

Talk About Taking Part

# Wheelchair Sport and Physical Activity Survey 2016



# Contents



Background	page 3
Survey information and demographics	page 5
Sport and physical activity participation	page 6
The sports environment	page 9
Motivations and barriers	page 11
Travelling to play sport	page 13
Future participation	page 14
Marketing and communications	page 17
Terminology	page 18
Our response	page 19



# Background

## About WheelPower

WheelPower, the national charity for wheelchair sport aims to provide, promote and develop opportunities for disabled people to participate in sport and physical activity and lead healthy active lives.

For over 60 years WheelPower has provided wide-ranging opportunities for people with physical impairments to take part in sport for rehabilitation, competition and fun. The charity owns Stoke Mandeville stadium, a sports complex suitable for a wide range of sports and physical activities at the internationally recognised birthplace of the Paralympic movement.

We use our expertise, annual programme of events, and partnerships with organisations such as national governing bodies of sport, to introduce people to wheelchair sport and support them to find a sport or activity that they are passionate about and enjoy.

**For more information, please visit  
[www.wheelpower.org.uk](http://www.wheelpower.org.uk)**



# Background

## Talk About Taking Part

This report sets out the findings from the inaugural WheelPower sport and physical activity survey - Talk About Taking Part. I would like to thank all those who took part.

We have found out what activities wheelchair users currently take part in, what they would like to try or do more of in the future and how we can best support them. We gained views from disabled people who didn't currently take part in any sport as well as those who already lead active lives.

Key headline results include:

- 8 in 10 respondents in this survey had taken part in some form of sport or physical activity over the last 12 months.
- Of those that had not taken part in the last 12 months, almost three quarters (73%) had not taken part in the last three years.
- Nearly three quarters of respondents (74%) would like to take part in more sport and physical activity in the future.
- The level of demand to take part in sport in the future is similar for those that currently take part in sport (74%) and those that don't (71%).
- 60% of respondents that currently take part in sport and physical activity are a member of a club.
- Nearly 7 in 10 (69%) of those that are not a member of a club, would consider joining a club to take part in more sport and physical activity.
- The most common barriers to taking part in sport and activity are a lack of suitable opportunities and accessible venues.
- 'Wheelchair sport' was the term that most interested respondents when it came to promoting sport and physical activity.

The results have shown that there is a great demand for sport and physical activity from both wheelchair users who are already active and those who are not, this represents a huge untapped market. We will use this insight to guide our new strategic plan and work with providers at all levels to help shape and improve the provision of wheelchair sport and activity.

**Kevan Baker OBE**  
Chairman, WheelPower

The survey was carried out by Rica (Research Institute of Consumer Affairs) between February and June 2016.

# Survey information and demographics

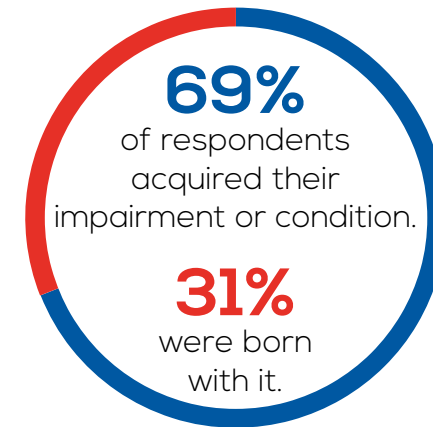
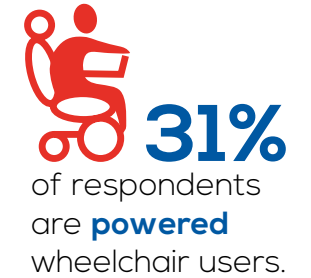
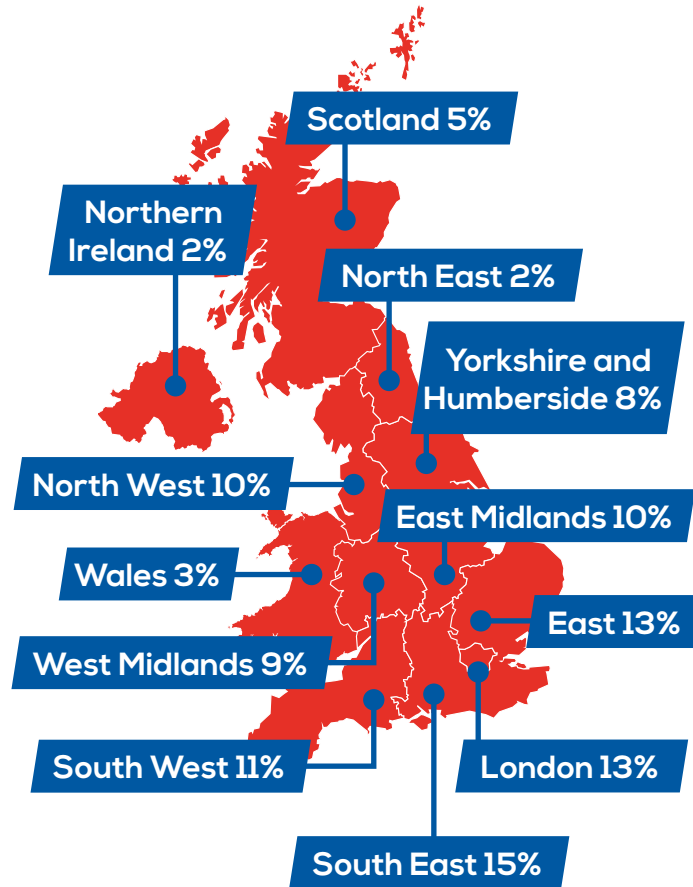
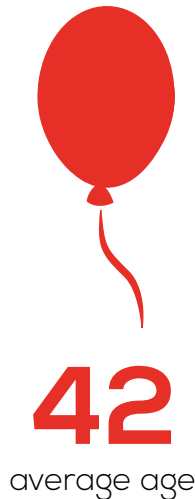
## Who we spoke to

## Location

## Disability



502 online survey respondents (94% current wheelchair users\*) followed up with ten in-depth interviews.



\*1% preferred not to disclose gender information.

\*6% non-wheelchair users with a physical impairment, interested in taking part in wheelchair sport/activity in the future.

# Sport and physical activity participation

## Participation

**80%**

of respondents have taken part in sport or physical activity within the last 12 months.

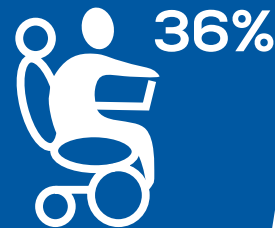


The majority of wheelchair users are much less likely to be currently active than non-disabled people. Sport England's Active People Survey reports that only 25% of people with a physical disability take part in a sport once a month or more, compared to 51% of non-disabled people.

Of those who had not taken part in sport or physical activity in the last 12 months, almost three quarters (**73%**) had not taken part in the last three years.

Younger people were more likely to have participated. **90%** of those under 36 have taken part in the last 12 months, compared to only **72%** of over 45s.











Over **one third** of powered wheelchair users have not participated in the last 12 months, compared to just 11% of manual users.



# Sport and physical activity participation

## Popular sports and activities

Top 10 most popular current sports and activities:











1.  **Swimming** - **36%** of all respondents
2.  **Gym** - **29%** of all respondents
3.  **Wheelchair Basketball** - **22%** of all respondents
4.  **Walking/pushing** - **19%** of all respondents
5.  **Handcycling** - **19%** of all respondents
6.  **Archery** - **17%** of all respondents
7.  **Wheelchair Tennis** - **17%** of all respondents
8.  **Table Tennis** - **11%** of all respondents
9.  **Boccia** - **10%** of all respondents
10.  **Fitness Classes** - **9%** of all respondents



# Sport and physical activity participation

## Regular sports and activities

Top 10 most popular regular sports and activities (participation once a week or more):

1.  **Gym** – **22%** of all respondents
2.  **Walking/pushing** – **18%** of all respondents
3.  **Swimming** – **16%** of all respondents
4.  **Wheelchair Basketball** – **13%** of all respondents
5.  **Wheelchair Tennis** – **10%** of all respondents
6.  **Handcycling** – **10%** of all respondents
7.  **Wheelchair Racing** – **5%** of all respondents
8.  **Fitness Classes** – **5%** of all respondents
9.  **Archery** – **4%** of all respondents
10.  **Wheelchair Rugby** – **3%** of all respondents





# The sports environment

## Current settings

We asked what sport or physical activity settings people participate in:

- On their own
- With other wheelchair users
- With other disabled people
- With others including disabled and non-disabled people

**30%-40%**

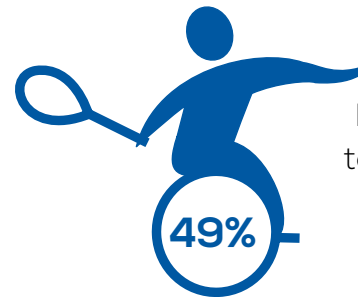
There were similar levels of current participation across the different settings. Between **30%-40%** of people took part within each of the settings.

People over the age of 45 and those that are not members of clubs are more likely to take part on their own.

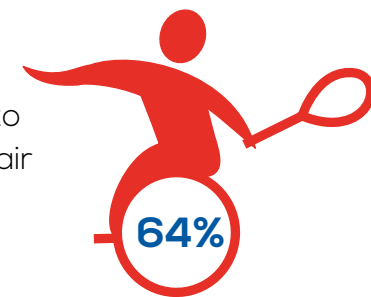
## Preferred settings



When it came to the preferred settings, fewer people (**26%**) wanted to take part on their own.



Many more people wanted to take part with other wheelchair users (**49%**) and with both disabled and non-disabled people (**64%**)



Within the interviews some people spoke about how the setting was not as important as the opportunity:

**“ I don't mind what the setting is for the sport, I'm just keen to get involved. But it is an acceptance thing. ”**

# The sports environment

## Club membership

### Club membership

**6 in 10 (60%)** respondents currently taking part in sports and physical activity are a member of a club.



**74%**

For around three quarters of those that is through a sports club, almost half of which (44%) are disability specific.

Younger respondents and manual wheelchair users are more likely to belong to a club.



Within the follow up interviews people commented on the advantages of joining a club or a team:

**“ You get more support in a club or team to improve etc. ”**

**“ I like the idea of belonging to a club for camaraderie, socialising and making friends. ”**

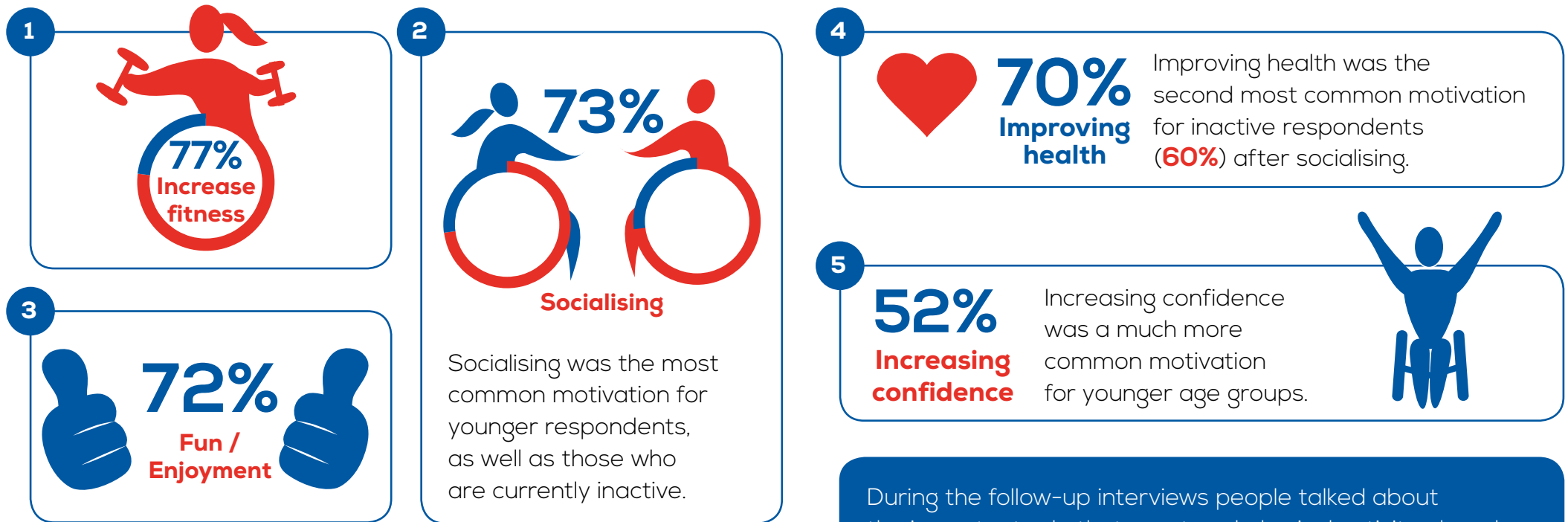
Nearly **7 in 10 (69%)** of those that are not a member of a club, would consider joining a club to take part in more sport and physical activity.

However, it was not as likely for them to prefer this to be a sports club. Particularly older respondents, who may prefer to join a health and fitness club.

# Motivations and barriers

## Motivations

The top five most common motivations for taking part in sport and physical activity are:



During the follow-up interviews people talked about the important role that sport and physical activity played within their lives:

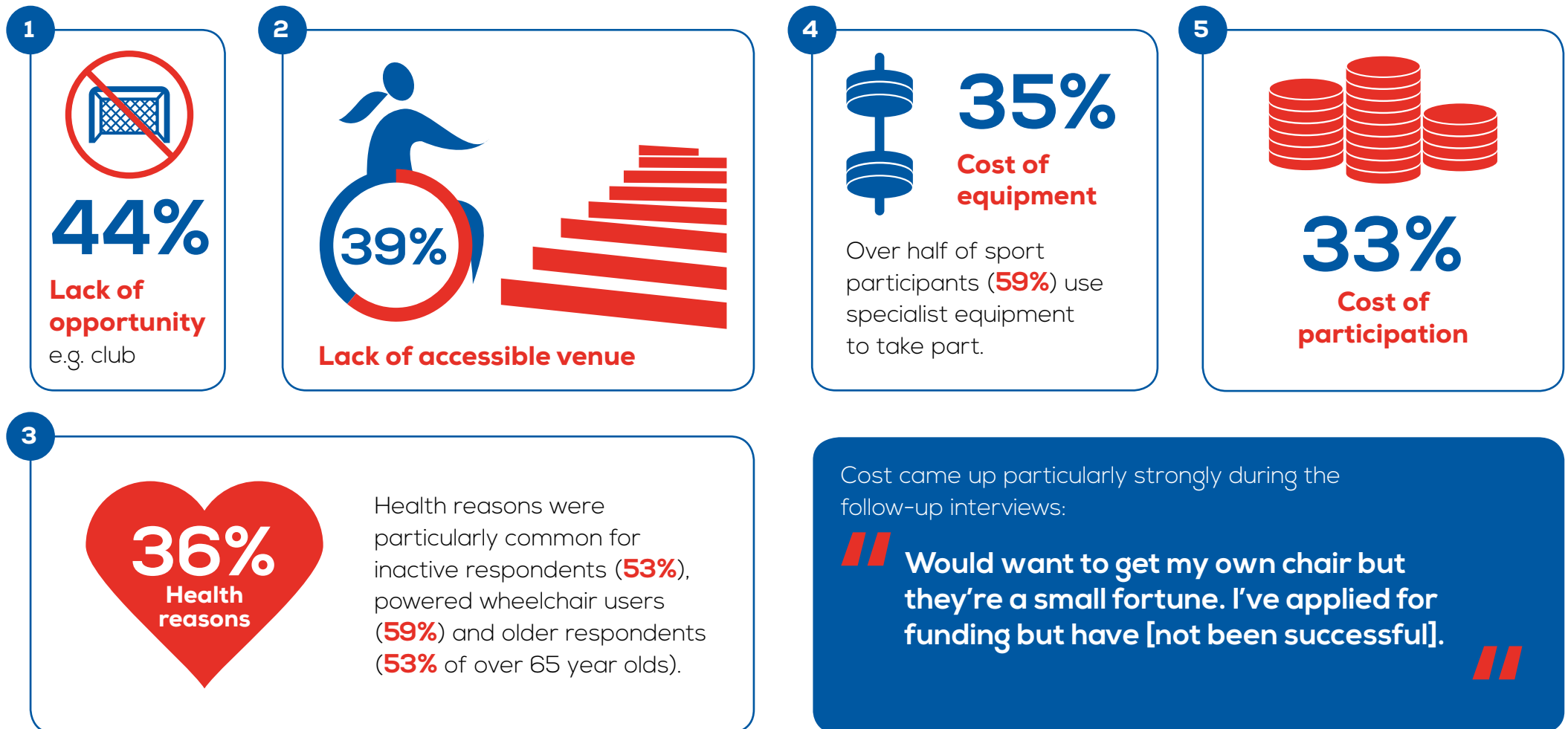
**“ It’s so important to have something outside that isn’t all about hospital doctors or carer visits. ”**



# Motivations and barriers

## Barriers

The top five most common barriers to taking part in sport and physical activity are:

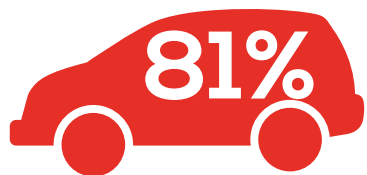


# Travelling to play sport

## Time and distance



Just over half of sports participants spend 30 minutes or more travelling to take part in sport.



81% of people usually travel by car to take part in sport.



on their own



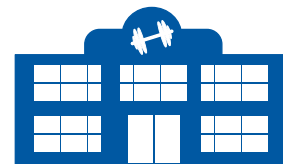
in a shared car

Those who are under 15 are travelling for the longest with just under three quarters (74%) travelling over 30 minutes to take part.

### Club Membership

Club members also spend longer travelling to take part (62% over 30 mins). This is especially true for disability specific club members (68% over 30 mins).

## As a barrier to participation



Travelling distance was the sixth most common barrier to taking part in sport and activity (29% of all respondents).



The top two barriers 'lack of opportunity' and 'lack of accessible venue' also impact on the distance a person may have to travel to access a suitable opportunity.

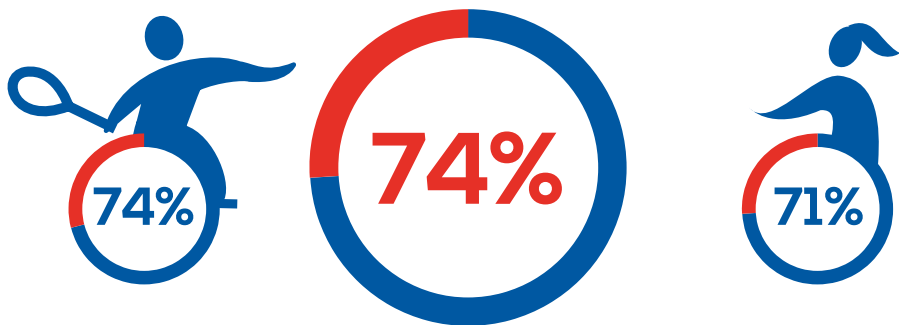
People also talked about travel as a barrier within the follow-up interviews:

“ Found somewhere which is an hour away, which would take too big a chunk from my studies. ”

# Future participation

## Latent demand

Around three quarters (**74%**) of respondents would like to take part in more sport or physical activity in the future.



Future demand was similar for those that currently play sport (**74%**) and those that don't (**71%**).

Younger people were most likely to want to do more sport (**91%** of under 15s).



# Future participation

## Sports and activities

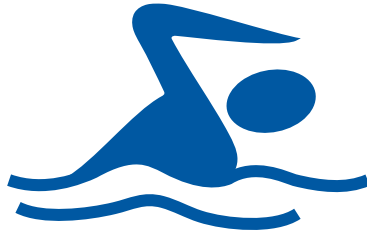
The top 10 sports and activities people are interested in taking up or doing more of in the future are:

1

**Swimming**

**27%**

of all  
respondents



**68%** of those are likely/very likely  
to do so in the next **12 months**.

2

**Gym and Fitness**

**23%**

of all  
respondents



**61%** of those are likely/very likely  
to do so in the next **12 months**.

3

**Handcycling**

**19%**

of all  
respondents



**43%** of those are likely/very likely  
to do so in the next **12 months**.

4

**Snowsport**

**18%**

of all  
respondents



**37%** of those are likely/very likely  
to do so in the next **12 months**.

5

**Archery**

**16%**

of all  
respondents



**45%** of those are likely/very likely  
to do so in the next **12 months**.



# Future participation

## Sports and activities

6

Canoeing/Kayaking

15%

of all respondents



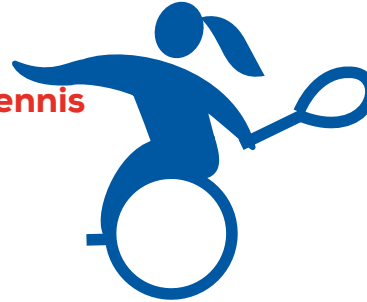
32% of those are likely/very likely to do so in the next 12 months.

7

Wheelchair Tennis

12%

of all respondents



53% of those are likely/very likely to do so in the next 12 months.

8

Walking/Pushing

12%

of all respondents



66% of those are likely/very likely to do so within the next 12 months.

9

Sailing

12%

of all respondents



38% of those are likely/very likely to do so in the next 12 months.

10

Fitness Classes

12%

of all respondents



41% of those are likely/very likely to do so in the next 12 months.

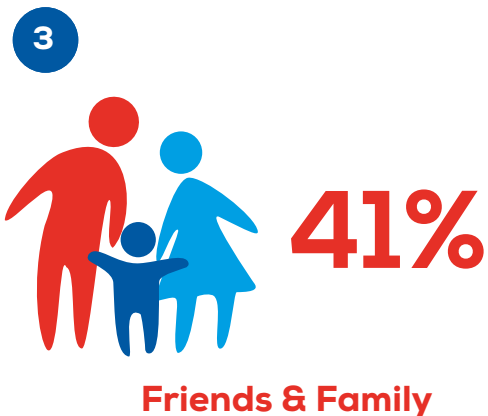
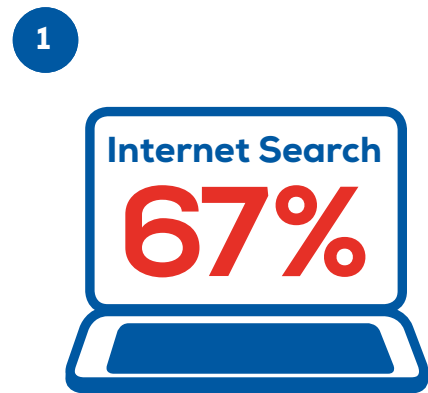




# Marketing and communications

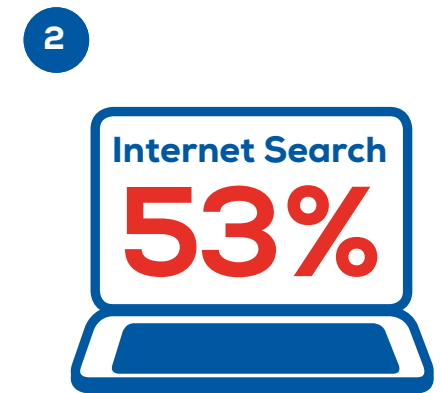
## How do people currently find out?

Top three current sources of sport and physical activity information:



## How would people like to find out?

Top three preferred sources of sport and physical activity information:



**Offline communications**  
(e.g. leaflets or newspapers)  
were more strongly preferred  
by inactive and older respondents.

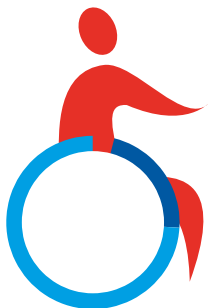
# Terminology

## Promoting sport and physical activity

We asked respondents what they thought of the use of the following terms in promoting sport and activity:

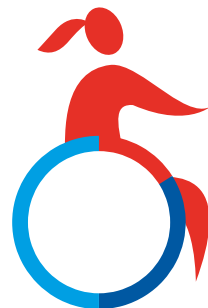
### Wheelchair Sport

74% interests me  
22% neutral  
4% puts me off



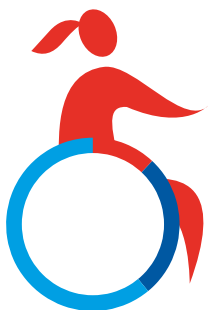
### Adaptive Sport

51% interests me  
34% neutral  
16% puts me off



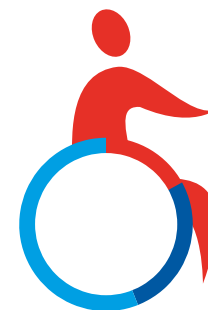
### Inclusive Sport

61% interests me  
27% neutral  
12% puts me off



### Disability Sport

56% interests me  
27% neutral  
17% puts me off



Those that currently do not play sport tended to be more put off by the term adaptive sport (22%), whilst less put off by the term disability sport (11%).



# Our response

## What we are going to do

The Talk About Taking Part survey results reinforce the importance of our work and the need for WheelPower to create a far-reaching and positive influence throughout the disability sector.

The results have told us that wheelchair users want to be more active and they have highlighted the most popular activities people are interested in taking up or doing more of in the future.

This survey gives us a clearer understanding about the needs of wheelchair users in sport and physical activity. We will use this insight to develop new routes to market and provide better opportunities for people to be active at all levels.

Moving forward, WheelPower will:

1. Develop and increase the number of local sport and activity opportunities, pathways and events for wheelchair users.
2. Ensure there is a participation pathway which includes a variety of entry points for wheelchair users to be introduced and become involved in sport and activity at all ages.
3. Support and develop the club infrastructure, as many wheelchair users indicated they would consider joining a club to take part in more activity.
4. Develop new projects and events to target and engage inactive and older wheelchair users.
5. Increase awareness of opportunities, making it easier for wheelchair users to find the right activity for them.
6. Encourage and support wheelchair users to be active in places where they want to take part, in activities they want to do and with those who they want to be active with.





**Chris Turner**

National Sports Director, WheelPower



## WheelPower - British Wheelchair Sport

Stoke Mandeville Stadium  
Guttmann Road  
Stoke Mandeville  
Buckinghamshire HP21 9PP  
[www.wheelpower.org.uk](http://www.wheelpower.org.uk)

 @wheelpower  
 wheelchairsport  
 01296 395995  
 [info@wheelpower.org.uk](mailto:info@wheelpower.org.uk)

