

# SPORTING CHANCE

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# INCREASING DISABILITY ACCESS TO SPORT



RICHARD TRACEY  
GLA CONSERVATIVES  
GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

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# INTRODUCTION

The London 2012 Paralympic Games had many positive outcomes for the 1.5m disabled people living in London (17.3 per cent of the population), not least of which was an increased awareness that it is essential that there be significant provision for people with a disability to have full and equal access to sport and physical activity<sup>1</sup>.

With 38 per cent of people believing that disabled people are a burden on society<sup>2</sup>, participation in sport can be a vital means of reducing the stigma and discrimination faced by people with a disability, showing disability in a positive light. This is in addition to the numerous physical and psychological health benefits of playing sport.

Of the 9.4m disabled people living in England, only 17.8 per cent take part in sport for 30 minutes or more at least once a week<sup>3</sup>. This compares to 39.3 per cent of non-disabled adults<sup>4</sup>. Data suggests that participation figures for both groups have been declining steadily since October 2013 and a downward trend has started to emerge since the post-Olympic peak<sup>5</sup>. It is now estimated that more than 72 per cent of disabled people do not take part in any sport of physical activity at all<sup>6</sup>.

Londoners need more from their Paralympic Legacy.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVE SPORT

The benefits of undertaking physical exercise are widely known; participating in sport has been shown to improve both physical and psychological health, and is also linked to crime reduction and increased social cohesion; and yet participation rates are not only low, but falling, and the trend is even worse amongst the disabled<sup>7</sup>.

Research shows that by burning just 200kcal a week, coronary mortality can be reduced by up to a third, and for every 500kcal of extra energy spent per week, the likelihood of type 2 diabetes is reduced by 6 per cent. In terms of mental health (which will affect 1 in 4 British adults in any year<sup>8</sup>), those with mild clinical depression (9 per cent of the population) may find exercise to be as effective as taking antidepressants; and by keeping active, older people could more than halve their risk of Alzheimer's<sup>9</sup>. In addition, sport is linked to increased productivity and reduced staff sick leave, contributing £6bn to the Treasury every year<sup>10</sup>. 'UKactive' estimates that by reducing inactivity by just 1 per cent, the government could save £1.2bn over 5 years.

The opportunity to get involved in physical activity is important for everyone, but none more so than people living with a disability. Playing a sport can have a hugely rehabilitative influence physically, and can help those with a more recent disability reintegrate themselves socially<sup>11</sup>. Sport can also provide a strong element of independence to those with a disability that impedes this on a daily basis<sup>12</sup>.

1. <http://www.inclusionlondon.co.uk/sport>

2. [http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts\\_and\\_statistics](http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts_and_statistics)

3. Ibid

4. Ibid

5. <http://www.sportengland.org/media/913623/aps9q2headlines.pdf>

6. [http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts\\_and\\_statistics](http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts_and_statistics)

7. [http://archive.sportengland.org/research/the\\_value\\_of\\_sport\\_monitor.aspx](http://archive.sportengland.org/research/the_value_of_sport_monitor.aspx)

8. [http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts\\_and\\_statistics](http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts_and_statistics)

9. <http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/gameoflife>

10. Ibid

11. <http://www.disabled-world.com/sports/>

12. <http://www.efds.co.uk/>

Disability often brings with it additional societal barriers. 38 per cent of people believe that disabled people are a burden on society, and nearly 65 per cent of people have admitted to avoiding disabled people because they don't know how to act around them<sup>13</sup>. 180 disability hate crimes are committed in England every day, which often results in fear and loss of confidence<sup>14</sup>.

Sport has the ability to help reduce the stigma and discrimination faced by people with a disability by providing people with an opportunity to come together to demonstrate their skill, presenting disability in a positive context<sup>15</sup>. On an individual level, sport can help people with a disability to realise their own potential, giving them additional life skills such as communication, teamwork, respect for others, and reduced dependence<sup>16</sup>. With only 47 per cent of disabled adults engaged in full time employment (compared to 77 per cent of non-disabled adults), these skills can aid those living with a disability to find work, allowing them to make a real economic contribution to society, further boosting their self-esteem<sup>17</sup>.

## CHANGES TO INCLUSIVE SPORT PROVISION

Since the first international competition for people with a disability – the Silent Games – was held in 1924, disabled sport has exploded onto the world stage. Today, the Special Olympics provide year-round opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities of every level to train and compete; the Paralympic Games provide international competition for multiple disability groups, including amputee, cerebral palsy, visual impairment, spinal cord injuries, intellectual disability, and les autres (those who don't fit into any other group); and the Deaflympics provide high level competition for athletes who are deaf or hard of hearing<sup>18</sup>.

At a grass roots level, funding has increased dramatically; on National Paralympic Day 2013, Sport England gave £8 million of National Lottery funding to bridge the gap between disabled and non-disabled participation rates and get more disabled people into sport<sup>19</sup>. Research by Leonard Cheshire found that 46 per cent of disabled people felt inspired to get more involved with sport or exercise as a direct result of the London 2012 Paralympic Games<sup>20</sup>.

Changes to legislation have also emerged to bring about positive change in the provision of sports facilities for disabled users. Since 2 December 1996 it has been unlawful for sports clubs to treat disabled people less favourably for a reason related to their disability. The 1999 changes to Disability Discrimination Legislation required, for the first time, that sports clubs had to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people such as providing extra help, and the 2004 legislation updated the definition to include the physical features of a facility, such as eliminating barriers to access and making the reception desk fully accessible<sup>21</sup>.

The 2010 Equality Act is the most recent piece of legislation to increase opportunities for disabled people to exercise and play sport. The Act brings together previous disability discrimination legislation and was welcomed for its holistic and inclusive attitude to sports provision and planning<sup>22</sup>.

13. [http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts\\_and\\_statistics](http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts_and_statistics)

14. Ibid

15. <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1563>

16. Ibid

17. [http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts\\_and\\_statistics](http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/facts_and_statistics)

18. [http://www.sportanddev.org/en/learnmore/sport\\_and\\_disability2/sport\\_and\\_adapted\\_physical\\_activity\\_\\_apa\\_/opportunities\\_for\\_participation/](http://www.sportanddev.org/en/learnmore/sport_and_disability2/sport_and_adapted_physical_activity__apa_/opportunities_for_participation/)

19. <http://sportengland.org/media-centre/news/2013/september/07/disability-sport-given-8m-boost-on-national-paralympic-day/>

20. [http://www.grassrootsgroup.com/web/guest/features-articles-and-research/-/asset\\_publisher/wnE6sBPx5iE9/blog/research-reveals-paralympics-inspires-disabled-people-to-get-involved-with-sport](http://www.grassrootsgroup.com/web/guest/features-articles-and-research/-/asset_publisher/wnE6sBPx5iE9/blog/research-reveals-paralympics-inspires-disabled-people-to-get-involved-with-sport)

21. [http://www.swimming.org/assets/uploads/library/Disability\\_Discrimination\\_Legislation.pdf](http://www.swimming.org/assets/uploads/library/Disability_Discrimination_Legislation.pdf)

22. [http://www.sportnottinghamshire.co.uk/files/9913/4200/2463/Equality\\_Act\\_2010\\_sports\\_impact\\_1\\_\\_1.pdf](http://www.sportnottinghamshire.co.uk/files/9913/4200/2463/Equality_Act_2010_sports_impact_1__1.pdf)

These changes to legislation are both welcome and necessary but they have not had the desired effect and the number of people with a disability who are actively engaging in sport and physical exercise is continuing to fall.

## WHO NEEDS INCLUSIVE FACILITIES?

London is home to some of the world's most famous sporting venues: Lord's Cricket Ground; Emirates Stadium; Wembley; Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park; Twickenham; and the All-England Club; as well as hundreds of local facilities and grass roots clubs. It is important that these facilities are available and accessible to all Londoners wishing to use them: as spectators or participants; old or young; non-disabled or disabled.

The term disabled, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, includes anyone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities<sup>23</sup>. This includes learning difficulties, as well as physical impairments and other conditions. People living with a disability will inevitably have different accessibility needs if they are to be fully included in sport.

The social model of disability says that disability is caused by the way that society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It looks at ways of removing real life barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people. These barriers are not only physical; attitudes found in society based on prejudice or stereo type also disable people from having equal opportunities to be part of society<sup>24</sup>.

Disability charity, Scope, believes that when these barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent in society, with choice and control over their own lives<sup>25</sup>. It is important to consider what barriers might be created when designing, upgrading, or running any leisure facility or sports programme if it is to be fully accessible to all.

Such barriers are not only common for people living with a disability: estimates suggest that the percentage of people who require accessible infrastructure is in excess of 20 per cent at any given time. In addition to those living with a permanent disability, this may include people with injuries, pregnant women, children, older people, shorter people, or people unfamiliar with the local language<sup>26</sup>. Reducing barriers to people who display any of these characteristics could go a long way towards increasing their opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity.

## THE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

In 2010/11, £180,000 was invested in the Inclusive Fitness Initiative, which has seen 72 accessible gyms and leisure centres across London gain accreditation<sup>27</sup>. While it is a positive step that disabled people can attend a gym with a guarantee of accessibility, the data suggests that there is a negative correlation between the number of facilities per disabled person, and the number of disabled people playing sport in each borough: the more accessible gyms a borough has, the fewer the number of disabled residents that are keeping active<sup>28</sup>.

The same is true for facilities generally. Data shows no significant correlation between spending

23. <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

24. <http://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/our-brand/social-model-of-disability>

25. Ibid

26. [http://www.efds.co.uk/assets/0000/3430/Doing\\_Sport\\_Differently.pdf](http://www.efds.co.uk/assets/0000/3430/Doing_Sport_Differently.pdf)

27. [http://www.efds.co.uk/inclusive\\_fitness/ifi\\_gyms/filter/london](http://www.efds.co.uk/inclusive_fitness/ifi_gyms/filter/london)

28. Correlation was -0.3. Data was provided by EDFs.

on facilities and improved participation<sup>29</sup>. Investment in facilities in itself does not help more people to play more sport.

Of course, Mayoral spending on facilities exists to complement spending on improving participation, and not replicate its work, but there is little point investing in state of the art facilities if Londoners are not any more inclined to use them.

## The Mayors Sports Facilities Fund

The Mayor's Sports Legacy Programme is part of the Mayor's initiative on sport and aims to support London's promise of an Olympic and Paralympic legacy by investing £22.5m in projects that give hundreds of thousands of opportunities for Londoners to get into sport. The Sports Facilities Fund is a core component of this Programme, used to invest in local sports clubs and to build new or refurbish existing sports facilities. So far, the Mayor's Sport Facilities Fund has seen over £7m invested across every London borough – 77 projects in total – creating capacity for more than 51,000 extra users each week to date.

The Mayor's Sports Facilities Fund 2013 has recently closed for bids. Successful applicants have been asked to: assist with the creation or refurbishment of a space for the community to play sport or take part in physical activity; provide a lasting benefit to the community in the immediate vicinity of the project; deliver a multi-sport approach; focus on raising participation in sport and physical activity, particularly amongst previously 'inactive' people; and plan and deliver a multi-sector approach with local agencies and partners to ensure best use is made of the facility.

Among the Mayor's projects are many that are aimed at improving and increasing provision for disabled people and yet disabled Londoners are still much less likely than non-disabled people to participate in cultural (including sporting) activities.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/sport/sports-legacy-programme/mayors-sports-facilities-fund>  
<http://inclusionlondon.co.uk/deaf-and-disabled-londoners-the-facts>

An English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) survey of disabled adults asked those who had not participated in any sport during the past 12 months what the main barriers to their participation were. Only 3 per cent of respondents said that they needed improved access to facilities, and just 1 per cent said that they needed facilities to be adapted in a different way. 93 per cent of the total reasons given for not participating in sport had nothing to do with facilities<sup>30</sup>.

The results of the EFDS survey show that respondent's perception that they were limited by their health was overwhelming the most common barrier to participation (60 per cent), although time (7 per cent) and money (6 per cent) were also mentioned<sup>31</sup>. Of those who answered positively to feeling limited by their health, 14 per cent said that having someone to advise them on what they can do would enable them to participate, 9 per cent reported needing someone to lead them or supervise them to ensure their safety, and 8 per cent said they just wanted someone to keep them company<sup>32</sup>.

This means that at any one time, approximately 648,000 Londoners are not participating in sport because their disability is making them feel excluded<sup>33</sup>.

29. Correlation is 0.02. Data was provided by GLA Sport and Sport England.

30. <http://www.efds.co.uk/assets/0000/3429/OOO66.pdf>

31. Ibid

32. Ibid

33. There are over 1.5m disabled Londoners of which 72 per cent never participate in sport. Of those that do not participate in sport, 60 per cent report health concerns as their greatest barrier to participation (648,000 people).

If we wish to increase participation, funds must not only be directed at improving facilities, but ensuring that these facilities are fully accessible to all and address the most reported barriers to participation better.

## ADDRESSING THE BARRIERS

### WELL TRAINED STAFF

More than 8 out of 10 disabled customers have taken their business elsewhere as a result of poor customer care<sup>34</sup> and poor staff attitude is regularly reported as a barrier to participation<sup>35</sup>.

'Inclusive and Active 2', was created by the Greater London Authority (GLA), NHS London, and Interactive, the lead strategic development agency for sport and physical activity for disabled people in London, and aimed to change attitudes and raise awareness of sport for disabled people, improving and increasing inclusive activity between 2010 and 2015. The strategy's key themes are: changing the culture; inclusive activity; more people, more active; diversifying the sector; and skilling the sectors<sup>36</sup>.

The vision of Inclusive and Active 2 is active disabled Londoners. It is about achieving a culture change in how we all perceive the relationship between sport and physical activity and disabled people, through 35 clear, targeted outcomes.

Since the document's creation, all Mayor's Sports Participation Fund applicants have been required to adopt 'Inclusive and Active 2', and stick to a bespoke action plan that shows how their planned activities will be inclusive. This is a hugely positive development but efforts must be made to ensure that all sports facilities adopt these principles, whether they are applying for funding or not.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the greatest improvement to facilities, that would have greatest impact in improving disabled people's ability to participate both as members and spectators, is not more facilities or more upgrades, but better staff training. 'Doing Sport Differently' argues that sports clubs with well-trained, disability-aware staff 'don't need to think of every possible eventuality in relation to every possible impairment in advance because they can be confident that their staff can respond intelligently to any situation'<sup>37</sup>.

With poor attitude a commonly reported barrier to participation, it appears that not all leisure staff receive the training required to make centres fully accessible. A basic e-Learning course exploring inclusive customer service can help to ensure that leisure services play their part in creating a welcoming environment for disabled people and can cost as little as £6 per person<sup>38</sup>. All IFI Mark accredited facilities must have sent their staff on such a course but programmes such as this are available to any business. Skills from this course are not only applicable to people living with a permanent disability, but can be applied to help the full 20 per cent of Londoners with other accessibility needs such as people with an injury and pregnant women.

34. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/31715/10-1126-2012-legacy-for-disabled-people-case-for-the-disabled-customer.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31715/10-1126-2012-legacy-for-disabled-people-case-for-the-disabled-customer.pdf)

35. [https://www.leonardcheshire.org/sites/default/files/Get\\_into\\_Sport.pdf](https://www.leonardcheshire.org/sites/default/files/Get_into_Sport.pdf)

36. <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Inclusive%20and%20Active%202.pdf>

37. [http://www.efds.co.uk/assets/0000/3430/Doing\\_Sport\\_Differently.pdf](http://www.efds.co.uk/assets/0000/3430/Doing_Sport_Differently.pdf)

38. [http://www.efds.co.uk/inclusive\\_fitness/staff\\_training](http://www.efds.co.uk/inclusive_fitness/staff_training)

## Delivering an Excellent Service for Disabled Customers – eLearning course

This is an online training to improve skills, knowledge, and confidence to create welcoming and accessible leisure environments.

The course has been specifically designed to benefit individuals who frequently interact with members of the public including receptionists, catering and support staff, fitness assistants, membership advisors, activity or class leaders, and centre managers amongst others.

A number of important areas of customer service and accessibility are brought together building upon the current skills of learners to ensure impact and improvements in service delivery and customer care.

The course covers inclusive customer service, perceptions of disability, legislation, effective communication, impairment specific good practice, and creating an accessible environment.

The interactive training needs no prior disability knowledge or experience and each learner completes the course at their own pace, making it an efficient and cost effective delivery method.

Training costs are £10 per person for 1-19 people, £8 per person for 20-49 people, £7 per person for 50-99 people, and just £6 per person for 100 people or over.

[http://www.efds.co.uk/inclusive\\_fitness/staff\\_training](http://www.efds.co.uk/inclusive_fitness/staff_training)

### **RECOMMENDATION: All future Mayoral sports funding allocations must continue to reflect the aims of Inclusive and Active 2.**

This must allow for improving facilities by upskilling staff as well as upgrading infrastructure. Investing in infrastructure alone will do little to increase participation unless it is accompanied by an investment in people.

## Mayor's Skills Fund

The Mayor's Skills Fund was part of the Mayor's Sports Legacy Programme and aimed to build the capacity and skills necessary to equip London with the personnel and infrastructure required to deliver a lasting legacy of increased sports participation.

So far, under the banner of 'the Mayor's Skills Fund': more than 13,000 people have been trained as coaches, volunteers, or officials; at least 200,000 volunteer hours have been pledged to community sports; more than 100 disabled Londoners have found jobs in the leisure industry; and a clear skills gap has been filled and capacity created to support Londoners playing sport.

The next phase of capacity building and skills enhancement in London is 'ClubWorks' – a £1.35m scheme to give sports clubs the tools they need to serve the city's diverse communities.

ClubWorks aims to strengthen a wide variety of clubs, helping them to grow and increasing participation by: developing a strong base of trained coaches and volunteers; helping clubs develop and implement strategies and plans for the future; working with clubs to grow and sustain their active membership; and support clubs to become more sustainable and attractive to funders.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/sport/sports-legacy-programme/building-capacity-and-skills>

**RECOMMENDATION: All council run leisure facilities should be required to send every member of staff on a disability and inclusivity training course.**

This should include all front of house leisure staff: receptionists; catering and support staff; fitness assistants; membership advisors; activity or class leaders; and centre managers.

Councils should fund this by applying for Mayoral grants.

Non-council run leisure facilities and larger sports clubs should also be encouraged to follow best practice.

## HEALTH ADVICE

60 per cent of disabled people report health concerns as the primary reason that they do not take part in more activity. This translates to roughly 7.5 per cent of Londoners or 648,000 people. While it is recommended that anyone with a disability consults their doctor before engaging in new physical activity, sports facilities must do more to ensure that disabled people have the support they need in-house.

There are a number of courses available that are tailored to specifically meet the needs of fitness instructors, ensuring that they have the knowledge required to deliver safe and effective inclusive workouts. These courses provide instructors with the training, confidence, and expertise in supporting relevant and safe fitness programmes with disabled people<sup>39</sup>.

39. [http://www.efds.co.uk/inclusive\\_fitness/staff\\_training](http://www.efds.co.uk/inclusive_fitness/staff_training)

## Exercise and Disability - YMCAfit

This course has been developed as part of the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI), which aims to make fitness facilities more accessible to disabled people, both in terms of the physical environment and the skills and attitudes of their staff.

Participants will learn to: identify current legislation (Disability Discrimination Act, Equality Act) and the obligations they place on facilities to provide access for disabled people; identify barriers to exercise for disabled people, including physical and environmental barriers, as well as society's attitudes to disabled people; understand the implications for exercise of a range of disabilities/impairments, including hearing and visual impairments, spinal injuries, amputation, cerebral palsy, and learning difficulties; and programme and supervise safe, enjoyable, and effective exercise programmes for disabled people with the above conditions/impairments.

This course is priced at £449 and awards participants with Level 3 CYQ Programming and Supervising Exercise with Disabled Clients.

<http://www.ymcafit.org.uk/courses/exercise-and-disability>

**RECOMMENDATION: Every leisure centre should ensure that a member of staff with an Exercise and Disability qualification (or similar) is present at all times.**

This would allow people with accessibility needs the flexibility to attend their local centre whenever they choose with the certainty that staff members are sufficiently skilled to support them adequately. Providing more advice on how exercise can be adapted to suit different abilities would allow over 90,000 more Londoners to get active, and providing proper supervision for disabled people could help a further 58,000<sup>40</sup>.

**RECOMMENDATION: Centres offering fitness programmes/exercise classes must ensure that staff designing and running them are aware of how to adapt fitness sessions for a range of accessibility needs.**

It is important this is included in any advertising for the activities to give reassurance to patrons and encourage their participation.

## IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

To make these changes, councils would have to work closely with their leisure providers to ensure that appropriate changes were being made, and leisure staff received the training that they need.

Tower Hamlets already serves as an example of best practice, having worked with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) to provide clear accessibility information on their website.<sup>41</sup> 5 of the 7 council's GLL leisure facilities have already worked with national access information provider, DisabledGo, to deliver detailed online guides for the services they can provide to local residents with accessibility needs. DisabledGo send specialist surveyors to leisure centres and other public facilities, accessing them against 19 points, enabling disabled people to judge for themselves if the

40. There are over 1.5m disabled Londoners of which 72 per cent never play sport. 60 per cent of these report health concerns as their greatest barrier to participation (648,000 people). Of this, 14 per cent reported needing more advice (90,720), and 9 per cent reported needing greater supervision (58,320).

41. [http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgn/leisure\\_and\\_culture/sport\\_and\\_physical\\_activity/find\\_a\\_leisure\\_centre.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgn/leisure_and_culture/sport_and_physical_activity/find_a_leisure_centre.aspx)

leisure centre suits their needs<sup>42</sup>. This list includes: level access and automatic doors; access by ramps; suitability for mobility impaired walkers; seat availability; WC accessible; changing rooms; large print; braille; hearing systems; parking; sign language used; disability awareness training; and others<sup>443</sup>.

While DisabledGo's unique system is allowing for greater independence and choice for disabled people in accessing their local leisure centres, they do have reservations about providing a symbol guaranteeing appropriate staff training. While they can access whether venues have disability awareness training at the time of survey and during their annual review, they emphasize that practices can vary and business ownership can change, often resulting in different approaches to disability. Despite these reservations, the symbol is included because it is something disabled people have stressed a need for<sup>44</sup>. Implementing the recommendations of this report would help to address these reservations and ensure that all leisure centres, as a minimum, could be awarded the DisabledGo badge for disability awareness/equality training.

Since the Mayor's Sports Facilities Fund first opened, councils across London have spent in excess of £48m on improving local leisure facilities, claiming over £7m in Mayoral grants to assist them. Over the course of these investments, changes in participation rates have been variable (anything between a 6 per cent increase in participation and a 10 per cent fall in participation), but with an average participation change of just 0.1 per cent across the whole of London over the last year, and a fall of 0.4 per cent since the 2012/13 peak, Londoners are clearly not getting what they need out of their Olympic Legacy.

The six Olympic growth boroughs (Barking and Dagenham, Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest)<sup>45</sup> - those boroughs that hosted the majority of the 2012 Olympic Games and were predicted to have the UK's strongest potential for growth - have between them seen £8.77m of overall spending on facilities and £1.6m of the grant allocations. Barking and Dagenham council has received only £50,000 from the Fund - the equivalent of £0.25 per person, whereas the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames - which is not an Olympic borough - has seen in excess of £650,000, equating to £3.46 per person. While Hackney, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest have seen small increases in participation (2 per cent, 2 per cent, and 3 per cent respectively), Newham has seen no change at all, and Barking and Dagenham and Greenwich have both seen significant falls (-6 per cent and - 7 per cent)<sup>46</sup>.

The boroughs that were promised the greatest Olympic Legacy are faring no better than London as a whole.

The councils representing the Olympic boroughs in particular must become experts in increasing sports participation and strive to demonstrate best practice. The Olympic boroughs must do more to seek out funding such as that available from the Mayor's Sports Legacy Programme and give their residents the Olympic and Paralympic legacies they were promised.

## SUMMARY

Of the 1.5m disabled people living in London, only 17.8 per cent take part in sport for 30 minutes or more at least once a week. If we wish to increase participation and fulfil the Paralympic Legacy London was promised, funding must be directed towards the most reported barriers to participation and sport made more accessible for the 20 per cent of Londoners with inclusivity needs.

42. <http://www.disabledgo.com/about-us>

43. <http://www.disabledgo.com/our-icons>

44. Ibid

45. <http://www.growthboroughs.com/>

46. GLA data

To achieve this, this report makes the following recommendations:

**RECOMMENDATION 1 - All future Mayoral sports funding allocations must continue to reflect the aims of Inclusive and Active 2.**

This must allow for improving facilities by upskilling staff as well as upgrading infrastructure. Investing in infrastructure alone will do little to increase participation unless it is accompanied by an investment in people.

**RECOMMENDATION 2 - All council run leisure facilities should be required to send every member of staff on a disability and inclusivity training course.**

This should include all front of house leisure staff: receptionists; catering and support staff; fitness assistants; membership advisors; activity or class leaders; and centre managers. Councils should fund this by applying for Mayoral grants.

Non-council run leisure facilities and larger sports clubs should also be encouraged to follow best practice.

**RECOMMENDATION 3 - Every leisure centre should ensure that a member of staff with an Exercise and Disability qualification (or similar) is present at all times.**

This would allow people with accessibility needs the flexibility to attend their local centre whenever they choose with the certainty that staff members are sufficiently skilled to provide adequate support. Providing more advice on how exercise can be adapted to suit different abilities would allow 90,000 more Londoners to get active, and providing proper supervision for disabled people could help a further 58,000.

**RECOMMENDATION 4 - Centres offering fitness programmes/exercise classes must ensure that staff designing and running them are aware of how to adapt fitness sessions for a range of accessibility needs.**

It is important this is included in any advertising for the activities to give reassurance to patrons and encourage their participation.

**Implementing the above changes would make sport and activity in London more inclusive for a fifth of Londoners, allowing more disabled people to enjoy the benefits of living a more active lifestyle and the Olympic boroughs must lead the way.**



## FEEDBACK

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**RICHARD TRACEY**  
LONDON ASSEMBLY  
Greater London Authority  
City Hall, The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA