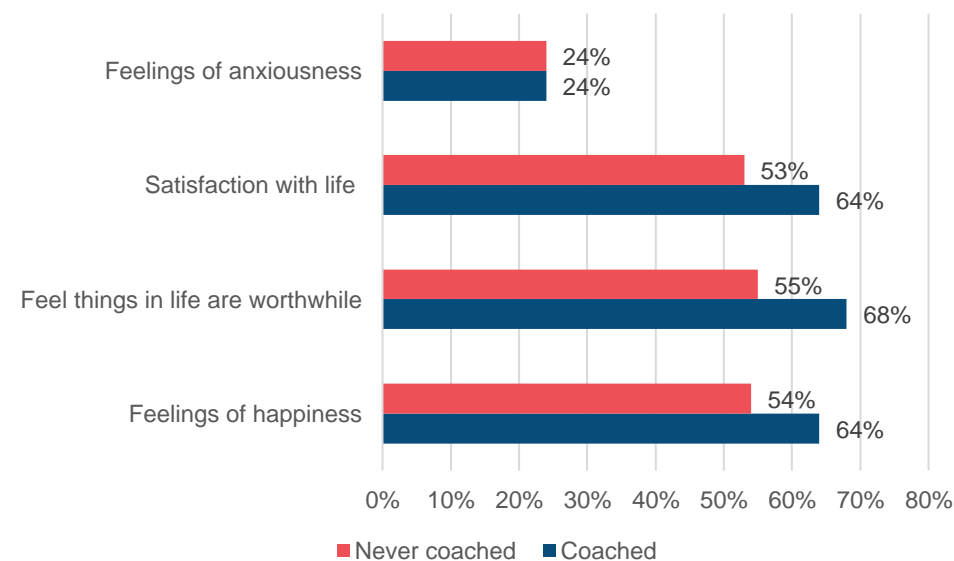
Physical and mental health



Over half (52%) of coaches would describe their mental health as excellent or good, compared to 43% of the UK population, or 43% of those who have never coached.

Coaches are more likely to rate themselves positively on a range of well-being measures compared to those who have never coached.

Well being



Overall, two thirds (64%) of coaches say they felt 'happy' yesterday. This is significantly higher than the national average or those who have never coached (both 54%). Furthermore, 11% of coaches said they felt 'completely' happy yesterday, compared to 8% of UK adults overall.

Coach development workforce

Overall, 7% of those who have ever coached sport or physical activity work with other coaches to educate, support, mentor or teach them about coaching.

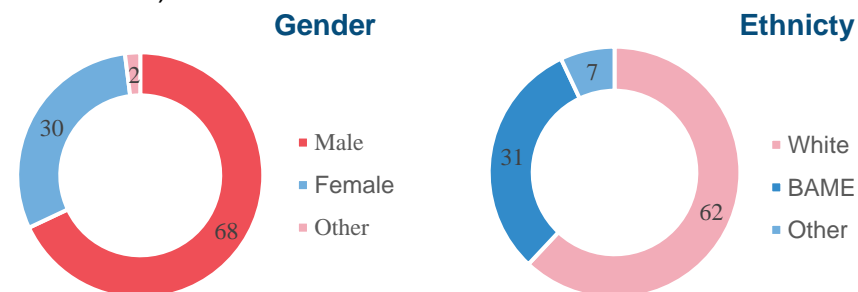
This equates to two percent of the adult population, or approximately **900,000 people in the coach development workforce in the UK.**

When asked which of the following best described their role as an educator, supporter, mentor, or teacher of coaches, 38% described their role as a 'Mentor'; a fifth (20%) a 'Coach Developer' and 13% a 'Coach Educator'.

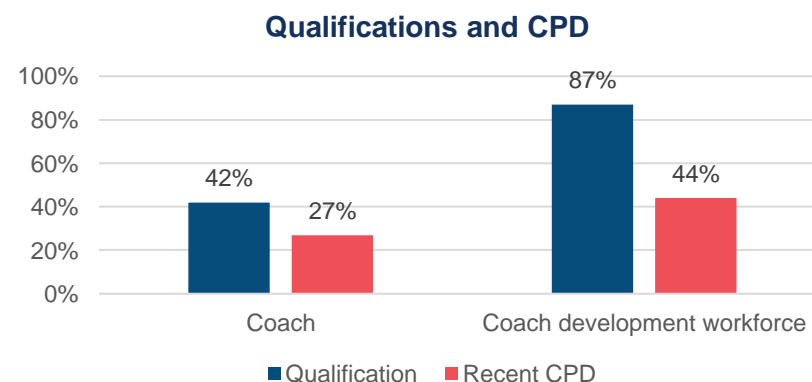
Description of role	All
Coach Developer: supports coaches through a blended approach of coaching conversions, in-situ observations, critical reflection and supportive challenge.	20%
Mentor: supports the personal and professional development of an individual through discussion, advice and guidance	38%
Coach Educator: works in a training, tutoring or teaching role	13%
Quality assurance or assessment role	4%
Head Coach: line manages other coaches	4%
Other	6%

Compared to the UK population, women are underrepresented and people from BAME backgrounds are overrepresented in the coach development workforce.

Compared to the coaching workforce overall, members of the coach development workforce are more likely to be male than female (68% male and 30% female) and from a BAME background (31% BAME and 62% white).



People in the coach development workforce are more likely to have a coaching qualification and to have engaged in recent CPD, compared to the coaching workforce overall.



People in the coach development workforce are more likely to feel confident when they coach (95%) and coach to a standard they are pleased with (87%), than the coaching workforce overall.

Summary

This report presents a summary of the key findings from Coaching in the UK, 2019 - the largest and most robust survey of coaching and coached-participation in the UK to date.

The size of the coaching workforce is significant: 6% of adults coached sport or physical activity in the 12 months prior to the survey, which equates to an estimated **3 million coaches in the UK**. Furthermore, an estimated 900,000 people support coaches in a coach development, mentor, educator or quality assurance role.

There has been a slight decrease in the coaching workforce since the last survey was conducted in 2017 (less than 1 percentage point), and UK Coaching will examine this data in further detail to try and understand this change.

Overall, the coaching workforce remains relatively diverse in relation to ethnicity and disability, but less diverse in relation to gender and social group. Since 2017, there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of coaches who are female, from a BAME background, and from lower social groups. Some of the changes observed in 2019 might be a result of small changes in the survey methodology, and UK Coaching will examine this data in further detail and will continue to monitor trends over time.

There are some variations in the data, particularly in relation to sport/activity, environment and level of coaching. Some of these variations are highlighted in the main report and UK Coaching will be undertaking further sub-group analysis in the near future.

The survey has shown that coaching takes place in a wide range of sports/activities and in a variety of different environments, but overall most coaching takes place at a recreational and club level; and within sports club settings. Those who coach football make up a significant proportion of the workforce.

It is interesting to note the considerable increase of coaching in college/university, and in outdoor urban spaces and countryside settings, but this change should be treated with some caution due to small changes in the survey methodology in 2019.

Whilst there has been a slight decrease in the coaching population overall, it is interesting to note that at the same time there has been a significant increase in the proportion of coaches who receive some pay, and an increase in those with at least one coaching qualification. This may suggest a movement towards a more professional status for coaches and we will continue to monitor this trend closely.

Coaches are generally very positive about their experience of coaching. In 2019, they are more likely to feel they are recognised for their contribution to helping others and they are more likely to recommend coaching to a friend or colleague. Yet, they still find it hard to balance their coaching alongside their other commitments and almost half would like help from others when they coach.

The cost of qualifications and training remains one of the biggest barriers to coaching in the UK in 2019, and may explain why a large

proportion of the workforce do not have a coaching qualification and do not engage in regular CPD. Furthermore, just under half of coaches do not have access to a mentor to support them in their role, and nearly two-thirds are not a member of a sporting body.

The findings show the benefits of qualifications and the benefits of having access to a coaching mentor. Coaches with a qualification, and those with access to a coaching mentor, are more likely to feel confident and competent when delivering sport and physical activity. UK Coaching will continue to support the learning and development of coaches across the UK by improving access to learning opportunities and developing high quality content.

The survey explored the physical and mental health benefits of coaching, and found significant differences between those who coach and those who do not coach. Those who coach are more likely to report excellent or good physical and mental health, and are more likely to rate themselves positively on a range of well-being measures, compared to those who have never coached and the UK population.

Although it is not possible to say that coaching leads to improved physical health, mental health and well-being, as there are likely to be several factors at play, these results do indicate that people who coach are more likely to be healthier, happier and satisfied with their lives.

The full statistical report is available on the UK Coaching website.





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