

Sports Participation - UK - August 2011

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“The targets set by the last government for increasing sports participation rates around the London 2012 Olympics may have been scrapped by the current administration, but the need to get Britain playing more sport remains as strong as ever, despite a recent fall in obesity rates.

However, a combination of local authority spending cuts, uncertainty around future funding of school sports and sustained pressure on consumers’ disposable incomes is limiting the prospects for achieving this, particularly with government policy now focusing on the younger age groups currently proving difficult to entice into regular play.

The growing popularity of free facilities and ‘doorstep sport’ suggests that creating low- or no-cost participation opportunities can continue to attract new fitness-focused players in the current climate, while the example of football suggests developing and promoting abbreviated forms of team and competitive sports could revive and sustain interest among younger groups.”

– Matt King, Head of Leisure Research

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How will pressure on local government finances affect availability of public sports facilities?
- Can the London 2012 Olympics leave a genuine legacy of increased sports participation?
- Will the government’s new participation strategy succeed in getting more young people playing?
- How are sports gaining in popularity attracting new players?
- How can the rise of ‘free’ sports and facilities increase spending on participation?
- How can sports providers overcome the main barriers that discourage consumers from taking part?

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