

Gathering and using insight on disabled people

Knowing your audience is essential. Learning from the wealth of information available can help you to have more impact with your resources.

We have created a series of engagement factsheets that encourage you to think about the ways you include disabled people. There are specific points to consider and places to look when gathering information on disability and disabled people. This factsheet provides top tips on how to be more effective in gathering and using insight.





What information do you need?

There is a lot of information available to help you reach disabled people, so it is important to have a clear idea of what you want to find out.

Examples might be to understand the number of disabled people taking part in sport. Or find out how many people with a physical impairment live in a particular place. Activity Alliance, along with other organisations, have carried out many studies involving disabled people, which could provide some useful context.

Data sources

There are several useful online sources of data which are free to access, though some require a short registration process. Here are links to the main ones:

Name	Internet address	Description
Active Lives survey	activelives.sportengland.org	Sport and activity participation figures published by Sport England.
Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI)	pansi.org.uk	Figures for selected impairments at a local authority and district level for people aged 18-64, published by the Institute of Public Care.
Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI)	poppi.org.uk	Figures for impairments and health issues for people aged 65 and over, published by the Institute of Public Care.
NOMIS (service provided by the Office for National Statistics)	nomisweb.co.uk	Sources of information (e.g. census data) which help to show the size of disability populations locally.
Care Quality Commission	cqc.org.uk	A variety of data is available, showing details of providers and establishments.

Map key stakeholders and gather information

There is a range of organisations, from the third, health and private sectors, charities, and those run by disabled people themselves, who specialise or have an interest in disability equality.

The knowledge they have can be vital, and they can also direct you to new audiences. It is important to understand who the key organisations and individuals are locally, with a view to establishing relationships with them and determining what information you need to know.

You should think about mapping out influencers and stakeholders for your particular project. You can gather information on local organisations from sources like the [Charity Commission](#), [Companies House](#) and [County Sports Partnerships](#). Try searching online too. A list may already exist for local areas.

Once you understand the information available, you will also know whether further research is needed. Carrying out research with disabled people can help you add depth to your understanding and knowledge.

If you are doing research about disabled people, involving disabled people in the project is important. This could be through consultation, lived experience involvement, codesign and coproduction.

Here are a few things to think about:

- Use a variety of methods, for example questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and case studies, to ensure the picture you build is more reliable. Do not just rely on one source of evidence.
- When carrying out research, make sure your questions are easy to understand and accessible. Use plain English, offer support and have alternative formats available, such as large print, easy read and British Sign Language.
- Ensure your research is adaptable and accessible to people in different impairment groups. Examples include:
 - If a telephone survey is used, provide an alternative version to include people with a hearing impairment, such as a paper, online or British Sign Language version.
 - Having an easy read version of a survey option alongside a standard online survey.
 - Having alternative ways of participating in an online interview, such as email conversation for those who communicate best in writing and taking their time.

Refer to the [Effective Engagement Resource](#) on how you may want to group these stakeholders based on interest and influencers.

Check and test

It is a good idea to test what you have found – and consulting with your partners locally is a good way to do this.

Check to see if you have any gaps in your data. Some tips here are to:

- Keep in mind that disabled people are not all the same, make sure you include views of people from a variety of backgrounds (for example a cross section of ages and a good gender mix). Also, consider other information such as the impact of social or economic factors in people's lives.
- Ensure that you do not just have the views of people you speak with regularly – take the time to reach out to those you don't always hear from.
- If something does not feel or look right, or is surprising, speak with others to explore this further.

Use the information to make an impact

Having the information is just the start – it now needs putting into practice! Use the insight you have gathered to develop an action plan, respond to the evidence and adapt your working practices.



This factsheet is part of a series of [Activity Alliance engagement resources](#) available on our website.

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This document is available in Word format. Please contact us if you need support. Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. Registered Charity no. 1075180