

Sports Participation - UK - September 2013

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“The biggest issue facing the sport participation market post-London 2012 is the question of ‘what next?’ The Olympic Games – and Team GB – have created much sustained positive sentiment around sport, but that will not last forever and needs to be tapped fairly quickly to get new participants into programmes that can develop long-term interest that is not mega-event-dependent.”
– David Walmsley, Senior Leisure Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- What are the participation legacy opportunities of London 2012?
- Has participation growth in cycling and athletics run out of steam?
- What role can family participation play in tackling post-16 drop-out?
- How can public facilities retain their appeal in the face of spending cuts?
- How can sport tackle cost barriers to expanding participation?

In the year since the Olympic circus left town, London 2012 has remained a central focus of efforts to expand the UK's sport participation market and make good the organisers' promise to inspire a generation into playing habits that will last a lifetime.

While early results in expanding the overall playing pool have been mixed, the impact of the event appears to have been positive on participation among key target groups, such as young people and women. However, the challenge of accelerating that progress over the medium term remains a difficult one, particularly in a climate of ongoing public spending cuts and income pressure on the least well-off.

This report assesses the factors underlying these current and recent trends in sports participation in the UK, examines consumers' attitudes towards sport, and identifies ways in which governing bodies, facility providers and sports brands and sponsors can help grow playing numbers in the short and medium term.

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