

# Equality and Sport Research

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### About this research

This report explores equality and sport in Scotland. This research aims to help improve work within the sport sector in Scotland, in relation to advancing equality, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations. It consolidates what we know and identifies what we need to know. It will form a building block for priorities for action around equality, for **sportscotland** and its partners in the sport sector.

### Research method

The research involved four main stages.

- **A review of existing evidence** – We gathered, reviewed and created a database of existing evidence around sport and equality. We produced papers on sport and equality in relation to each protected characteristic.
- **A survey of staff within the sport system** – We issued a survey to over 1,200 staff, and 573 responded – a response rate of 46 per cent.
- **Discussion groups with staff within the sport system** – We held ten discussion groups with staff in the sport system in Scotland. These groups included staff involved at different levels and in different sporting fields and sectors. A total of 70 people took part in these groups.
- **Discussion groups with people with protected characteristics** – The research also involved discussions with people with protected characteristics. We held nine discussion groups with people with protected characteristics, and one set of six telephone interviews.

As the research was undertaken, we also liaised closely with Scottish Government analysts who were completing a review of the quantitative data available around equality in sport in Scotland, as part of the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework. The findings were weaved into this report to provide quantitative evidence from Scotland, to support our qualitative research.

### Key findings – availability of literature

There is a substantial body of literature relating to sport and equality. Much research and data relates to equality and sex, disability and young people – particularly young women. While there are some useful research studies in relation to sexual orientation and gender reassignment, there are gaps in the data and evidence in these areas. In relation to race and religion, much of the research focuses on Muslim women – where sports participation levels have been shown to be significantly lower than for other groups. There is also some research into experiences of older people in Scotland. There is very little research in relation to pregnancy and maternity, or marriage and civil partnership.

## Key findings – participation in sport

The literature and data available for Scotland highlights some clear inequalities in sports participation.

- In Scotland, more men participate in sport than women. More men are members of sports clubs than women, and women often participate in different sports from men. Lower participation by women in sport begins at around 13 to 15 years old.
- Disabled people in Scotland are less active, and are less likely to participate in sport.
- In Scotland, Pakistani adults are least likely to participate in sport. However, it is hard to identify other differences based on ethnic origin, due to the small numbers of ethnic minority people in Scotland.
- In Scotland, people of Muslim faith are least likely to take part in sport. Roman Catholics also have a slightly lower sports participation rate than average. It is hard to identify other differences, due to the small numbers of people with minority religions or beliefs in Scotland. However, research from England suggests that there are differences in participation of people with different religions and beliefs among different sports.
- In Scotland, adults in the 16 to 24-year-old age group report higher levels of sports participation than other age groups. There is a clear drop off among those aged 45 and over. In children, 13 to 15-year-old girls in particular participate in sport markedly less than other age groups.

There is some evidence around sexual orientation and sports participation. There is very little evidence around participation in sports in Scotland in relation to gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; and marriage and civil partnership.

## Key findings – barriers to participation

The available literature and our own fieldwork highlight some clear barriers to sports participation. There are some common themes, across people with different protected characteristics:

- negative experiences of PE
- lack of self esteem and body confidence
- attitudes of others
- facilities
- influence of family and peers
- opportunities and pathways.

There is also evidence of a number of barriers related to the wider sporting system. Key issues include:

- **Leadership, coaching and volunteering** – Ensuring that the profile of decision makers and facilitators in sport reflects the population; and
- **Media and equal pay** – There is a particular issue relating to equality for women. Women also experience a clear issue with equal pay, largely receiving significantly lower rewards for competitive sports participation.

## Key findings – priority of equality in sport

Staff within the sporting system in Scotland indicated a general view that equality was increasing in importance, with a stronger focus from **sportscotland** and the Scottish Government, and more training and development around equality in sport.

However, there was some concern that this had not led to significant action. Many staff indicated that they did not know how to integrate equality into their work. People with protected characteristics also indicated that they felt awareness of protected characteristics was increasing, but it was unclear if this was translated into actual change.

While some Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport were positive about the focus on equality, some felt that there was now too much focus on equality and some felt that the focus was driven by other organisations. There was also a concern that for some clubs, being ‘open to all’ was seen to be enough.

When people working in the sporting system were asked about understanding of equalities in relation to the protected characteristics, confidence was highest around sex, disability, age and socio-economic disadvantage, and lower for other groups. This strongly reflects the evidence from literature. Awareness and understanding was generally highest among those areas which had a bank of data and literature, and lower among the areas which were less well researched.

People with protected characteristics felt that the top priority for embedding equalities in sport was training for those working in and delivering sport. Some participants suggested that this training should involve equality organisations or people with protected characteristics, so that the issues can be discussed and explored.

## Key findings – lessons learned

A number of key lessons emerge, including:

- empower, support and listen to people when planning opportunities;
- work in partnership with trusted organisations to involve a range of participants;
- support staff and volunteers to understand experiences of inequality;
- base approaches on evidence - including equalities monitoring and research; and
- clubs have a vital role - and are often the first point of contact for people wishing to participate in sport.

## Key challenges for the future

The evidence gathered from this work suggests a need for a focus on six main challenges:

1. Learning
2. Culture and attitudes
3. Systems and monitoring
4. Involvement and partnerships
5. Coaching and volunteering
6. Pathways and club development

These challenges are explored in more detail in Chapter Five. The issues identified from this research are significant and wide ranging. It will not be possible to take forward action in all of these areas over the short to medium term. Clear, focused action in a small number of areas, with demonstrable impacts will be more useful than working to address a wide range of issues.

The responsibility for taking forward these challenges does not lie with **sportscotland** alone. **sportscotland** will need to work with partners to reflect on the issues raised within the research, and prioritise areas for action. However, **sportscotland** does have a critical role in influencing equality through:

- **Leading by example** – On issues like the profile of staff and decision makers, the culture within the organisation, and your policies and plans.
- **Sharing evidence** – Undertaking research, encouraging effective data monitoring and sharing learning.
- **Funding sports activity** – Integrating equality outcomes within funding approaches, and considering dedicated funding for supporting equality.
- **Supporting new approaches** – Providing staff and partners with support to try out new ways of working to promote equality and tackle inequalities.
- **Promotion and communication** – Raising awareness of the importance of equality, and the work that is being done to promote equality among those working, volunteering and participating in the sport system in Scotland.

# 1. Introduction

## About this report

- 1.1 This report explores equality and sport in Scotland. **sportscotland** and the Equality and Human Rights Commission appointed us in April 2015 to undertake research to inform **sportscotland**'s future work around equality.

## Research aims and method

- 1.2 This research aims to help improve work within the sport sector in Scotland, in relation to advancing equality, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations. It consolidates what we know and identifies what we need to know. It will form a building block for improvement work within **sportscotland** and with partners in the sport sector.

- 1.3 The research involved four main stages.

- **A review of existing evidence** – We created a database of existing evidence around sport and equality, through searches of literature through IDOX; internet searches to identify evidence reviews or good practice; and gathering information from **sportscotland**, Scottish Government and other key partner organisations. We reviewed the information gathered, to produce papers on sport and equality in relation to each protected characteristic. We have summarised key themes emerging by protected characteristic and by sector within the sport system in this report.
- **A survey of staff within the sport system** – We issued a survey to over 1,200 staff, and 573 responded – a response rate of 46 per cent. A copy of the survey is included as Appendix One.
- **Discussion groups with staff within the sport system** – We held ten discussion groups with staff in the sport system in Scotland. These groups included staff involved at different levels and in different sporting fields and sectors – including schools, clubs and high performance sport. A total of 70 people took part in these groups. Six of the discussion groups lasted for one hour, and four were world cafe style discussions lasting approximately 15 minutes. The groups explored the issues raised in the survey in more depth. A copy of the discussion guide is included as Appendix Two.
- **Discussion groups with people with protected characteristics** – The research also involved discussions with people with protected characteristics. We held nine discussion groups with people with protected characteristics, and one set of six telephone interviews. One of the discussion groups was a small pilot group, to test the approach. The discussion groups and telephone interviews explored people's experiences of equality in sport, both as participants and spectators. We discussed the profile of people to be involved in these groups with the Equality Advisory Group for Sport in August 2015, and subsequently with **sportscotland**.

More detail on the profile of participants is available in Chapter Four of this report.

- 1.4 As the research was undertaken, we also liaised closely with Scottish Government analysts who were completing a review of the quantitative data available around equality in sport in Scotland, as part of the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework. The findings were made available in early October 2015, and were weaved into this report to provide quantitative evidence from Scotland, to support our qualitative research. We have highlighted where these figures have been used throughout this report.

## Context

### sportscotland

- 1.5 **sportscotland** is the national agency for sport. It is the lead agency in Scotland for the development of sport, and has a clear focus on building a world class sporting system at all levels, for everyone in Scotland.
- 1.6 **sportscotland** has a Corporate Plan for 2015 to 2019, entitled 'Raising the Bar'. This Plan includes equalities and inclusion as a key priority for improvement. It has a clear focus on ensuring that sport is accessible to people, recognising that both inequality and discrimination exist in sport. In addition, throughout the Plan there is repeated reference to the need to ensure that everyone can take part and have a positive experience, at all levels.

"Widening access means understanding and addressing the needs of people who share the protected characteristics, as well as the complexities associated with socio-economic disadvantage, and the exclusion that can be experienced in some rural parts of Scotland."

(**sportscotland** Corporate Plan 2015 to 2019)

- 1.7 **sportscotland** has also produced a set of equality outcomes, as part of its public sector equality duties. These outcomes focus on:
- **awareness** – increasing awareness of the needs of people who share protected characteristics that are under-represented in sport;
  - **skills and knowledge** – ensuring the sporting workforce has the appropriate skills and knowledge to address inequalities in sport;
  - **workforce diversity** – ensuring that people participating in sport are supported by a diverse sporting workforce; and
  - **opportunities** – advancing equality of opportunity to participate, progress and achieve in sport.
- 1.8 **sportscotland** is in the process of redeveloping its equality outcomes, to better reflect the priorities within its new Corporate Plan. It is doing this in advance of the legal requirement to update its equality outcomes, in 2017. **sportscotland** is also a member of the UK wide Sports Council Equality



Group. This Group has produced 'The Equality Standard', which was launched in 2004 and last updated in 2012.

## Equality and Human Rights Commission

- 1.9 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) works to promote equality. Across the UK, the EHRC has a key project around 'making sport inclusive'. In England and Wales, this has involved working with the England and Wales Cricket Board and Premiership Rugby to encourage people from all backgrounds to participate in sports. The work with the Cricket Board involves targeted activities to encourage more women, girls, disabled people and ethnic minority people to take up the sport. The work with Premiership Rugby involves building more inclusive sporting experiences, both on and off the pitch, and encouraging more women, girls and ethnic minority people to participate.
- 1.10 The EHRC in Scotland has secured funding for a programme of work over 2015 and 2016. This work will focus on ensuring accessibility of sporting venues, and working with sports governing bodies to make sure they are doing all they can to improve participation and inclusion. The EHRC in Scotland wishes this approach to be strongly evidence based, to ensure it builds on a clear understanding of the main issues which require to be addressed to make sport inclusive. This research, alongside wider analysis, contributes to that evidence base.

## Scottish Government

- 1.11 The Scottish Government has developed a broad policy<sup>1</sup> with the aim of encouraging people in Scotland to be more active. This policy focuses on linking sport and physical activity – ranging from supporting inactive people through to elite athletes. The Government recognises that understanding and tackling inequalities in sport is important, as these inequalities have a significant impact on people's lives. A lack of physical activity contributes to almost 2,500 deaths per year and costs the NHS around £94 million per year<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.12 The Active Scotland Outcomes Framework describes Scotland's ambitions for sport and physical activity. This framework is much wider than sport, the focus of **sportscotland**, and includes activities such as walking and playing. It has six main outcomes, and is underpinned by a commitment to equality.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government, Active Scotland Outcomes Framework  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/Sport/physicalactivity>

<sup>2</sup> NHS Health Scotland (2012) *Costing the Burden of Ill Health Related to Physical Inactivity for Scotland*

## Vision: A More Active Scotland

Physical activity is about getting people moving. Daily walking, playing in a park, going to a gym, training with a team or aspiring to win a gold medal - it really doesn't matter how people get active, it just matters that we do.

Being physically active contributes to our personal, community and national wellbeing.

Our vision is of a Scotland where more people are more active, more often.

## National Outcomes

Business	Employment	Research and Innovation	Young People	Early Years	Healthier	Inequalities Tackled	Life Chances
Safe from Crime	Sustainable Places	Resilient Communities	Environment Valued	National Identity	Impact on Environment	Older People Supported	Public Services

## Active Scotland Outcomes

<b>We encourage and enable the inactive to be more active</b>	<b>We encourage and enable the active to stay active throughout life</b>	<b>We develop physical confidence and competence from the earliest age</b>
<b>We improve our active infrastructure – people and places</b>	<b>We support wellbeing and resilience in communities through physical activity and sport</b>	<b>We improve opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport</b>

## Equality: Our commitment to equality underpins everything we do

- 1.13 Throughout 2015, the Scottish Government has been undertaking a review of the evidence available around equality, sport and physical activity, from Scottish statistics, surveys and datasets. This information will help to ensure that equality underpins everything within the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework.

### Sport and physical activity

- 1.14 The Active Scotland Outcomes Framework, and other national approaches to activity, closely link sport and physical activity. This research, for **sportscotland**, focuses strongly on equality in sport in Scotland. Although, there is no universal definition of sport, it can be differentiated from physical activity. **sportscotland** uses the Council of Europe's European Sports Charter definition of sport<sup>3</sup>:

“Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental

<sup>3</sup> **sportscotland** (2013) *Recognition of sports and National Governing Bodies*, source: [http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/sport-a-z/recognition\\_of\\_sports\\_and\\_national\\_governing\\_bodies/](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/sport-a-z/recognition_of_sports_and_national_governing_bodies/)

wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.”<sup>4</sup>

- 1.15 **sportscotland** has adopted a broad understanding of sport, which includes activities such as rambling, dance, aeromodelling and angling<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup>Council of Europe (1992), *European Sports Charter*

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/sport-a-z.aspx>

## 2. The evidence around equality and sport

### Introduction

- 2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the evidence around equality and sport in Scotland. It draws on published research and evaluation, as well as national statistics produced by the Scottish Government.
- 2.2 This chapter summarises the evidence from a large volume of research. More detailed, separate 'Learning Notes' have been produced on key topics, for use by people within the sport system in Scotland.

### Sex and sport

#### Participation in sport

- 2.3 There is a substantial body of research into sex and sport. In relation to participation in sport, there is clear evidence of inequality in participation in sports in relation to women and men in Scotland. Evidence from 2014<sup>6</sup> shows that:
- more men (57%) than women (46%) reported participation in sport and exercise (excluding walking) in the last four weeks;
  - when walking is included, 81 per cent of men participated in sport and exercise, compared with 75 per cent of women;
  - this lower participation by women in sport begins at around 13 to 15 years old, when substantially more boys begin to report participation in sport than girls (71% of boys compared with 56% of girls).
- 2.4 Data shows that as girls move into their teenage years, sports participation reduces<sup>7</sup>. There is a significant body of research into participation levels and experiences of young women. There is less research into participation levels among older women, and participation at elite levels. However, data shows that while one in three men are members of sports clubs (32%) this falls to just one in five women (21%)<sup>8</sup>. And evidence from 2014 shows that older men (aged 65 and over) were more likely than older women to take part in sport and exercise (including walking) in the last four weeks (62% compared with 54%)<sup>9</sup>.
- 2.5 These lower participation rates are important for equality in sport. But they are also important because participation in sport can have a positive impact for women and girls on health and wellbeing, self esteem and self empowerment,

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<sup>6</sup> Scottish Government (2015), *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

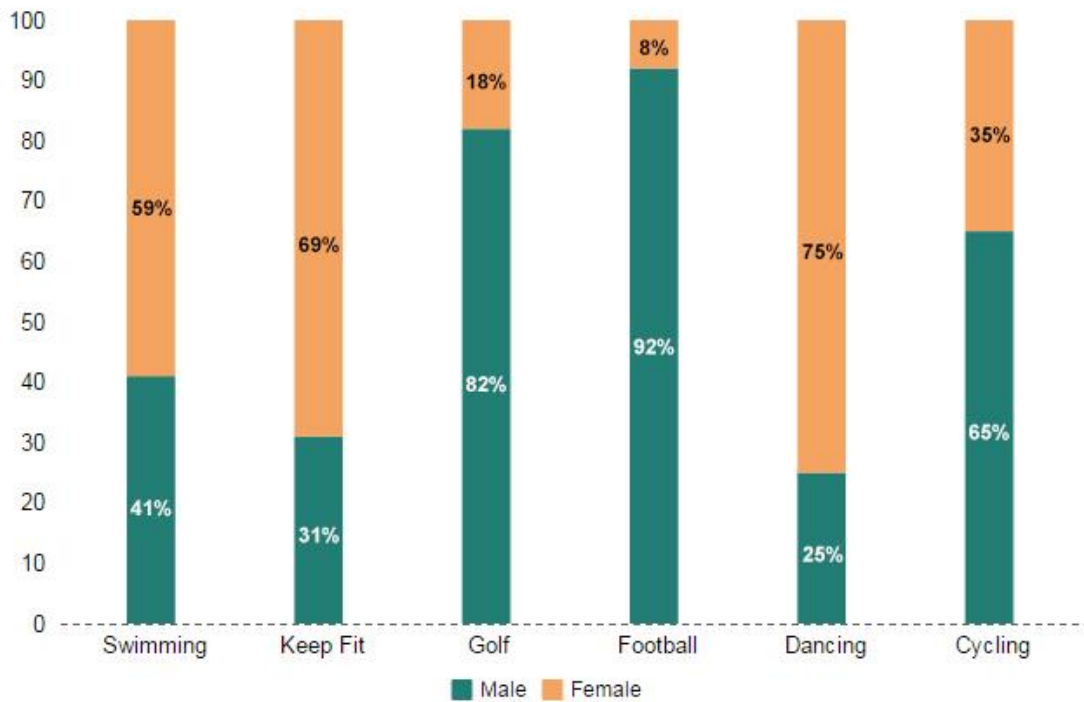
<sup>7</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

<sup>8</sup> 2007/08 Culture and Sport Module of Scottish Household Survey quoted in **sportscotland** (2013) SportFirst, Issue 10

<sup>9</sup> Scottish Government (2015), *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

social inclusion and integration, and opportunities to develop leadership and other skills<sup>101112</sup>.

- 2.6 There are also links with wider inequalities. For example, the gap between men and women’s participation in sport is greater amongst some ethnic minority groups than it is in the population as a whole<sup>13</sup>.
- 2.7 Women often participate in different sports from men. Evidence from England found that the most popular sports for women were swimming, athletics (including road running) and tennis – while the sports popular with men were football, cricket and rugby<sup>14</sup>. Evidence from the Scottish Household Survey (2014) also shows that men and women participate in different types of sport. The graph below shows that there were differences in levels of participation in different sports. For example, while 92 per cent of people who had taken part in football over the past four weeks were male, 75 per cent of those who had taken part in dancing were female<sup>15</sup>.



**Participation in sport over the past 4 weeks by sex**

<sup>10</sup> UN SDP IWG (2008) *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace (Sport and Gender Chapter)*

<sup>11</sup> Department for Culture Media and Sport (2015) *Further Analysis to Value the Health and Educational Benefits of Sport and Culture*

<sup>12</sup> Wider and more historical research summarised by sportanddev.org at [http://www.sportanddev.org/en/learnmore/sport\\_and\\_health/selected\\_bibliography/](http://www.sportanddev.org/en/learnmore/sport_and_health/selected_bibliography/)

<sup>13</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

<sup>14</sup> Department for Culture Media and Sport (2011) *Adult Participation in Sport, Analysis of the Taking Part Survey*

<sup>15</sup> Scottish Household Survey (2014)

## **Barriers to participation**

2.8 Research demonstrates a range of barriers to girls and women in participating in sports. The key issues are covered in turn below.

### ***Barriers - experiences of physical education***

2.9 Research has consistently demonstrated that girls are less positive about their school experiences of physical education than boys<sup>16</sup>. Research undertaken in 2003 in Scotland, by **sportscotland**, found that girls were less positive about 'sport' than 'physical activity' and were more concerned about fun and being with their friends than the competitive element of sport.<sup>17</sup> This found that girls who had low levels of sport and physical activity participation were more than twice as likely to report finding sport in their school too competitive, when compared to more active girls.

2.10 However, there were nuances to this experience. For example, focus groups conducted with girls for the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation<sup>18</sup> found that girls do enjoy competition and like the opportunity to develop their skills. However, many dislike some of the behaviours that can go with it such as being over-competitive and aggressive.

2.11 Interestingly, experiences of opportunities and facilities in later life are not so different between men and women. Scottish Government analysis of data from 2014 shows that there were no differences between men and women in either use of or levels of satisfaction with local authority sports and leisure facilities<sup>19</sup>.

### ***Barriers - lack of self-esteem and body confidence***

2.12 Many girls are put off participation in sport due to concerns about managing their appearance, and a growing lack of confidence. Focus groups with young women conducted for the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation<sup>20</sup> identified issues of self-esteem and body confidence impacting on sports participation. These issues were closely connected to perceptions of what it meant to be a woman. For example, some girls said "it was not feminine to be sweaty, to get muddy or to ruin one's hair."

2.13 Girls who feel self-conscious are more likely to feel they aren't good at sport and do not want to participate. Research found that a third (35%) of girls did not perceive themselves to be good at sport and this was negatively related to participation<sup>21</sup>. General anxiety and self-consciousness was associated with

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<sup>16</sup> WSFF (2011) *Changing the Game for Girls*

<sup>17</sup> **sportscotland** (2003) *Increasing demand for sport and physical activity for adolescent girls in Scotland*

<sup>18</sup> WSSF (2011) *Changing the Game for Girls*

<sup>19</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

<sup>20</sup> WSSF (2011) *Changing the Game for Girls*

<sup>21</sup> **sportscotland** (2003) *Increasing demand for sport and physical activity for adolescent girls in Scotland*

lower perceived competence at sport. However, the same research found that girls reported feeling less self-conscious if they participated with their friend. It is also important to note that weight management can also be a key motivation factor for many girls<sup>22</sup>.

### **Example of work to change women's attitudes towards sport**

Sport England has recently conducted research with women and found that many women were afraid to exercise because of a fear of judgement. Sport England responded with a nationwide campaign called 'This Girl Can' aimed at getting girls and women active regardless of their size or shape. It uses hard-hitting strap lines including "Sweating like a pig; feeling like a fox" to prompt a change in attitude and a boost to women's confidence.<sup>23</sup>

### **Barriers - influence of family and peers**

2.14 Research shows that some girls reduce their commitment to physical activities as they are anxious about being rejected from their peer groups for continuing an activity the others are not involved with.<sup>24</sup> Research conducted by the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation<sup>25</sup> found that family, friends and school can all act as barriers to participation. However, it found that they can also act as positive role models. For example, a third of all girls involved in the research said that "I am motivated to be active because my mother is active."

### **Sex and the sporting system in Scotland**

2.15 Equality in sport is not just about participation. There are wider, structural issues about how the sporting system in Scotland supports both women and men to participate.

2.16 Much of the experience in Scotland is tied to broader systems across the UK. A key, recent source of information about inequalities within sports structures across the UK is a detailed report by the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee<sup>26</sup>. This report highlighted issues relating to:

- availability of facilities for training and playing sport – from grassroots to elite sports;
- finance – including sponsorship and prize money;
- media coverage of women's sport;
- the variety of sports on offer to girls at school; and
- female role models – as elite sportswomen, coaches and managers.

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<sup>22</sup> Allender, S., Cowburn, G. & Foster, C. (2006) *Understanding participation in sport and physical activity among children and adults: a review of qualitative studies*, Health Educ. Res. 21(6): pp.826-35

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.sportengland.org/our-work/national-work/this-girl-can/>

<sup>24</sup> Hendry, L., Shucksmith, J., Love, J. & Glendinning, A. (1993) *Young People's Leisure and Lifestyles*

<sup>25</sup> WSFF (2011) *Changing the Game for Girls*

<sup>26</sup> House of Commons Culture Media and Sport Committee (2014) *Women and Sport, First Report of Session 2014/15*

- 2.17 These issues are explored in more detail below, in both a UK and Scottish context.
- 2.18 On average, less than 5 per cent of sports coverage in national and local print media is dedicated to women's sport<sup>27,28</sup>. This is significant because TV, radio and the newspapers play a central role in informing our knowledge, opinions and attitudes about women in sport, which in turn, influence participation levels.
- 2.19 A survey conducted by the BBC in 2013<sup>29</sup>, asked elite sportswomen to comment on whether they thought the media coverage of women was adequate – 85 per cent said no. Research<sup>30</sup> which examined and compared reporting patterns before and after the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics found a continuing bias towards men's sport in the media and no evidence of improvement either before or after the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. **sportscotland** also found that while London 2012 was hailed as the most gender equal Games in history, with every participating country having at least one female representative, there were still 30 more medals available to men than women.
- 2.20 There are also inequalities in the number of women working in sports media in the UK. While there are many more female sports journalists, presenters and editors than 40 year ago, there are still major inequalities in the workforce. For example:
- in 2012, only two of the Press Gazette's top 50 sport journalists were women;
  - in 2013 only 18 per cent of students for sports journalism were women; and
  - in 2014 only 4 per cent of Football Writers' Association members were women<sup>31</sup>.

### ***Sporting system issues – investment and facilities***

- 2.21 Data for Scotland shows that women are less likely to be members of clubs<sup>32</sup>, and more likely to take part in individual and non-competitive activities<sup>33</sup>. This means that they are often participating outside the reach of sports governing bodies, through which most of the funding for sport comes<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Women's Sports Foundation (2003) *Britain's Best Kept Secret*

<sup>28</sup> Packer, C. *et al.* (2014) *No lasting legacy: no change in reporting of women's sports in the British print media with the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics*, Journal of Public Health, 37(1): pp.50-6

<sup>29</sup> BBC (2013), *GB sportswomen tell BBC Sport survey they 'lack support'*, source:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/21705510>

<sup>30</sup> Packer, C. *et al.* (2014), *as at reference 28*

<sup>31</sup> National Union of Journalists and Sports Journalists Association figures quoted in *Women and Sport, First Report of Session 2014/15*, House of Commons Culture Media and Sport Committee (2014)

<sup>32</sup> 2007/08 Culture and Sport Module of Scottish Household Survey quoted in **sportscotland** (2013) SportFirst, Issue 10

<sup>33</sup> Scottish Household Survey (2014)

<sup>34</sup> As explored at UK level using a range of data sources in paragraph 20 of Culture Media and Sport Committee (2014) First Report: Women and Sport



- 2.22 In 2015, **sportscotland** invested in 55 of the Scottish governing bodies for sport. Investment decisions are driven by a clear strategy, with **sportscotland** investing in partners including local authorities and Scottish governing bodies who can contribute to the delivery of the outcomes in its Corporate Plan<sup>35</sup>. **sportscotland** will only invest in SGBs that actively demonstrate their commitment to equality, and sets out requirements around achieving the Equality Standard for sport within its funding awards.
- 2.23 Sponsorship is an important source of investment in sport in the UK. In 2011, women's sport received just 0.5 per cent of all UK sports sponsorship, with approximately a third of sponsorship going to mixed sports and 60 per cent to men's sports. This is influenced by the high level of commercial sponsorship for football, as well as Formula One, rugby, cricket, golf and tennis<sup>36</sup>.

### ***Sporting system issues – equal pay***

- 2.24 Equal prize money for men and women was first introduced at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in 2007. However, discussion about equal prize money in tennis began in the 1970s, taking a long time to come to fruition. Other sports have different levels of prize money for men and women. A BBC Sport study<sup>37</sup> reveals that almost a third of sports - including golf, cricket and squash - pay prize money that rewards men more highly than women. This sends negative messages about the value of women's contribution, and women may be discouraged from professional sporting roles due to low pay.

#### **Example**

Casey Stoney, Captain of the British women's football team and member of the Lincoln Ladies combines these two incomes, plus part-time work, to earn an annual salary of £25,000, roughly what John Terry (a male footballer) earns in a single day<sup>38</sup>.

### ***Sporting system issues – leadership, coaching and volunteering***

- 2.25 Research<sup>39</sup> has found that significant inequalities exist between men and women in sports coaching and leadership positions. For example, survey data for the UK found that of sports clubs who employed specialist coaching staff, 89 per cent employed men while only 47 per cent employed women<sup>40</sup>. Figures from 2015 show that 72 per cent of coaches in the UK were men and 28 per cent women<sup>41</sup>. For qualified coaches this inequality increased to 82 per

<sup>35</sup> **sportscotland** (2015) *Raising the Bar: Corporate Plan 2015 to 2019*

<sup>36</sup> Commission on the Future of Women's Sport (2011) *Big Deal? The Case For Commercial Investment in Women's Sport*

<sup>37</sup> BBC (2014) *Women in sport still facing inequality over prize money*, source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/29786682>

<sup>38</sup> The Telegraph (2012, *Casey Stoney: England football captain who earns in a year what John Terry is paid in a day*, source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/9558238/Casey-Stoney-England-football-captain-who-earns-in-a-year-what-John-Terry-is-paid-in-a-day.html>

<sup>39</sup> **sportscotland** (2004) *Women in Sport Leadership*

<sup>40</sup> **sportscotland** (2004) *as above in reference 36*

<sup>41</sup> Sports Coach UK (2015) *The Coaching Panel*

cent men and 18 per cent women<sup>42</sup>. Evidence from Scotland suggests that among those who responded, there was a slightly higher proportion of women than in the UK more widely – with 68 per cent male and 32 per cent female in 2015<sup>43</sup>.

- 2.26 The low number of female coaches can also impact on participation. Boys and girls can respond to different styles of coaching. Research shows that the traditional style of male sports coach can be off putting to women.<sup>44</sup>
- 2.27 There are also inequalities in the profile of decision makers in sport in Scotland. **sportscotland** data shows that in 2015/16, over a quarter of board members of Scottish governing bodies of sport were women (29%)<sup>45</sup>. This had increased from 24 per cent in 2014/15. However, in 2015/16, 11 governing bodies had no women on their boards. Within **sportscotland**, in 2015, 52 per cent of staff were men and 46 per cent were women. There were, however, clear differences in the gender balance for different 'job families' within **sportscotland**<sup>46</sup>.

### **Lessons, ideas and solutions**

- 2.28 The research suggests that tackling inequality between men and women should focus on encouraging equal participation (including both single sex and mixed sex opportunities); equal promotion and media focus; equal rewards; building staff skills; and developing a gender balance in decision making roles<sup>47</sup>.

### ***Lessons – increasing participation***

- 2.29 There is a substantial body of research into increasing women's participation in sport, particularly for young women. Research has shown that young women often want single sex activities, and that introducing these opportunities can increase participation rates<sup>48</sup>. In addition, much of the research focuses on promoting and providing a choice of sport - including contact, low-contact or non-contact sports; mixed or single-sex sports; team sports, double or single sports<sup>49</sup>.
- 2.30 It is also useful to note that traditional sports are not the only way for women to become more active. Women and girls are now progressively more likely to be physically active through alternative activities<sup>50</sup>. This approach is

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<sup>42</sup> Sports Coach UK (2011) *Sports Coaching in the UK III*

<sup>43</sup> Sports Coach UK (2015) *Coaching in Scotland 2015*

<sup>44</sup> Fasting, K. & Pfister, G. (2000) *Female and Male Coaches in The Eyes of Female Elite Soccer Players*

<sup>45</sup> Research Scotland analysis of **sportscotland** (2015/16) Board Member Gender Split data

<sup>46</sup> **sportscotland** (2015) *Employee Information Report*

<sup>47</sup> Women's Sports Foundation UK and **sportscotland** (2005) *Making Women and Girls More Active, a Good Practice Guide*

<sup>48</sup> **sportscotland** (2012) *Fit for Girls Evaluation*

<sup>49</sup> Sport England (2006) *Understanding participation in sport: What determines sports participation among 15-19 year old women?*

<sup>50</sup> The Scottish Health Survey (2013)

supported by national programmes such as Fit for Girls<sup>51</sup>, which aims to bring more accessible and desirable physical activities into the school curriculum for girls. Active Schools teams in Scotland also use this type of approach to involve and support young women. Sport England has also found that providing fun, safe and comfortable environments with a non-competitive atmosphere can help non sporty young women to engage and become involved<sup>52</sup>.

**Bodyworks** is operated by Argyll & Bute Council's Out of Schools Learning team. It provides opportunities for girls to take part in physical activity during lunch time. This is particularly important for girls in rural areas who may find it difficult to take part in after-school activities because of time and travel. The supportive girls only environment and range of activities has also proved popular. As a further incentive to increase activity and participation, free entry vouchers to evening classes run by the same instructors are offered to all the girls who take part during their lunch hour. The programme has helped to increase attendance in sport for girls in rural areas and in particular has drawn in girls who would not normally take part in any sport<sup>53</sup>.

Active School's teams provided examples of older girls supporting younger girls to take part in competitions and events. Such encouragement not only improved the confidence of young girls to get involved, but also created leadership opportunities for girls who were not typically sporty.

### ***Lessons – leadership and empowerment***

- 2.31 There are many examples of work focusing on empowering women through sport. For example, a report by Women Win<sup>54</sup> assesses the impact of sport and physical activity programmes on the lives of girls and women. It found that sports programmes which provide information, life skills, resources and services aimed at advancing their life positions can have a big impact in empowering women.

The **Girls on the Move Leadership Programme** aims to involve more young women as leaders in physical activity. The programme provides skills training and personal development on free residential courses. Programme participants can gain up to two nationally recognised awards in sports leadership. Applicants don't need to be sporty to take part – interest, motivation, enthusiasm and potential are most important. The programme is not about producing athletes, but focuses on turning girls into leaders.

An evaluation of Girls on the Move in 2014 found that leadership training and having the opportunity to lead in activity over a period of time had a positive effect on self-esteem.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> sportscotland (2012) *Fit for Girls Evaluation*

<sup>52</sup> IFF Research & Sport England (2013) *Evaluation of the Active Women Programme - Year Two*

<sup>53</sup> Women's Sports Foundation UK and sportscotland (2005, *Making Women and Girls More Active, a Good Practice Guide*

<sup>54</sup> Women Win (no date) *Empowering Girls and Women through Sport and Physical Activity*

<sup>55</sup> Taylor, J. (2014) *The impact of the 'Girls on the Move' Leadership Programme on young female leaders' self-esteem*, *Leisure Studies*, 33(1): pp. 62-74

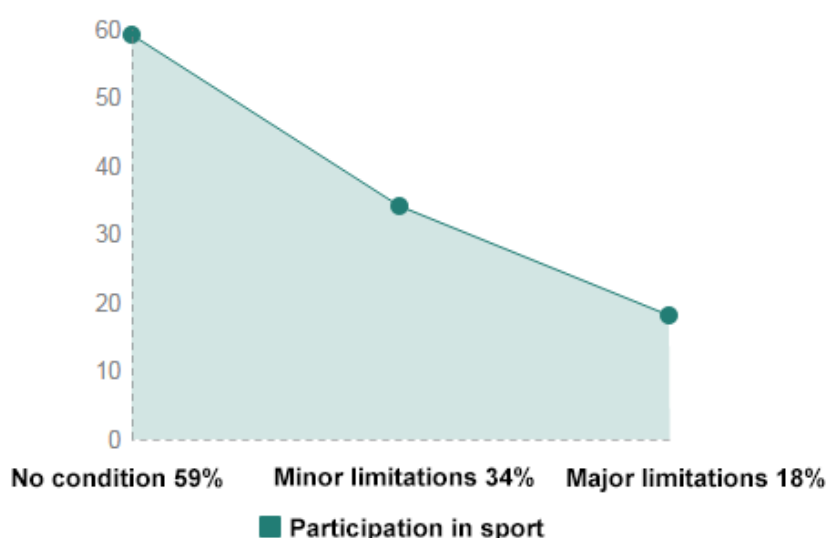
## Lessons – alternative ways of providing facilities

2.32 Some research points to the value of bringing sport to women, due to barriers around travel and suitable facilities<sup>56</sup>. Sports England is introducing ‘girls only satellite clubs’ across England, providing opportunities within community facilities and pop up venues. Of 1,500 satellite clubs in England, 150 were girls only.<sup>57</sup>

## Disability and sport

### Participation in sport

2.33 Disabled people are much less likely to participate in sport. In Scotland, disabled people are less active, have poorer experiences of school PE, and are less likely to participate in sport as adults. In 2014, sports participation (excluding walking) for adults in Scotland without a condition was 59 per cent. This fell to a fifth (18%) for adults with a condition resulting in major limitations and a third (34%) for adults with a condition resulting in minor limitations. Disabled people are less likely to use leisure facilities. However, when disabled people do take part in sport and exercise, they are almost as likely as others to take part frequently (on 15 or more days per month)<sup>58</sup>.



2.34 Research by the Independent Living in Scotland (ILiS) project brought together Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs), decision makers, academics, public service leaders and other key experts from across Scotland to discuss disabled peoples’ equal participation in sport.<sup>59</sup> This ‘Think Tank’ identified that despite efforts by official sporting bodies, clubs and legal

<sup>56</sup> WSFF (2011) *Changing the Game for Girls*

<sup>57</sup> Sport England (no date) *Satellite Clubs Guide*

<sup>58</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

<sup>59</sup> ILiS (2014) *The Solutions Series, ‘On your Marks...disabled people’s equal participation in sport’*

drivers, there are still issues with large numbers of disabled people finding it difficult to be active at the recommended levels in Scotland.<sup>60</sup>

2.35 Their report notes that significantly fewer disabled people reached the national targets for physical activity than non-disabled people. Low participation in sports by disabled people is important because it can:

- limit disabled people's opportunities to pursue a healthy lifestyle;
- limit the positive portrayal of disabled people;
- prevent sports facilities from gaining the money, knowledge and experience that disabled people can bring;
- contribute to the isolation of disabled people; and
- discourage inclusion and diversity in the community.

### **Barriers to participation**

2.36 Literature emphasises that it is crucial that disabled people are individuals, and have a range of different experiences. However, there can be some commonly experienced barriers which can impact on disabled people's participation in sports.

#### **Barriers – attitudes**

2.37 Negative attitudes and stereotypes, including inaccurate assumptions, negative perceptions and prejudice, can hinder some disabled people from participating in sport. There is a strong body of literature suggesting that attitudes can be a major barrier<sup>61</sup>. This includes the attitudes of disabled people themselves, of those planning and delivering sports, and of other sports participants.

2.38 Literature suggests that disabled people themselves may feel self-conscious, have low levels of confidence or fear of failure in relation to sports. Some suggest that this is strongly influenced by experiences at school<sup>62</sup>. Others suggest that the strong focus on physical perfection in sports can make those who do not feel physically perfect feel inadequate<sup>63</sup>.

2.39 However, there is also strong evidence that sport is very important to disabled people. The Disabled People's Lifestyle Survey in England in 2013 found that disabled people said that keeping healthy, spending time with family and friends and having time for hobbies and interests were the most important things to them<sup>64</sup>. In addition, sport came seventh out of 15 options.

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<sup>60</sup> In relation to the guidelines of moderate activity for at least 150 minutes or vigorous activity for 75 minutes or a combination of both, per week.

<sup>61</sup> As summarised from a range of sources in UN SDP IWG (2008) *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace (Sport and Disability Chapter)*

<sup>62</sup> sportscotland (2001) *Sport and People with a Disability: Aiming at Social Inclusion*

<sup>63</sup> Brittain, I. (2004) *Perceptions of Disability and their Impact Upon Involvement in Sport for People with Disabilities at all Levels*, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 28(4): pp.429-52

<sup>64</sup> English Federation of Disability Sport (2013) *Disabled People's Lifestyle Survey Report*

### **Barrier – physical accessibility**

- 2.40 Physical accessibility and inclusion can also be issues. Research<sup>65</sup> has found that only one in four clubs in the UK thinks it has suitable facilities for disabled people to participate, suitably trained staff, and appropriate equipment. This indicates that three quarters of clubs need some form of additional support.
- 2.41 Some clubs may believe that they need specialised equipment to allow disabled people to take part in their sport, when in reality, some simple adaptations to the equipment they already have could be enough. Other barriers can include equipment, health and safety and support for disabled people.
- 2.42 There is a range of guidance on physical accessibility in sports facilities, largely focused on organisations in England. The Equality and Human Rights Commission strongly supports the Private Member's Bill currently under discussion, to require sports bodies to comply with 'Accessible Stadia' guidelines published by the Sports Grounds Safety Authority.

### **Barrier – pathways**

- 2.43 Another important barrier is pathways into sport for disabled people - from school to community and onto competitive sport. Some popular sports such as wheelchair basketball have a higher profile and therefore pathways are clearer. Scottish Disability Sport is working to ensure networks of opportunities for 13 sports, linked across local, regional and national level. But pathways for other sports are not always clear. This means that people can 'fall out of sport' where there are no suitable or known opportunities for them<sup>66</sup>.

### **Barriers – wider issues**

- 2.44 Literature highlights a wide range of other, wider barriers to disabled people's equal participation in sport. This includes transport and levels of poverty experienced by disabled people.

### **Sporting system issues**

- 2.45 There is clear evidence that disabled people are under represented in the coaching workforce. Research shows that eight per cent of coaches in the UK are disabled, which is significantly below the estimated 15 per cent disabled population across the UK. This research also highlighted falling proportions of disabled coaches, from 10 per cent in 2006 to eight per cent in 2008<sup>67</sup>.
- 2.46 Evidence from Scotland highlights that people with long term conditions engage in volunteering in sports and activities less than those without

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<sup>65</sup> Sport and Recreation Alliance (2013) *Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Survey*

<sup>66</sup> ILiS (2014), *Solution Series 6*

<sup>67</sup> Sports Coach UK (2011) *Sports Coaching in the UK III*

conditions (3% compared with 5%)<sup>68</sup>. However, due to the small numbers involved it is important to treat these figures with caution.

- 2.47 With this gap in coaching representation, literature highlights concern about the skills, confidence and experience of coaches to work with and support disabled people. There is a significant body of guidance for coaches on how to be inclusive, and how to coach people in different settings or with different impairments. However, many sports providers lack the confidence or experience to support disabled people, or to provide 'all inclusive' mixed opportunities<sup>69</sup>. While the guidance is varied, there are common messages around treating people as individuals and involving people in decisions.
- 2.48 Media coverage can also have an impact on attitudes, aspirations and behaviours. However, research has shown that despite coverage of Paralympic competitions, sports clubs are not seeing increased uptake among disabled people as a result. Research<sup>70</sup> found that only one in ten sports clubs saw an increase.

### **Lessons, ideas and solutions**

- 2.49 There is a very wide range of literature around promoting equality for disabled people in sport. Some of the common themes from the literature are highlighted below.

#### ***Lessons – listening to disabled people***

- 2.50 Research consistently stresses that it is important to understand lifestyles of disabled people in relation to sport, listen to disabled people and involve them in the development of opportunities.
- 2.51 There is clear evidence about individual preferences. For example, the Disabled People's Lifestyle Survey found that two thirds of people prefer to play with a mix of disabled and non disabled participants. These participants were largely looking for flexibility, moderate exercise and enjoyment with friends. Younger disabled people and men were most likely to want energetic activity, and more likely to be driven by competition and identify with 'sport'. However, women were more driven by 'recreation' and people with mental health issues often wanted to improve their health through sport, and preferred the term 'fitness'.

#### ***Lessons – training and education***

- 2.52 Training and education, both on physical activity and disabled equality is essential. It should be delivered to the right people, at the right time and has the potential to address many of the issues and raise awareness of access, attitudes and assumptions. PE for example, is often people's first experience of sport and sometimes the only time they will participate. Therefore, all

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<sup>68</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

<sup>69</sup> English Federation of Disability Sport (2014) *Active Together*

<sup>70</sup> Sport and Recreation Alliance (2013) *Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Survey*

teachers, not just PE teachers and coaches should receive training on disability in sport to help improve pathways into sport.

- 2.53 The media can also encourage disabled people to get involved in sport through promoting sport opportunities. The television coverage of the Paralympics has helped to raise the profile of elite sport for disabled people. However, a House of Lords report on the legacy of the Paralympic games found that it was less clear if it had changed wider attitudes towards disability. In addition to covering competitive sport, it is important to show disabled people participating in non-elite and non-competitive sports.

### **Clubs**

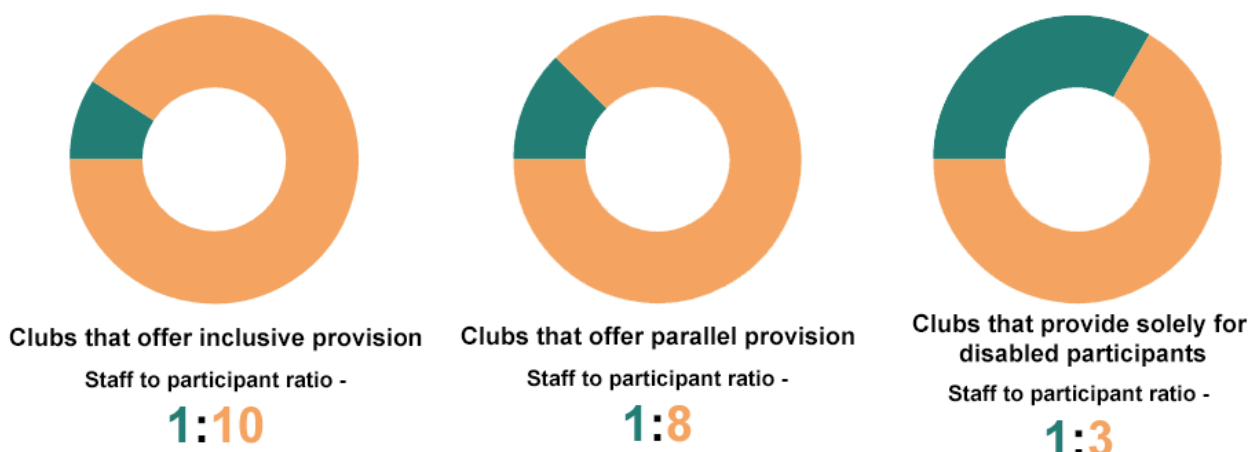
- 2.54 Clubs are often the first point of contact, so disabled people need to know that clubs value their membership<sup>71</sup>. Clubs can include disabled people in a variety of ways. Some clubs run fully inclusive sessions which include all its members. Other clubs have bespoke groups and sessions 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.
- 2.55 Research found that 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. There is also evidence that staff to participant ratios are important<sup>72</sup>. 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.

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<sup>71</sup> English Federation of Disability Sport (2013) *Report of the Sport and Recreation Alliance's Sports Club Survey*

<sup>72</sup> English Federation of Disability Sport (2013) As above, at reference 68





2.56 Finally, there is a wide body of literature suggesting that it is crucial for clubs to work in partnership, to attract and support disabled participants and attract appropriate funding etc. However, research found that just one in three sports clubs and organisations in England had links with organisations that could support them with disabled members<sup>73</sup>.

#### Example

Trust Rugby International RFC is Scotland's first registered unified rugby club. This is where disabled players train and play in the same team as non-disabled players. By working with strategic partners, a support network provides access for people with learning disabilities and their carers. Their aim is:

“Promoting and encouraging an appreciation of equality, diversity and social integration by proactively supporting the personal development of young people through participation in Rugby.”

TRI has worked closely with health promotion teams to build strategic partnerships with other relevant organisations including the Scottish Rugby Union and Scotland Rugby League, to create a sustainable referral and support network. They are working with this network to develop Scotland's first unified rugby and personal development coaching model. It has been working with communities to create a series of taster sessions to give participants the chance to experience the game. TRI is also working in partnership with Scotland Rugby League to support and develop wheelchair rugby league.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> EFDS (2013) *EFDS Report of the Sport and Recreation Alliance's Sports Club Survey*

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.trustrugby.com/#/wheelchair-rugby-league/c1feo>

### Example

The English Cricket Board was one of the first sports governing bodies to introduce its own cricket specific disability training course. It has a dedicated disability cricket contact. It has also proactively offered cricket to disabled people in schools. It promotes the concept of inclusive clubs, with support provided. It has a target of having one inclusive club in every area by 2017. It stresses that clubs need to take time to think about what makes their club welcoming to disabled people.

The guide puts an emphasis on:

- Building strong school club links – encouraging parents, friends and others to try the club and see what it is like.
- Seeking support from others – teachers, parents, carers, etc – to explore how to create a safe and welcoming environment.
- Proactively building links with disabled people’s organisations – meeting them face to face.
- Consider the non-sporting outcomes from cricket – confidence, health, friendship – as just as important as the sporting outcomes – skills development, success, prestige.
- Consider using other spaces, which might be more accessible – think creatively.<sup>75</sup>

## Sexual orientation and sport

### Participation in sport

2.57 Quantitative data on sexual orientation and sports participation in Scotland is very limited<sup>76</sup>. There is no official data on the total number of people in Scotland who are lesbian, gay or bisexual – although estimates range from one to seven per cent. This makes it very difficult to explore equality issues in sport for this group.

2.58 Data on sports participation in Scotland<sup>77</sup> indicates that lesbian, gay and bisexual participants are not significantly different from heterosexuals in activity levels. However, adults who identified as having an ‘other’ sexual orientation were significantly less likely to meet activity recommendations than the national average. It is important to treat these findings with caution however, due to anticipated under reporting of LGB people who are not ‘out’ within surveys. This means that this survey is likely to reflect the experiences of those who are out, more than those who are not ‘out’.

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<sup>75</sup> English Cricket Board (2013) *Welcoming Disabled Cricketers*

<sup>76</sup> Analysed in Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

<sup>77</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

## Barriers to participation

2.59 Qualitative research<sup>78</sup> has found that while most LGB people have positive experiences of sport, there are key barriers to participation including:

- homophobia;
- previous negative experiences, particularly in school;
- lack of positive role models; and
- lack of knowledge of what is available.

### **Barriers - homophobia**

2.60 Homophobia (or fear of homophobia) is one of the key barriers facing LGB people in participating in sport. **sportscotland**<sup>79</sup> conducted a thorough investigation of the literature surrounding participation of LGB people in sports and found that “discrimination runs deep” and that “there is a reluctance to accept that participation in sport by anyone whose sexual orientation is other than heterosexual is problematic.”

2.61 The Equality Network conducted research<sup>80</sup> into LGBT participation in sport and found that homophobic and biphobic bullying continues to be a major problem. Its survey results show that 79 per cent of LGBT people felt that there was a problem with homophobia in sport.

2.62 Research<sup>81</sup> carried out by Stonewall included an online survey of over 2,000 football fans. The results show that LGB abuse is “all too common” and almost always goes unchallenged. Fans believe that it is this abuse, from fans, players and teammates that deters gay people from playing football and creates a culture of fear where gay players feel it is unsafe to come out.

2.63 Research conducted with LGB people in Wales identified that over half of those responding to a survey would be more likely to participate in club sport if other members were LGB, or if the club was inclusive of LGB people or LGB friendly.<sup>82</sup>

### **Barriers – experiences at school**

2.64 Research<sup>83</sup> has found that school sport plays an important role in influencing attitudes towards sport among LGB people. Research participants indicated that “gendering” of sport in secondary school had an adverse effect on their experience of PE, and made PE different from other lessons in school. The Out for Sport<sup>84</sup> report shows that 42 per cent of LGB people participating in the

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<sup>78</sup> Equality Network (no date) *Out for Sport: The Facts*

<sup>79</sup> **sportscotland** (2008) *A Review of Sexual Orientation in Sport*

<sup>80</sup> Equality Network (2012) *Out for Sport: tackling homophobia and transphobia in sport*

<sup>81</sup> Stonewall (2009) *Leagues Behind – Football’s Failure to tackle anti-gay abuse*

<sup>82</sup> Stonewall Wales (2012) *Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) People in Sport: Understanding LGB sports participation in Wales*

<sup>83</sup> Stonewall Wales (2012) as in reference 78

<sup>84</sup> Equality Network (2012) *Out for Sport: tackling homophobia and transphobia in sport*

study had been put off participating in sport because of their experiences at school.

- 2.65 Stonewall research<sup>85</sup> recommends that schools should acknowledge and identify the problem, address staff training need and promote a positive social environment in PE.

### **Barriers - lack of positive role models**

- 2.66 There are some openly LGB elite athletes, particularly within women's sport.<sup>86</sup> However, the numbers are small. During the 2012 Olympic Games there were only 23 'out' gay participating athletes, and only one of these was from the UK<sup>87</sup>.

- 2.67 Research undertaken by Stonewall, exploring football, found that:

- three in five fans believed anti-gay abuse from fans dissuaded gay professional players from coming out; and
- one in four fans believed anti-gay abuse from team mates contributed to there being no openly gay players in football.

#### **Thomas Hitzlsperger**

Thomas Hitzlsperger is a former Aston Villa player who revealed he was gay after his retirement from premier league football. The BBC reported in January 2014 that he was the most prominent footballer to publicly reveal his homosexuality.

"I'm coming out about my homosexuality because I want to move the discussion about homosexuality among professional sportspeople forwards."

The BBC notes that examples of out gay footballers are 'few and far between' and that there is a culture within football that has to change so as to encourage more players to come out as gay, while still playing premier league football.<sup>88</sup>

### **Sporting system issues**

- 2.68 There is little evidence about the number of lesbian, gay or bisexual people working, volunteering, coaching or in decision making roles within sport. There are gaps in information about employment, coaching and leadership within sport for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Lack of data and evidence can mean that issues remain hidden. There may be a need for further research exploring experiences of bisexual people; experiences of elite athletes; and management of identities including within the coaching and officiating fields.

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<sup>85</sup> Stonewall Wales (2012) *Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) People in Sport: Understanding LGB sports participation in Wales*

<sup>86</sup> Equality Network (2012) *Out for Sport: tackling homophobia and transphobia in sport*

<sup>87</sup> LGBT Youth North West (2013) *Including LGBT young people in sport – a guide*

<sup>88</sup> BBC (2014) *Thomas Hitzlsperger: Former Aston Villa player reveals he is gay*, source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/25628806>

## Lessons, ideas and solutions

2.69 Sports clubs, governing bodies and activity providers should take preventative steps towards bullying behaviour. Key approaches include<sup>89 90</sup>:

- promoting safe environments which celebrate and embrace diversity
- having strong policies and procedures
- gathering information to assess the extent of problems
- raising awareness of issues
- raising the profile of LGBT sports groups and clubs
- increasing participation in all sports and physical activity
- using major events, like the Commonwealth Games, to educate and inform.

2.70 Research<sup>91</sup> recommended that National Governing Bodies should do more to visibly demonstrate a commitment to tackling homophobia in sport, work with the media to improve coverage of LGB issues in sport, train officials and stewards to identify and challenge homophobic language and support the creation of LGB sports clubs where there is interest.

2.71 In May 2015, the Scottish LGBT Sports Charter was launched in Glasgow. The Charter sets out steps that will help to remove the barriers perceived or experienced by LGBT people in sports. The charter was developed in consultation with sports governing bodies (SGBs), other sports stakeholders and LGBT people.<sup>92</sup> The charter has five principles for those delivering sport in Scotland to sign up to, which echo the key principles identified by research around actively involving and supporting LGBT people, developing inclusive policies and practices, and creating a positive and welcoming sporting environment.

### **Pride House**

LEAP Sports hosted a Pride House in Glasgow city centre during the Commonwealth Games of 2014. It was a venue to welcome LGBT athletes, fans and others during international sporting events. It was a welcoming place to view the competitions, to enjoy the event but also to learn about LGBT and homophobia in sport and to build relations with mainstream sport. The first Pride House was organised for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver and Whistler, and others have since followed. The aim of the Pride House approach is to help break down some of the social and personal barriers which discourage LGBT people from participating in sports.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Child Protection in Sport Unit Briefing (2014) *Homophobic Bullying in Youth Sport*

<sup>90</sup> <http://leapsports.org/>

<sup>91</sup> Stonewall Wales (2012) *Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) People in Sport: Understanding LGB sports participation in Wales*

<sup>92</sup> Equality Network (2015) *Scottish LGBT Sports Charter*

<sup>93</sup> Source: [www.pridehouseglasgow.co.uk](http://www.pridehouseglasgow.co.uk)

## Gender reassignment and sport

### Participation in sport

2.72 There is no data available on the participation of people who have or are undergoing gender reassignment in sport. None of the existing household surveys ask about transgender status, meaning that the number of people who are transgender or are going through gender reassignment is not known nationally.

### Barriers to participation

#### **Barriers – transphobia**

2.73 One of the key barriers facing transgender people in participating in sport is transphobia. The Equality Network conducted research<sup>94</sup> specifically into transgender participation in sport and found that transphobic bullying is a major problem. Its survey results show that 79 per cent of transgender people said that transphobia was a barrier to them participating in sport.

“.....who wants to be teased, mocked and be made the butt of jokes in the showers, on the playing fields, in the pub?”

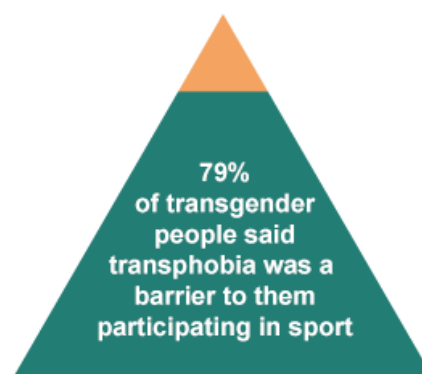
(Quote from Out for Sport)

“Transphobia is accepted as funny, and a valid way of insulting and damaging a sports personality and excluding people from taking part.”

(Quote from Out for Sport)

2.74 Four out of five transgender people involved in the Equality Network research had personally experienced or witnessed transphobia in sport.

Of that group, almost all (96%) had experienced or witnessed verbal abuse. More than one in ten (16%) had experienced or witnessed physical abuse. In addition, seven per cent said they had experienced or witnessed other forms of sexual assault. These experiences were in the context of both sports participation and spectating. There is also evidence that some transgender people can experience transphobia within LGB sporting groups<sup>95</sup>.



<sup>94</sup> Equality Network (2012) *Out for Sport: tackling transphobia in sport*

<sup>95</sup> EHRC (2009) *Trans research review*

### **Gabrielle Ludwig**

Gabrielle Ludwig is a transgender basketball player in California. She is believed to be the first transgender person ever to play community college basketball in the United States. She began living as a woman in 2007. She was the subject of a national media 'frenzy' and transphobia from spectators who called her "it". Critics also complained that Ludwig's height and weight gave her an unfair advantage. <sup>96</sup>

"My first game, I sucked... I was so nervous... There were reporters everywhere and in my face. Photographers would zoom in on things that were more masculine on my features or on my hands to sensationalize something."

### **Barriers - lack of appropriate facilities and changing rooms**

2.75 Another key barrier is the lack of changing and leisure facilities which meet the needs of transgender people. This is a particular issue for transgender participants in sport, who have a requirement for gender-neutral changing facilities, private showers and toilets.<sup>97</sup> Without these in place, transgender people can find it difficult to participate in sports.

"Transphobia since I have come out, this is mainly in changing rooms..."  
Quote from Out for Sport

### **Taurus Club, Manchester**

Manchester Concord, a transgender social group have paid to have a changing facility specifically for transgender people installed in one of the local gay-friendly bars. <sup>98</sup>

### **Glenogle Swim Centre**

In 2010, the LGBT centre in Edinburgh consulted with transgender people about gaps in services and found that there was an interest in transgender specific swimming sessions. Edinburgh Leisure agreed to provide sessions at Glenogle Swim Centre specifically for the transgender community and closed to the general public. Staff at the swimming pool were trained in transgender awareness before the sessions. The sessions have taken place twice a month since July 2010 and are well attended with participants travelling some distances to participate. <sup>99</sup>

"I hadn't been swimming for nearly 10 years and this helped me reconnect with the experience. It has improved my confidence and I've even managed to use some hotel pools. Without the trans swimming sessions, I couldn't possibly have tried this."

<sup>96</sup> SFGate (2013) *Unique challenges for transgender player*, source:

<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Unique-challenges-for-transgender-player-4319130.php>

<sup>97</sup> CUSU (2013) *Transgender and Intersex Sports Provision at the University of Cambridge*

<sup>98</sup> Source: <http://www.manchesterconcord.org.uk/taurus.htm>

<sup>99</sup> Equality Network (2012) *Out for Sport: tackling transphobia in sport*

## **Barriers - gendered sports**

- 2.76 Traditional views of sports aimed at ‘men’ and ‘women’ can cause issues for transgender participants. Sports and competition is classed into ‘male’ and ‘female’ which has led to a practice known as ‘sex-testing’ – introduced by the International Olympic Committee and continued until as recently as 1998. This was an attempt to produce differentiation between men and women.<sup>100</sup>
- 2.77 The Gender Recognition Act 2004 created a process to enable transsexual people to get their UK birth certificates and legal gender changed. Section 19 of the Act relates to sport. The Act makes clear that the participation of transgender people in competitive sporting events may be legitimately restricted in order to ensure fair competition and the safety of competitors. This only relates to people participating in the sport as competitors. The Sports Council Equality Group has recently jointly funded the development of guidance for national governing bodies to help them develop inclusive policies to allow transgender people to participate in local and competitive sports.<sup>101</sup> This guidance includes a ten point plan for inclusion, including a public commitment to inclusion of transgender people; leadership at the highest level in the organisation; building relationships with transgender people and associated organisations; having clear codes of conducts and policies; and staff training.

### **Caster Semenya**

Caster Semenya is a South African athlete who was subjected to gender verification testing to determine whether she was in fact, female after a performance which saw her beat her own personal best, and also the long standing South African record in the 800m set by Zola Budd.

The 18-year-old South African won the 800m at the World Athletics Championships but tests to prove she was female were ordered by the International Association of Athletics Federation. This set off a ‘gender row’ with some people insisting that Semenya had to be a man, in order to have achieved her world record time in the 800m, while others insisted that gender testing was insulting and wrong. After a year of testing the International Association of Athletics Federation panel declared that Semenya would keep her world championship status and could compete as a woman.<sup>102</sup>

## **Sporting system issues**

- 2.78 The research by the Equality Network provides useful qualitative information about the experiences of transgender people. However, there is little wider research exploring experiences. In addition, there is no robust data available on levels of transgender participation in sport; employment, coaching, leadership or decision making roles; intersections with race, age and class; and the extent of these problems.

<sup>100</sup> Council of Europe (2012) *LGBT Inclusion in Sport, Good Practice Handbook no 4*

<sup>101</sup> **sportscotland** (2011) *Equality at sportscotland: Mainstreaming the Equality Act 2010 duties*

<sup>102</sup> BBC (2009) *Semenya told to take gender test*, source:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/athletics/8210471.stm>



## Lessons, ideas and solutions

2.79 The Out for Sport research makes a number of recommendations as to how sport can help eliminate discrimination and prejudice. The recommendations included:

- **Leadership** from Scottish Government, SGBs, clubs and many others to ensure the elimination of homophobia and transphobia in Scottish sport.
- **Practical action** to lift barriers including a public awareness campaign to tackle transphobic prejudice.
- **A better understanding** of the issues in relation to transphobia in Scottish sport and what should be done to tackle the problem, including diversity training for staff.

2.80 The Equality Network research also identified a strong view that more high profile transgender sports personalities would make a difference in tackling transphobia. It also identified a need for an advertising campaign tackling transphobia. It was suggested that this could include high profile sports personalities to make a stand against transphobia. This was seen as particularly important as many did not think it was yet safe for athletes to be open about their gender reassignment, in terms of career success and physical and mental wellbeing.

## Race

### Participation in sport

2.81 There is limited data about sports participation among ethnic minority people in Scotland. The proportion of ethnic minority people in Scotland is small (4%) which makes it hard to undertake robust analysis of participation in sport by ethnic group. However, there is some evidence of inequalities. Pakistani adults are least likely to participate in sport (30% compared to an average of 49%)<sup>103</sup>. There are no other ethnic groups which display significantly different levels of sports participation. This is important because recent research<sup>104</sup> shows that while most ethnic groups in Scotland report better health than the 'white Scottish' ethnic group, older Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women reported poor health, considerably worse than the older men within these groups.

### Barriers to participation

2.82 There is a clear intersection with religion, and many of the barriers may be very similar to those explored later in this chapter under this theme.

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<sup>103</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

<sup>104</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Which ethnic groups have the poorest health?*

### **Barriers – racism**

- 2.83 Racism was noted as a barrier to participation in sport in research conducted for **sportscotland**<sup>105</sup>. Firstly, many people had experienced discrimination in other aspects of their lives, including at school, at work or in the general public arena. They therefore expected that it might also occur within a sporting context. Some had anecdotal evidence from others who had actual experience of such attitudes and behaviour when playing sport themselves, or had experienced it when watching games. Some had taken part in sport in the past and had stopped participating because of racism.
- 2.84 Recent incidents of racist abuse in the UK, often connected to football, have highlighted the fact that racism is a continuing problem. Social media has become both a tool for the spread of racist and abusive content and a potential means of combating such behaviour<sup>106</sup>.

### **Barriers – time and family life**

- 2.85 There are other barriers. The amount of free time available to some ethnic groups can be a barrier. The Sports Participation and Ethnicity in England 1999/2000 survey<sup>107</sup> found that over 40 per cent of Indian, Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Black African women reported that home and family responsibilities prevented them from participating in some form of physical exercise. Work, school, childcare and other domestic duties are often stated as reasons preventing ethnic minority women from having sufficient leisure time to participate<sup>108</sup>.
- 2.86 The attitudes of ethnic minority parents towards their children's involvement in sporting activity has also been raised as one of the key reasons for low participation in sport<sup>109</sup>. Research has shown that parents of ethnic minority origin do not always recognise the value or worth of their children participating in sporting activities, and much has been written about the emphasis placed on academic achievement and the pursuit of a 'good' job instead of involvement in sporting activity.

### **Barriers – mixed activities**

- 2.87 There are also concerns regarding appropriate dress and the mixing of sessions of people from different backgrounds. Some literature indicates the need for women only sessions, with the facility having women only time both before and after the session<sup>110</sup>. Research<sup>111</sup> found that self-image played a

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<sup>105</sup> **sportscotland** (2001) *Sport and Ethnic Minority Communities: Aiming at Social Inclusion*

<sup>106</sup> House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2012) *Racism in Football*

<sup>107</sup> Sport England (2000) *Sports Participation and Ethnicity in England, National Survey, 1999/2000*

<sup>108</sup> Cleland, J. (2009) *Exploring ethnicity and sports participation in Burton-on-Trent and Stoke-on-Trent*

<sup>109</sup> Carroll, B. & Hollinshead, G. (1993) *Ethnicity and conflict in physical education*. British Educational Research Journal, 19(1): 59-76.

<sup>110</sup> Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation and Sporting Equals (2010) *Muslim Women in Sport*

<sup>111</sup> Wray, S. (2002) *Connecting Ethnicity, Gender and Physicality: Muslim Pakistani Women, Physical Activity and health*

crucial role as some respondents had stopped attending due to increased internal negative feelings of being seen by other women when getting changed and by men when exercising or attending a particular location.

- 2.88 Research<sup>112</sup> found that for South Asian women body shape and a lack of a 'sporty type' image remained a concern. Wray<sup>113</sup> found that whilst some Muslim women did have an image of westernised ideals of image (such as femininity and attractiveness) others did not see this type of image as important to them.
- 2.89 Research<sup>114</sup> has also shown that celebrating and promoting positive images – such as the increased number of ethnic minority participants in high profile sporting events such as the London Olympic Games in 2012 and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014 have helped in this regard.

### **Sporting system issues**

- 2.90 The current profile of the coaching workforce in the UK is not representative of the wider community. While three per cent of the total workforce is ethnic minority, only one per cent of qualified coaches are ethnic minority. Research by Sporting Equals<sup>115</sup> found that there was significant interest in coaching from ethnic minority people, but there were barriers, such as information, marketing and visibility of role models. The research found that coaching was perceived as an opportunity for privileged individuals who were able to commit time to coaching on a voluntary basis. Coaching was not seen as a career, but as a hobby.

#### **Rachel Yankey, Ghanaian Coach**

Rachel is of Ghanaian descent and has made 115 appearances for the England Women's national football team and recently won the FA Cup, League Cup and Women's Super League with Arsenal ladies. She also works as a coach in schools, teaching football to children.

"I think it's important to be a role model both by being a professional footballer and also inspiring others through my work as a coach. I believe that sport helps communities build bridges and develop integration."

Rachel felt there was a strong need for female only courses as a lot of females don't feel comfortable in male orientated environments, particularly those girls from different culture or faith backgrounds. She also felt there was a need for parents and ethnic minority role models to promote the benefits of coaching and sport as a potential career option.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Carroll, R., Ali, N and Azam, N. (2002) *Promoting Physical Activity in South Asian Women Through 'Exercise on Prescription'*. Health Technology Assessment. 6 (8): 1-99.

<sup>113</sup> Wray, S. (2002) *Connecting Ethnicity, Gender and Physicality: Muslim Pakistani Women, Physical Activity and health*

<sup>114</sup> Carroll, B. & Hollinshead, G. (1993) *Ethnicity and conflict in physical education*. British Educational Research Journal, 19(1): pp.59-76

<sup>115</sup> Sporting Equals (2011) *INSIGHT BME Coaching in Sport*

<sup>116</sup> Sporting Equals (2011) *INSIGHT BME Coaching in Sport*

“Often BME communities don’t realise the wider benefits of coaching and the importance of empathy when recruiting coaches who can relate to and inspire young people and eventually become role models.”

Rachel Yankey, quoted in BME Coaching in Sport, Sporting Equals, December 2011

## Lessons, ideas and solutions

- 2.91 Sport England, supports a project called Sporting Equals<sup>117</sup>. The project aims to develop policies and working practices that promote racial equality by working with the governing bodies of sport and key national umbrella organisations that together influence and direct sport in England.
- 2.92 It runs a number of programmes to help promote race equality in sport. For example, the ‘Making Equals’ project aims to create greater integration by engaging young people from Asian and white British communities using the power of sport. Participants were able to enjoy a number of non-traditional sports including wheelchair basketball, dodgeball, PING! (table tennis) handball and football. These sports were selected to allow participants to interact on a level playing field and learning and experiencing together.
- 2.93 Over the sessions young people and stakeholders shared learning and good practice. The intention was that the project will leave a legacy of increased community cohesion and a wider sporting profile within the younger people engaged from Asian and White communities, including a greater understanding of different cultures.
- 2.94 Sporting Equals also worked with Queens Park Rangers football club to help the club build its connections with local communities through a talent identification programme targeted at ethnic minority groups. There were open sessions which engaged with 120 boys aged 8 to 12 years from Indian, Pakistani, White, African, Caribbean and Arabic families. Parents and families stayed to support the young people through their coaching, side matches and skills sessions.

**The Scottish Ethnic Minority Sports Association (SEMSA)** was established in 1990 due to the lack of provisions available to ethnic minority communities in Glasgow. Since its inception SEMSA has created and provided culturally sensitive sporting opportunities. There are weekly programmes of activities including football, women’s football, kabaddi, cricket, badminton, and swimming.

SEMSA has worked in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life, Celtic and Rangers Football Clubs to host the UK Asian Football Championships in Glasgow. This event has been running for 15 years and helps to raise the profile of Asians in football at all levels of the game. <sup>118</sup>

<sup>117</sup> [www.sportingequals.org.uk](http://www.sportingequals.org.uk)

<sup>118</sup> Source : <http://www.semsa.org.uk>

## Religion and belief

### Participation in sport

- 2.95 As with race, there is very limited evidence about sports participation in relation to religion and belief in Scotland. Due to the small proportion of people in Scotland identifying with non-Christian religions, robust analysis of participation in sports is challenging. The vast majority of the literature focuses on the Muslim faith. There is a lack of research being undertaken to include those from other faith or religious groups.
- 2.96 The evidence from Scotland suggests that people with a Muslim faith are less likely take part in sport, with a particular concern for Muslim women.<sup>119</sup> This is supported by research conducted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission<sup>120</sup> which shows that the lowest rate of sports participation is for Muslims. The evidence from Scotland also highlights that Roman Catholics had slightly lower sport participation than average (46% compared to 49%).
- 2.97 Research has also indicated that there are lower levels of participation from people identifying with a particular religion, than those with no religion<sup>121</sup>. However, analysis by the Scottish Government<sup>122</sup> has highlighted a clear correlation with age, which also impacts on sports participation levels, because younger people are much less likely to be religious and much more likely to be physically active.
- 2.98 Beyond Scotland, a report by Sport England<sup>123</sup> identified that there are also differences in participation of people with different religions and beliefs among different sports. For example, badminton, basketball and cricket have a higher participation rate for Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, and Muslim faiths, compared to those stating Christian, or 'no religion'.

### Barriers to participation

#### *Barriers – for women*

- 2.99 Research<sup>124</sup> has found interesting results in the comparisons between Muslim women's attitudes towards sport in different countries. In traditional Muslim countries attitudes are actually far more positive towards PE than in the UK. Young Muslim women in the UK seem to have very negative views regarding PE in schools.
- 2.100 Research conducted with Muslim girls in the school environment has demonstrated that the girls were put off participating in sporting activities to

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<sup>119</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

<sup>120</sup> EHRC and Sporting Equals (no date), *Equality and human rights in sport and physical activity*

<sup>121</sup> Scottish Government (2013) *Scottish Government Equality Outcomes: Religion and Belief Evidence Review*

<sup>122</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

<sup>123</sup> Sport England (2009) *Equity in Sports Participation: Ethnicity and Faith*

<sup>124</sup> Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation and Sporting Equals (2010) *Muslim Women in Sport*

the point where some were skipping classes. This was due to a requirement to shower communally and wear clothing which was considered as inappropriate to the children's cultural traditions and beliefs. The researchers<sup>125</sup> found that "for the devout Muslims there is a real feeling of guilt and shame at exposing their bodies and legs which had not been fully appreciated by the teachers."

### **Barriers – flexibility around religious festivals and clothing**

2.101 The issue of Ramadan has also been highlighted in the research literature as a religious barrier specific to Muslim children, that affects their participation levels in sporting activities<sup>126</sup>. Research shows that Muslim children are reluctant to participate in school sporting activities during the period of Ramadan because of reduced energy levels resulting from fasting.

#### **Sports Hijab**

Dr Emma Tarlo, from the University of London has conducted research into clothing and reports that women have been put off sports because of a lack of appropriate clothing. However, a new 'sports hijab' has been created by a Dutch designer which has encouraged more Muslim women into sports.

London 2012 was the first Olympics in which women competed in all 26 sporting events and FIFA has relaxed its rules so that women can play football with their heads covered.

Fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad, will become the first person to represent the US at the Olympics in 2016, wearing a hijab, says she chose her sport because it allowed her to cover her body without altering the uniform.<sup>127</sup>

"A way has been found of combining women's passion for sport with their passion for their faith and the sports hijab will certainly aid women's participation in sport at all levels."

#### **Kulsoom Abdullah**

The female weightlifter Kulsoom Abdullah was initially barred from the US championships, because she wanted to compete in clothing that would cover her elbows and knees. She had wanted to wear such clothing in accordance with her interpretation of Islamic rules of modesty for women. Officials were concerned that such clothing would obscure the view of the judges to assess whether she had achieved a proper "lock" of the elbows and knees, which is essential for a weight-lifting competition.

Subsequently, Kulsoom Abdullah proposed to wear a tight fitting unitard under the compulsory competition costume, which would allow the judges to assess whether

<sup>125</sup> Carroll, B. & Hollinshead, G. (1993) *Ethnicity and conflict in physical education*. British Educational Research Journal, 19(1): 59-76.

<sup>126</sup> Carroll, B. & Hollinshead, G. (1993) As above at reference 122

<sup>127</sup> Rimla Akhtar from the Muslim Women in Sport Foundation, quoted in the Guardian, 23 July 2012 Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/the-womens-blog-with-jane-martinson/2012/jul/23/sports-hijabs-muslim-women-olympics>

her elbows and knees were properly locked while lifting weights. The International Weightlifting Federation agreed and Kulsoom Abdullah then registered for the US Championships.<sup>128</sup>

### **Barriers – family life and parental attitudes**

2.102 The attitudes of ethnic minority parents towards their children's involvement in sporting activity has also been raised as one of the key reasons for low participation in sport.<sup>129</sup> Research has shown that ethnic minority parents do not always recognise the value or worth of their children participating in sporting activities, and much has been written about the emphasis placed on academic achievement and the pursuit of a 'good' job instead of involvement in sporting activity.

### **Barriers – role models**

2.103 Muslim women's attitudes towards sport are also affected by a lack of visible role models. Celebrating and promoting these positive images is key to developing long term attitudinal change and increasing participation levels<sup>130</sup>.

### **Hala Ousta**

Hala Ousta is the Football Equity Officer with the Scottish Football Association. Having grown up in a supportive family environment that encouraged her sporting interests, Hala now works in local communities to ensure that young ethnic minority people in Glasgow have the same opportunities. The work of the Equity Officers has fed into the Scottish Football Association's new Football Equity Strategy which details how they plan to increase participation in football amongst people from ethnic minorities.<sup>131</sup>

### **Wojdan Shaherkani**

Wojdan Shaherkani is a judo player from Saudi Arabia. She was competing for the first time at the London Olympic Games. She had to overcome criticism and hostility from her own country – particularly religious groups who strongly discourage female participation in sport. Her national Olympic Committee said she could only compete if she was wearing a hijab. But judo's governing body was worried that a head covering could be dangerous in the grapples and tumbles of the sport. Finally, an agreement was reached where Shaherkani competed wearing a tightly wrapped head-scarf.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> altMuslimah (2011) *The dress code barrier for Muslim women in sports*, source:

[http://www.altmuslimah.com/2011/07/the\\_dress\\_code\\_barrier\\_for\\_muslim\\_women\\_in\\_sports1/](http://www.altmuslimah.com/2011/07/the_dress_code_barrier_for_muslim_women_in_sports1/)

<sup>129</sup> Carroll, B. & Hollinshead, G. (1993) *Ethnicity and conflict in physical education*. British Educational Research Journal, 19(1): 59-76.

<sup>130</sup> Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation and Sporting Equals (2010) *Muslim Women in Sport*

<sup>131</sup> Scottish FA (2013), *Meet Football Equity Officer Hala Ousta*, source:

[http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/scottish\\_fa\\_news.cfm?page=1957&newsCategoryId=12&newsID=12108](http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/scottish_fa_news.cfm?page=1957&newsCategoryId=12&newsID=12108)

<sup>132</sup> The Mail (2012) *The Muslim women who overcame the odds and the prejudice to make history today on the Olympic stage*, source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2183262/Olympics-2012-The-Muslim-women-overcame-odds-make-London.html>

## **Barriers – sectarianism**

- 2.104 In some parts of Scotland there are divisions between different religious groups. This can impact on society and on sport. The historical links of some clubs and the traditional ethnic and religious make up of their supporters have led to them being held as symbols of religious, cultural and political beliefs.
- 2.105 Research conducted by ScotCen<sup>133</sup> found that the majority of people in Scotland felt that sectarianism is a problem. Most (88%) of those interviewed identified football as a contributing factor, and over half (55%) said they thought it was the main factor.
- 2.106 In December 2011, the Scottish Parliament passed the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act to address some of the issues which arise from sectarianism in football. It came into force on 1 March 2012. The legislation was introduced in response to calls from Scotland's police and prosecutors for additional powers to combat sectarian songs and abuse at and around football matches and threats posted on the internet or through the mail.

## **Lessons, ideas and solutions**

### **Lessons – building relations**

- 2.107 There are some examples of where religious tensions have been put to one side through sports. For example, Peace Players International (PPI) was founded in 2001 on the premise that “children who play together can learn to live together.” Since inception, PPI has reached more than 65,000 participants and trained more than 1,100 youth leaders. Through a groundbreaking peace building-and-leadership development curriculum, Peace Players International uses basketball to bring children together and teach them proven tactics for improving their communities. Peace Players International currently operates year-round programs in [South Africa](#), [Northern Ireland](#), [Israel and the West Bank](#), and [Cyprus](#).<sup>134</sup>

### **Lessons – training and learning**

- 2.108 Nil By Mouth is an anti-sectarianism charity in Scotland. In April 2015, the charity worked with sports coaches at Ayrshire College to teach them about sectarianism in order to provide them with the insights, techniques and strategies they will need in the workplace. The campaign director for Nil By Mouth, spoke with groups of Sports Coaching and Development students to help them understand what sectarianism is and the consequences it has on society. He stressed how important it was for them to know how to deal with difficult situations once they are in coaching jobs.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Scottish Government (2014), *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2014: Public Attitudes to Sectarianism in Scotland*

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.peaceplayersintl.org>

<sup>135</sup> Nil By Mouth (2015), *Sports Students Spurred To Tackle Sectarianism*, source: <http://nilbymouth.org/2015/sports-students-spurred-to-tackle-sectarianism/>



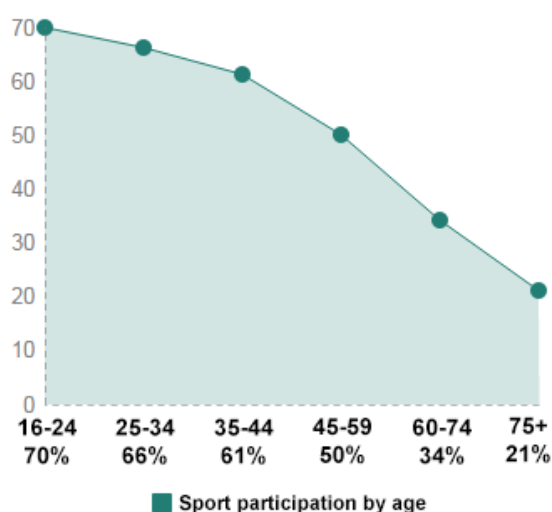
## Lessons – connecting organisations

2.109 Sporting Equals has conducted research<sup>136</sup>, looking at how ‘faith centres’ or places of worship for different religious groups can play an active role in offering sport and physical activity to the community. Sporting Equals developed a model which aims to bridge the gap with disengaged communities by connecting sports provision to the local community at a grassroots level, by using the local mosque or church as a gateway for access. Sporting Equals has worked with a number of faith centres and places of worship to hold community wellbeing events and to make links with partner organisations to offer sports activity to the local community.

## Age

### Participation in sport

2.110 In adults, the 16 to 24-year-old age group reports higher levels of sports participation (excluding walking) than other age groups. There is a clear drop off within the 45 to 59 age band, with rates of sports participation over the past four weeks in 2014 falling. Child sports participation is highest between ages eight and ten, and falls substantially as age increases.



2.111 However, there is evidence that physical activity (broader than sport) among those aged 65 and over is increasing each year. There is also evidence that older adults (up to the age of 74) are almost as likely as young people to walk for recreation<sup>137</sup>.

<sup>136</sup> Sporting Equals (2012) *The role of faith centres in the provision of sport and physical activity*

<sup>137</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

## **Barriers to participation**

### ***Barriers – for young women***

2.112 The earlier section on sex explores some of the reasons for low levels of participation in sport and activity by girls.

### ***Barriers – for older people***

2.113 Research<sup>138</sup> has also revealed that there are complex individual, social and environmental barriers faced by older people who wish to participate more with sport and activity, particularly for those living with disabilities. There can be individual barriers around confidence and concern that sport may be unsafe. Social support also plays an important motivational role in physical activity participation and can be influenced by friends, family, carers, health practitioners, and activity instructors. Trust, shared values and solidarity among neighbours is associated with higher levels of physical activity. There can also be wider barriers around transport and fear of crime which may discourage older people from travelling to access exercise facilities.

2.114 However, there is little research into experiences of sport participation for older people in Scotland.

2.115 There is very little research into the age profile of those working, taking decisions, coaching or officiating in sport. Research in this field tends to focus on retirement ages for athletes and referees. For example, research exploring referee retirement ages found that organisations such as the SFA (Scottish Football Association) and FIFA used to have retirement ages for referees, but now use fitness tests to determine referee ability. European basketball and international ice hockey also use the fitness test approach to determine referee ability. However, the research suggested that some still have unwritten rules that referees should retire around the age of 50<sup>139</sup>.

2.116 Evidence suggests that volunteering in the fields of activity and sport declines with age. Amongst only those adults who do volunteer, 22 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds volunteer with sport or exercise (coaching or organising), falling to 16 per cent for those aged 60 plus<sup>140</sup>.

## **Lessons, ideas and solutions**

2.117 Research suggests a range of potential opportunities, including:

- presenting sports activities as opportunities for having fun and socialising;

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<sup>138</sup> British Heart Foundation National Centre (2012) *Physical activity for older adults (65+ years)*

<sup>139</sup> McArdle, D. (2009) *Some Reflections on Age Discrimination, Referees' Retirement Ages and European Sports (Law)*

<sup>140</sup> Scottish Government (2015) *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*

- addressing social and economic barriers such as costs, transport and access to facilities;
- involving older people planning and developing programmes;
- tailoring programmes to the needs and level of the group or individual; and
- developing innovative and creative programmes which avoid stereotyping older people and promote a positive image of older people.

<sup>141</sup>

2.118 More research is needed to explore why certain older people maintain a new exercise activity while other older people decide to drop out quickly<sup>142</sup>.

## Pregnancy and maternity and sport

### Participation in sport

2.119 There is little evidence relating to the participation of pregnant women in regular or organised sport. There is no evidence in a UK, or Scottish context. There is a gap in evidence around participation of pregnant women or mothers in sport. There is also a gap around employment, coaching, decision making and leadership.

### Barriers to participation

#### ***Barriers - health and safety***

2.120 There is wider literature within medical research on the relative merits of exercise during pregnancy. The evidence generally suggests that exercise during pregnancy carries health benefits for the woman and unborn child.

2.121 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced guidance for service providers to help them understand what the equality law means for their club or organisation. In the guidance<sup>143</sup> it explains that an association or sports club can restrict the terms of membership on grounds of health and safety of a member who is pregnant. It may be lawful to restrict a woman's access to a service in the short term, if it is reasonable to believe that giving access would create a risk to her health and safety. The association would take similar measures in cases where health and safety might be at risk because of other physical conditions.

#### **Trudy Gardener**

In July 2001, the National Netball League in Australia introduced an interim ban on pregnant women playing in the National Netball League. Netballer Trudy Gardener, captain of the Adelaide Ravens, lodged a complaint with the Human Rights and

<sup>141</sup> Age Concern Northern Ireland (no date), *Promoting Physical Activity with Older People*, source: <http://www.sportni.net/sportni/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/PromotingPhysicalActivityOlderPeople.pdf>

<sup>142</sup> Picorelli, A. M. A., et al. (2014) *Adherence to exercise programs for older people is influenced by program characteristics and personal factors: a systematic review*, *Journal of Physiotherapy*, 60(3): pp. 151-156

<sup>143</sup> EHRC (2011) *What Equality Law Means for Your Association, Club or Society*

Equal Opportunity Commission alleging that the ban was in breach of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth). The Commission determined that "while some players may have particular health reasons that restrict their participation, a blanket ban may unfairly discriminate against some women." The ban against pregnant women playing netball has been lifted<sup>144</sup>.

2.122 Guidance produced in Australia<sup>145</sup> highlights that there is very little evidence around whether any woman has ever damaged her unborn child by participating in sports. However, the guidance highlights that the pregnant woman has a responsibility to seek medical advice and obtain a clear understanding of the risks by discussing training and exercise with the sports club and also her own doctors. It also suggests that all sporting organisations should have policies in place that clearly outline their position on pregnant women, including staff training, insurance policies, and a statement that states the organisation will encourage pregnant athletes to obtain and act upon medical advice.

### **Barriers – parenting**

2.123 Research has identified that one of the biggest barriers for women with children participating in sport was available childcare facilities<sup>146</sup><sup>147</sup>. The research suggested that this issue also affected girls who could be more likely to be expected to take care of siblings or do the housework or cooking. The report recommends that sports facilities should investigate options for providing childcare or help with childcare costs and adopt a child-friendly approach so that women can bring their child with them to the venue. Sport England also commissioned research to explore the barriers that lone parents face to sports participation, having gathered qualitative evidence that this group faces particular challenges. Cost and confidence were two of the biggest barriers.

## **Marriage and civil partnership and sport**

### **Participation in sport**

2.124 There is very little evidence about marriage or civil partnership status and participation in sport in Scotland. Research<sup>148</sup> shows that older people who live alone have lower physical activity levels than individuals who are married. However, research in relation to marriage and civil partnership in sport is

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<sup>144</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission (2003), *Pru Goward welcomes decision in "Trudy Gardener" case*, source: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/media-releases/pru-goward-welcomes-decision-trudy-gardner-case>

<sup>145</sup> Australian Sports Commission (2002) *Pregnancy in Sport, Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Industry*

<sup>146</sup> Ipsos MORI (2006) *Sport, Exercise and Physical Activity Public Participation Barriers and Attitudes*

<sup>147</sup> Women's Sports Foundation UK and sportscotland (2012) *Making Women and Girls More Active: A good practice guide*

<sup>148</sup> Pettee, K. K., et al. (2006) *Influence of marital status on physical activity levels among older adults*, *Med Sci Sports Exerc.*, 38(3): pp. 541-6

limited. There is limited research into equality in relation to marriage and civil partnership in sport, anywhere in the world.

### **Barriers to participation**

2.125 There have been a small number of research studies exploring the impact of marriage on sporting participation and performance. This has varied findings. One research study<sup>149</sup> suggested that male sporting performance was negatively affected by marriage. The research found that male competition in sport could be considered a cultural display for potential mates, and that the desire to engage in such behaviour diminishes following marriage. The research found that professional male tennis players performed significantly worse in the year after their marriage compared to the year before. The researchers surmise that this decline in performance is due to players devoting less time to competition and more to married life.

2.126 However, research<sup>150</sup> undertaken by TNS-BMRB for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport looked at a number of issues that can influence participation in sport. This research found that marital status, on the whole, had limited influence on sports participation.

2.127 Further research<sup>151</sup> suggests that “current literature is ambiguous” as to how marriage impacts on physical activity. They suggest that on one hand, the social and domestic responsibilities of marriage might decrease the time available for participating in sports activities, but equally the presence of an active partner may increase motivation for participation. However, a systemic review undertaken in 2012 concluded that marital status was not found to be a determinant for physical activity<sup>152</sup>.

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<sup>149</sup> Farrelly, D. & Nettle, D. (2007) *Marriage Affects Competitive Performance in Male Tennis Players*

<sup>150</sup> Buraimo, B., Millward, P. & Jones, H. (2010) *Participation, engagement and intensity of sports participants: Analysis of the Taking Part Survey*

<sup>151</sup> Hull, E. E. *et al.* (2010) *Influence of marriage and parenthood on physical activity: a 2-year prospective analysis*, *J Phys Act Health*, 7(5): pp. 577-83

<sup>152</sup> Bauman, A. E. *et al.* (2012) *Correlates of physical activity: why are some people physically active and others not?*, *Lancet*, 380(9838): pp.258-271

### 3. Views within the sporting system

#### Introduction

3.1 This chapter sets out the views of staff working within the sporting system. It is based on a survey of staff within **sportscotland** and other sporting organisations, to which 573 individuals responded. It is also based on discussion groups with 70 staff working in the sporting system.

#### Method

3.2 A survey was issued to over 1,200 staff within the sporting system in Scotland. A total of 573 individuals responded, a response rate of 46 per cent. This is a very high response rate for this type of survey. Response rates varied between different types of staff. Response rates were highest for Scottish Governing Body executive staff, and lowest for local authority sports development staff.

3.3 It is worth noting that there is some crossover in roles, and some people could have fallen into two or more different response categories – but were asked to choose one. In particular, we found that many respondents initially classified as ‘local authority sports development staff’ now worked for leisure trusts, and classified themselves in the ‘other’ category. Of the 36 ‘other’ respondents, eight worked for a leisure trust. Taking this into account, the response rate for local authority sports development staff would increase to 40 per cent.

Role	No. of Responses	No. of Invitations	Response Rate
Scottish Governing Body executive staff	48	55	87%
Regional Development staff	55	119	46%
sportscotland staff	139	308	45%
Active Schools coordinator/manager	192	474	41%
National Performance Coaching staff	11	28	39%
Community Sports Hub staff	20	54	37%
Local Authority Sports Development staff	72	198	36%
Other	36		-
<b>Total</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>1236</b>	<b>46%</b>

3.4 We also undertook focus group discussions. We held six groups lasting one hour each, and four mini groups lasting 15 minutes each, conducted as part of a world cafe session at a Community Sport Hub officer’s day. The groups were arranged by **sportscotland** and its partners. Staff representing different sectors and senior management were invited to participate. Many groups linked with existing staff meetings and events, to ensure involvement of staff with a range of experiences and attitudes in relation to equality. Overall, approximately 70 people took part in the discussion groups.

Group	Location	Participants
Board	Edinburgh	10
Staff group	Edinburgh	8
Staff group	Stirling	7
Active School Managers	Glasgow	5
Scottish Governing Bodies (Managers)	Glasgow	5
Scottish Governing Bodies (Staff)	Glasgow	2
Community Sport Hubs Staff, World Cafe Event	Edinburgh	4 discussion groups with approximately 32 people

### Priority of equality within sport

3.5 Survey respondents were asked to comment on the priority they felt equality had within sport in Scotland. Overall:

- almost half of respondents (48%) felt that it had ‘a lot’ of priority, and was considered in most areas;
- approximately a third of respondents (38%) felt that it had ‘a little’ priority, and was considered in some areas;
- just over one in ten respondents (13%) felt that it had ‘complete’ priority, and underpinned everything in sport; and
- just one in one hundred respondents (1%) felt that it had no priority, and was rarely thought about.

3.6 Responses were broadly similar across respondent groups. However, respondents from Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport (SGBs) and local authorities were most positive about the integration of equality within sport, with over two thirds of both respondent groups (67%) believing that it had a lot or complete priority. Regional Development staff were least positive, with almost half (46%) feeling it had a little or no priority. It is important to note that these figures do not reflect performance across each sector, but are an assessment of how different sectors feel equality is reflected in sport in Scotland as a whole.

### **Staff within sportscotland, schools and clubs**

3.7 Staff working within **sportscotland**, and in other local school and club based activity, generally felt that equality was increasing in importance. Many **sportscotland** staff, Active Schools staff and Community Sport Hub staff highlighted that there was now a focus on equality within the **sportscotland** Corporate Plan. This had been accompanied by presentations and training on equalities, which many **sportscotland** staff had been involved in recently. Together, this gave the impression that equality was “being taken seriously” by **sportscotland**.

“The understanding of equalities has increased and it has expanded. It has more priority now.”

(**sportscotland** staff member, focus group)

- 3.8 However, many felt that much more needed to be done. There were challenges around taking action, including:
- many do not know how to integrate equality into their work – due to a lack of knowledge and resources; and
  - many struggled with moving from talking about equality to addressing inequality in a practical way.

- 3.9 However, there were broader concerns that equality could sometimes be given “lip service” rather than genuine consideration, with issues being considered late on and often to “tick boxes” rather than due to a genuine desire to be more inclusive. Many staff indicated that they felt there had been more discussion about equality, but there had not yet been much practical action to promote equality in sport. In addition, a small number of **sportscotland** staff highlighted that there was a low level of awareness of equalities issues among some senior managers, which could result in a lack of priority and focus.

“There is awareness, but I’m not sure that equality is seen as a priority for action. People aren’t doing much about it.”

(**sportscotland** staff member, focus group)

“If anything it’s paid lip service and may be considered late in a project to tick boxes rather than a genuine desire to be more inclusive.”

(**sportscotland** staff member, survey)

- 3.10 A number of respondents also felt that it was difficult to make equality a priority when there was a strong focus on increasing participant numbers within projects, clubs and initiatives. This meant that some were concerned about focusing on target groups or niche sports, as these do not guarantee large attendance figures.

“We never close doors to anyone but as we are often judged on the numbers it becomes very difficult to focus on positively offering and encouraging new groups into activity.”

(Active Schools staff, survey)

“It is time intensive to get equality groups. It is easier to get groups you know will run. There is no tick box for BME or SIMD, so why do it if we’re not recording this nationally?”

(Active Schools staff, focus group)

- 3.11 A focus group with **sportscotland** board members also highlighted that equalities had increased in priority over the past five years. In discussion it was clear that there had been encouragement for **sportscotland** to focus more on equality, from the Scottish Government and from local authorities. There was also increasing awareness of the public sector duties around equality.



## **Scottish Governing Bodies for Sport**

- 3.12 Many Scottish Governing Body Chief Executives and national performance coaching staff also felt that equality was increasing in priority (although more work still required to be done). Some SGBs highlighted that equality was embedded into their work, throughout their organisation.

“Equality has undoubtedly come a long way in recent years and has increasing political profile but it is still not considered a priority area within most sports and for some it is considered an inconvenience.”

(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, survey)

“Equality is embedded in almost everything that we do - selection, employment, governance.”

(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, survey)

“Our SGB has put a lot of effort into ensuring that we have equality at the centre of what we do - we have 2 Equality Champions [including our Chairperson] on our Board.”

(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, survey)

- 3.13 However, some felt that by providing a universal service which welcomes everyone, they were fulfilling their equality requirements. A small number felt that equality should not be a priority.

“We shouldn’t focus too heavily on equalities. We have a diverse membership so there is no need to focus energy on policies.”

(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, focus group)

“My role is performance focused, I’m really only interested in the issues that surround the development of internationally competitive athletes.”

(National performance coaching staff, survey)

“Within our sport it has never seemed an issue and there is probably more importance given to this topic than other equally deserving areas.”

(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, survey)

- 3.14 Some staff within SGBs highlighted that it could be a challenge to get senior staff and board members to understand the importance of equalities. Discussion with some senior staff within SGBs highlighted this.

“There is quite a lot of old guard... the old boys club who won’t acknowledge the issue.”

(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, focus group)

“Why these protected characteristics? Why not cancer? Why not tall girls?”

(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, focus group)

- 3.15 A number of staff (including frontline and more senior staff) indicated that while there had been some increasing focus on equality, this was not driven from within the organisation, and did not result in meaningful change. A number of SGBs indicated that **sportscotland** was requiring a focus on equality, so they were responding in order to secure continued funding.

“**sportscotland** say ‘if you don’t do it; you’ll not get funding.’  
(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, focus group)

- 3.16 Some survey responses from SGBs indicated that the Equality Standard was important, and was embedded in their work.

“I feel equality is more on people’s agendas within sport now especially with the Equality Standard being in place.”  
(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, survey)

- 3.17 However, a very small sample of frontline staff within SGBs with responsibility for equality felt that they were only allocated that role so that the SGB could obtain the Equality Standard for Sport.

- 3.18 Some SGBs at the focus group discussions felt that there was a particular challenge as the main priority of their work was to increase participation and membership in sports clubs, which some did not feel sat well with a focus on equality. Participants highlighted that this priority came both from **sportscotland** and SGB boards.

“We are about generating interest and membership in our sport, so there is not a focus on equality.”  
(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, focus group)

#### **Lessons learned:**

Inclusion of equality messages within high level plans and strategies can help to raise awareness of the importance of equality. When linked to training programmes, this can strengthen both awareness and knowledge around equalities.

However, in order for action to be focused on equality, targets and priorities must consider experiences and outcomes, not just outputs and participation numbers. An ongoing focus on equality must also be supported and promoted by senior staff and boards. Currently, within the sport system in Scotland, a strong focus on equalities is not always coming from the top. There are some concerning attitudes towards equality, particularly from some of those involved in some Scottish Governing Bodies for Sport.

## How different environments take account of equality

### 3.19 Overall:

- Two thirds of respondents (66%) felt that the school environment took account of equality a lot or completely.
- Just under half of respondents (47%) felt that the high performance environment took account of equality a lot or completely.
- Over one third of respondents (40%) felt that the club environment took account of equality a lot or completely.

3.20 A number of respondents highlighted that generally, they believed that equality was given the highest priority at school level, and the lowest within elite sport.

“The higher the level, the less equality is taken into account.”

(Active Schools staff, survey)

3.21 Some respondents found it difficult to comment on environments beyond their field of expertise. More than a quarter of **sportscotland** staff indicated that they didn't know in relation to each of these three questions.

### **School environment**

3.22 Most respondents felt that school environments took account of equality well. There was a strong feeling that schools worked to promote equality and inclusion more generally, with a strong infrastructure and clear policies to support this. Through having physical activity as part of the school curriculum, alongside this focus on inclusion, most were confident that equality was well taken account of in schools.

“Schools are very aware of equality in sport, particularly with the influence of Active Schools over the past ten years and our work around under represented groups.”

(Active Schools staff, survey)

3.23 However, many who were not involved with school sports (particularly national performance coaching staff, SGB staff and some **sportscotland** staff) indicated that they did not know. In addition, some felt that more could be done to address imbalances in sports participation between boys and girls, and to provide more opportunities for children with additional support needs.

3.24 A number of Active Schools staff had particular concerns about opportunities for disabled people. There was some debate within our discussion group about whether there should be a focus on separate activities and events for disabled people, or integrated opportunities. In addition, some survey respondents highlighted that disability sport was poorly integrated into mainstream curriculums, and that disabled people do not receive equal access and opportunities to sports in schools. Some highlighted particular challenges in building the confidence of parents and support workers around sports participation.

“Disabled schools do not get the same opportunities as mainstream schools.”  
(Active Schools staff, focus group)

### **Club environment**

3.25 In responding to this question, a number of people highlighted that clubs were very variable and performed in different ways in relation to equality. However, overall, it was felt that clubs take less account of equality than schools in relation to sport. National performance coaching staff felt the most positive about the club environment. However, one in ten Community Sport Hub staff felt that clubs do not take account of equality at all.

3.26 There were particular concerns about:

- a focus on increasing membership – and a perception that this is easier through general rather than targeted promotion and activity;
- a focus on results and attracting participants who can win competitions;
- a lack of awareness of equality issues;
- a lack of understanding of the barriers people face;
- a perception that equality is a tick box consideration;
- a perception that working with certain groups will be too difficult; and
- a resistance to change – meaning that clubs continue to do what they have always done.

“The accreditations that clubs are to achieve and adhere to are tick box exercises.”  
(Active Schools staff, focus group)

“I think for the majority of clubs, it’s still seen as something that is hard work (and they have a lot of other things going on), rather than something that can really benefit the club.”  
(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, survey)

3.27 Many felt that clubs often believed that being ‘open to all’ and not actively discriminating was enough. Many felt that clubs could take this approach because they are often volunteer led or in the private sector. Some, such as Community Sport Hub officers, indicated that it was difficult to put pressure on clubs to change, as they were autonomous organisations. Some felt that there was a need to convince clubs that equality was an important issue, and identify key individuals within clubs who could work to address inequalities.

“I believe there is still a lack of knowledge within clubs about how the Equality Act 2010 impacts upon their governing documents and practices.”  
(Scottish Governing Body of Sport, survey)

“Clubs are reactive, not proactive to needs. They are not aware of some of the issues.”  
(Community Sport Hub officer, focus group)

- 3.28 Some respondents provided examples of activity which clubs had undertaken to target specific people, such as ethnic minority people, but indicated that both clubs and participants felt these to be superficial. However, a number of respondents highlighted positive ways of encouraging clubs to be more mindful of equalities, including Clubmark quality accreditation (run by Sport England), UEFA Captains of Change and FIFA Live Your Goals.

### **High performance environment**

- 3.29 Just under half of respondents (47%) felt that the high performance environment took account of equality a lot or completely. These respondents felt that high performance sport was doing well because it had more money to take account of equalities, and was visible in the media (and so required to think about equality and diversity). In particular, respondents felt that high performance sport was taking more account of disability, and providing more opportunities for disabled athletes.

“In the performance sphere, things are looking up.”  
(Local authority development staff, survey)

- 3.30 However, there were concerns about equality for women and for people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. A high number of respondents highlighted that high performance sports people require support to enable them to reach that level – meaning success can be very dependent on parental support, finances, school opportunities, and wider opportunities.

“There is a general view that sport is ‘open’, and those who want to, take part. Few people recognise how inherently unequal some sports are for some people.”  
(**sportscotland** staff, survey)

- 3.31 A number of respondents felt that if pathways to high performance sport (including through schools and clubs) focused more on equality, the focus at the highest level could then be on talent.

#### **Lessons learned:**

Overall, participants felt that the focus on equality was strongest in schools, and weakest in clubs. The culture and ethos of these environments played a critical role. Many felt that schools had an existing strong focus on equality which helped to embed equality into sport and physical activity. However, clubs were felt to be important as they are often the first point of contact for participants. While some clubs were developing approaches to equality, one off targeted activity was not always felt to be meaningful. An ongoing approach to embedding equality, for example through a quality mark or standards, was generally seen as more useful.

## Views on main inequalities in sport in Scotland

- 3.32 There was clear agreement across survey respondents and focus group participants that sex and disability were the two main areas where inequalities existed in sport, and where work had been done to try to tackle these inequalities. There was less discussion about inequalities in relation to other protected characteristics. Some also specifically talked about inequalities in football, particularly in relation to sex and sexual orientation.
- 3.33 A small minority of respondents felt that there were no inequalities in sport in their field – including respondents working in rowing, cycling, mountaineering, weight lifting, horse riding and in schools.

### Sex

- 3.34 There were concerns about inequality between men and women, with concerns that there are not enough opportunities for women in sport – to participate, compete, coach and manage. There were issues around:
- participation – with participation levels falling as girls move from primary to secondary school;
  - coaching – with concerns that women had fewer opportunities, were less visible and were less accepted, especially at elite level;
  - leadership and management – with concerns that some boards and senior management teams were predominantly or entirely men;
  - recognition and value – with particular issues around prize money, media coverage and recognising the achievements of women; and
  - practicalities – with issues around facilities for women, including toilets and changing facilities.

“... the high profile inequality appears to be gender based, with statistics showing inequality between men and women in participation, coaching in major roles of influence...”

(**sportscotland** staff, survey)

“One of the most evident inequalities lies in coaching, where there are very few female coaches at the higher end of the performance pathway.”

(**sportscotland** staff, survey)

- 3.35 Many participants highlighted that inequalities grow as young men and women move through school – with secondary school sports participation becoming increasingly unequal. Many Active Schools staff talked about the reasons for this imbalance, including perceptions of ‘male’ and ‘female’ sports, body image and peer pressure. Some were keen to understand this drop off in more detail, to understand what changes would be helpful.

“Within mini rugby, girls are hugely under represented. There is an issue with the facilities – we play in a public park with with no toilet facilities, which is a much bigger issue for the girls than the boys. There is also an issue with the

boys not passing to the girls, which means that the girls get disillusioned and stop attending.”

(Active Schools staff, survey)

- 3.36 In discussion, a number of participants felt that there had been significant activity to address imbalances in participation in sports in recent years. However, there was a recognition that this needed strengthened and sustained, and that there was a need to tackle wider, cultural and structural issues around equality for women in sport. There were particular concerns about inequality in football, and the cultures and systems that support this.

“Women in sport has been an issue for years and we struggle to see any change.”

(Community Sports Hub officer, focus group)

“We are not serving this generation of girls as well as we should. There is something systematically wrong with what we are offering girls.”

(sportscotland staff, focus group)

- 3.37 Finally, many participants highlighted the challenges around media coverage of women in sport.

“For it to be equal we need more women playing sport from a young age, from nursery school and all throughout primary, more women interviewing on TV at high level, more women commentating, pay and prize money must always be equal as should media and tv coverage of womens sporting events.”

(Active Schools staff, survey)

“Media is the main problem from a female point of view - newspapers, sports programmes are totally dominated by male sport.”

(Local authority sports development staff, survey)

### ***Disability***

- 3.38 When thinking about equality, disability was often the first topic which came to mind for participants. Many participants felt that disability was more tangible and “obvious” than other protected characteristics, and many felt that it was easier to take action to involve disabled people than people with other protected characteristics. Many talked of dedicated activities or initiatives to establish clubs for people with additional support needs, or to appoint a dedicated disability officer to assess accessibility and support. There were fewer examples of where disabled people had been supported to access and participate in mainstream sports activity.

- 3.39 While participants were positive that there was a focus on disability equality, there was a strong view that more required to be done. There were particular issues around:

- building the knowledge, understanding and confidence of coaches, volunteers and school staff;

- building a pool of specialist coaches and expertise;
- supporting clubs and others to take practical action to involve disabled people;
- role models for disabled people – at high performance level; and
- pathways for disabled people within sports.

“The majority of community sports clubs in Scotland are not qualified or confident in working with children with disabilities.”

(Active Schools staff, survey)

“The number of disabled coaches currently coaching in Scotland is low and we need to do more to promote the opportunities available and also to encourage a diverse workforce.”

(**sportscotland** staff, survey)

- 3.40 Some survey respondents indicated that provision for disabled people who are on a pathway towards a Paralympic sport is clearer and better, than other sports. Respondents felt that non-Paralympic sports had the potential to be very inclusive, but did not have the same pathways and structures in place.

“The pathways for children involved in disability sport seems a lot messier. Numerous groups, clubs and organisations are involved trying to deal with children with a massive variety of disabilities.”

(Active Schools staff, survey)

- 3.41 A number of participants indicated that there could be concern about injury for disabled people through sports participation, and a need for more specialist advice and support in this field. There was also a concern that for some, disability was the only protected characteristic considered, with little work done on any other areas.

### ***Other protected characteristics***

- 3.42 Beyond the two protected characteristics of disability and sex, awareness of inequalities and challenges was lower.

- **Age** - Discussion of age was also often linked with sex, and the issues around low participation of young women in sports. However, a small number of survey respondents (particularly **sportscotland** staff and local authority development staff) indicated that local authority sports provision often focuses on young people or ‘families’.
- **Sexual orientation and gender reassignment** – These issues were rarely mentioned in our survey, and when prompted in focus group discussion it was clear that these inequalities are less well understood and in some cases perceived as “not relevant” to discussion about equality in sport. A small number of participants highlighted challenges in raising issues of sexual orientation within a sporting environment, with some suggesting that people hide their sexual orientation, particularly in male dominated contact sports. Some SGBs found it



difficult to gather monitoring information on sexual orientation, finding that people did not disclose their sexual orientation. However, there was positivity about wider changes in attitudes towards sexual orientation, with a feeling that young people were more inclusive and accepting than older generations.

- **Faith and race** – Issues around faith or race were rarely mentioned. However, a small number of survey respondents talked about the profile of staff and board members within the sport system, and the perceived low levels of ethnic minority people within sporting organisations. A small number also mentioned challenges around racism within certain sports, and under representation of ethnic minority people within coaching and leadership roles.
- **Socio-economic inequality** – Many focus group participants felt strongly that deprivation and poverty created clear inequalities in relation to sports access and participation. In particular, a number of participants felt that those who make it to high performance level are those who are heavily supported and financed, largely by their parents. It was suggested that most Olympic medallists would be from very affluent backgrounds, with some exceptions (such as boxing and football). Some SGBs were also concerned that they were perceived as middle class sports, and may lose out on potential participants.

“There is still inequality around what is on offer for athletes. Even at the top level of sport you still have to pay for things.”

(sportscotland staff, focus group)

“This [targeted activity for people who wouldn’t normally experience sport] is not going anywhere. Their priority for sport is low and we expect regular participation.”

(Scottish Governing Body for Sport, focus group)

### ***Leadership, employment and governance***

- 3.43 More broadly, a number of survey respondents, and focus group participants, commented on the staff profile within the sporting system in Scotland. There were concerns that senior managers within the sporting system were mostly men, middle aged, and white.

“The public face of the vast majority of sport in the UK is a straight, white male. It is hard for people to aspire to be something they cannot see. Although many SGB's are making a concerted effort to directly engage with under represented groups it will take a long time for everyone to get the message and see sport as a welcoming environment for everyone.”

(Regional Development Officer, survey)

- 3.44 Most comment was about the imbalance between men and women within the sporting system, with many survey respondents believing that this was the clearest inequality in terms of leadership, employment, senior roles, decision

making, coaching and officiating. There were particular concerns about women in leadership and decision making roles within key sporting organisations in Scotland.

“On a more generic note across the board, the high profile inequality appears to be gender-based, with statistics showing an inequality between men and women in participation, coaching and major roles of influence within NGBs.”  
(Leisure trust staff, survey)

“I see still a lack of women in leadership positions within sport at all levels and am actively working to address this. Things are slow to change though.”  
(**sportscotland** staff, survey)

- 3.45 There were also real concerns about inequalities in coaching, particularly with few women coaches at the elite levels of sport. However, a small number of respondents particularly highlighted that this inequality did not exist within their field of sport.

“One of the most evident inequalities lies in coaching where there are very few female coaches at the higher end of the performance pathway.”  
(**sportscotland** staff, survey)

“Lack of women in coaching roles, particularly at the elite levels of sport. Are females not as good as men at coaching performance sport or are they discriminated against?”  
(Local authority sports development staff, survey)

“The only inequality within [our sport] is that the men and women do not compete directly. We have both male and female categories. In the last 3 years we have had around a 60:40 split with men and women competing in the sport. We have a large number of female officials and females are part of the company board.”  
(Sports Governing Body, survey)

- 3.46 Some gave examples of how inequalities, particularly around sex, could be balanced out. For example, one SGB had deliberately recruited women to its board, with the added bonus that many of the women it recruited were younger and provided a broader age range. This approach required strong encouragement.

“They only sat up and took notice when it was pointed out that if they were found to be discriminatory, they could be held individually liable.”  
(Scottish Governing Body for Sport, focus group)

#### **Lessons learned:**

People working within the sport system in Scotland, who participated in this research, demonstrated highest awareness of inequalities in relation to sex and disability (as well as age, in relation to participation levels of girls in their early teenage years). Sex, disability and age are some of the longest established equality areas, with some of the protected characteristics being newer to many,

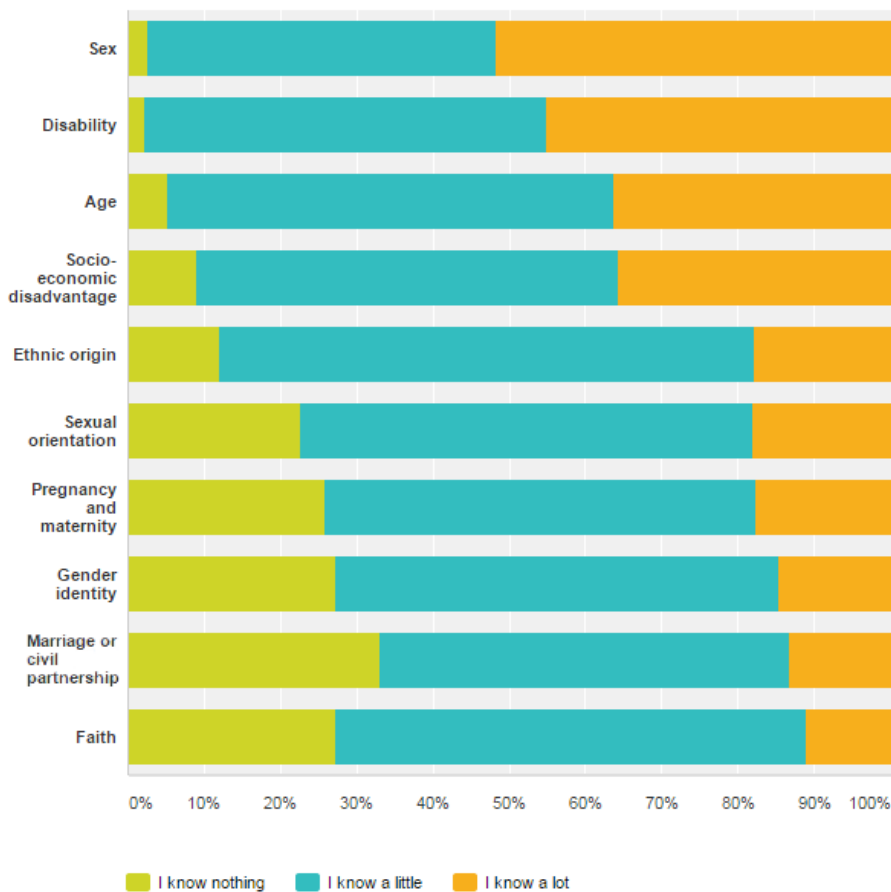
including those in the sporting system. This focus doesn't necessarily mean that the inequalities don't exist across other protected characteristics, rather that awareness of certain inequalities is higher than others.

### Understanding of equality and sport

3.47 Our survey explored how people would rate their understanding of equality and sport in relation to each of the protected characteristics. This showed very clearly that understanding was rated most highly for sex, disability, age and socio-economic disadvantage – followed by ethnic origin. Understanding was rated lowest for faith, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.

**How would you rate your understanding of equality and sport in relation to:**

Answered: 475 Skipped: 98



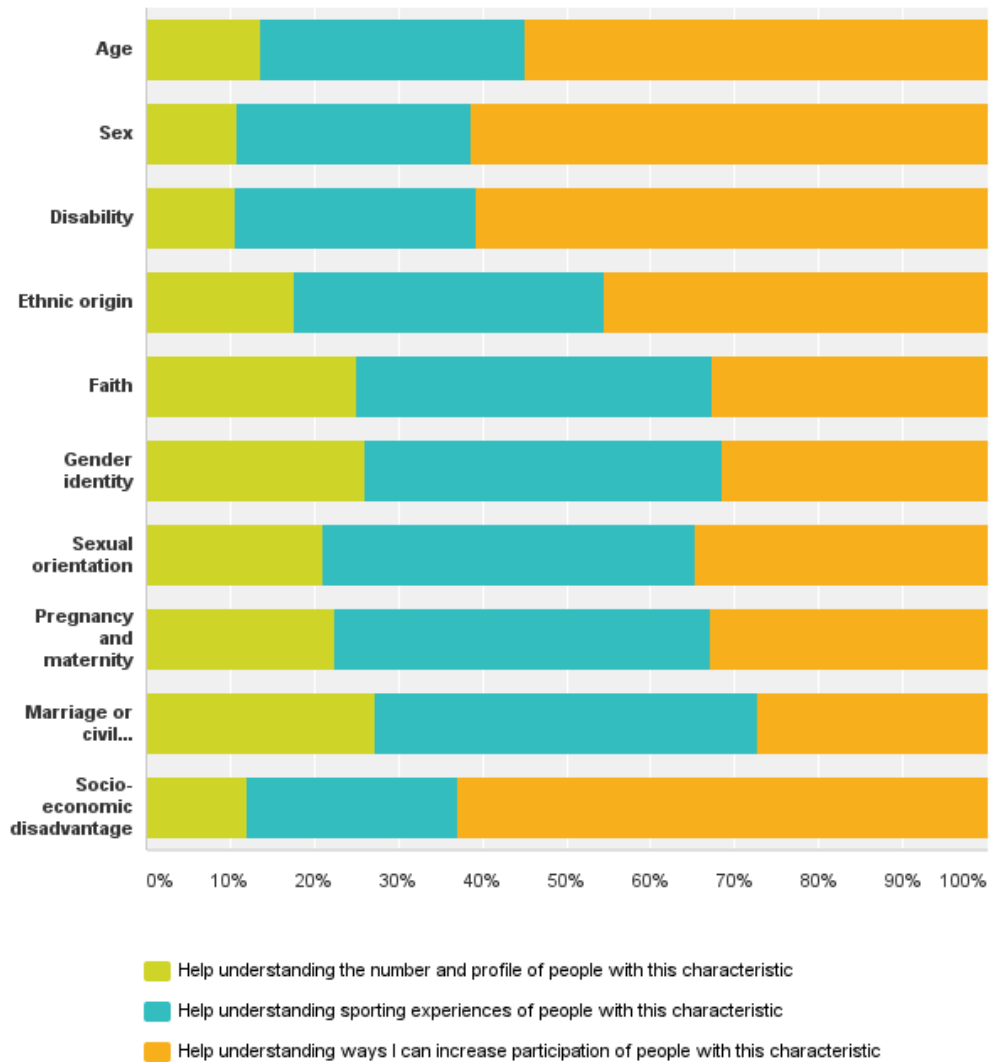
- 3.48 There were some slight differences in understanding between different respondent groups. Local authority staff rated their understanding more highly than other respondents across all strands, particularly for age, sex, disability and socio economic disadvantage. SGBs, national performance and regional development staff also rated their understanding reasonably highly across all characteristics, with notably higher rated understanding in relation to sexual orientation, ethnic origin, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Responses from **sportscotland** staff, Active Schools Coordinators and Community Sport Hub staff were broadly very similar. However, Community Sport Hub staff rated their understanding more highly for sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity.
- 3.49 Our focus group discussions also demonstrated that many staff felt much more comfortable talking about issues around socio-economic deprivation, sex and disability, than other characteristics.

### Support and training requirements

- 3.50 Our survey explored what support, training or guidance people required in relation to protected characteristics and sport. Overall, this showed that:
- For sex, disability, age and socio-economic disadvantage (and ethnic origin to a lesser extent) most people felt that they understood the number and profile of people with these characteristics and their sporting experiences. There was a high level of interest in understanding ways to increase participation of people with these characteristics.
  - For faith, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership, there was a higher level of interest in understanding the number and profile of people with these characteristics and their sporting experiences. These were areas that people felt they understood less well, and so required more contextual information about the inequalities that people could experience in sport.
- 3.51 There were some differences between groups. While a high proportion of **sportscotland**, Active Schools, local authority sports development and SGB staff wanted help with understanding profiles, numbers and experiences, Community Sport Hub staff and regional development staff were more interested in help understanding ways of increasing participation. National performance coaching staff demonstrated a very different profile than others, with almost all wanting help understanding sporting experiences of people with protected characteristics, and very few wanting help understanding the profile or how to increase participation at this stage.

### Q7 What support, training or guidance on equality and sport in relation to people with certain characteristics would you like to receive in the future?

Answered: 424 Skipped: 149



3.52 Our survey also asked whether people would like more support or guidance with particular activities or tasks. Most participants were keen for support across all tasks, including:

- helping to build good relations between people with different protected characteristics (80%);
- communicating in an inclusive way (79%);
- understanding the impact of policies and practices (74%);
- developing policies and ways of working which promote equality (71%);
- gathering equalities information (67%); and
- recruiting and supporting a diverse workforce (65%).

- 3.53 Responses were very similar across all respondent groups. However, **sportscotland** staff and national performance staff were less likely to want more help with gathering equalities information and recruiting a diverse workforce than other groups.
- 3.54 A fifth of survey respondents said that they would also like further support or guidance on other equality issues. Most were Active Schools or **sportscotland** staff. Here, participants reiterated the need for guidance around the profile and experience of people with protected characteristics and how to increase participation and address inequalities. There was particular interest in access to statistics to demonstrate inequalities; advice about how to measure change and impact in tackling inequalities; and advice on how to create roles and opportunities for both men and women within the sporting system.
- 3.55 At our focus group discussions, participants suggested a need for:
- ongoing, up to date information about the law and equality;
  - up to date information about the profile of communities;
  - evidence about existing inequalities;
  - good practice examples which demonstrate possibilities (both within the sporting sector and beyond), as well as providing contact details for follow up;
  - key contacts, such as equality 'champions', to lead on issues and share information; and
  - practical help – such as access to a religious calendar to ensure events are not planned on religious festival dates.
- 3.56 Focus group participants also highlighted a need specifically for coaches within clubs, focusing on simple and accessible equality training. There was a strong view that this training should be integrated within wider coaching and sports training, due to a belief that it would be challenging to attract coaches to dedicated equalities training sessions. There was also a desire for this training to be practical, perhaps involving input from equalities organisations and groups.

## Summary

- 3.57 Staff within the sporting system in Scotland indicated a general view that equality was increasing in importance, with a stronger focus from **sportscotland** and the Scottish Government, and more training and development around equality in sport. However, there was some concern that this had not led to significant action. Many staff indicated that they did not know how to integrate equality into their work. Some also felt that existing targets were strongly focused on outputs (members/ participants) and found it hard to justify focusing on equality, profile and quality of experience.
- 3.58 Some Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport felt that there was now too much focus on equality. Some staff reported challenges getting senior staff and board members to understand the importance of equality. There was also a lack of ownership of the equalities agenda within some SGBs, with some feeling that it was driven by other organisations.
- 3.59 Staff within the sporting system felt that schools generally took more account of equality than clubs and the high performance environment. There was a belief that schools had a wider focus on inclusion, and had the structures and policies to support equality. However, there was some concern about school based opportunities for young disabled people.
- 3.60 There was concern that for some clubs, being 'open to all' is seen to be enough and equality issues may be treated in a 'tick box' manner. Some felt that the high performance environment was doing well on equalities, particularly in relation to disabled people. However, there were concerns about equality for women and for people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in the high performance environment.
- 3.61 When asked about the main inequalities in the sporting system in Scotland, many participants talked about issues around sex and disability. There were concerns around equality for women in terms of participation, competition, coaching and managing, and particular concerns about media coverage. In relation to disability, there were issues around the skills and confidence of coaches, volunteers and clubs, and lack of pathways for disabled people within some sports. Some also highlighted inequalities around socio-economic disadvantage.
- 3.62 When asked about understanding of equalities in relation to the protected characteristics, confidence was highest around sex, disability, age and socio-economic disadvantage, and lower for other groups. There was a high level of interest in learning more about how to involve these groups in sporting activity, and more interest in learning about the profile and experiences of people with other protected characteristics – such as faith, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. Participants were also interested in learning more about how to build good relations, how to communicate in an inclusive way, and how to understand impact.

## 4. Views of people with protected characteristics

### Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter explores the views of people with protected characteristics with an interest or involvement in sport. We gathered views through a series of focus group discussions and telephone interviews, exploring views on:
- experiences of sport;
  - experiences of inequality in sport;
  - barriers to participation;
  - priority of equality in sport; and
  - what could be done to embed equalities in sport.
- 4.2 We held nine discussion groups with people with protected characteristics between August and October 2015, supplemented with six telephone interviews with older participants.
- 4.3 We organised the groups by liaising with a number of organisations which were able to facilitate a meeting with some of their service users. We spoke to a total of 58 people with an interest in sport.

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>Disability</b>	Mixed group	2
	Mixed group	5
	People with mental health issues	7
	Deaf people	4
<b>Sex</b>	Women	4
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Lesbian, gay and bisexual people	10
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Transgender people	3
<b>Pregnancy / maternity</b>	Pregnant women and women with young babies	6
<b>Race and faith</b>	Ethnic minority people	11
<b>Age</b>	Older people who have reduced sporting activity	6 telephone interviews
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>



## Participation in sport

4.4 We asked participants about the sports they were involved in. This included a wide range of sports, such as:

- Abseiling
- Badminton
- Climbing
- Cricket
- Cycling
- Dancing
- Fishing
- Football
- Power-lifting
- Roller-skating
- Rugby
- Running
- Swimming
- Table tennis
- Walking
- Yoga
- Kayaking

## Priority of equality in sport

4.5 We asked participants to discuss what they felt equality in sport meant to them. Most felt that people should not experience barriers to participation, and should be encouraged to participate.

“Equalities in sport means: no barriers, no negativity and to be encouraged, not discouraged.”

(Disability group)

“It doesn’t matter what age, religion, gender – it should be for everyone.”

(Older person, telephone interview)

4.6 Overall, most participants felt that equality was not given the priority it should have in sport. There was a perception that while awareness of protected characteristics was increasing; and the stigma surrounding some protected characteristics was decreasing; it was unclear if this was translated into actual change. Some LGBT participants indicated that some Scottish Governing Bodies had signed up to the Equality Network’s charter, but still felt that equality was being given “lip service”.

“You hear a lot but does it translate to what’s going on?”

(Pregnancy and maternity group)

4.7 Everyone involved in this research felt that people with protected characteristics experienced inequalities in sports participation. Most people focused on the inequalities experienced by those who shared their own protected characteristic(s). However, people could also recognise the inequalities experienced by others.

“There are more opportunities for boys than for girls.”

(Pregnancy and maternity group)

“LGBT face great inequality. They have more reason to be rejected.”

(Sexual orientation group)

“Disabled people face more inequality than others. This is because they don’t fit in the way other protected characteristics can ‘blend in’. There are so many types of disability and a range of needs.”

(Disability group)

“There is potential for everyone to face discrimination. Sport does not discriminate about who it discriminates.”

(Sexual orientation group)

- 4.8 Most participants who were not disabled felt that equality in relation to disability was probably given most priority. Most felt that this was right. Participants felt that sporting organisations were most familiar with disability equality, and could make changes to accommodate disabled people in sport. Some people suggested that the Paralympics had created more awareness of disabled issues in sport.

“Disability is probably given most priority – and rightly so. It’s not a bad thing, it’s probably just more established.”

(Pregnancy and maternity group)

- 4.9 However, disabled participants did not agree that disability equality was given most priority. These participants suggested that equality for women received the most priority. And disabled participants also indicated that some disabilities were given more priority over others. Deaf participants for example did not think they were given the same opportunities as other disabilities.

“What I’d like to see is for deaf people to have the same opportunities as blind people and amputees. We should be on a par with other disabilities.”

(Disability group)

“There is still an ignorance amongst the public about disabled people.”

(Disability group)

## Inequalities in sport

### *General views on inequalities in sport*

- 4.10 We asked participants to comment generally on their perceptions of the types of inequalities that particular groups could face. The most commonly mentioned across all the focus group discussions were:

- **Racism** – While ethnic minority participants at our race and faith group had not personally experienced racism, general discussion across the groups suggested that this was still a perceived issue in sport. Participants felt that football was the sport in which racism was most prolific - among spectators rather than players.

“There is still a lot of discrimination based on skin colour, especially in football.”

(Older person, telephone interview)

- **Cultural inequalities** – Participants indicated that some religions and cultures observe traditions that are not always recognised or accommodated, creating inequalities. For example, facilitating female-only activity sessions for Muslim women, or disallowing headscarves to be worn during sports.
- **Sexism** – Participants felt that gender stereotypes were common in sport – although there were some examples of sports becoming more open to challenging the gender ‘norms’ by offering female rugby, for example.
- **Disability** – Inequalities relating to disabled people in sport were still apparent – according to disabled people themselves. Other participants were more likely to think that disabled people were being given more priority, particularly because of events such as the Paralympics.

“There’s more attention now (on disabled sport) than there ever has been.”

(Women’s group)

- **Homophobia** – There were few examples of personal experience of homophobia among our participants. However, the perception was that homophobia was still an issue within sport and more should be done to challenge derogatory or abusive language, from spectators and participants.

“I’ve never really seen proper bullying, just underlying social attitudes that say ‘you’re not welcome here’.”

(Sexual orientation group)

### ***Experiences of discrimination***

- 4.11 We then asked people to discuss their own experiences of discrimination or inequalities in sport. Overall, there were very few examples of focus group participants experiencing discrimination. Some examples focused on negative experiences at school, during PE. For example, one Asian participant said that while he was at school, he would always be picked first for the cricket team, but last for the football team. He believed this was purely based on stereotypes as he did not play cricket.

“It’s racial stereotyping.”

(Ethnic minority group)

- 4.12 Disabled and LGBT participants also reported experiencing some unwanted attention – particularly at the gym. However, many of these participants felt that they were able to challenge stereotypes by participating in the first place.

“At the gym, you can feel the unhelpfulness of people, but when you start lifting weights; they change their minds.”  
(Disability group)

“They say ‘that’s not for you...don’t hurt yourself love’ (when at the gym lifting weights).”  
(Sexual orientation group)

“I’ve competed in sport all my life and have never faced inequality within sport. Bizarrely I think being gay and being involved in sport has helped prevent discrimination – as it’s challenging an expectation or stereotype.”  
(Sexual orientation group)

- 4.13 Some participants experiencing mental health issues commented that there is a perception that participating in sport and exercise will “automatically” improve motivation and a person’s general mood.

“At gyms, they expect that exercise will improve mental health.”  
(Mental health group)

One transgender participant commented on his experience of a ballroom dance class. The gendered nature of the roles in dancing – where partners are ‘traditionally’ male and female, made it difficult for him and his male partner to participate.

One participant volunteered as a football referee in his spare time. He said that he had chosen not to reveal his sexual identity because he did not feel comfortable doing so, as he feared harassment and judgement from others.

“There is no one who is openly gay and after seven years as a referee it is the one area of my life where I am not fully open about my sexuality.”

## Barriers to participation

- 4.14 We explored the barriers to participating in sport. Participants indicated that barriers could be both practical (such as cost) and perception based (such as feeling intimidated or unsafe).

### **Practical barriers - cost**

- 4.15 The cost of participating in sports was mentioned as a particular barrier by ethnic minority participants, disabled participants and LGBT participants. Ethnic minority participants focused on the cost of children’s sports. Participants reported that their children were involved in a number of sports activities at club level, but that the cost involved was prohibitive. Some parents had decided not to renew their child’s membership because of escalating costs.

- 4.16 Disabled people commented that the cost of accessible equipment was a barrier and was often too prohibitive to allow them to participate in sport.

“If I want to play wheelchair tennis, I need a special chair to do it, and I can’t afford it. If I want to go cycling, I need a special bike and it’s not easy to come by. You need special equipment to do some sports.”

(Disability group)

- 4.17 Some older participants had previously been involved in sports, but had since reduced their participation. For the most part this was due to “getting older” and not being able to participate as fully in the sports they did in their youth. Older participants cited the cost of activities as off-putting, although there were examples of older people receiving free passes for their local gym. For some, the cost of activities had led them to give up attending classes or clubs.

“Sports clubs and groups can be very restrictive in terms of cost.”

(Older person, telephone interview)

- 4.18 Some participants at the sexual orientation group also commented on the cost of participating in sport, which they felt could be a barrier.

“You have to spend a lot of money to participate in sport – even just for the equipment, even if it is just investing in a good pair of trainers to allow you to go running for free, or buying tennis racquets or gym memberships.”

(Sexual orientation group)

### ***Practical barriers - appropriate activities and facilities***

- 4.19 Women who were pregnant or who had recently given birth commented on the lack of appropriate activities for pregnant women. These women had found most of the activity on offer focused on yoga and gentle dance. There was very little cardio activity available for those who wanted to continue the sport they were doing before they became pregnant.

“There is still a perception that pregnant women shouldn’t be running around.”

(Pregnancy and maternity group)

- 4.20 For this group, there was a demand for more activities that are run by knowledgeable people who understand what is safe for pregnant and post-natal women. Some women had found that the focus of activities was on weight loss and that they would prefer something more rehabilitative which focused on strengthening the core. Crucially, the women had to be able to take their baby along to these activities also.
- 4.21 A number of transgender participants indicated that the way facilities were laid out presented barriers. Transgender participants commented that in general, the preference is to have cubicles, rather than communal changing, so that there is an opportunity to remain private. However, some had found that even with these facilities available, in team sport situations this led to ridicule and stigma of those who choose to change privately.

“There is a lack of safe space for people who feel marginalised.”  
(Gender reassignment group)

“There are rituals and anxiety that people go through when changing to try and remain inconspicuous – using towels to cover up and pulling layers out from underneath. In reality, these often make them more prominent than if they had just undressed normally.”  
(Gender reassignment group)

- 4.22 Some ethnic minority participants also felt that sports providers didn’t always understand the cultural issues faced by these groups - for example, the need for single-sex swimming sessions.

“It is difficult for clubs to understand that western people just swim together, but Asian women want to be female only.”  
(Ethnic minority group)

“There are cultural barriers. There is women’s swimming in a mainstream pool. They say it is for everyone, but it is not possible.”  
(Ethnic minority group)

### ***Practical barriers – awareness of opportunities***

- 4.23 Awareness of activities available in the local area was also a key barrier. Ethnic minority participants commented that some people from ethnic minority communities are unable to read or write, or do not have English as a first language. This can make it difficult for them to find out what is going on locally. This was equally an issue for deaf participants who felt they too were at a disadvantage finding out what activities were available.

“Often hearing parents do not know what is available for their deaf children.”  
(Disability group)

“If schools send home information about sports, it is largely ignored, either because the parents can’t read it, they have no money to allow their children to do it, or they do not see the benefit.”  
(Ethnic minority group)

- 4.24 Others felt that information about the facilities on offer at sports centres, specifically changing facilities (cubicles or communal changing) would help encourage people (particularly LGBT people) to attend if they knew what to expect.

“LGBT people would be more likely to join if they knew in advance about the facilities available.”  
(Sexual orientation group)

- 4.25 Some participants felt that pathways from school sport to club level and beyond, were not always clear. People felt that without these links some people ‘fall out’ of sport as they do not know where to go to participate. In

particular, disabled people commented that they had difficulty finding pathways for particular sports – for example, cycling was mentioned as one where the pathways were not clear.

- 4.26 Some participants commented that their experience of club sport was that the club state they are ‘open to all’ but that clubs should be doing more to promote this status. Transgender participants stated that more should be done to advertise and promote club and community sport as ‘equal’ and ‘open to all’ so that people did not have to ask specifically – potentially compromising their confidentiality.

“Some community groups say they are ‘open spaces’ and think all they have to say is that ‘we don’t discriminate’ but there may be barriers.”  
(Sexual orientation group)

### ***Attitudinal barriers - gendered nature of sports***

- 4.27 Several participants commented on their perception that sports were gender segregated and those who choose to take part in a sport that was “not for their gender” were then subject to inequality and harassment.

“It is less socially acceptable for men to be dancers.”  
(Women’s group)

“Yes – male sports include weightlifting, boxing, judo. Female sports include gymnastics, and synchronised swimming. It’s not right. It shouldn’t be this way, but it does happen.”  
(Disability group)

“We’re so rigidly gendered in society and sport perpetuates it.”  
(Gender reassignment group)

- 4.28 A number of participants felt that some work had been done to challenge the gender stereotypes, such as women’s rugby and football – where women’s teams had been very successful.

### ***Attitudinal barriers – confidence and encouragement***

- 4.29 Some of the participants from the mental health group suggested that a key barrier for them was feeling intimidated – either by the sporting environment; by other participants, by staff or being intimidated by attending activities alone.

“You go to the gym and see lots of fit young people and you feel out of place.”  
(Mental health group)

- 4.30 Participants in the sexual orientation group also reported feeling intimidated and uncomfortable, particularly when participating in sport in a gym environment. This related to the attitudes of heterosexual people who made these participants feel uncomfortable.

“Straight people think that if you’re gay, you fancy everyone and that in a locker room situation you’re like a predator.”

(Sexual orientation group)

- 4.31 Some ethnic minority participants commented that it was difficult for young people from minority communities to get into sport as their parents do not always understand the benefits of sport to encourage them to participate.
- 4.32 Some older people said that they only felt comfortable participating in sport for leisure purposes and not when it was competitive. Older people found they were looking for companionship and opportunities to socialise, rather than opportunities to play at a competitive level.

“I cycle once a week with the (named) cycle group, but I probably wouldn’t go as often if it wasn’t in a group. It’s not as much fun to go for a cycle and stop for a coffee on your own is it?”

(Older person, telephone interview)

SAMH the mental health charity hosts a **Reach Out** programme. It is an activity based programme, designed to build confidence and resilience by getting participants engaging in new activities and meeting new people. Activities include sports such as rock-climbing, hill-walking, and yoga.

Even though the participants did not know one another personally, all were affiliated to SAMH and so there was an understanding that they were “all in the same boat”. The instructors were also aware of their mental health issues and were able to provide the right amount of guidance and support.

“They tailored it to you so you never felt left out.”

“The course gave me the confidence to do other things.”

### ***Systemic barriers - media***

- 4.33 Many participants felt that the media has a very ‘gendered’ approach to sports and that male sports are given far more coverage than female sports. Participants felt this perpetuated the ‘gender stereotypes’ of male sport and female sport.

“Sports stories are male dominated. People can name male sports stars, especially in football and tennis, but couldn’t name a female football star. Men get a lot more coverage in sport.”

(Women’s group)

- 4.34 Deaf participants in particular felt that there was very little media coverage of deaf sportsmen and women’s achievements. There were examples of the deaf bowling team winning gold medals internationally, and a deaf swimmer who competes for Scotland and the UK - but these stories rarely made it into the mainstream media.



## **Systemic barriers - role models**

- 4.35 Most participants indicated that they did not think there were enough role models sharing their protected characteristic in sport. This was particularly true of deaf participants and participants in the sexual orientation and gender reassignment groups.

“At the moment, children and young people say that they don’t see any deaf role models in the media.”

(Disability group)

“We have many famous lesbian, gay and disabled athletes who are leading the way in equalities for sport, people such as Tom Daley have provided a voice for these minority groups growing up which is unfortunately not available to the transgender community.”

(Sexual orientation group)

- 4.36 LGB participants felt that there is still a stigma surrounding ‘being gay’ and that sports professionals are probably advised not to reveal their sexual identity as it would negatively affect their public image.

“There are genuine fears over their careers. It’s too much of a risk. No-one is going to be a martyr.”

(Sexual orientation group)

## **Experiences of different sporting environments**

- 4.37 We explored whether the level of inequality faced by participants in sport changed depending on the sporting environment. For example, whether there was a perception of more inequality at club and community level than at high performance level.

- **School level** – Some participants felt that the traditional ‘gendered’ nature of sports for young men and young women was changing, with more school sports challenging gender stereotypes and offering girls rugby and sports where girls and boys play together. In general, participants felt that schools created equal opportunities where possible.
- **Club level** – Many participants felt that club sports may say that they are ‘open to all’ but that in reality, clubs did not know much about the needs of participants. However, some talked of positive experiences where clubs promoted an inclusive culture and approach. For example, some participants attended LGBT friendly clubs which also welcomed heterosexual members. These were described as a “stepping stone” into sport more generally.
- **High performance** – Some participants suggested that elite sports were unequal because of the cost involved in reaching an elite level of athleticism. Disabled people specifically commented that they were at a disadvantage because they were not at the same level of financial equity as

others. Others felt that high performance sport was based on ability in that sport, rather than protected characteristics and so, it was more equal. For example, athletes here are “at the top of their game” and are accepted because of their sporting ability.

“The more competitive you get the more equality there is.”

(Disability group)

One deaf participant praised the system used in American sports where anyone can go for a trial in a sport, and if you are then thought to be good enough, the sport will support you – regardless of your personal circumstances. This participant was aware of a deaf athlete who did just this and is now competing internationally.

“This approach helps America to see that deaf people can be involved in sport.”

(Disability group)

### Future activity

- 4.38 Participants discussed how best to embed equalities in sport so it would become more of a priority. The top priority for the future was training for those working in and delivering sport. Some participants suggested that this training should involve equality organisations or people with protected characteristics, so that the issues can be discussed and explored.

“Training should be given by people who are enthusiastic about equalities and should involve disabled people – maybe delivered by disabled people so they can see the need right in front of them.”

(Disability group)

- 4.39 Disabled people and people with mental health issues suggested that more staff training for those working at all levels – from gym staff to Scottish Governing Bodies – to help people to understand the profile and potential barriers for each of the protected characteristic groups. Transgender participants suggested that it would be useful for Governing Bodies to engage with specialist organisations such as the Scottish Transgender Alliance or the Equality Network to “genuinely discuss inclusion”.

“They think they’re open and liberal – but they’re not.”

(Sexual orientation group)

- 4.40 There were some other suggestions about what could help embed equalities in sporting systems. These included:

- challenging homophobic or racist comments;
- increased media coverage of women’s sport and disabled sport;
- fewer physical barriers to access facilities and within facilities;
- a focus on participation rather than competition to encourage a wider range of abilities into sport; and

- more leadership from Scottish Governing Bodies to prioritise equalities.

“A key step is to challenge banter to stamp it out. And this needs to be everyone – not just LGBT people.”

(Sexual orientation group)

“Better coverage of female sport and a realisation that women are equal to men.”

(Women’s group)

- 4.41 Some older participants and women at the pregnancy and maternity group commented that change needed to start at school, educating young people about protected characteristics so as to see longer term change.

## Summary

- 4.42 Most participants did not think that equality was given priority in sport. There was a perception that while awareness of protected characteristics was increasing, it was unclear if this was translated into actual change.
- 4.43 Everyone involved in this research felt that people with protected characteristics experienced inequalities in sports participation. Most people focused on the inequalities experienced by those who shared their own protected characteristic(s). However, people could also recognise the inequalities experienced by others.
- 4.44 Most participants who were not disabled felt that equality in relation to disability was probably given most priority. However, disabled participants did not agree. They suggested that equality for women received the most priority. And disabled participants also indicated that some disabilities were given more priority over others. Deaf participants for example did not think they were given the same opportunities as other disabilities.
- 4.45 Perceptions of the type of inequalities in sport included racism, cultural inequalities, sexism, inequality relating to disabled people and homophobia.
- 4.46 There were few examples among participants of personal experience of discrimination. Some examples focused on negative experiences at school, during PE for example. Disabled and LGBT participants reported some unwanted attention but felt they were able to challenge stereotypes by participating in the first place.
- 4.47 The cost of participating in sport was recognised as a key barrier by ethnic minority participants, disabled participants and LGBT participants. Disabled people commented that the cost of accessible equipment was also prohibitive.
- 4.48 Other practical barriers related to appropriate activities – particularly for pregnant women. And appropriate changing facilities were an issue –

particularly for transgender participants. Some ethnic minority participants commented that it can be difficult for them to find out what is going on locally.

- 4.49 Several participants felt that sports were gender segregated and those who choose to take part in a sport that was “not for their gender” were then subject to inequality and harassment. Others suggested that confidence and self-esteem could be a barrier to participation. Some participants from the mental health group said that they had felt intimidated in the gym environment.
- 4.50 Most participants felt that although clubs were advertised as ‘open to all’, many do not really understand the needs of all participants.
- 4.51 The top priority for embedding equalities in sport was training for those working in and delivering sport. Some participants suggested that this training should involve equality organisations or people with protected characteristics, so that the issues can be discussed and explored.

## 5. Findings and conclusions

### Introduction

5.1 This chapter sets out our key findings, from the literature review and from our research with people in the sporting system and people with protected characteristics in Scotland. Our findings from discussions with people with protected characteristics and people working in the sporting system in Scotland strongly echoed the findings from literature. This chapter also sets out conclusions, themed as ‘challenges’ for embedding equality within sport in Scotland, based on our findings.

### Key findings – availability of literature

5.2 There is a substantial body of literature relating to sport and equality. Much research and data relates to equality and sex, disability and young people – particularly young women. While there are some useful research studies in relation to sexual orientation and gender reassignment, there are gaps in the data and evidence in these areas. In relation to race and religion, much of the research focuses on Muslim women – where sports participation levels have been shown to be significantly lower than for other groups. There is also some research into experiences of older people in Scotland. There is very little research in relation to pregnancy and maternity, or marriage and civil partnership.

### Key findings – participation in sport

5.3 The literature and data available for Scotland highlights some clear inequalities in sports participation.

- In Scotland, more men participate in sport than women. More men are members of sports clubs than women, and women often participate in different sports from men. Lower participation by women in sport begins at around 13 to 15 years old.
- Disabled people in Scotland are less active, and are less likely to participate in sport.
- In Scotland, Pakistani adults are least likely to participate in sport. However, it is hard to identify other differences based on ethnic origin, due to the small numbers of ethnic minority people in Scotland.
- In Scotland, people of Muslim faith are least likely to take part in sport. Roman Catholics also have a slightly lower sports participation rate than average. It is hard to identify other differences, due to the small numbers of people with minority religions or beliefs in Scotland. However, research from England suggests that there are differences in participation of people with different religions and beliefs among different sports.
- In Scotland, in adults the 16 to 24-year-old age group reports higher levels of sports participation than other age groups. There is a clear drop off among those aged 45 and over. In children, 13 to 15-year-old girls in particular participate in sport markedly less than other age groups.

5.4 There is some evidence around sexual orientation and sports participation. There is very little evidence around participation in sports in Scotland in relation to:

- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity; and
- marriage and civil partnership.

### Key findings – barriers to participation

5.5 The available literature and our own fieldwork highlight some clear barriers to sports participation. There are some common themes, across people with different protected characteristics.

- **Negative experiences of PE** – Poor experiences of sports and activity in early life can have a life long impact. The literature highlights that poor experiences of PE are a factor in low sports participation for women, disabled people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people and Muslim women.
- **Lack of self esteem and body confidence** – The literature demonstrates that attitudes and feelings about your own body can be a particular barrier to sports participation for women – particularly young women – and disabled people. A lack of positive role models is also a particular issue for LGB people. In our research, some participants suggested that confidence and self-esteem could be a barrier to participation. In addition, some participants from the mental health group said that they had felt intimidated in the gym environment.
- **Attitudes of others** – There is strong evidence of negative experiences in sports related to the attitudes of others, with experiences and fears of experiencing homophobia, transphobia, racism and sectarianism. Several participants in our research felt that sports were gender segregated and those who choose to take part in a sport that was “not for their gender” were then subject to inequality and harassment. Most participants felt that although clubs were advertised as ‘open to all’, many do not really understand the needs of participants.
- **Facilities** – There is evidence that some people experience barriers to participating in sports due to the facilities. Physical accessibility is an issue, as well as availability of gender neutral changing rooms, toilets and showers for transgender people, and women only opportunities.
- **Influence of family and peers** – The literature highlights that young women in particular can be anxious about rejection from peer groups, and are strongly influenced by the participation of friends and family in sport. Family life and responsibilities can also be a barrier for people from some ethnic and religious groups.
- **Opportunities and pathways** – There is evidence that the pathways for sports participation for disabled people are not always clear. Availability

of women only opportunities can be important for some ethnic minority people, while the focus on sports participation and competition based on gender can be a barrier for transgender people and people who may not conform to gender stereotypes. Our research also identified that some ethnic minority participants found it difficult to identify local opportunities.

- 5.6 A number of participants with protected characteristics who took part in our research also highlighted the cost of participating in sport. The cost of participating in sport was a key barrier for ethnic minority participants, disabled participants and LGBT participants. Disabled people commented that the cost of accessible equipment was also prohibitive.
- 5.7 When asked about the main inequalities in the sporting system in Scotland, many of those working within the sporting system talked about issues around sex and disability. There were concerns around equality for women in terms of participation, competition, coaching and managing, and particular concerns about media coverage. In relation to disability, there were issues around the skills and confidence of coaches, volunteers and clubs, and lack of pathways for disabled people within some sports. Some also highlighted inequalities around socio-economic disadvantage.

### Key findings – priority of equality in sport

- 5.8 Staff within the sporting system in Scotland indicated a general view that equality was increasing in importance, with a stronger focus from **sportscotland** and the Scottish Government, and more training and development around equality in sport.
- 5.9 However, there was some concern that this had not led to significant action. Many staff indicated that they did not know how to integrate equality into their work. Some also felt that existing targets were strongly focused on outputs (members/ participants) and found it hard to justify focusing on equality, profile and quality of experience.
- 5.10 While some Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport were positive about the focus on equality, some felt that there was now too much focus on equality. There was also a lack of ownership of the equalities agenda within some SGBs, with some feeling that it was driven by other organisations.
- 5.11 Staff within the sporting system felt that schools generally took more account of equality than clubs and the high performance environment. There was a belief that schools had a wider focus on inclusion, and had the structures and policies to support equality. However, there was some concern about school based opportunities for young disabled people.
- 5.12 There was a concern that for some clubs, being 'open to all' was seen to be enough. Some felt that the high performance environment was doing well on equalities, particularly in relation to disabled people. However, there were concerns about equality for women and for people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in the high performance environment.

- 5.13 Most participants involved in the discussion groups with people with protected characteristics did not think that equality was given priority in sport. There was a perception that while awareness of protected characteristics was increasing, it was unclear if this was translated into actual change. All felt that people with protected characteristics experienced inequalities in sports participation.
- 5.14 Most participants who were not disabled felt that equality in relation to disability was probably given most priority. However, disabled participants did not agree. They suggested that equality for women received the most priority. And disabled participants also indicated that some disabilities were given more priority over others. Deaf participants for example did not think they were given the same opportunities as other disabilities.

### Key findings – the sporting system and culture

- 5.15 There is evidence from the available literature that there are a number of barriers and challenges to equality which are related to the wider sporting system. Key issues include:
- **Leadership, coaching and volunteering** – There is some evidence that the profile of those making decisions, leading, coaching and volunteering in sport does not reflect the Scottish population. Women, disabled people, older people and ethnic minority people are under represented in the coaching workforce. Data is not available to comment on the profile of people with other protected characteristics in this respect. Women are also under represented in decision making roles within sports.
  - **Media and equal pay** – There is a particular issue relating to equality for women. Only five per cent of sports coverage in local and national print media is dedicated to women's sport, and there are far fewer women than men working in sports media. Women also experience a clear issue with equal pay, largely receiving significantly lower rewards for competitive sports participation.
  - **Funding and sponsorship** – Sports which are well established, popular and achieving well competitively receive more funding – based on achievement of medals and sponsorship. However, there is evidence that people with protected characteristics often prefer to participate in different sports or types of sports. The funding approaches mean that it is harder for new, emerging sports to build up – even though these sports may be preferred by some people with protected characteristics.
- 5.16 A lack of data and evidence about some areas mean we don't know enough about LGB and T people working, volunteering, coaching or in decision making roles within sport. There is also a gap in information about the age profile of decision makers and volunteers, although data for Scotland suggests that volunteering falls among those aged 60 plus.



## Key findings – lessons learned

5.17 A number of key lessons emerge, including:

- **Listen to people** – People need and want different opportunities. It is vital to speak to people, find out what they want, and involve people in developing opportunities. In this way, sport can also play an important role in empowering people.
- **Work in partnership** – There are organisations which have built up connections and trust with people with protected characteristics. Working jointly with these organisations can greatly help with planning appropriate activities and opportunities, and enhancing participation rates.
- **Support staff and volunteers** – People need to understand the inequalities experienced by different groups, and how to help them. Training, education and support initiatives can have a major impact in changing attitudes, cultures and practices.
- **Evidence** – Without understanding people’s participation levels and experiences, it is not possible to plan effectively. Approaches based on an understanding of the evidence available work best. This can involve thinking about data collection, equalities monitoring and research.
- **Role of clubs** – Clubs are often the first point of contact for people wishing to participate in sport. It is important that this experience is positive. A clear and visible commitment to equality and inclusion can help people feel confident using services. There are already good examples of clubs across Scotland and the UK that have proactively worked to be inclusive.

## Key findings – understanding of equalities

5.18 When people working in the sporting system were asked about their understanding of equalities in relation to the protected characteristics, confidence was highest around sex, disability, age and socio-economic disadvantage, and lower for other groups. There was a high level of interest in learning more about how to involve these groups in sporting activity, and more interest in learning about the profile and experiences of people with other protected characteristics – such as faith, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. Participants were also interested in learning more about how to build good relations, how to communicate in an inclusive way, and how to understand impact.

5.19 The findings on understanding of equalities strongly reflect the evidence from literature. Awareness and understanding was generally highest among those areas which had a bank of data and literature, and lower among the areas which were less well researched.

5.20 People with protected characteristics felt that the top priority for embedding equalities in sport was training for those working in and delivering sport. Some participants suggested that this training should involve equality organisations or people with protected characteristics, so that the issues can be discussed and explored.

### Challenges for the future

5.21 This research has brought together existing literature about equality and sport, and identified areas of good practice as well as inequalities and areas for improvement. The research was very broad ranging, and intended to be an initial scoping exercise gathering views from a wide range of people within the sporting system, as well as people with protected characteristics. The evidence gathered from this research suggests a need for a focus on six main challenges:

1. Learning
2. Culture and attitudes
3. Systems and monitoring
4. Involvement and partnerships
5. Coaching and volunteering
6. Pathways and club development

5.22 These challenges are explored in more detail below. However, before considering these, it is important to note that lots of good work is already going on in sport in Scotland. This research does not collate all good practice, but many participants told us of good work that was happening in their field. However, there are also important areas for improvement.

5.23 The issues identified from this research are significant and wide ranging. It will not be possible to take forward action in all of these areas over the short to medium term. Clear, focused action in a small number of areas, with demonstrable impacts will be more useful than working to address a wide range of issues. The responsibility for taking forward these challenges does not lie with **sportscotland** alone. **sportscotland** will need to work with partners to reflect on the issues raised within the research, and prioritise areas for action. However, **sportscotland** does have a critical role in influencing equality through:

- **Leading by example** – On issues like the profile of staff and decision makers, the culture within the organisation, and your policies and plans.
- **Sharing evidence** – Undertaking research, encouraging effective data monitoring and sharing learning.
- **Funding sports activity** – Integrating equality outcomes within funding approaches, and considering dedicated funding for supporting equality.
- **Supporting new approaches** – Providing staff and partners with support to try out new ways of working to promote equality and tackle inequalities.
- **Promotion and communication** – Raising awareness of the importance of equality, and the work that is being done to promote equality among those working, volunteering and participating in the sport system in Scotland.

## Challenge One: Learning

- 5.24 This research highlighted a strong commitment from most people within the sporting system to taking action to promote equality in sport in Scotland. However, most are unsure how to take action. This research has provided a starting point, from which tools to support action can be rolled out, further developed and used. People within the sporting system in Scotland can now have access to a database of equality evidence, a series of short learning notes, and detailed data for Scotland (through the Scottish Government's work on the Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis).
- 5.25 It is important to make sure that people are aware of these tools, understand how to use them, and take ownership of sharing information and ideas about equality. To do this, there is a need for:
- **Leadership** – A continued clear, supportive direction from leaders and senior managers within **sportscotland** (and its partners) will help to ensure that equality is prioritised. Staff need to understand why and how to take action on equality, what freedom they have to try out new and different approaches, and what support is available.
  - **Using resources** – Staff need to know how to access resources, and how to use them. This can be initiated through a launch or learning event, but must be followed through in the longer term. It is important to consider options such as ongoing training and support, setting up an equalities 'Hub' with resources online, setting up a clear point of contact for support with using the resources, or many other options.
  - **Implementing new approaches** – Staff need to have the freedom and support to try out new and different approaches, to enhance participation and address barriers. Staff need to be confident to do this, and will need to understand the opportunities available. A range of support options could be available, such as introducing an Equality Learning Set for people to share ideas, or using a 'Model for Improvement' allowing the piloting and testing of new ideas on a mini scale, and learning from these.
  - **Learning from what works** – Lots of good work is already happening. It is important to learn from this and share it, not just start from scratch. It will be important to think about opportunities to share experiences (both good and bad) so that staff can learn about what works and what doesn't.

## Challenge Two: Culture and attitudes

- 5.26 Most people are keen to learn how to do more around equality – as discussed above. However, a small number are still unsure why a focus on equalities is important.
- 5.27 This is particularly important for clubs and Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport. SGBs can play a powerful leadership role, and are crucial in terms of embedding positive attitudes towards equality. Clubs are often the first point of contact for people wishing to participate in sport, and the research suggests that the club environment is seen as less inclusive than others within the sporting system.
- 5.28 There is a need for a training and awareness campaign to help people to understand why equality is important in sport. This could be presented very positively, emphasising that an inclusive club brings in new members with new skills and talents – and that being inclusive can be easy. It could be accompanied by practical support, including:
- training, involving people with protected characteristics, which is practical and targeted separately at leaders and decision makers, and sports deliverers;
  - advice about how to be inclusive, thinking about participation, coaching, volunteering and decision making at all levels;
  - joint discussions about how to tackle inequalities collectively – including tackling homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism and inequality for disabled people; and
  - joint discussions about how to promote positive role models, to reduce people's concerns about getting involved in sport.

## Challenge Three: Systems and monitoring

- 5.29 This research found that sometimes the systems in place to recognise performance do not fully reflect equality priorities. In particular, targets based on membership or participation numbers mean that there can be a focus on universal, mass provision rather than thinking about the different needs and preferences of different groups. It is important to review this approach, to ensure that there is a focus on outcomes – not just outputs. This would mean that there was more of a focus on impact, the things we want sport to achieve. Membership could remain important, but could be balanced with a focus on diversity of participants and positive experiences for all participants.
- 5.30 In order to begin to think about diversity of participants, it is important to have clear equalities monitoring information. We recognise that this is not easy. Across the sporting system, a wide range of organisations and staff members are operating in different ways with large groups of people – ranging from informal, one off, drop in sessions through to sustained participation. Equalities monitoring and understanding the profile of participants, particularly for large scale programmes, is an issue which many sectors and organisations in Scotland are grappling with.

- 5.31 However, there are examples of good practice and principles for effective monitoring which can be built upon to develop a system which is appropriate, useful and proportionate within the sporting system in Scotland. **Appendix Three** includes a detailed discussion of the principles behind effective monitoring, the challenges faced within the sporting system, and examples of good practice from others.

#### **Challenge Four: Involvement and partnerships**

- 5.32 This research highlighted that people with protected characteristics need to be involved in discussions about activity within the sporting system. Deliverers could be supported to involve people at local level, but people also need to be involved in national level discussions. This research has also highlighted the value of working in partnership with organisations which have good connections with people with protected characteristics, to encourage participation and advice on service planning. There may be scope for strengthening the Equality Advisory Group to ensure that people's voices are heard in service planning issues.

#### **Challenge Five: Coaching and volunteering**

- 5.33 While there are gaps in the evidence available, the profile of the coaching and volunteering workforce does not reflect the Scottish population. This is important as people like and need different coaching styles and experiences – and having a range of approaches could be a key aspect of encouraging more people to take part in clubs and grassroots activity. Coaching and volunteering could also offer a wider range of people opportunities to be involved in sport. The skills required to coach or volunteer may attract people who do not see themselves as sporty into the sporting field – which again would open up new opportunities to a wider range of people.
- 5.34 It would be useful to consider the actions required to encourage a more diverse range of people into the coaching and volunteering workforce – for example through a targeted campaign, working with clubs and SGBs, or other approaches.

#### **Challenge Six: Pathways and club development**

- 5.35 This research demonstrated that it can be hard for some people to find their way into sports – particularly if people are looking for specialist activity, or clubs which are inclusive. There are four key components of this:
- **Developing and promoting strong pathways** – This is particularly important for disabled people and for women, who may have both mixed and separate pathways to negotiate.
  - **Supporting inclusive clubs** – Training for coaches, volunteers and clubs would help people's first experience of club sport to be more positive. A consistent way of promoting inclusive clubs would also help people to feel confident accessing provision.

- **Building a range of opportunities** – There is clear evidence that different people enjoy different sports. It is important everyone delivering sport is encouraged to consider it in its widest sense, to ensure that a range of opportunities is available which may suit different people.
- **Building positive early experiences** – This research found that experiences of PE are negatively impacting on views on sport in the longer term. This emphasises the importance of building on the very positive experiences through Active Schools, and working in partnership with education to enhance experiences.

## **Appendix One: Survey of Staff in the Sport Sector in Scotland**

**sportscotland and the Equality and Human Rights Commission have commissioned us – Research Scotland – to research equality in sport in Scotland.**

**By equality we mean ensuring that people are treated fairly, and in a way which meets their needs, with equal rights, opportunities and status.**

**We would like to ask you to complete a short survey about your views on equality and sport in Scotland.**

**This survey will take no more than 10 minutes to complete. The deadline for the survey is the 30th June.**

**It is designed to gather your own views and experiences, so please be as open and honest as you can. The survey is completely anonymous. You don't complete your name, and information will be presented in a way which ensures no one individual can be identified.**

**Even if you think you don't have much to say about equality in sport, please have a quick look at the survey and see what you can complete. Your response will be extremely helpful in planning a Scotland where everyone has the chance to fully participate in the sporting system.**

**If you have any questions about the research, please call Ann Elliott or Katy MacMillan at Research Scotland on 0141 424 5295 or email [ann.elliott@researchscotland.org](mailto:ann.elliott@researchscotland.org)**



ABOUT YOU

1. Your role

- Active Schools staff
- Community Sport Hub staff
- Local Authority Sports Development staff
- Regional Development staff
- National Performance coaching staff
- Scottish Governing Body Executive staff
- sportscotland staff member
- Other

If you ticked 'other' (please state)

EQUALITY IN THE SPORTING SYSTEM

2. Overall, what priority do you feel equality has within sport in Scotland?

- None – it is rarely thought about
- A little – it is considered in some areas
- A lot – it is considered in most areas
- Complete – it underpins everything in sport

Please say a bit more about your answer

3. Overall, how do you feel environments within the sporting system take account of equality?

	Not at all	A little	A lot	Completely	Don't know
School environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Club environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High performance environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please say a bit more about your answer

4. How would you describe the main inequalities within your particular field of sport in Scotland?

5. More broadly, how would you describe the main inequalities in sport in Scotland?

4

YOUR EXPERIENCES OF EQUALITY

6. How would you rate your understanding of equality and sport in relation to:

	I know nothing	I know a little	I know a lot
Age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethnic origin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faith	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socio-economic disadvantage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. What support, training or guidance on equality and sport in relation to people with certain characteristics would you like to receive in the future?

	Help understanding the number and profile of people with this characteristic	Help understanding sporting experiences of people with this characteristic	Help understanding ways I can increase participation of people with this characteristic
Age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethnic origin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faith	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socio-economic disadvantage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Would you like more support, training or guidance on equality and sport in relation to particular tasks or activities?

	Yes	No
Developing policies and ways of working which promote equality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the impact of policies and practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicating in an inclusive way	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gathering equalities information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting and supporting a diverse workforce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping to build good relations between people with different characteristics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Do you feel that you need any other types of support, training or guidance? This could be in relation to a particular characteristic, or in relation to a general skill around equality.

Yes

No

Please tell us more about what types of support, training or guidance you need:

10. Finally, how would you most like to receive support around equality and sport? Please tick all that apply.

Written guidance, factsheets or learning notes

Interactive online learning

Face to face training

Mentoring or shadowing

Networking and sharing experiences

Protected time for self learning

Other

If you ticked 'other' please tell us more

## Appendix Two: Discussion Guide for Focus Groups with Staff

### General

This guide was tailored for each group, to reflect the profile of participants.

### Priority given to equality

- Overall, what priority do you feel equality has within sport in Scotland?
- What priority does it have within your particular field of sport?
- And what priority should it have?
- How would you describe the main inequalities within your particular field of sport in Scotland?
- Are there differences in the priority given to equality across these groups in your particular field of sport?
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Ethnic origin
  - Faith
  - Pregnancy and maternity
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender reassignment
  - Marriage or civil partnership
- And do you feel that is right? Do some need to be higher priority in the future than they are now?

### Thinking about equality

- How do you feel about your own (or your wider team's) ability to think about equality, in terms of:
  - Understanding the profile of people who may experience inequality?
  - Understanding the types of inequality people might experience?
  - Knowing how to take action to involve people or tackle inequality?
- How do you think about/ consider equality when planning or delivering activity?
- What has worked well about this?
- Do you have any examples of changing attitudes/ experiences/ participation levels as a result of your work?
- What are the challenges or difficulties you experience?

### The future

- *Strategic only:* Overall, what needs to change to embed equality in sport?
- *Strategic only:* Which of these things can we change? What is within our own sphere of influence in the sporting system?
- What would help you and others in your team in thinking about equality?
  - What support/ guidance/ training would be useful?
  - What else would help?
- How do you and others in your team like to learn?
  - What style of written guidance should we be aiming for?
  - What do you like and use a lot?
  - What don't you like?

## Appendix Three: Equality Monitoring

### The importance of equality monitoring

It is important to understand the broad profile of the people taking part in sporting opportunities (whether opportunities to participate in sport, to work in sport, to take decisions about sport or to compete at a high level). If organisations understand the profile of people taking part, staff, volunteers and others across the sector can begin to question why people with certain characteristics are over or under represented. This means that if needed, organisations can take informed action to address these inequalities.

Ideally, this means equality monitoring – gathering information on the personal characteristics of people involved in sport. This appendix provides some guidance for the sporting sector on equality monitoring in different contexts.

### The challenges equality monitoring

It can be difficult to gather equality monitoring information. There are a range of challenges, including:

- individuals may not want to provide the information – and may feel concerned about providing personal information;
- staff may not want to gather the information – they may feel concerned about asking, or may not recognise the importance of gathering the information;
- there may be limited opportunities to take time to gather the information – participants may not want to take time away from sporting activity to provide this information, and staff may not have time to prioritise it;
- it may be hard to gather information for each distinct participant – many participants may attend multiple times, and it can be hard to establish clear logistical procedures for participants to only provide this information once, to avoid duplication;
- it may be very difficult to collate and analyse this information – particularly where there are large numbers of participants.

These challenges mean that many organisations in a wide range of sectors across Scotland find it a real difficulty to understand the profile of the people taking part in their activities.

### General good practice around equality monitoring

#### ***Overarching guidance***

There is some general guidance about the principles that apply to equality monitoring systems. All of the advice about equalities monitoring emphasises that:

- You shouldn't monitor anything unless and you plan to act on it – Organisations need to be committed to analysing monitoring information regularly and doing something about any inequalities identified. Otherwise, gathering equalities information is simply a waste of time.



- You should clearly explain why you are gathering personal information – People need to know why this information is needed and how it will be used. If this is not clear they are less likely to provide it.
- You should guarantee anonymity – Gathering information anonymously results in higher response rates. In most cases, anonymity should be guaranteed. If information is going to be linked to individuals it is very important to treat this in a confidential and sensitive way, and to make clear to those providing the information that this is the case.
- You should work hard to ensure the information is meaningful. The wording of the questions is very important – no-one likes being categorised, and finding the right words to ask about people's characteristics is very important. The questions should also be able to be compared to national figures.

### ***When and how to ask for individual information***

Sporting organisations should gather equalities monitoring information from the individual participants, coaches, staff or others they work with themselves. It is not appropriate to ask anyone else to complete the information on behalf of the individual, without consulting them.

Information should be gathered anonymously – but with opportunities for support if required. The aim is to understand the profile of participants (or others), not to attach the information to the individual to affect service delivery.

The timing of when this information is gathered needs to be judged carefully. Ideally it should fit with stages when organisations are gathering other information. For example, for clubs it might make sense for an equalities monitoring form to be completed after each new member joins – perhaps at the same time as any other information is gathered (anonymously and on a separate form, gathered and collated separately from the other information). Clubs would need to be clear how this information would be collated, who would see it and how it could be used.

For sessions where participation may be varied (involving different people over time) it might make sense to gather equalities monitoring information at the same time as asking people to complete an evaluation or satisfaction survey at the end of the block of activity.

Different organisations and teams can use different approaches. Although it is important the same questions are used consistently, it is important that different approaches and methods can be used to gather the information – so that it makes sense for those delivering and participating in activities.

### ***Building trust gradually***

Guidance suggests that if people understand why the information is being gathered and how it will be used, they will build up their confidence in providing this information. This applies both when organisations or teams introduce a new approach to equality monitoring, and if a new approach to collating information – for example at national level - is adopted.

The aim should normally be to gather information on all protected characteristics – otherwise organisations can't assess whether there are inequalities or barriers. In particular, guidance on gathering monitoring information about sexual orientation, religion and gender reassignment emphasise the importance of firstly creating a culture of equality in the organisation. But it does take time to build up trust. When introducing a new equality monitoring approach, it can be useful to start by gathering some information, analysing this, and then including more questions over time. This is not an easy task and will take time, but will ultimately support equalities monitoring to be embedded.

### ***Supporting staff***

It is also important for all organisations to support staff who are asked to gather equalities information. Staff need to understand how important it is that this information is gathered, so that they encourage people to complete the information. There is evidence that sometimes staff discussing equalities information (in other fields) sometimes omit the questions asked of some people, as they are concerned they might not understand the question or it might upset them. This can result in particular groups actually being excluded from the equalities monitoring process.

### **Dealing with specific issues in equalities monitoring**

The general guidance is useful, but the specific challenges of gathering equalities monitoring information in the sporting context (and others in Scotland) remain.

In general, projects, programmes or organisations which work with a small, focused number of people over a sustained period of time find it easiest to undertake equality monitoring. It is possible for organisations to follow the principles of building up trust, gathering information gradually and using this meaningfully when they have a sustained relationship with participants, employees or others.

This means that in the sporting context, the general principles above should help with enhancing equality monitoring in the context of clubs with regular members, or projects with a small number of regular participants. These organisations, groups or teams may need support in prioritising equality and equality monitoring, and considering what to gather from participants, when and how. However, it should be logistically possible to gather information from individuals, over time. This would provide clubs with the information they need to be able to take action to address inequalities in participation. And over time (while building commitment to equality, trust and joint working) it may be possible for these figures to be collated at national level, in an anonymised manner.

However, there is a much more significant challenge for drop in and large scale activity. Here, it is much more difficult to track participant numbers – and distinct participants – which makes it difficult to gather and meaningfully analyse equalities information. In these situations, it simply may not be possible to ask all participants to provide equality information – and for this to be collated and analysed. The resource implications are significant, and it is important to take a proportionate approach.

There are a number of possible practical solutions.

### ***Dealing with programmes which target whole schools***

Some programmes may be for absolutely everyone in a certain year group at a school (or schools), or everyone within a whole school (or schools). For these programmes, overarching figures for the school can provide an idea of the profile of participants. We recognise that there can be real challenges in schools and education authorities sharing this information, and suggest that useful indicator sources could include:

- [Scottish Government schools database](#) – This includes information on the proportion of pupils who are ethnic minority and the proportion of pupils from an area of deprivation.
- [Information on number of pupils with additional support needs by local authority area](#) – However, please note this data is gathered in different ways by different areas, and it must be used with caution.

Even when using this approach, it would, however, be necessary to ask questions of the deliverer or lead for the programme (rather than the individual participants). These questions would explore issues such as:

- whether they have concerns that certain individuals may not have had the opportunity to get involved – to provide an indication of likely over or under representation; and
- whether they undertook targeted activity to reduce barriers or introduce specific opportunities for those who may experience barriers.

This means that any figures can be used in context, alongside expertise and commentary from those planning and delivering the approach.

Deliverers may have concerns about stating their challenges in engaging certain groups, in case they are seen to be not achieving well, or are penalised in some way. It is important to be clear about how this information will be used, to help reduce these concerns.

### ***Dealing with 'open to all' programmes***

'Open to all' programmes are probably the biggest challenge in equalities monitoring. These programmes may attract some individuals more than others, or may present barriers to some participating. To help understand whether the programme truly is 'open to all', it is extremely useful to know about the profile of participants.

However, it is unlikely to be possible/ proportionate to ask every single participant to complete an equalities monitoring form. This would require significant resources in terms of collating and analysing the information, and it may be hard to avoid duplication in gathering this information.

For these types of programmes, organisations may want to consider approaches such as:

- **Samples** – It may work to have ipads or paper surveys at a small number of events to ask people to provide information, which would provide an indicator of the profile of participants. If using this approach, organisations should choose a range of sessions which are varied enough to include different scenarios – for example sessions in urban and rural areas, disadvantaged and more affluent areas, areas with high and low ethnic minority populations, and events targeted at a range of individuals.
- **Satisfaction forms** – Evaluation and feedback activity can be a hugely valuable opportunity to gather anonymised equalities information. If participants are being asked to complete surveys or forms about their experience, including a small number of questions about the profile of participants, gives organisations an indication of those who are involved/ not involved, and also lets organisations correlate experiences with the profile of participants to identify trends or divergences. Importantly, this type of approach can also work when doing any other one to one activity with participants, such as setting intended goals or outcomes, or gathering health and safety information or parental permissions.

When using these approaches, organisations should think about what is important to know. Are there particular concerns about certain groups being under-represented or experiencing barriers to participation? Organisations might think about testing this first, see how it goes, and then move on to other characteristics.

### Examples of equalities monitoring

One national programme funds a range of partners, who either undertake work in sport, art and community directly, or in turn fund other organisations. It is estimated that well over 250,000 young people are involved.

Gathering equalities monitoring information from participants is simple for some, where organisations are supporting individuals over time. However, for others, it is challenging - for example where participants drop in to informal sessions and are deliberately not asked many questions about themselves. Some of these organisations use approaches such as:

- Flash surveys at key events – e.g. tournaments – to gather information and feedback
- Using ‘proxies’ to provide an indication of those involved. For example, for all sessions particularly targeted at areas of deprivation, it is assumed that most or all participants will live in areas of deprivation.
- Gathering a small amount of equalities information on evaluation/ outcomes forms. Many are becoming more outcomes focused, and wish to track what participants have achieved. Including equality information on these forms is a meaningful way of gathering information from most participants.
- Evaluations which explore whether people experience barriers to participation – providing qualitative information about experiences which can be used to complement the quantitative information.

One national programme funds opportunities for an estimated 220,000 young people – both in and out of schools. Gathering equality monitoring information is a challenge, particularly for large drop in programmes where no record is taken of distinct participants due to their informal nature.

This programme opted in the first instance to pilot an approach which focused on gauging the profile of participants in relation to ethnic origin, additional support needs and socio-economic deprivation. It asked programmes whether they believed that individuals with these characteristics were over or under represented in their programme, and asked for figures only for those who were targeting these groups specifically. It intended that this would be a first, proportionate step towards more robust equality monitoring information, which would build on the lessons learned during the pilot.

### **Deciding what to monitor**

Equalities monitoring is easier to collate if everyone is clear about what needs to be gathered. However, different environments and organisations will be more ready to undertake equality monitoring across a range of protected characteristics than others. Organisations need to have flexibility to build on their existing monitoring approaches, and measure what is important in their context.

**sportscotland** may, however, have a role in providing guidance on what it is particularly important to measure within the sporting sector in Scotland. So, for example if clear priority areas are identified, it may let others know that it is initially focusing on improving the data held about certain protected characteristics – and encourage others to focus on these areas too.