

National Survey for Wales 2019-20: Sport and Active Lifestyles

*A statistical snapshot prior to the
Coronavirus outbreak in Wales.*

*sportwales
chwaraeon cymru*

Summary

- This report covers the twelve-month period prior to April 2020. As such it represents the state of the nation immediately prior to the Coronavirus outbreak (and the subsequent social distancing and lockdown measures). In this sense, the results of the survey are a baseline for assessing any national scale changes in adult sport related activities within Wales.
- This statistical release provides headline results about sport participation, latent demand, experiences of sport, encouraging future participation, sports club membership, coaching and volunteering in sport; all from the National Survey for Wales in 2019-20. This is the fourth consecutive year that results for sport and active lifestyles have been released as part of this survey. The survey has been weighted in order to be representative of adults living in households in Wales (2,525,000 people)¹.
- In 2019-20, just prior to Coronavirus, 32% of adults (16+) participated in a sporting activity three times a week or more (808,000 people). 7% participated approximately twice a week (186,000 people), 11% participated approximately once a week (268,000 people) and 49% participated less than once a week (1,246,000 people). Moreover, 41% of adults had not participated in any sporting activity (1,040,000 people) in the previous 4 weeks.
- Protected characteristics² are associated with varying rates of participation and these variations may be explained by underlying differences in people's motivation, confidence, awareness of opportunities, access to opportunities, and prior experiences of sport.
- The number of people participating in a sporting activity three times a week or more is a national indicator for the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. This had increased from 29% in 2016-17 to 32% in 2017-18, then remained at 32% during 2018-19. It remains at 32% again for 2019-20.
- In 2019-20, 59% of adults (ages 16+) reported that they had taken part in some sporting activity in the last four weeks (1,468,000 people). This rate remains unchanged when compared with the results from the previous years (2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19). Age, gender, disability and Welsh speaking characteristics are associated with varying participation rates.
- Adults in Wales are most likely to be taking part in activities such as walking (2 miles or more; 792,000 people), gym or fitness classes (435,000 people), swimming indoors (308,000 people), running and jogging outdoors (123,000 and 233,000 people respectively), cycling (214,000 people), and outdoor football (174,000 people).

¹ Sometimes a small proportion of these adults are excluded from the statistical output because they opt out from responding to certain survey questions or are not asked a question due to survey routing.

² See <https://www.diversesecymru.org.uk/protected-characteristics/>

- Adults who already participate in sport are most likely to want to do more sporting activities. 49% of all adults would like to do more sport or physical activity (1,236,000 people). The equivalent measure was 50% in 2018-19, 55% in 2017-18, and 58% in 2016-17. This indicates that there has been a short-term decline in demand to do more sport. Nevertheless, and like previous years, the types of activity in most demand include indoor swimming (351,000 people), gym or fitness classes (210,000 people) and cycling (201,000 people).
- The survey asked respondents about the types of things that would encourage them to participate more in sport. The most popular reason given by adults in Wales was 'if I was less busy at work' (29%; 739,000 people), followed by 'if I was younger' (26%; 652,000 people), then 'if I had fewer family commitments' (23%; 571,000) and 'if I was fitter' (22%; 555,000 people).
- Almost a quarter of adults are a member of a sports club / organisation (23%: 574,000 people). Of these adults, 83% belong to one sports club/organisation, 14% belong to two, 2% belong to three, and 1% belong to more. 55% of members belong to pure sports clubs only, 39% belong to a leisure / fitness centres only, and 6% belong to both. 18% of adults had participated in sport in at least one of these locations within the last 12 months (463,000 people), with 11% of adults also receiving some form of coaching, as a member, during that time (276,000 people). One *per cent* of adults had been coached using the Welsh language.
- Six percent of adults (152,000 people) had coached other people in the last 12 months (and 1% of adults had coached using the Welsh language).
- 10% of adults in Wales reported volunteering in sport (241,000 people). Volunteers were most likely to provide coaching (5%, 120,000 people) followed by administration (3%, 85,000 people), officiating/refereeing (2%, 61,000 people), stewarding (2%, 51,000 people), transport (1%, 34,000 people), and then catering (1%, 27,000 people). In addition, 1% volunteered in other activities linked to sport (30,000 people). Around a third of these adult volunteers had volunteered in more than one of these activities.
- Nearly all adults who participated in sporting activities within the last 4 weeks had enjoyed their last experience. Over a million adults found the experience 'very enjoyable' (75%; 1,105,000 people) whereas 22% of adults found their last sporting experience to be 'fairly enjoyable' (317,000 people). Only 3% of adults stated that they did not enjoy the experience (43,000 people). Most adults enjoyed their last experience because of the opportunity to socialise. Feeling comfortable, good facilities and achieving goals were also common factors leading to enjoyable experience.
- Adults were also asked if they enjoyed sport at school, 55% said they enjoyed it 'a lot' (1,372,000 people), 23% enjoyed it 'a little' (570,000 people), and 22% did not enjoy it at all (558,000 people).

- Since this survey was conducted adult household behaviour has undoubtedly changed. The full extent to which sporting behaviours have changed relative to the baseline presented in this report will become best understood over time. What remains clear, however, is the importance of sport to the well-being of future generations.
- For more background information on the survey, please see the Welsh Government's web pages: <https://gov.wales/national-survey-wales>