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# **EFDS Report of the Sport and Recreation Alliance's Sports Club Survey 2013**

**A baseline understanding of the provision for disabled  
people among UK sports clubs**

**Collated in November 2013**

## Introduction

**Every two years, the Sport and Recreation Alliance (the Alliance) runs a survey with community and grassroots sports clubs to take a look at their health and gain a better understanding of the sport and recreation sector.**

The 'sports club' survey looks at:

- The opportunities, challenges and barriers sports clubs face
- How sports clubs are coping financially, and the extent to which they are feeling the squeeze of local authority cuts
- How sports clubs are sustaining or growing their membership
- What training and support sports clubs would like to see offered by non-profit organisations in the future

In addition to the standard questions, this year the Alliance added a number of additional questions designed to gain a better understanding of the extent to which sports clubs provide for disabled people.

The main Alliance Sports Club Survey report covers the key findings, but due to the scope and range of the survey, impairment specific findings are not covered in detail.

There is however a wealth of useful information within the survey that can help the sport and physical activity sector to better understand the current provision for disabled people.

Therefore, with support from the Alliance, the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) has produced this more detailed report focusing solely on the findings which impact disabled people.

EFDS would like to thank the Sport and Recreation Alliance for their on-going support to ensure that we are able to build upon and improve our knowledge of disabled people in sport.

EFDS conduct a number of our own research projects, but are limited in what can be achieved. By being able to utilise other research which is also being conducted provides the sector with a much richer understanding of the market.

## Andy Reed OBE- Chair of Sport and Recreation Alliance

**The issue of disability sport provision in the UK has really come to the fore of late, particularly in light of the incredible success of the London 2012 Paralympic Games.**

The event allowed us to publicly debate where the opportunities lie for disability sport, and have been a testament to how far disability sport has come in recent years. But the results of our Sports Club Survey suggest that we still have further to go to translate this will and enthusiasm into effective provision at grassroots level.

Many clubs still lack the skills, resources and facilities to provide for disabled participants, and we have a job to do to make sure clubs are aware of the support and guidance that's out there to help them become more inclusive.

Our work at the Alliance spans many different policy areas and we know that the onus doesn't fall solely on sport to provide the answers.

Barriers to participation can equally be about transport, costs and geography and we must all play our part towards making sport truly inclusive.

There is a lot of support already available to help sports clubs equip themselves to provide for disabled people – tools such as the EFDS' Inclusion Club Hub.

Making sure that clubs know they can access these resources will be a vital part of creating a more welcoming and productive environment for disabled people in sport.

We know that creating a lasting legacy for disability sport will not be something that is measured in weeks or months but in years.

We're excited about working with organisations like the EFDS and the British Paralympic Association in the coming years, and look forward to seeing how disability sport has developed in our next survey in 2015.

## **Barry Horne- Chief Executive of the English Federation of Disability Sport**

**EFDS alongside its partners wants to ensure disabled people who look for local opportunities can be guaranteed a quality experience once at the club.**

Clubs are often the first point for people to take part in sport, so disabled people need to know that clubs value their membership and will support them too. All members (current or potential) need to feel valued and receive equal opportunities. As roughly 20 per cent of our population this means it makes perfect sense to reach out to more disabled people to sustain and grow membership.

EFDS's research report on 'Understanding the barriers to participation' showed that there are a number of minor improvements a club can make, which would help disabled people to feel more comfortable in their environment. Examples include being open and direct towards disabled people, asking the level of support needed to be able to take part in the sport and slightly amending standard practices. The same research also identified the main way in which disabled people find out about sporting opportunities is through word of mouth from other disabled people.

We work to support the sports sector and drive the inclusion of disabled people, who are still a largely under-represented group. For clubs, there is not one set way to improve inclusion. Clubs can include disabled people in a variety of ways. Some clubs run fully inclusive sessions which include all its members. Other clubs have bespoke groups and sessions for disabled people, but they are still delivered within the main club structure. These both benefit disabled people to enjoy sport as much as non-disabled people.

Importantly, what this report recognises is that a high proportion of clubs want to do more to include disabled people in their activities. Lack of awareness and resources are mentioned as a key driving factor for improvement. Our Inclusion Club Hub (<http://www.inclusion-club-hub.co.uk>) has already been shown to improve and increase opportunities for disabled people at a grassroots level. The extra support for clubs, such as this tool, to deliver inclusive activities means more disabled people can enjoy sport and stay active for life.

## Executive Summary

### 1. Club provision

**The availability of equipment, staff and facility features to support disabled people at the club varies widely depending on the type of provision a club has available. Clubs offering parallel provision seem to be best prepared.**

One third of clubs have no provision for disabled people. These clubs are generally smaller with no staff trained to adapt the sport for disabled people and are least likely to have suitable equipment or facilities. It is unclear whether these clubs have made a conscious decision not to include disabled people, or whether their lack of resources has resulted in this.

Clubs that focus solely on disabled people are more likely to have suitable facilities, equipment and trained staff, but are much smaller and have lower levels of finance.

Clubs that offer parallel provision, where disabled people take part in parallel sessions within the same club as non-disabled people, are generally larger with higher levels of finance and greater numbers of disabled members. They have more staff trained in providing for disabled people, and are more likely to have suitable facilities and equipment than other mainstream clubs.

One third of clubs have no provision for disabled people. These clubs are generally smaller with no staff trained to adapt the sport for disabled people and are least likely to have suitable equipment or facilities.

Clubs that offer inclusive provision, where disabled and non-disabled people take part in the sport together, are most common. Half of the clubs surveyed stated that they offered this type of provision. However, these clubs have a relatively low number of disabled members, with four in ten (43 per cent) actually having no disabled members. In addition they have fewer staff trained in adapting sport for disabled people and are less likely to have suitable facilities and equipment. It appears that clubs want to be inclusive, however currently have limited awareness of the relevant skills and resources to provide this.

## 2. Workforce

**Staff to participant ratio varies significantly across the club types, with clubs that focus solely on disabled people having a much higher staff to participant ratio.**

Clubs that offer inclusive provision have a staff to participant ratio of 1:10, in line with the general staff to participant ratio of sports clubs. However, clubs that offer other types of provision have a higher ratio.

Clubs that offer parallel provision have one member of staff for every eight participants, with clubs providing solely for disabled people having one member of staff for every three participants.

The data suggests that more staff members are needed to support disabled people in sport. However, it is worth noting that the level of support required will be impacted by the type and how profound a person's impairment is, the age of participants and the type of sport they are playing.

Clubs may believe that they need specialised equipment to allow disabled people to take part in their sport, when in reality simple adaptations to the equipment they already have will suffice.

## 3. Equipment

**Over half of sports clubs state that they do not have access to suitable equipment for disabled people to take part in their sport.**

This figure is based on self declaration from the club of what they believe to be suitable and relevant equipment. Given that two thirds (67 per cent) of all clubs surveyed have no disabled members; it may be difficult for them to determine whether or not they have suitable equipment. In addition, one in ten clubs actually state that they are unsure whether or not they have access to suitable equipment.

Clubs may believe that they need specialised equipment to allow disabled people to take part in their sport, when in reality simple adaptations to the equipment they already have will suffice. It is clear that training is needed to help clubs understand the extent to which adapted equipment is needed and the most cost effective ways to provide it.

## 4. Training

**Only eight per cent of club staff or volunteers have received training in adapting their sport for disabled people.**

This is a very small proportion, suggesting a low level of skills or knowledge in clubs about how to adapt the sport to ensure disabled people can be included. The benefits of such training needs to be communicated to encourage clubs to ensure their staff take part.

It is worth noting that the question regarding training referred specifically to adapting the sport for disabled people. In reality, ensuring disabled people have a quality experience within a club goes above and beyond taking part in the sport itself.

The interaction with the club staff and other team members plays a significant role in the level of enjoyment and likelihood of a disabled person to continue their involvement with a club. Increasing awareness and skills among staff and other members of disabled people's needs within different sports is also important as it will ensure a better quality experience and continued participation. It is unclear from this survey the extent to which training of this kind is has been taken.

In reality, ensuring disabled people have a quality experience within a club goes above and beyond taking part in the sport itself.

## 5. Engagement

**One in three sports clubs and organisations have links with organisations that could support them with disabled members.**

It appears that some clubs are already making connections to organisations within the disability sector to increase their skills and knowledge. It would be good to better understand the kind of support that is received and the extent to which clubs find this useful.

# Types of clubs: How do clubs provide for disabled people, and what impact does that have on the quality of provision?

The survey established the type of provision that sports clubs offer disabled people. There are four categories:

1. **No provision:** A club that provides for non-disabled people only
2. **Disability specific:** A club that provides for disabled people only
3. **Inclusive:** A club that provides for both disabled and non-disabled people, who take part together in inclusive sessions
4. **Parallel:** A club that provides for both disabled and non-disabled people, who take part separately in parallel sessions

This report will look at the findings based on the type of provision clubs offer disabled people.

## 1. Clubs who provide for non-disabled people only

One third of the sports clubs surveyed stated they provide for non-disabled people only and that they have no disabled members. It is unclear from this survey whether it is a conscious decision by these clubs to not provide for disabled people, or simply a result of having no disabled members or no interest in the club from disabled people.

### Club size

Clubs who cater solely for non-disabled people tend to be smaller than other clubs.

They have an average total membership of 129 members (adults and juniors) compared to 194 members in clubs with inclusive provision and 304 members in clubs with parallel provision.

These clubs have a much lower annual income than clubs overall, receiving on average £32,740 compared to £42,845. Their annual membership fees for adults are lower than the average, £64 compared to £78, but slightly higher for juniors, £50 compared to £46.

## **Staff and equipment**

On average clubs who cater solely for non-disabled have one member of staff to every six participants, a higher staff to participant than clubs overall, but lower than clubs which provide solely for disabled people.

These clubs generally have no staff or volunteers who have received any training on adapting the sport for disabled people.

Eight in ten (80 per cent) of these clubs say they do not have access to the appropriate equipment for disabled people to take part in their sport.

## **Facilities**

Clubs who provide solely for non-disabled people most commonly hire facilities, generally from a local authority (52 per cent) or a school (33 per cent).

Given that these clubs generally hire facilities from local authorities or schools who must abide by the DDA in relation to accessibility, you would expect the facilities have suitable features to support disabled people's access. However, on average, these clubs indicate that the facilities they use are half as likely as clubs with inclusive or parallel provision to have facilities with doorways suitable for wheelchair access, disabled parking, provision for disabled access in general (lowered curbs, ramps, lifts) and disabled changing facilities.

It is likely that these figures are not a true representation of the actual facilities, but more a reflection of the lack of understanding by the club as to what suitable facilities look like.

## **Future opportunities and challenges**

Improving their facilities and training and developing staff and volunteers are the main opportunities that appeal to these clubs. However, given that only seven per cent of these clubs say that they will look to increase the number of disabled members with the next two years, it is unlikely that any improvements in facilities or staff will take disabled people into consideration.

The main challenges that these clubs think they will face is the ability to recruit new members (52 per cent) and increased facility costs (52 per cent).

## **Awareness and links to supporting organisations**

Despite these clubs currently not providing for disabled people, seven per cent have connections to, or relationships with, organisations that provide support and guidance in how to include disabled people in sport.

Although this is a very small number of clubs, it does mean that some clubs are obviously thinking about improving the provision they offer to disabled people. It would be interesting to determine why these clubs have made this decision, and how helpful and useful they have found the connections to these organisations.

### **Impact of 2012 Games**

Less than one in ten (8 per cent) clubs which focus solely on non-disabled people said that they had seen a direct increase in membership from the London 2012 Games. Of those clubs that did see an increase, on average they attracted 15 new adult members and 29 new junior members, impressive numbers given how small these clubs are.

## **2. Provision for disabled people only**

**Only two in 100 of the clubs surveyed stated that they provided opportunities solely for disabled people. We believe that this may be an under-representation of this type of setting.**

There is a lot of sports provision for disabled people which takes place in groups which focus solely on disabled people; however these groups may not consider themselves sport clubs, but rather social groups or clubs. Such clubs may therefore not have been aware of the SRA club survey, may have felt that the survey was not relevant to them so did not take part or may have not met the criteria needed to take part.

Despite this, the data collected provides an interesting baseline insight into clubs which focus on disabled people.

### **Club size**

On average, these clubs have around 45 members, making them significantly smaller than other clubs.

These clubs have the lowest annual income of all clubs, receiving on average £29,312 compared to an average £42,845 from clubs overall. Their annual membership fees are significantly lower than the average. For adults, their fees are only £20 compared to £78, and for juniors £14 compared to £46.

### **Staff and equipment**

Although clubs which focus solely on disabled people may be small, they have the greatest staff to participant ratio of all clubs. They have one member of staff to every three

participants, compared to an average of one member of staff to every eight participants across all clubs.

Around one third (33 per cent) of staff with these clubs have received training in adapting or amending sport to include disabled people, the highest proportion of staff across all clubs.

Over nine in ten of these clubs (94 per cent) say they have suitable equipment for disabled people to take part in sport.

## **Facilities**

Clubs which focus solely on disabled people are least likely to have a long term commitment to a facility. Only seven per cent own a facility, compared to 21 per cent overall and only nine per cent have a long term lease on a facility compared to 25 per cent overall.

These clubs are more likely to make use of public space with 23 per cent doing this compared to 14 per cent of clubs overall. However, they most commonly and are more likely than other clubs, to hire their facility; with six in ten (58 per cent) saying this is what they do.

Within their facilities, these clubs are more than twice as likely to have access to suitable features for disabled people such as wider doorways for wheelchair users, accessible parking facilities, provisions such as lowered kerbs, ramps or lifts, accessible changing facilities, suitable signing and hearing loops.

Clubs that focus solely on disabled people are much more likely to give a higher rating for the standard of the facilities they use, giving them an average score of 5.7 out of 7 compared to 4.8 out of 7 for clubs overall, where a score of 7 is excellent. They are also much less likely to want to improve their facilities in the next two years, with only 14 per cent saying this is something they are considering, compared to 54 per cent of clubs overall.

Although these clubs most commonly hire from local authority providers (36 per cent), they are much less likely to do so compared to clubs overall (52 per cent). They are however twice as likely to hire facilities from other sports clubs, 18 per cent compared to 8 per cent of clubs overall.

Clubs that focus solely on disabled people are more likely to rate the relationships that they have with local authorities and county sports partnerships higher than the average score of clubs overall. They give their relationship with local authorities a score of 4.1 out of 7, compared to 3.4 out of 7, and their relationship with county sports partnerships a score of 4.2 out of 7 compared to 3.6 out of 7, where 7 is excellent.

12 per cent of clubs which focus solely on disabled people state that they are multi sports, providing their members access to different sports in one session. This is much higher than provision in the other club types, where less than one per cent provide multi sports.

### **Future opportunities and challenges**

When thinking about future opportunities, increasing the number of disabled members is the focus of three quarters (74 per cent) of clubs who provide solely for disabled people, three times higher than clubs overall (21 per cent). This is clearly important to these clubs, as when asked what training they would like to receive, the most common choice by almost half of the clubs (48 per cent) was training in recruiting club members.

The other opportunities which are most relevant to these clubs are securing grants (46 per cent) as well as promoting competitions and events (41 per cent).

Clubs solely for disabled people are much less likely to consider putting effort into other long term plans. Only 12 per cent of these clubs have a development plan compared to 26 per cent of clubs overall. They are much less likely to want to train their staff (33 per cent compared to 49 per cent), develop links with schools (21 per cent compared to 36 per cent), or increase the number of volunteers (24 per cent compared to 36 per cent).

Considering the high staff to participant ratio in clubs solely for disabled people, it is interesting to see that the clubs are keen to increase the number of members, but are much less likely to try and increase the number of volunteers that they have. It may be that these clubs assume that the disabled people who attend will bring their own support, and that is how they maintain a high staff / participant ratio.

It is also worth noting that whilst the clubs are keen to increase members, they are not interested in making links with local schools which would allow them to do that. It could be that due to the size of the clubs they lack the skills and awareness of the most suitable methods in which to increase members.

When thinking about potential challenges that may arise in the next two years, recruiting new members is the main concern for over half (56 per cent) of clubs that provide solely for disabled people. Other main concerns focus around finance, including accessing funding (49 per cent), increased transport and facility costs (46 per cent) and being able to generate enough income (44 per cent). In addition, although not of great importance to a majority, the lack of local competition is significantly more important to these clubs than clubs overall (26 per cent compared to 9 per cent).

Unsurprisingly, clubs who provide solely for disabled people are less likely to think that providing for disabled people is a challenge (15 per cent compared to 24 per cent of inclusive and 29 per cent of parallel clubs).

Compared to clubs overall, clubs solely for disabled people are also less concerned about retaining members (26 per cent compared to 44 per cent), recruiting volunteers (28 per cent compared to 42 per cent) and developing links with schools (20 per cent compared to 31 per cent).

These clubs are concerned about being able to recruit new members, but are much less concerned about retaining them once they have recruited them. It would be useful to gain a better understanding of why they are less concerned about new members leaving.

### **Impact of 2012 Games**

Clubs which focus solely on disabled people are less likely to have seen an increase in membership after the London 2012 Games. Four in ten (39 per cent) said that their membership did not increase, compared to six in ten (59 per cent) other clubs. Of those clubs that did see an increase, on average they attracted four new adult members and four new junior members.

### **Awareness and links to supporting organisations**

Compared to clubs overall, clubs solely for disabled people are more likely to be aware of organisations that can support them in providing sport for disabled people. Almost half (47 per cent) have links to such organisations, compared to two in ten (21 per cent) of clubs overall.

## **3. Inclusive clubs**

**Almost half of the clubs surveyed claimed to provide inclusive provision, which means disabled people and non-disabled people can take part in their sport together in the same session.**

Previous research conducted by EFDS<sup>1</sup> highlighted that this is the most preferred setting in which disabled people want to take part in sport. So initially it seems very positive that sports are providing what disabled people want. However, four in ten (43 per cent) of those clubs who state they provide inclusive provision actually have no disabled members. How can clubs claim to provide inclusive provision when they have no disabled members?

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<sup>1</sup> EFDS Lifestyle report 2013

## **Club size**

On average, clubs which provide inclusive provision have 194 members in total (junior and adult), five of which are disabled, which equates to three per cent of their membership.

These clubs have an average annual income of £49,331 slightly higher than the overall average £42,845. Compared to the overall average, their annual membership fees are slightly higher for adult members, £86 compared to £78, and slightly lower for junior member £43 compared to £46.

## **Staff and equipment**

Inclusive clubs have the lowest staff to participant ratio of all clubs, with ten participants to every one member of staff, compared to eight participants to one member of staff across clubs overall.

Fewer than one in ten staff members (seven per cent) within inclusive clubs have received training to adapt provision for disabled people. So whilst almost half of clubs believe their sessions are inclusive, they are lacking trained staff that may be more aware of what inclusive sessions actually consist of.

Only four in ten (43 per cent) inclusive clubs state that they have suitable equipment for disabled people to take part in their sport.

## **Facilities**

Hiring facilities is most common among inclusive clubs, with four in ten (43 per cent) doing this, most frequently from local authorities (52 per cent). Inclusive clubs are more likely than other clubs to own their own facility, with one quarter (24 per cent) stating this.

Although inclusive clubs claim to provide inclusive provision, they indicate that their facilities are less likely to have relevant features to make them more suitable for disabled people. Just over half (52 per cent) have doorways that will fit someone's wheelchair, only four in ten have accessible parking (45 per cent) and accessibility provision in terms of lower kerbs, ramps or lifts (40 per cent). Less than one third (28 per cent) have disabled changing facilities and less than one in ten suitable signing (nine per cent have) and an induction loop (three per cent).

## **Future opportunities and challenges**

Looking to the future, the main opportunities that appeal to inclusive clubs are improving their facilities (55 per cent) and training and developing their staff and volunteers (52 per cent). It would be very positive if these improvements included amends and adaptations to

allow more disabled people to take part in their sport, however the data suggests this may not be the case.

Only around one quarter of inclusive clubs (27 per cent) see providing for disabled people as an opportunity compared to three quarters (74 per cent) of clubs solely for disabled people and over half (55 per cent) of clubs with parallel provision. A quarter (24 per cent) of inclusive clubs actually think that providing for disabled people will be a challenge.

Accessing funding (54 per cent), recruiting new members (49 per cent), and generating sufficient income (48 per cent) are the most common challenges identified by inclusive clubs.

### **Impact of 2012 Games**

Four in ten (41 per cent) inclusive clubs said that their membership did not increase notably due to the London 2012 Games. Less than two in ten (16 per cent) said that their membership increased and was sustained after the games.

Of those clubs that did increase their membership, they managed to attract a total of 13 new adults members, one of which was disabled, and 23 new junior members, one of which was disabled.

### **Awareness and links to supporting organisations**

Just over one quarter (26 per cent) of clubs who offer inclusive provision have connections to, or relationships with, organisations that provide support and guidance in how to include disabled people in sport. Whilst this is a positive finding to know that some clubs are making these connections, more clubs need to do this to increase their awareness and knowledge of how to include disabled people in their sport.

## **4. Parallel provision**

**Less than one in ten (eight per cent) clubs provide parallel sessions for disabled, which means disabled people are members of the club, but take part in the sport in separate sessions to the non-disabled members.**

### **Club size**

Clubs which provide parallel provision are generally much bigger. They have significantly more members than the other clubs overall, with 304 members in total (adult and junior), compared to 174 of all clubs overall.

Not only are the clubs bigger in general, but clubs with parallel provision are also have a much greater number of disabled members, around three times the number of clubs overall. On average these clubs have 11 disabled members compared to an average of four across all types of club.

These clubs also have more money. They have the largest annual income of all groups, on average £59,011 compared to £42,845 overall. Their annual membership fees are also significantly higher. Adult members on average pay £104 compared to £78, with junior members paying £64 compared to £46.

### **Staff and equipment**

On average, clubs with parallel provision have one member of staff for every eight participants. Whilst this is not as high a ratio as clubs who provide solely for disabled people, it is still greater than clubs with inclusive provision.

One in ten (nine per cent) members of staff within parallel clubs have received training to amend or adapt sport for disabled people. Looking at absolute numbers, parallel clubs have twice as many staff receiving training compared to clubs overall (four members of staff compared to two). Whilst this is positive it is worth noting that parallel clubs tend to have more staff in total anyway (43 members of staff compared to 26).

Almost two thirds (63 per cent) of clubs with parallel provision are most likely to have suitable equipment for disabled people to take part in their sport.

### **Facilities**

Clubs that have parallel provision are more likely than any other type of club to have long term commitment to a facility. They are most likely to have a long term lease, with 44 per cent of these clubs stating that they do this compared to 25 per cent of clubs overall. Around one quarter (23 per cent) say that they own their own facility.

Compared to other clubs, they are least likely to hire facilities, with only 38 per cent saying they do this compared to 49 per cent of clubs overall. When they do hire facilities, it is most commonly from their local authority, although they are also more likely than other clubs to hire from schools.

Other than clubs solely for disabled people, clubs with parallel provision have the greatest level of suitable features within their facilities for disabled people to gain access. Although the actual proportion of clubs with these features is still rather low. Only around half have doorways that will fit a wheelchair (49 per cent), disabled parking (54 per cent) and accessibility provision in terms of lower kerbs, ramps or lifts (48 per cent). One third has

disabled changing facilities (31 per cent). Just over 1 in 10 (15 per cent) have suitable signing and only 2 per cent have an induction loop.

### **Future opportunities and challenges**

Clubs that provide parallel provision seem to be much more optimistic than other clubs with more identifying possible opportunities. The most common opportunities identified by around six in ten of these clubs include improving facilities (60 per cent), developing links with schools (59 per cent) and training staff (58 per cent).

Although improving facilities was seen as the main opportunity, these clubs also identified it as a challenge (65 per cent). This is probably because of funding issues that six in ten clubs identified as a challenge. 60 per cent said that generating income and 57 per cent said that accessing funding were future challenges they would face.

Over half of these clubs (55 per cent) saw increasing disabled members as an opportunity. Whilst this is very positive, three in ten (29 per cent) of clubs also saw this as a challenge, the highest of all the clubs types.

Six in ten (57 per cent) of the clubs also stated that recruiting volunteers was a challenge. Possibly why they were more likely than other clubs (13 per cent compared to 8 per cent overall) to believe that capitalising on volunteering from London 2012 was an opportunity.

### **Impact of 2012 Games**

Clubs with parallel provision were most likely to say that they saw an impact on their membership from the London 2012 Games. More than two in ten (22 per cent) of these clubs said that they saw an increase in members that was sustained. Of those clubs that did see an increase in membership, on average they attracted an additional 12 adult members, four of which were disabled, and 20 junior members, six of which were disabled. This means that around one third of the new members were disabled.

### **Awareness and links to supporting organisations**

Clubs with parallel provision are most likely to have connections to, or relationships with, organisations that provide support and guidance in how to include disabled people in sport. Six in ten (59 per cent) of these clubs claim to have some connection.

## Conclusions

**This report is designed to give a baseline understanding of the current level of provision for disabled people within sports clubs within the UK. It provides no conclusive recommendations, but should instead be used as a measuring tool, offering insight and guidance as to how clubs can improve their provision. Measures from the next Sport and Recreation Alliance survey can then determine the extent to which provision has changed.**

The report shows that there are a significant number of sports clubs which currently have no provision for disabled people. These clubs are generally smaller and are much less likely to have relevant facility features and appropriate equipment which enable disabled people to easily participate in their sport. These clubs have less disposable income which means they may be less likely to spend on necessary adaptations.

They do however have a greater staff to participant ratio, meaning that they are better placed to offer more focused support to disabled people if needed. Although, currently staff in these clubs are less likely than other clubs to receive relevant training in adapting the sport for disabled people to take part.

More needs to be done to better understand the extent to which the lack of provision for disabled people is a conscious decision, or a result of the inability of the club through lack of money, resources, knowledge and experience to provide for disabled people.

Unsurprisingly, clubs which focus solely on disabled people are much more likely to have suitable equipment and facilities with relevant features to ensure that disabled people can take part in their sport. They also have a higher staff to participant ratio to ensure a greater level of support for participants who need it and have more members of staff who are trained in adapting sport for disabled people.

These clubs have a lower number of members and also charge the lowest membership fees, leading to the lowest income of all clubs. This means that they may be more financially unstable. In addition these clubs seem to lack long term planning, being less likely to have development plans and want to improve their staff and volunteers. Whilst the clubs seem to be well designed to provide for disabled people, they are perhaps less well prepared to ensure long term survival.

The majority of clubs state that they provide an inclusive setting, allowing disabled and non-disabled people to take part together. However, the data suggests otherwise.

4 in 10 of the clubs currently have no disabled members and only a quarter say that they see providing for disabled people as an opportunity. Less than half of the clubs say that they have access to suitable equipment for disabled people to take part and the facilities that they use are much less likely to have the relevant features to ensure disabled people can gain full access.

Fewer staff in these clubs are trained in how to adapt the sport to include disabled people, suggesting that staff perhaps are unaware of the kind of amends and adaptations that are needed to provide an inclusive setting. They also have a much lower staff to participant ratio, which suggests that they may not be able to provide relevant support for people with more profound impairments.

So it seems that whilst clubs may believe that they provide inclusive opportunities they may be lacking the skills, resources, facilities and equipment to ensure that the disabled people who attend receive a quality experience.

Clubs which provide parallel provision seem to be the best prepared of all clubs. These clubs have a much greater number of disabled members and are much more likely to have suitable equipment and facilities. These clubs also seem to be better prepared to plan for the future, with greater awareness of opportunities and challenges and more likely to have long term plans.

There is a clear need for increasing the knowledge and awareness of the needs of disabled people in sport, specifically around facilities features and sports equipment.

Parallel provision seems to occur in clubs that are significantly larger than other clubs, who charge much higher membership fees and have a much greater income. They are more likely to own their own premises and have a greater number of staff. This means that they are more likely to be able to invest time and resources into ensuring a good quality of provision for disabled people. Sadly, these types of club only account for eight per cent of the overall population.

There is a clear need for increasing the knowledge and awareness of the needs of disabled people in sport, specifically around facilities features and sports equipment. It could be that some clubs believe that they need specialised equipment or expensive adaptations to their facilities for disabled people to take part, whilst in reality this may not be the case.

Whilst some sports may need notable investment, others may only require minor adaptations to facilities, equipment or the format of the game to ensure disabled people can be included. EFDS have a number of tools which sports clubs can use to increase their knowledge, awareness and skills of disabled people in sport.

The inclusion club hub ([www.inclusion-club-hub.co.uk](http://www.inclusion-club-hub.co.uk)) is an online tool which, by asking a series of questions, determines the level of awareness and understanding a club has about disabled people in sport. Each club receives a personalised report of their responses which includes advice and guidance on how to improve their provision, with signposting to additional support and useful resources.

The Active Kids for All Community Inclusion Training is a free training scheme in England, designed for coaches, leaders, assistants and parents who support community sports clubs, helping them to develop the skills and confidence to include disabled people in sporting activity. The aim of the training is to provide over 10,000 coaches, leaders, assistants and parents with training to ensure community sports clubs provide opportunities for disabled people, in turn increasing participation of disabled people in sport.

This first touch training will be delivered using a 3-4 hour practical session supported by online materials. In addition to building confidence and competence it will also introduce participants to leadership and coaching pathways for further development if of interest. The training will be available from January 2014, and you can register your interest by sending your full name and contact details to [AKFACommunitytraining@sportengland.org](mailto:AKFACommunitytraining@sportengland.org)

In December 2013, EFDS will release a guide to physical access for sports clubs. The guide is aimed at anybody involved in running or working in a sports club. It is not a detailed technical guide, but intended as a starting point. The resource takes readers through the main areas of physical access and signposts sources of further information and support.

EFDS is always keen to monitor the impact of our resources on the ability of clubs to provide for disabled people. We look forward to the next Sport and Recreation Alliance club survey to provide a measure for these changes.



**For more information on our research and insight, or other EFDS support, please contact [federation@efds.co.uk](mailto:federation@efds.co.uk) or telephone 01509 227750.**

**Visit our website at [www.efds.co.uk](http://www.efds.co.uk)**