



Disabled coaches in the UK

Analysis of responses from disabled coaches to the sports coach UK Coaching Panel Survey 2015

Methodology



266 coaches who completed the sports coach UK Coaching Panel survey at the start of 2015 stated they had a long term illness, health problem, or impairment that impacts on their daily activities (referred to as disabled in the rest of this report).

Analysis was conducted of this group and compared with the results from the overall survey. Where interesting differences emerged they are discussed in this report.

This was the first time we had a large number of disabled coaches complete our survey and this provides a new level of information in an area that is traditionally under-researched. However this should be regarded as a starting point that identifies the direction for future research rather than the full picture.

Analysis was also conducted by impairment. This resulted in smaller sample sizes so this analysis was only included when a significant difference was identified.

The respondents coached in 35 different sports with rugby union, football, archery, bowls, table tennis and swimming the most common. Of these archery and bowls had a higher than expected response rate compared to the overall survey results, while football had a lower than expected response rate.

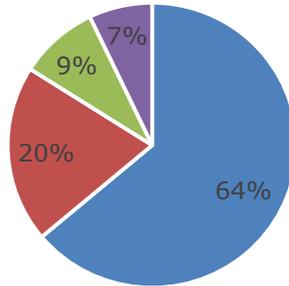
Key points



Key points that emerged from the analysis included:

- Disabled coaches are more likely to be volunteers and less likely to be paid full-time to coach.
- Disabled coaches are older than the coaching average and more likely to start coaching at an older age.
- At the 25-34 age range there is a significant drop-off with less disabled coaches starting to coach.
- Motivations to coach are more likely to involve helping an old team/club or because there was no one else to do it. However the main motivations for all coaches (stay involved in sport or help their children) are less significant for disabled coaches.
- Twice as many disabled coaches are likely to coach sessions that include disabled participants (42% compared to the national average of 19%). This is especially true for coaches with a learning or sensory impairment.
- Help with funding and flexible development opportunities would be most valuable to disabled coaches.
- Disabled coaches are less likely to feel supported than the coaching average and almost a quarter do not feel supported at all (compared to the coaching average of 14%).
- Disabled coaches are more optimistic than the coaching average about the amount of coaching they will be doing in the future.

Who completed the survey (1)

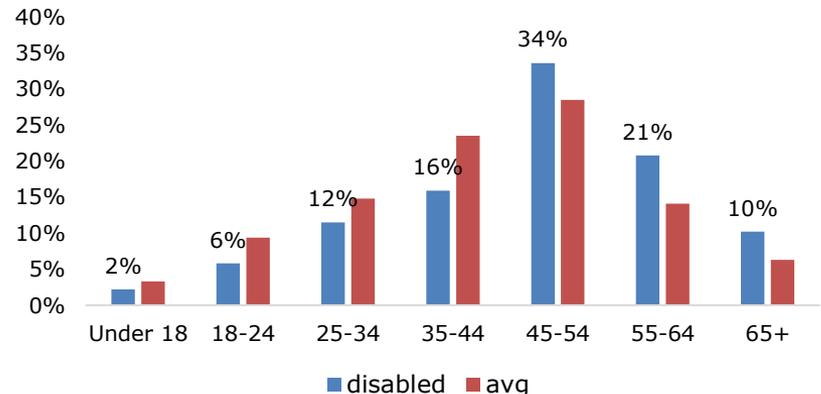


- I'm a volunteer
- I volunteer but get paid for some of the coaching I do
- I get paid for coaching part-time but I don't volunteer
- I'm a full-time coach (over 30 hours' work per week)

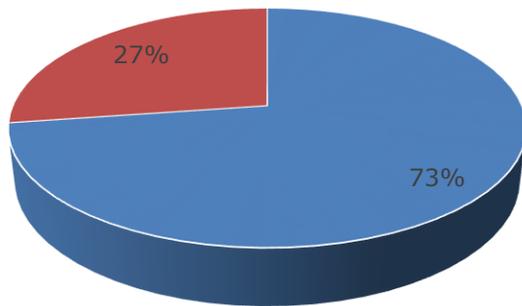
84% of respondents coached as volunteers at least part of the time (20% were also paid for some of the coaching they do). The proportion of coaches who only volunteer (64%) is above the national average (58%) while respondents were less likely to be paid full-time (7% compared to 10%).

The disabled coaches tended have an older profile than the coaching average. The most common age group was 45-54 compared to 35-44 for the coaching average.

To this can be best explained by the fact that disability is linked to age and the significant increase in the proportion of disabled adults occurs after 50 years old.



Who completed the survey (2)

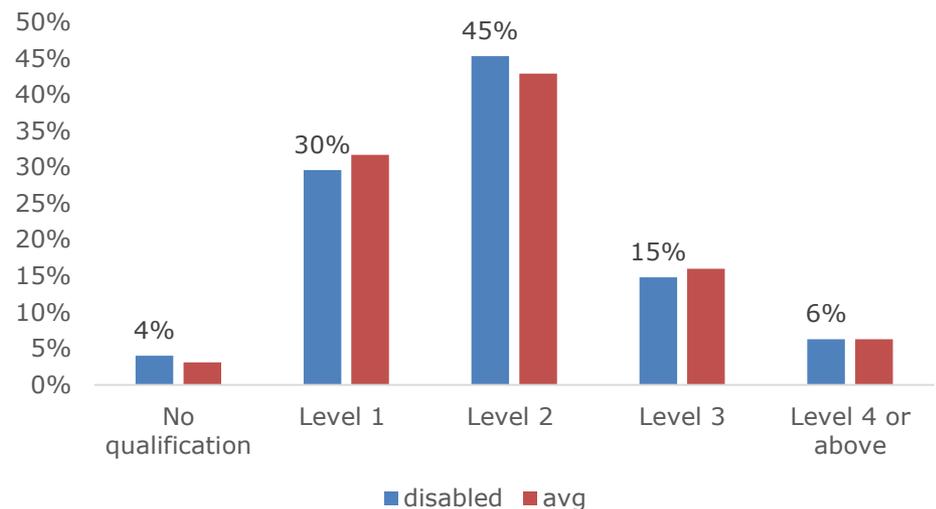


■ Male ■ Female

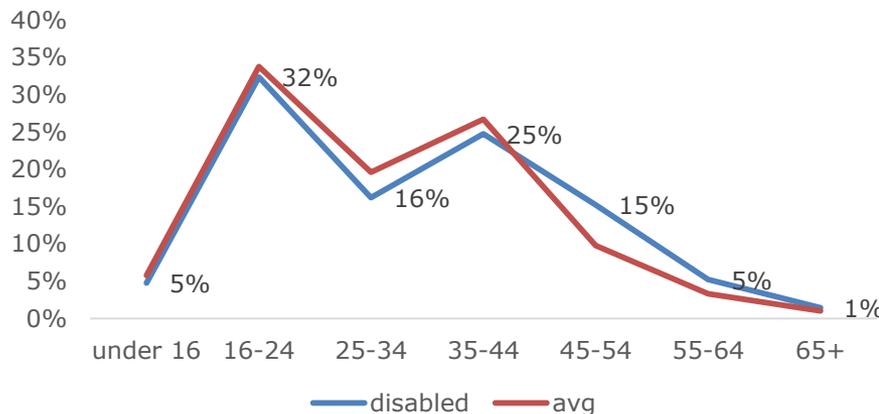
A higher proportion of disabled coaches were male compared to the national average. This also suggests that currently combination of being female and disabled is a greater barrier to coaching.

Almost all the coaches in this sample were qualified. We know that a high proportion of disabled coaches are not qualified so this suggests these results are more representative of one subset of disabled coaches.

It is interesting that the profile of qualified disabled coaches is similar to the coaching average, especially at the higher levels. This suggests there are opportunities for coaches at higher levels.



Entry into coaching



22% of disabled coaches started coaching after the age of 45. This is significantly higher than the coaching average (14%). At present it is not clear why this is the case.

With the youngest age groups there is little difference between disabled and non-disabled coaches starting and the real issue appears to be with the 25-34 age group. This is also one of the peak age groups for entry into coaching.

Coaches with learning and sensory impairments tended to start coaching at an earlier age (avg=21 and 22 respectively) while the average for coaches with physical and medical impairments was 32 and 33.

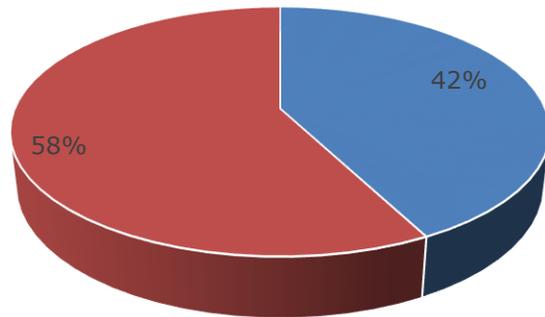
In the table opposite motivations to start coaching are listed and compared to the national average (final column).

Disabled coaches are much less likely to coach to stay involved in sport or help their children. They are also less likely to have coaching experience while still playing. This all suggests that the needs of disabled people coming into coaching may be different from the majority of non-disabled people. Closer to the [No One Else](#) market segment in other sport coach UK research.

Coaches with a Learning impairment were significantly more likely to start coaching for a career (and less likely for everything else). Coaches with a physical impairment are less likely to start for career reasons. Coaches with a sensory impairment are less likely to be asked.

| Motivation | disabled coaches | Index against national average (avg=100) |
|--|------------------|--|
| I wanted to stay involved in sport when my playing career ended. | 22% | 81 |
| I had already been coaching while playing and wanted to keep this up | 18% | 78 |
| My children were playing and I wanted to help | 25% | 77 |
| I wanted to help my old team/club | 24% | 110 |
| I wanted a career in coaching | 19% | 90 |
| I was asked/there was no one else to do it | 23% | 132 |
| I started at university | 6% | 113 |

Coaching sessions



■ Disabled participants ■ No disabled participant

Twice as many disabled coaches are likely to coach sessions that include disabled participants (42% compared to the national average of 19%). This is especially true for coaches with a learning or sensory impairment.

Around 20% of these sessions were disability sessions (in that all participants were disabled) and this is higher than the coaching average of 12%. Therefore disabled coaches are more likely to coach in disability sessions but they are also more likely to coach in sessions that have a mix of disabled and non-disabled participants.

Another way of looking at this is that the majority of disabled coaches coach non-disabled participants.

72% of sessions run by a disabled coach happened in clubs, similar to the national average. However disabled coaches are more likely to coach beginners than competitive club participants.

In general coaching sessions with disabled coaches were similar to any other coaching session and the disabled coaches held a similar proportion of head coach, coach, and assistant roles as other coaches.

Continuing Personal Development (CPD)



In general disabled coaches use of CPD is similar to all coaches. The main differences being more use of feedback from athletes/players and less use of the Internet.

In terms of how significant an impact the CPD made the main differences were that disabled coaches found distance learning more useful but were less likely to state that mentoring made a significant impact on their coaching.

| Source of learning | disabled | all coach |
|---|----------|-----------|
| Talking to other coaches | 85% | 82% |
| Observing/working with other coaches | 76% | 78% |
| Reflecting on coaching sessions | 72% | 70% |
| Feedback form athletes or players | 72% | 64% |
| Watching videos on the Internet (YouTube or others) | 64% | 66% |
| Searching/using the Internet | 63% | 69% |
| Other coaching workshops | 56% | 59% |
| Reading books | 52% | 51% |
| Coaching qualifications | 44% | 47% |
| Coaching conferences | 37% | 35% |
| Mentoring | 34% | 30% |
| Social Media (Twitter, Facebook linkedin) | 31% | 29% |
| Online learning courses | 28% | 29% |
| FE/HE Qualifications (related to coaching or sport) | 8% | 6% |
| Formal distance learning | 5% | 4% |

When asked what would make coaches feel more supported in the future the results for disabled coaches showed that funding and flexibility were key. The top three suggestions are shown below:

1. Funding for CPD learning events
2. CPD opportunities linked to qualifications
3. Workshops that include flexible learning options

This was different to the all coach average where the most popular results were access to a more experienced coach, workshops in local clubs and CPD linked to qualifications.

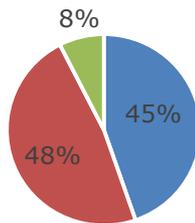
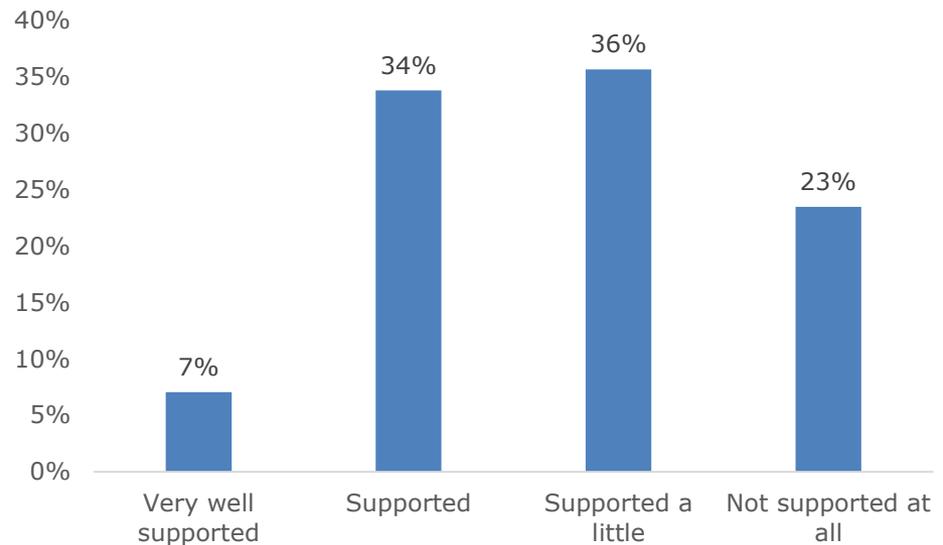
Coach support



Overall 77% of disabled coaches feel supported by their NGB or other national bodies. This is lower than the national average of 86%.

Of particular concern is that almost one quarter of disabled coaches do not feel supported at all (compared to 14% of coaches).

Coaches with physical or medical impairments were the most likely to feel not supported at all. Coaches with a learning impairment were most likely to feel very well supported.



■ More ■ About the same ■ Less

Almost half of disabled coaches expect to do more coaching in the next twelve months while 8% expect to do less. This is better than the national coaching average where only 39% expect to do more (and 5% less) suggesting levels of optimism among disabled coaches are high.

Future research



This is the first time we have had a large enough sample of disabled coaches to conduct separate analysis. This has given us some useful new information and it has also highlighted areas that it would be interesting to explore further. This should be through further large scale survey work with disabled coaches, but it is also the case that more in-depth research with specific impairment groups or topics would also be useful.

Future research questions that have emerged from this work include:

- Why do disabled coaches start coaching at an older age than other coaches?
- Did the coaches acquire their disability or if it is congenital? If acquired, at what age. If acquired was this through sport?
- Did the coaches play the sport(s) they coach?
- What is the relationship between gender, ethnicity and disability?
- Are there differences between coaches supporting disability sport and those working in mainstream settings?
- How do you improve levels of support among disabled athletes?