

“ Include me as we
return to activity. ”

Inclusive recovery report: How sport and activity providers responded and disabled people’s experiences as the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted.

How have the benefits
of being active changed
for disabled people?

This research study explored how the
benefits and motivations to be active have
changed since the COVID-19 pandemic.



Mental health:

- Improved mood.
- Increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Better concentration, memory and general ‘alertness’.
- Better self-care.



Social:

- Meeting new people.
- Developing social skills and connecting with others.
- Being part of a team.
- Preventing isolation and loneliness.



Resilience:

- Overcoming challenges and working towards a goal.
- Gaining a sense of achievement.
- Satisfaction at doing something for yourself.



Physical health:

- Feeling “lighter”.
- More flexible and mobile.
- Managing impairments or conditions.
- Staying fit or strong.

How have the barriers to being active changed for disabled people?

In addition to Activity Alliance's previous research, this report helped us to understand how the pandemic made barriers and challenges to being active bigger.



Physical:

- Concerns over activities or accidents.
- Loss of fitness or strength.
- Less opportunities and less awareness of activities.
- Concerns about places, facilities, and equipment being unwelcoming or unsuitable.
- Providers concerned about having the right facilities, equipment, and training to meet people's needs.
- Providers concerned about having a COVID-19 safe environment.



Financial:

- Financial pressures limit spending on organised activity sessions.
- No extra available money for public transport or taxis.
- Stress and frustration because of financial challenges.
- Providers facing significant financial pressures, including reduced or unstable revenue and increased cost of COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Providers have less capacity or fewer sessions than previously, and less time to trial new initiatives or act upon feedback.



Psychological:

- Lack of confidence and doubts in ability and fitness.
- Fear of shame or embarrassment.
- Lack of motivation when routines and habits are impacted by restrictions.
- Providers not always embedding or prioritising inclusion.
- Providers feel challenged to respond to changes in participant needs.



Structural:

- Closure of facilities.
- Lack of widely available accessible activities, and signposting in local areas.
- Cultural attitudes including a lack of representation, inaccessibility and old practices affecting inclusion.
- Providers facing challenges in reaching disabled people with limited resources.
- Low awareness of inclusion and inequalities among providers.
- Providers have less time and resource to trial new ideas and initiatives.