



**English Federation
of Disability Sport**

Making **active lives** possible

The impact of coaching on disabled people's participation:

A review of a sports coach UK report focusing on
disabled people's experiences

January 2015

Prepared by the English Federation of Disability Sport
in partnership with sports coach UK

Report findings based on 'The impact of coaching on participation' July 2014, sports coach UK

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Foreword



At the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) we strive to improve awareness of what disabled people want from sport and physical activity so we can help the sector improve their offer to disabled people. To do this, we not only conduct our own primary research, but seek secondary research from other sources which provides additional insight.

There is a vast amount of potential secondary data available to us from different sources, but often the way in which the data analysed or presented does not make the most of its value in terms of understanding disabled people.

EFDS are continually seeking partnerships with different organisations who are willing to review their research and draw out statistics focusing on disabled people's experiences of sport and activity. This report is a prime example of such a partnership.

EFDS would like to thank sports coach UK for their effort and time in helping us to drill further into their data to provide some interesting findings of the attitudes and perceptions of disabled people regarding coached sport.

Moving forward, EFDS will continue to search for other useful partnerships. We ask organisations to consider the data they are collecting and whether they capture information around disabled people. If so, please consider sharing your findings with us.

Emma Spring
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Introduction

Sports coach UK released 'The Impact of Coaching on Participants' report in July 2014. The first year report of four year study, designed to measure the impact taking part in coached sport has on participant's views, perceptions and experiences of sport.

The study consisted of two surveys, one with young people aged 14 to 18, and one with adults aged 19 and over. Results were very encouraging, showing that taking part in coached sport had a positive impact on participants. A least¹ 2 in 3 participants said that coaching increased their enjoyment and over half² said that coaching has made them less likely to stop playing sport.

Within the survey, sports coach UK asked participants whether or not they were disabled. This allowed for data to be analysed by disability. In the main report there were a few minor references to disabled people and their views, however EFDS felt that more could be drawn from the data.

EFDS has therefore worked with sports coach UK to review the data to explore further to see if the experiences of disabled people were any different to non-disabled participants. This report presents the findings of that comparison, highlighting where similarities and differences exist.

¹ 66% of adults and 81% of young people said that coaching has increased their enjoyment

² 51% of adults and 65% of young people said that that coaching has made them less likely to stop playing sport.

Executive Summary

This report shows that disabled and non-disabled people generally have similar, positive experiences of coached sport. However, some of the data for disabled people suggests that they may have a slightly less positive experience than their non-disabled counterparts, with young disabled people being even more likely to be dissatisfied.

- Taking part in coached sport has a positive influence on disabled people's attitudes to sport
 - It increased
 - Their enjoyment of playing sport,
 - Their passion and commitment to sport
 - The time that they spend playing sport
 - It decreased
 - Their likelihood of stopping playing sport temporarily or completely
 - However, in some areas disabled people appear to be less satisfied with their experience than their non-disabled peers
 - Whilst the data is based on a small sample, it does raise the question of whether this is indicative of underlying issues which needs to be further explored

This suggests that coaching could play an important role in helping to sustain and increase the number of disabled people taking part.

- The reasons for and against taking part in coached sport are the same for disabled and non-disabled people, but differ by age
 - For those already taking part in coached sport, they do so because
 - Adults primarily take part to get better at the sport of choice
 - Although a small sample, disabled adults are slightly more likely to take part in coached sport to learn something new, suggesting a role for coaches to encourage disabled people into new or difference sports
 - Young people primarily take part to have fun and to improve health
 - For the people who currently do not take part in coached sport this is because
 - Adults believe they do not need coaching as they take part to get fit and improve their health, to have fun and because their goals do not need a coach to achieve them.
 - Young people do not need coaching as they take part to have fun

- Results suggest that people have preconceived ideas of the purpose of coached sport and what it can provide them. Education is perhaps needed to widen their awareness of what coached sport can provide
- Generally, disabled and non-disabled people gave positive responses in terms of their experiences coach performance, although disabled people's scores are often lower than their non-disabled peers
 - Disabled people are more likely to give lower scores to coaches in terms of their performance
 - Young disabled people give the lowest scores, particularly in areas involved in making participants feel comfortable
 - Disabled adults gave their lowest scores in areas where coaches are trying to help them improve
- The results show that disabled people seem less committed to sport than non-disabled people.
 - They are more easily discouraged from taking part, with weather, cost and distance acting as barriers
 - Young disabled people are have even lower levels of engagement

This report has provided a good baseline in trying to understand the impact of coached sport on individuals and how if at all it differs depending on whether or not participants are disabled. Initial results seem to indicate that generally participants of coached sports have a positive experience; however there are some areas where experiences of disabled people are not as consistent as their non-disabled peers.

More work needs to be done to fully understand the reasons as to why disabled people are not having the same experience as their non-disabled peers.

Influence coach has had on participant playing sport

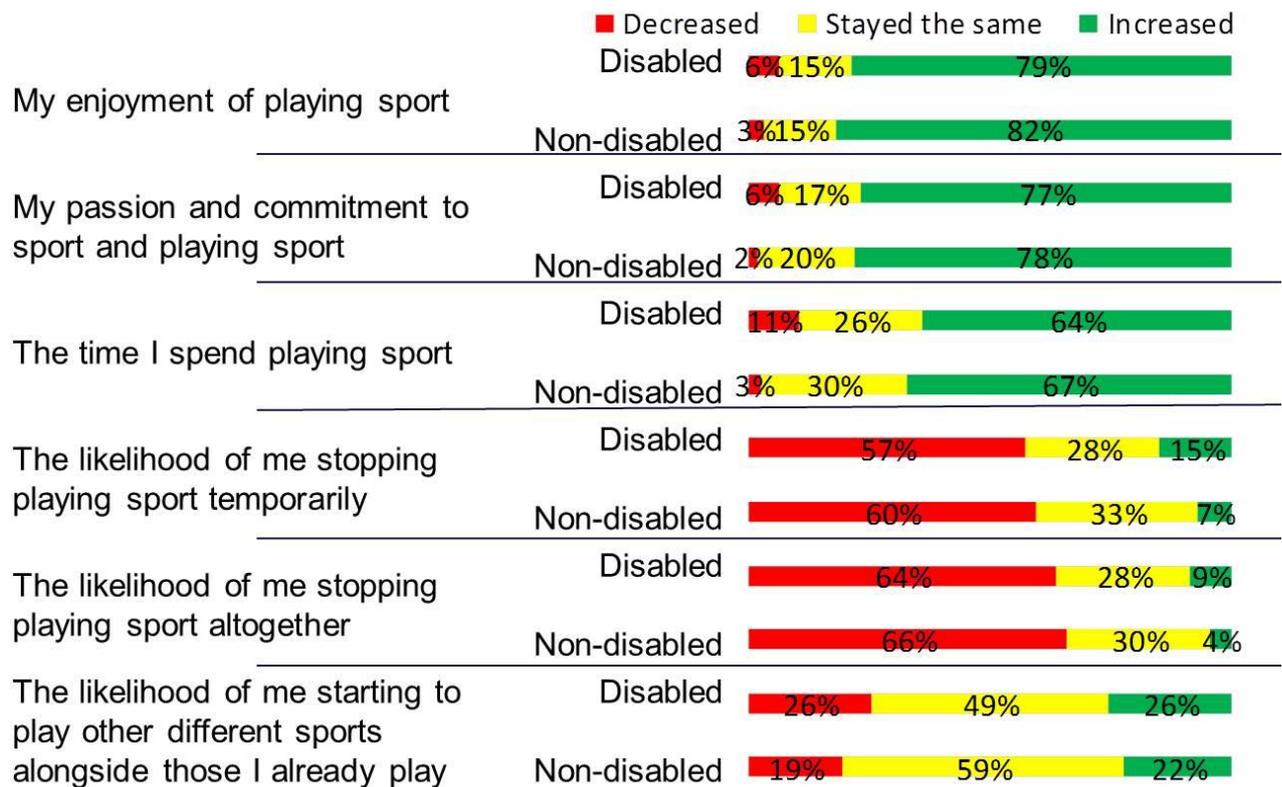
Participants were asked to think about a number of criteria and indicate to what extent they have increased, stayed the same or decreased because of being coached. The criteria were:

- My enjoyment of playing sport
- My passion and commitment to sport and playing sport
- The time I spend playing sport
- The likelihood of me stopping playing sport temporarily
- The likelihood of me stopping playing sport altogether
- The likelihood of me starting to play other different sports alongside those I already play

Figures 1 and 2 shows that for both disabled and non-disabled adults and young people coaching generally has a positive impact on their attitudes to sport.

Figure 1: Chart comparing the influence being coached had on disabled and non-disabled adults

Please note that for statements 3 and 4 – ‘The likelihood of me stopping playing sport temporarily or altogether’ – a decrease is actually a positive result.

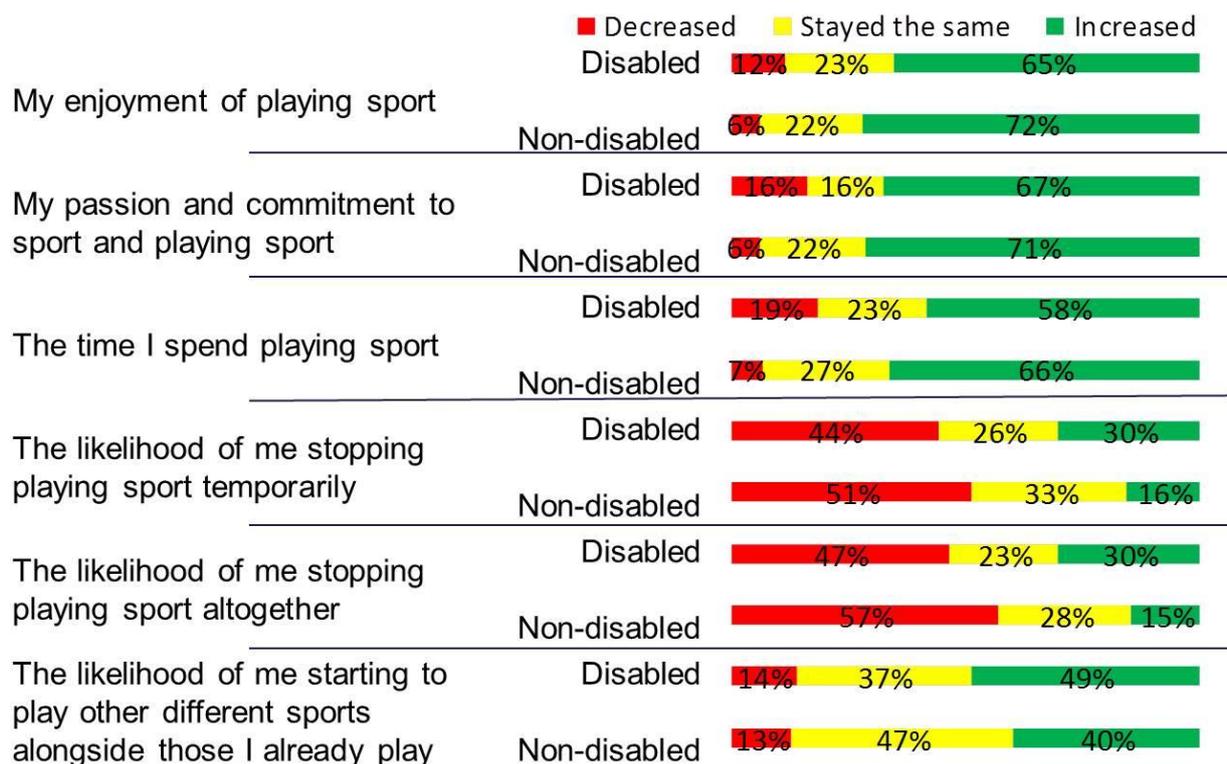


The proportion of disabled adults and non-disabled adults who had a positive experience of coaching was similar. Around 8 in 10 adults said that being coached increased their enjoyment of playing sport and had increased their passion and commitment to sport. 6 in 10 said that being coached has increased the time that they spend playing sport and

Being coached also seems to have had a positive impact on encouraging adults to continue to play sport with around 6 in 10 said that being coached has decreased their likelihood of stopping playing sport either temporarily or completely.

Figure 2: Chart comparing the influence being coached had disabled and non-disabled young people

Please note that for statements 3 and 4 - the likelihood of me stopping playing sport temporarily or altogether – a decrease is actually a positive result.



Whilst young people also generally have a positive experience of coached sport, there is a more notable difference between the experiences of disabled and non-disabled young people compared to the differences seen between disabled and non-disabled adults. On average across the criteria 7 per cent fewer young disabled people indicate a positive experience compared to their non-disabled peers.

Half of young disabled people (49 per cent) said that being coached has led them to start and play other sports. Whilst this is not much higher than the proportion of non-disabled young people who said the same thing, compared to disabled adults, it is twice as high.

Whilst this is based on a small sample, more needs to be done to determine whether this is a positive or negative reaction. Has their coaching experience in one sport been so positive, it has led them to take up other sports? Or alternatively, has their experience in one sport been so negative they have left to try something else?

Overall the findings suggest coached sport plays a significant role in ensuring disabled people have an enjoyable experience whilst playing sport as well as encouraging them to continue to play sport. Previous research has shown³ only half the number of disabled people take part in activity once a week compared to non-disabled people. This suggests

³ Sport England Active People Survey, January 2015

that coaching could play an important role in helping to sustain and increase the number of disabled people taking part.

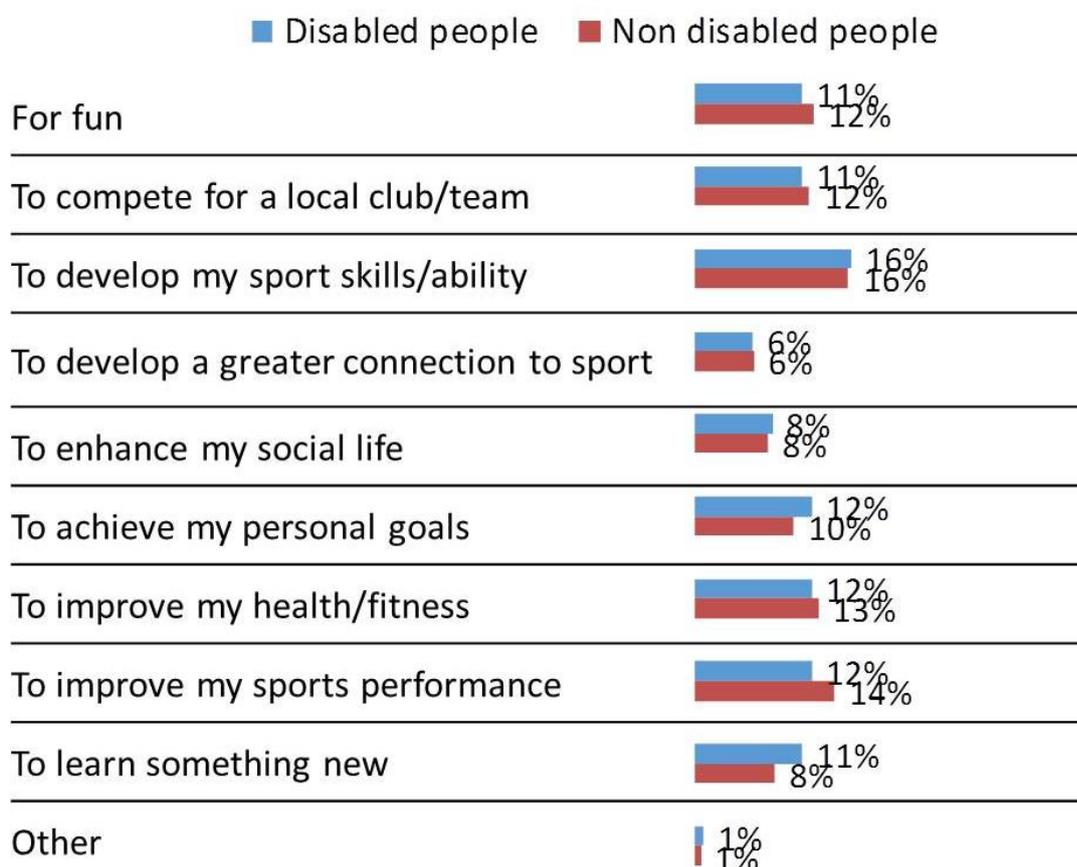
However, although the results are generally positive they do raise some questions. There is a slight discrepancy for all disabled people, where they have a slightly less positive experience, which is even more pronounced for young disabled people. Whilst this is based on a relatively small sample size, it could still be indicative of some underlying issues. Further research is needed to determine whether this finding is robust.

Reasons for and against taking part in coached sport

When asked why they do or do not take part in coached sport, there was no notable difference in the reasons between disabled and non-disabled people. The main differences are seen across the age groups.

Although not chosen by a significantly greater number of people, the most common reason adults said that they take part in coached sport is to develop their skills and abilities, chosen by 16 per cent of participants, as shown in figure 3

Figure 3: Chart comparing disabled and non-disabled adults currently taking part in coached sport and the reasons why they do

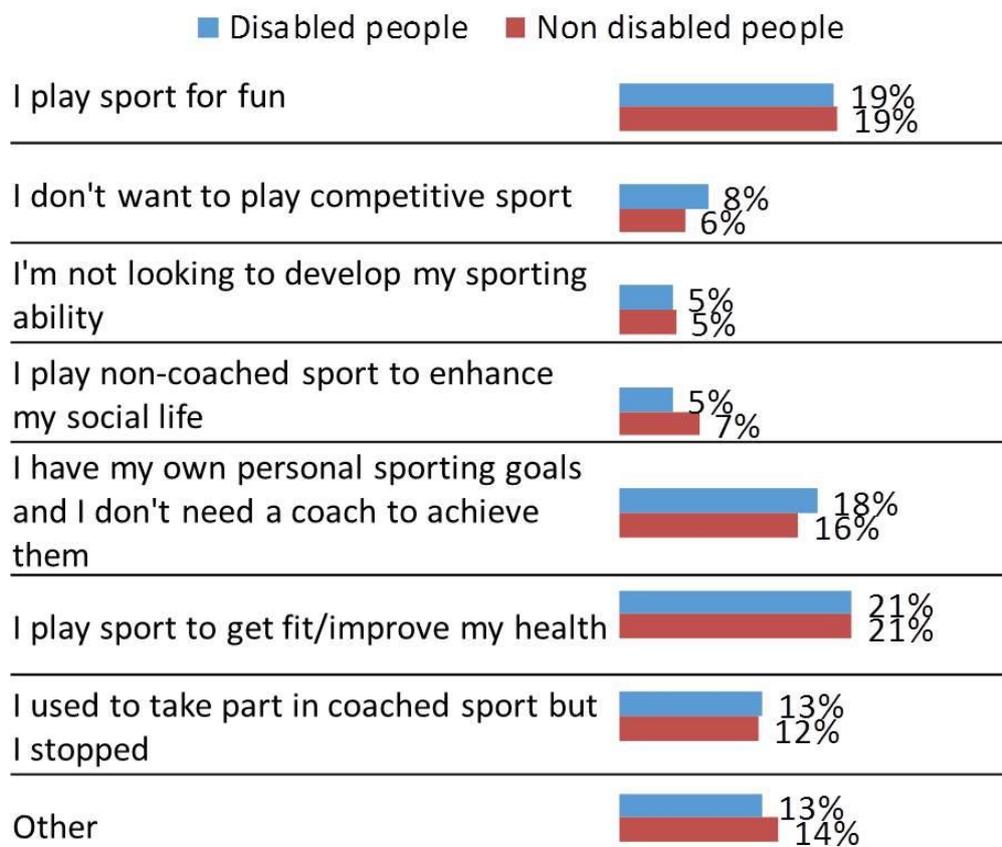


Other common reasons for taking part include to improve performance; to improve health and fitness; for fun; to compete in a local club or team; to learn something new. Although a small sample, it is interesting to note that disabled people are more likely to choose coached sport to learn something new. It would be interesting to conduct further research to understand why this is. This does suggest there is an opportunity for coaches to provide

new experiences to disabled people, showing them new ways to play sport and suggesting other sports that may be of interest.

Figure 4 identifies the reasons why adults said that they do not take part in coached sports. The three most common reasons to not take part was because they mainly take part to get fit and improve their health (21 per cent), or that, they take part to have fun (19 per cent) and that they like to set their own goals which do not need a coach to achieve them.

Figure 4: Chart comparing disabled and non-disabled adults who currently do not take part in coached and their reasons for not doing so



These results suggest that some adults see coached sport as something to be involved in if you want to progress or improve but shy away from it if they are only interested in having fun. Work needs to be done to change people’s perceptions of what coached sport can provide.

Figure 5 shows the reasons why young people said that they take part in coached sport. The three most common reasons were for fun (20 per cent), to improve their health and fitness (16 per cent) and to improve their sports performance (15 per cent).

Figure 5: Chart comparing disabled and non-disabled young people currently taking part in coached sport and the reasons why they do

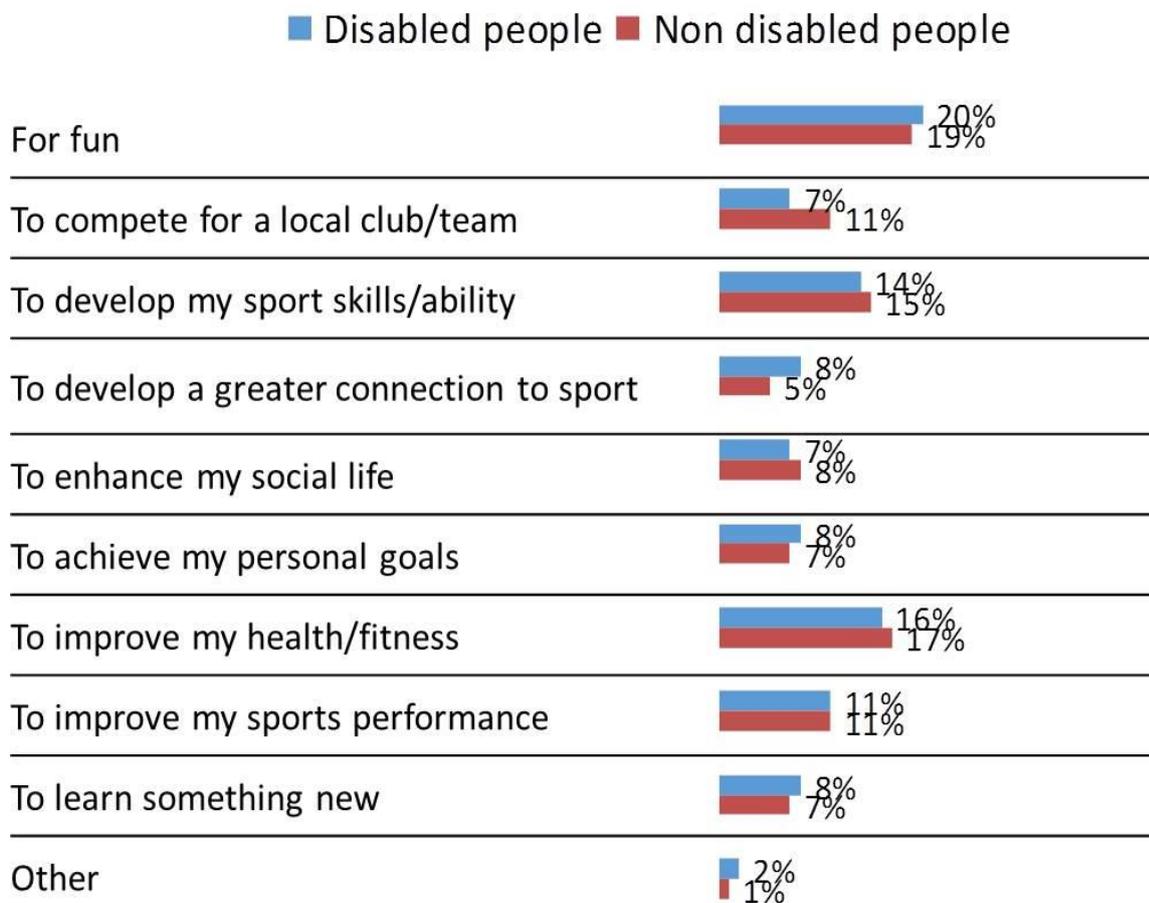
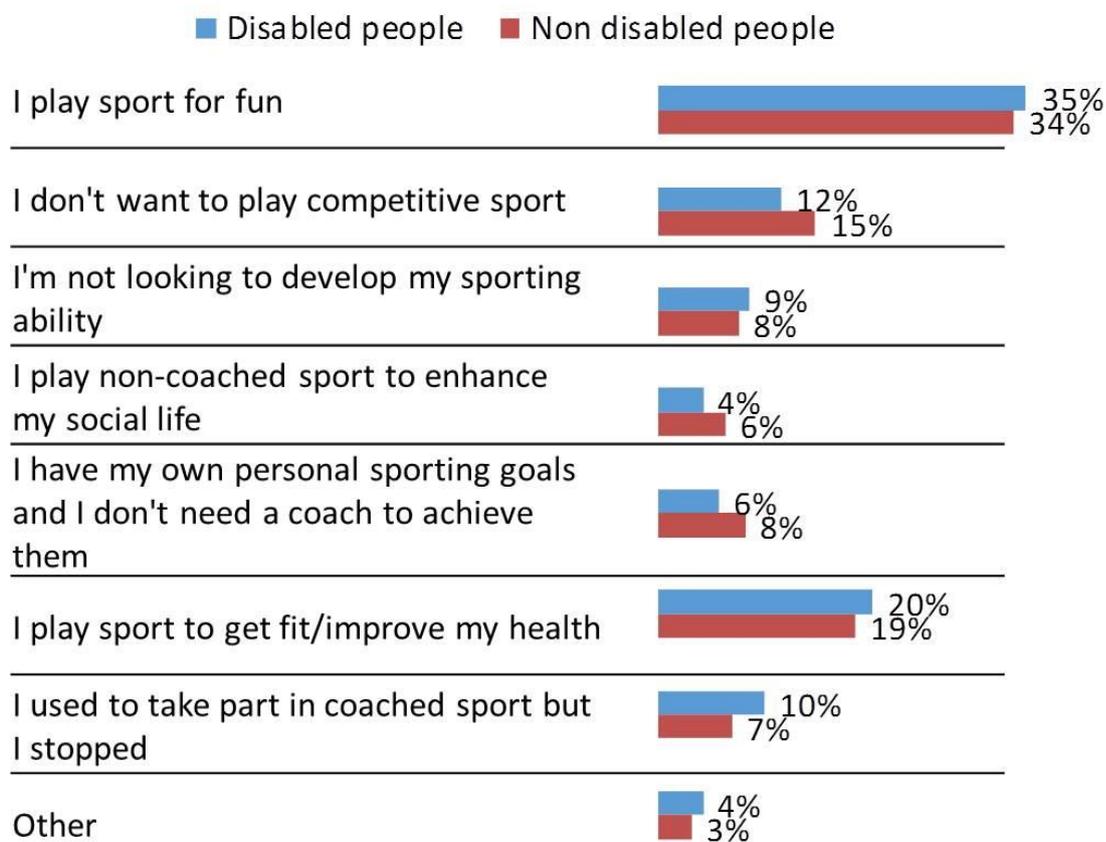


Figure 6 shows that the main barrier to taking part in coached sport for young people is because they want to have fun. The proportion of young people who are choosing fun as a barrier to taking part in coached sport is higher than those who are choosing it as a motivator. This suggests that young people are less likely to perceive coached sport as a fun activity. This suggests that more work needs to be done to inform coaches and help them develop appropriate sessions for young disabled people.

Figure 6: Chart comparing disabled and non-disabled young people who currently do not take part in coached and their reasons for not doing so



Rating coaches

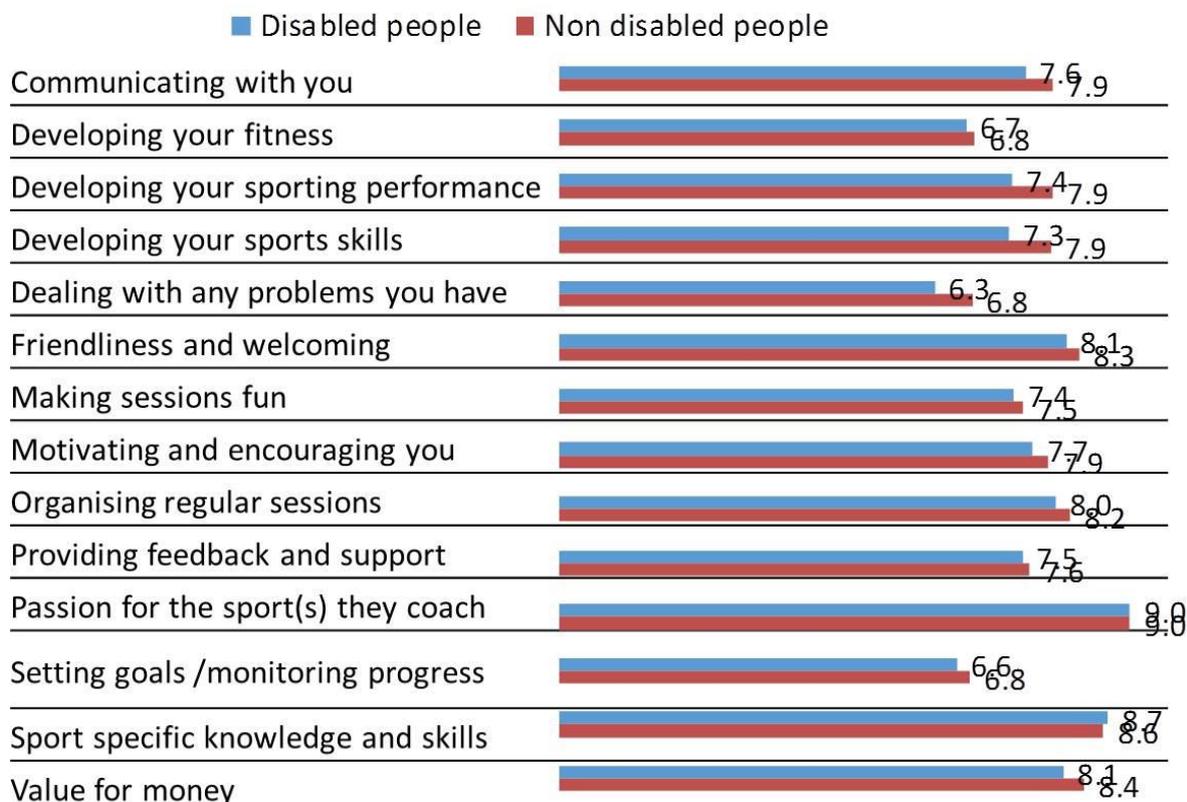
Participants were asked to rate their coach on 14 criteria to understand how well coaches interact with participants. For each criteria people gave a score between 1 and 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent. The criteria were:

- Communicating with you
- Developing your fitness
- Developing your sporting performance
- Developing your sports skills
- Dealing with any problems you have
- Friendliness and welcoming
- Making sessions fun
- Motivating and encouraging you
- Organising regular sessions
- Providing feedback and support
- Passion for the sport(s) they coach
- Setting goals and monitoring progress towards them
- Sport specific knowledge and skills
- Value for money

Overall, disabled people were less satisfied with their coaches. They gave lower scores for almost all criteria. Young disabled people were much more dissatisfied, giving significantly lower scores for a number of criteria compared to their non-disabled peers.

On average disabled adults scores were 0.2 points lower than their non-disabled peers, as shown in figure 7. Disabled adults gave a lower score for all but two criteria.

Figure 7: Chart comparing the mean score disabled and non-disabled adults gave coaches on a number of criteria



The areas where both disabled and non-disabled adults were most dissatisfied with their coaches were

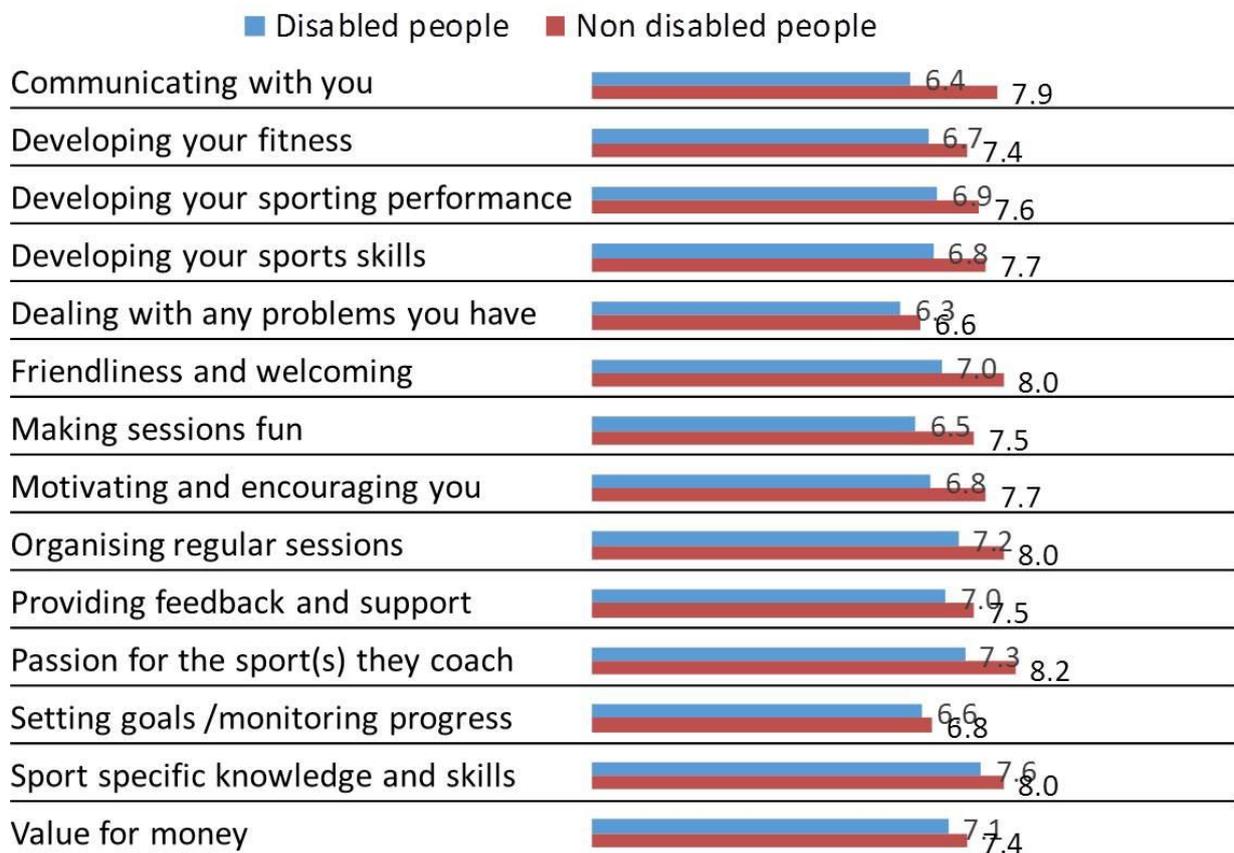
- Dealing with any problems you have
- Setting goals / monitoring progress
- Developing your fitness

For some criteria the difference in levels of satisfaction are notably greater. Disabled adults give much lower scores for coaches developing your sport performance and developing your sports skills (0.5 points or more difference). This suggests there may be an issue with coaches technical ability to coach disabled people. This is supported by previous research conducted by sports coach UK⁴ which identified that coaches can be less confident in providing for disabled athletes and may need to develop their technical skills to improve in this area.

⁴ The Coaching chain: Reflections of disabled athletes and coaches, sports coach UK, 2013

Young disabled people gave lower scores for all criteria, on average 0.7 points lower than their non-disabled counterparts as shown in figure 8

Figure 8: Chart comparing the mean score young disabled and non-disabled people gave coaches on a number of criteria



The four areas with the lowest scores for disabled young people were

- Dealing with any problems you have
- Communicating with you
- Making sessions fun
- Setting goals / monitoring progress

Non-disabled young people also gave low scores to ‘Dealing with any problems you have’ and ‘Setting goals / monitoring progress’. However they were more likely to score ‘Value for money’ and ‘Developing your fitness’ lower than their disabled peers.

These differences show that disabled young people are less likely than their non-disabled counter parts to feel that coaches are able to make session fun for them and be able to communicate with them effectively. This is particularly prevalent in terms of communication where young disabled people give this an average score 1.5 points lower than their non-disabled peers. There is also a big difference between the scores for

'Friendliness and welcoming', with young disabled people scoring on average 1 point lower than non-disabled young people.

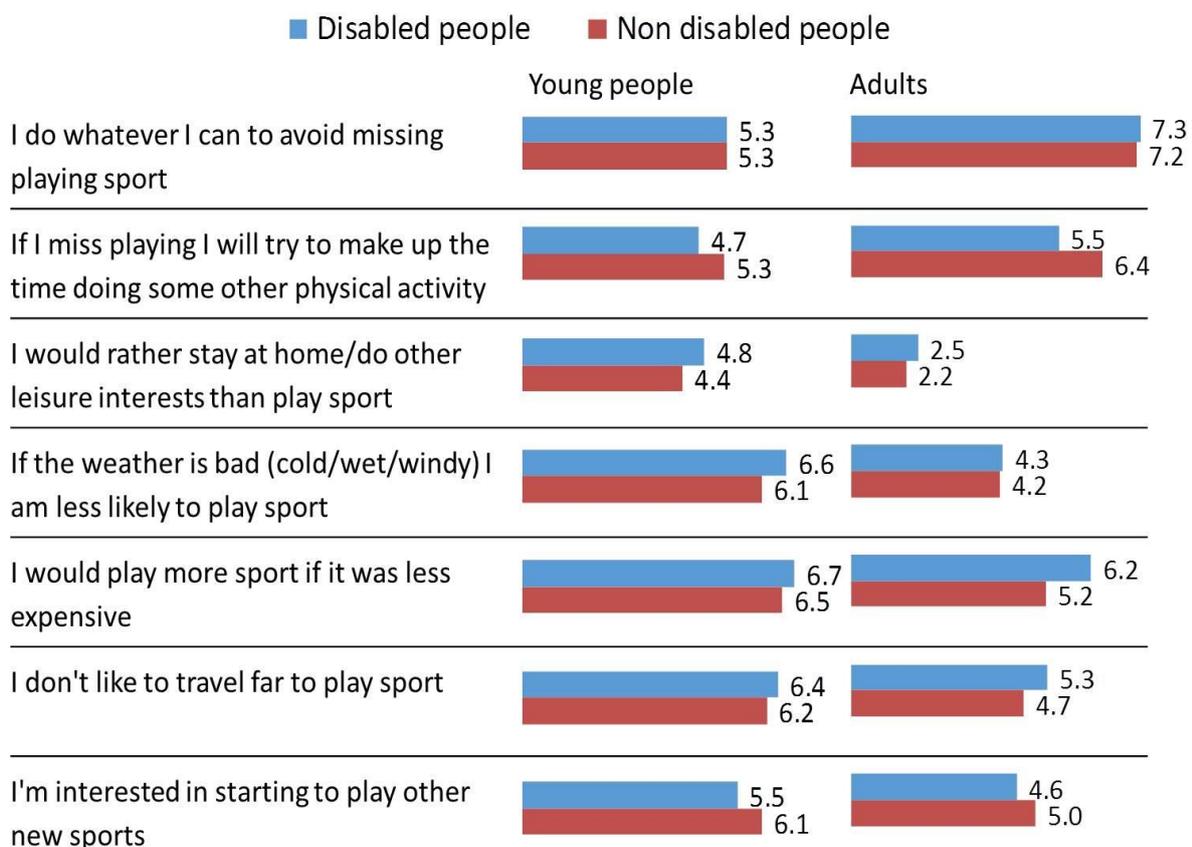
This suggests that coaches need more support to make them feel more comfortable in providing sessions for disabled young people. If they are more comfortable they are more likely to be able to communicate effectively with young disabled people, be more friendly and welcoming and provide more fun sessions.

Attitudes toward sport

To understand people’s attitudes to sport, participants were asked to what extent they agreed with a number of statements. They gave a score between 1 and 10, where 1 is strongly disagree and 10 is strongly agree. The attitudes they were asked to rate were:

- I do whatever I can to avoid missing playing sport
- If I miss playing sport I will try to make up the time doing some other physical/sporting activity
- I would rather stay at home/pursue other leisure interests than play sport
- If the weather is bad (cold/wet/windy) I am less likely to play sport
- I would play more sport if it was less expensive
- I don't like to travel far to play sport

Figure 9: Chart showing the extent people agree with each statement, based on mean scores



The most notable differences in the data were seen (as shown in figure 9) between young people and adults, a finding also prevalent in main sports coach UK report⁵. All young people, disabled and non-disabled, gave more negative responses than adults, suggesting that they are less committed to sport.

Although not as significant as the differences seen in age, the data suggests that disabled people are also less engaged with sport than non-disabled people. They seem to be more easily discouraged from sport:

- They are more likely to not play sport if the weather is bad.
- They are more likely to prefer to stay at home doing other leisure activities.
- If they do miss playing their sport, they are much less likely to try and make up the time with another activity.
- They are more likely to agree that they do not like to travel far to play
- They would be more likely to play more if it was less expensive.
- They are less interested in trying other new sports

These attitudes are more pronounced in young disabled people, with the exception of willingness to try other sports, where young people generally are more willing to do than adults.

⁵ the Impact of Coaching of Coaching on Participants <http://www.sportscoachuk.org/resource/impact-coaching-participants>

Conclusion

Overall, coached sport has a positive impact on people's experience and attitude toward sport. However the data does suggest that in some cases disabled people are having a less satisfactory experience than their non-disabled peers, especially young disabled people.

This survey has highlighted a number of areas where improvements could be made. It indicates that coaches could benefit from additional support to make them more comfortable providing activities for disabled people.

A larger study, with a greater sample, is needed to determine the true extent of the findings. In addition, more work could be done on a qualitative level to understand the full reasoning behind some answers in this report and help to gain an understanding of the kind of support that coaches would find useful.

For more information on this survey or report, please contact Emma Spring at EFDS.

email espring@efds.co.uk or telephone 0161 2005442

The report is available to download on www.efds.co.uk

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If you would like to join our panel of disabled people, please contact us on research@efds.co.uk or 0161 2005442. It will be mainly communication via email or telephone, so you do not have to commit to any unnecessary time or travel.