



Measurement Consultation

Summary of responses

March 2013

Executive summary

We consulted during the summer of 2012 (June to August) on proposals to change the way sport is measured in the Taking Part (TP) and Active People (APS) surveys. There was an **excellent level of response** from a wide selection of stakeholders and our thanks go to all who took the time to respond.

Support for proposals:

Overall, we received **considerable support** for the proposals, alongside some areas for further consideration. Most respondents supported **local and sport specific measurement**, with a **single result for sport**, and **data collected through a mixed mode**. Consultees also expressed the **importance of retaining consistency** with previous results, which means that we need to implement any potential changes carefully through testing and with technical advice.

We are therefore proposing to continue to ask sport participation questions in Taking Part Survey, but on behalf of Sport England. This means that sport participation data will not be analysed and reported on by DCMS or in the Taking Part publications. This approach allows for the inclusion of face-to-face data within Active People over time, so that Active People can become a fully mixed-mode survey. In the shorter term the data will be used to validate the landline estimates

What we are implementing now:

- APS data collection was extended to **include 14 and 15 year olds** from summer 2012
- Sport questions in TP and APS will be **harmonised** from 1st April 2013, to contribute to a single measure of sports participation
- From June 2013 there will be one result for sport, which will be reported by APS, with results informed by face to face collection (undertaken through TP)
- Taking Part **cross cultural results and child survey** will not be impacted

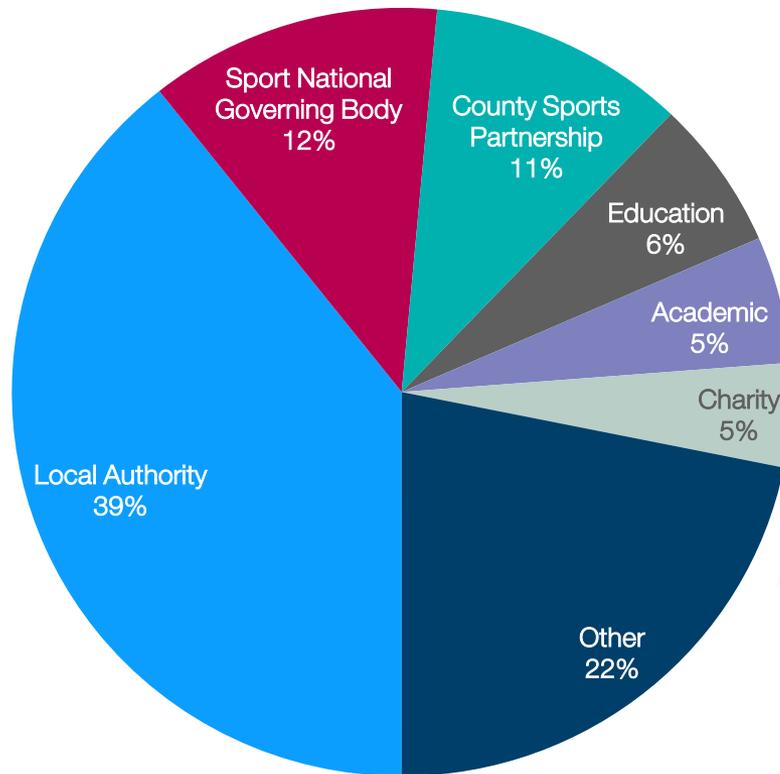
Technical work to has informed this process:

- **Data collection using mobile phones** – mobile phone telephone interviews with mobile only households were tested during APS 5 (2010-11) and data collection commenced in October 2012 via mobile phones without screening for mobile phone only households and via a mobile ‘app’
- An **online pilot** has been set up and fieldwork commenced in November 2012 with results due in spring 2013
- **Parallel runs of face to face and telephone interviewing** using the APS questions to measure mode differences
- Assessment of the **impact of prompting** and options for using prompts in telephone interviewing
- The Methodology Advisory Service and the Government Statistical Service Methodological Advisory Committee within the Office of National Statistics and the survey contractors TNS BMRB have provided **guidance on mixed-mode integration** of results
- Work on the **contract and procurement** to allow there to be a single contract in the future

Background and the consultation process

- Consultation was undertaken to gain stakeholder views on proposals to bring together the Taking Part (TP) and Active People (APS) surveys, with an aim of delivering the following benefits:
 - The right measurement to support the new [youth and community strategy](#);
 - Underpin performance management of Sport England investment into sport National Governing Bodies;
 - A single measure of sports participation, instead of the two we have currently;
 - Improved value for public money;
 - Data collection that provides wider coverage of the population;
 - Improved public confidence in sport statistics; and
 - Continued support of the public health outcomes framework and local authority work through provision of local level data.
- Pages on the [DCMS](#) and [Sport England](#) (SE) websites explained the consultation process, hosted supporting documentation and provided a link to an online survey. These pages and the consultation were publicised to stakeholders via DCMS and SE research newsletters.
- The survey was available for completion for a 12 week period from 17th May to 8th August.
- 204 survey responses were received in total, either via the online system or email.
- A small number of additional submissions and supplementary information provided outside of the survey format have also been incorporated into this report.

Local authorities made up the single largest group of the 204 respondents, but a high proportion of both Sport National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) also responded



Other :

(number of responses)

- Other public sector (7)
- Leisure trust (7)
- Health agency (6)
- Sports club (6)
- Other national organisation (6)
- Research agency/consultancy (3)
- Commercial provider (3)
- Government department (2)
- Sport England National Partner (2)
- Self employed consultant (1)
- Housing (1)
- Sports Forum (1)

Q: What type of organisation do you represent?

Base: 204 responses

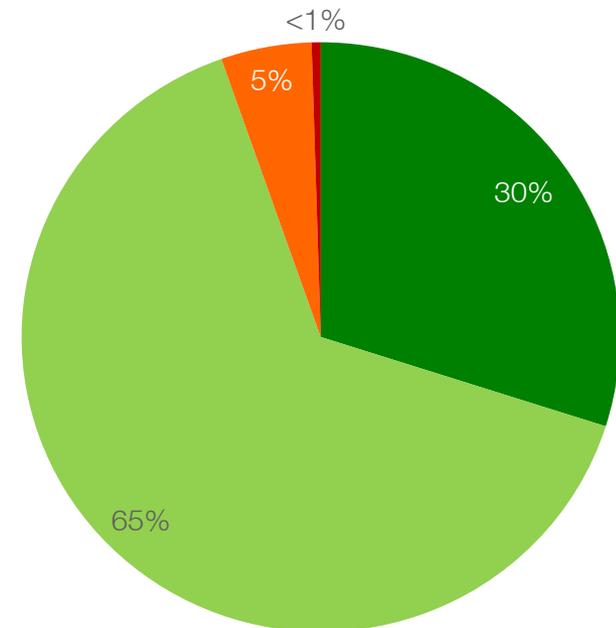
There is wide (over 90%) support for a single measure for sport and integration of sport in APS and TP, but most are 'broadly' rather than 'completely' supportive
Verbatim comments provide details of particular requirements and are discussed throughout this report

The proposed changes:

- A single measure for sport (rather than two surveys);
- Minor changes to the sports questions within TP and APS to harmonise them;
- A single set of sport results;
- Integrating the face to face and landline telephone data collection methods of TP and APS;
- A total sample size (160,000 interviews) of sufficient scale for local measurement of sports participation data;
- Extend data collection to ask 14 and 15 year olds the same sports questions as adults; and
- A research project into digital means of data collection (online and mobile phone), with a view to integrating results over time.

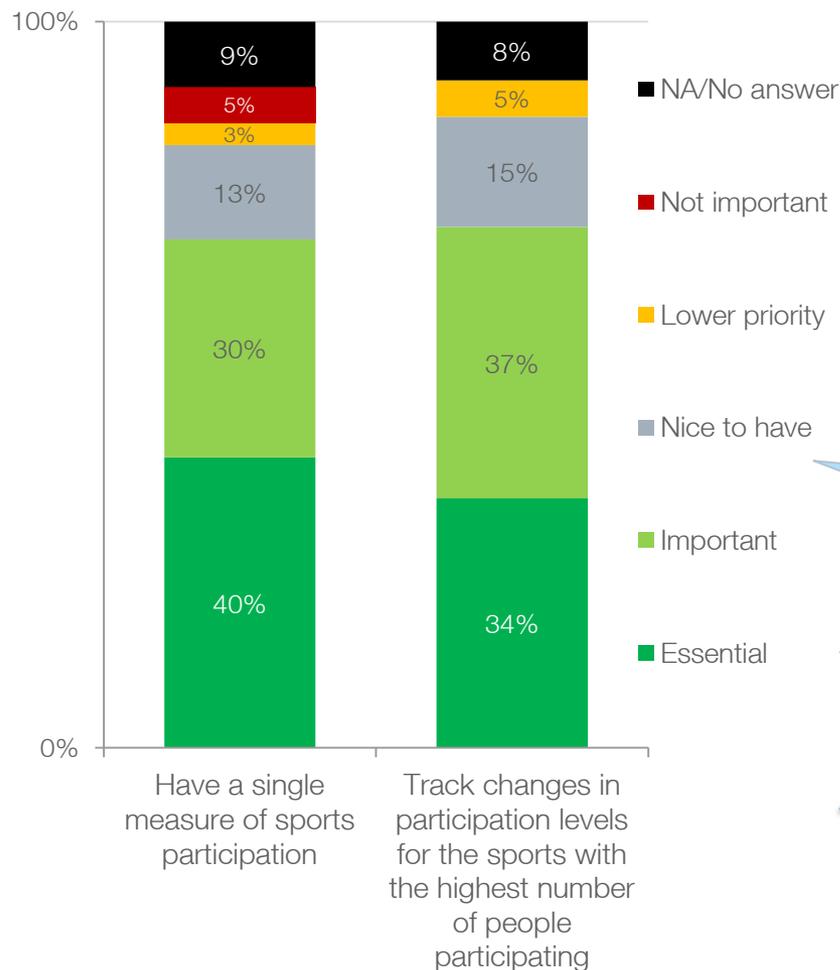
Support for our proposed changes

■ Completely supportive ■ Broadly supportive
■ Not wholly supportive ■ Completely disagree



Q: Are you supportive, or not, of our proposed changes?
Base: 204 responses

Single measure of sport: There is strong support for a single measure (70%), whilst retaining various indicators within sport and recreation. Sport by sport and health indicators are also considered important



Free text (verbatim) responses:

Around 8% of the verbatim comments received included a reiteration of support for a single measure of sports participation.

There was considerable demand for the survey to continue to provide measurement of physical activity (separately from sport), and to do this in a manner aligned to health guidelines (150 minutes a week) to link to health work and funding streams. Similar interest in outputs relating to health, physical activity and inactivity.

Respondents felt the survey should provide results from the widest of physical activity and active travel measures to much narrower definitions of sport.

There were also requests for more sport specific questions to provide greater insight from those taking part in sport and to ensure different forms of the sport are accurately collected and included in the measurement (see final comment below).

“it seems the most logical approach to combine the surveys to provide a more comprehensive and comparable data set moving forward.” **Health agency**

“...both traditional and informal forms of a sport should be included.” **Sport NGB**

“Ideally we would want to have more methods of measuring sports participation in order to have more than one point of reference, i.e. greater sources of data in order to compare results” **Sport NGB**

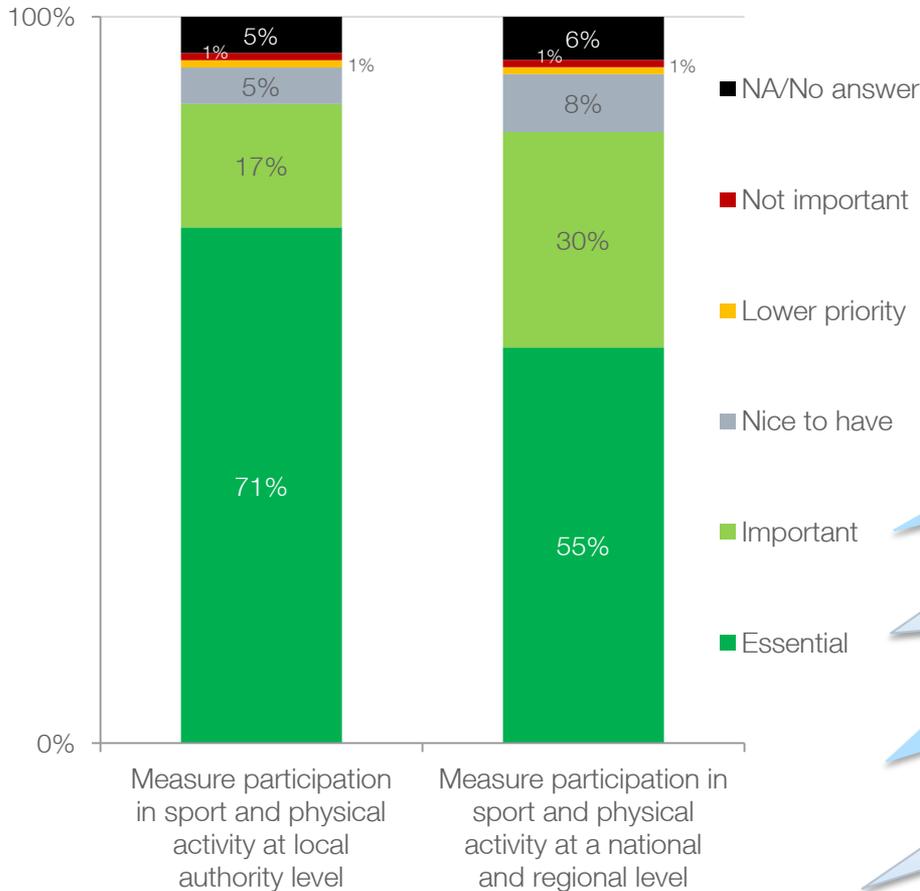
“More needs to be done to ensure the survey is a wanted tool for national governing bodies... once a participant has declared they play a specific sport they [should be] asked more detailed sport specific questions... this means that while the state of the nation and the aggregated position of all sports in relation to the health agenda can be tracked through 1 x 30 segments, sports organisations will be provided with genuinely useful and detailed data about patterns of participation and how their sports are played. These measures should calculate regularity of participation, levels of exertion and sense of wellbeing... This would allow sports to better address specific shortcomings in their participation profiles.” **Other national organisation**

“Measurement of Type of golf: whether 18 hole, 9 hole, Par, 3 or Pitch & Putt ... Measurement by annual play occasions: enabling the sport to overcome seasonality and identify core golfers as well as avid golfers (who play once a week or more).” **Sport NGB**

Q: In the section below you can provide your views on the priorities for the things we measure, our technical approach and the outputs from the survey

Base: 204 responses

Geography: Strong demand to measure participation in sport and physical activity at local authority level (considered essential by over 70% of respondents), plus strong support for a national measure



Free text (verbatim) responses:

Around 15% of all the verbatim comments related to either:

- Ensuring the current total sample size was maintained;
- Increasing the total sample size;
- Providing larger samples at local authority level;
- Interest in more sport specific data at a local authority level; or
- Data at smaller geographical levels.

These respondents were often seeking data to better measure the impact of specific interventions or NGB programmes.

Three respondents suggested reducing the number of face-to-face interviews to permit a larger overall sample size (but, five respondents sought more face-to-face interviews).

“Maintain local data for local interpretation that fits the needs of public health.” **Other**

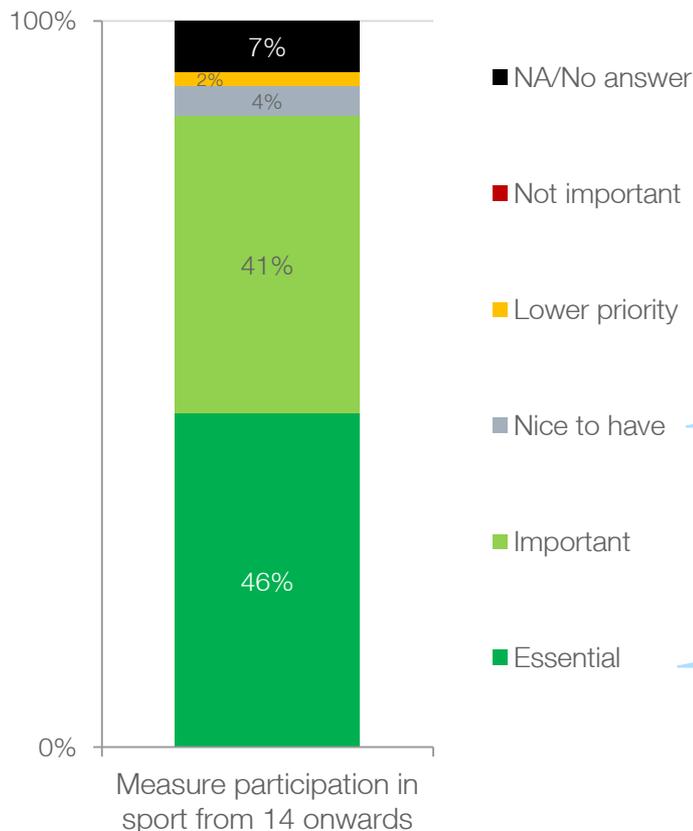
“Being able to... disaggregate the results into various sub-categories, e.g. age group, disability, gender, ward level (in order to commission effectively at a local level)” **Local authority**

“...analysis at Local Authority level... is the most important element of the APS to us... must contain a local element that is as consistent as possible with data from previous years.” **CSP**

“...very important to be able to view data and understand trends at a local level. Without statistically significant local level data it is very difficult for sports to track and subsequently influence local planning and interventions.” **Sport NGB**

“Would have liked... an option which included increasing the.. sample size... 500 per LA is the minimum to provide accurate data on overall participation at an LA level (and, for the majority of sports, is not useful for sport-specific analysis at or below a regional / sub regional level..)” **Sport NGB**

Age ranges: There was support for extending data collection to include 14 and 15 year olds (by 87% of respondents), but there was also some demand for including respondents younger than 14



Free text (verbatim) responses:

6% of the verbatim comments suggested data should be collected from respondents younger than 14 and these people expressed interest in distinguishing between in and out of school activity for the younger ages to monitor the impact of school sport and curriculum changes.

Some respondents questioned how results could be compared to previous years when the younger age group is included.

A small number of respondents also expressed concern that the sample size for individual year of age would be smaller because of widening the survey to 14 and 15 year olds.

“Including 14 & 15 year olds is key to measure against the new strategy but how this will then be looked at against previous years' APS results that were 16+ is a question mark.” **CSP**

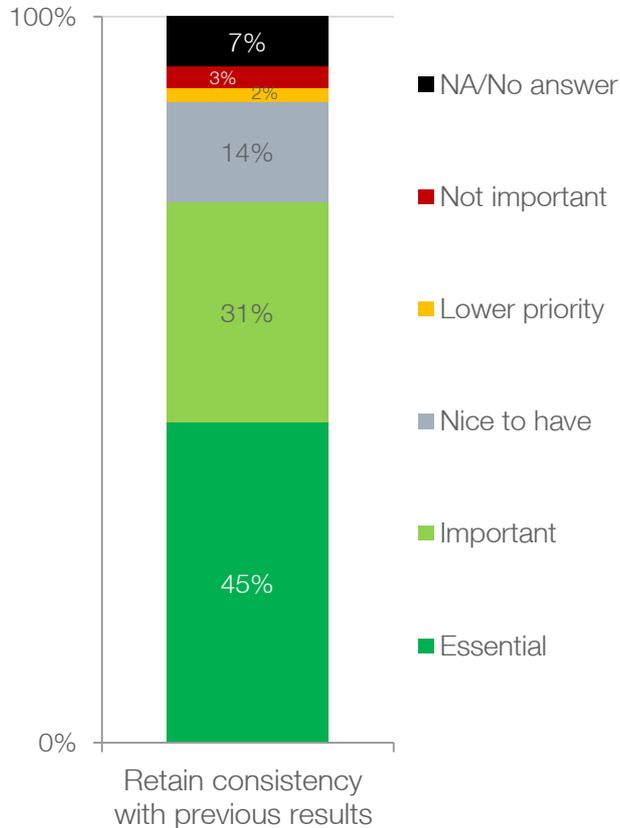
“Young people under 14 need to be considered with the same measure done through schools so we have a constant data track.” **Local authority**

“Although clearly complex and more difficult for a number of reasons it would be very beneficial to have something in place to replace the old PESSYP survey as well.” **Local authority**

“The participation rate for 14/15 years old will obviously be a lot higher due to their involvement in schools, we feel this would skew the results, if they were not separated.” **Education**

“Measuring participation in sport from 14 years is a positive step, but participation decline begins at a younger age (normally KS2 to KS3 transition). Including a measure from age 11 would allow policy makers to help prevent drop-off through targeted interventions rather than use remedial methods at a level age. A habit for life does not start at 14 years.” **CSP**

Consistency: highlighted by 76% of respondents and some concerns were raised about the challenges in integrating data from a number of different data collection modes



Free text (verbatim) responses:

Consistency and reliability seen as key by many, so support for the changes is tempered by concerns around our ability to reconcile changes and provide trend data which allows for historical comparisons.

Respondents were clear that a key priority is to have data which provides trend information and to be able to compare results from any new survey with the data they have previously used from the existing surveys.

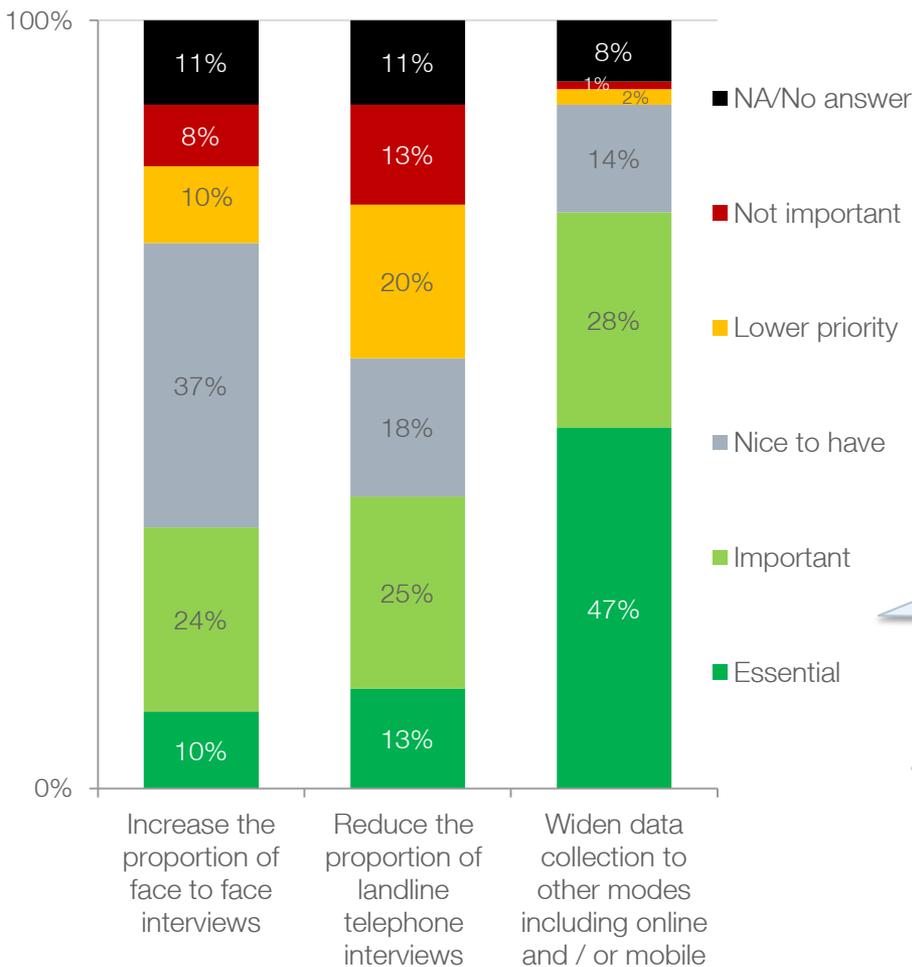
A number of respondents highlighted the need to ensure the data is robust, reliable and valid and the risk posed by the complexity of integrating results from a variety of data collection modes.

However, others support the introduction of the additional modes as soon as possible.

- “ ... It is key that whatever changes are made, results can be robustly compared to the current AP data, to enable trends over time to be measured.” **CSP**
- “It is essential we can compare with previous results” **Education**
- “I don't see why mobile phones are considered "digital" along with computers/ online responses. In my experience large swathes of the population have no been using landlines for almost 10 years now.” **CSP**
- “It is essential to provide continuity of data and statistical reliability. Ensuring that new physical activity measures are also reported on will be essential to maintain credibility within this sector” **CSP**
- “I agree with the changes, especially the range of data collection... This will encourage a more representative sample of the population and not just those with landlines. It is very important the survey is kept up to date with the sources of technology used by most people..” **CSP**
- “The inclusion of new technology will we hope ensure that young people will respond” **Local authority**

Q: In the section below you can provide your views on the priorities for the things we measure, our technical approach and the outputs from the survey
Base: 204 responses

Mode: Online and mobile data collection are of most interest (75% consider this essential/important), but more mixed opinions regarding the balance of face to face and landline interviews



Free text (verbatim) responses:

There is strong support for including online and mobile in sport data collection. This is driven by:

- The increasing numbers of households without landlines
- The opinion that landline telephone interviews and face-to-face in-home interviewing may not capture the participation of highly active people because they are perceived to be 'rarely at home and doing everything online/on their phones'
- The need to understand and measure young people's participation in particular (where landline may be least effective)

Around 6% of all the verbatim comments included further mention of support for the introduction of mobile and/or online data collection (half of these noted these modes are essential for young people.)

There was a mix of comments about the appropriate level of face-to-face interviewing, with some respondents very supportive of this mode and others who viewed this as less of a priority.

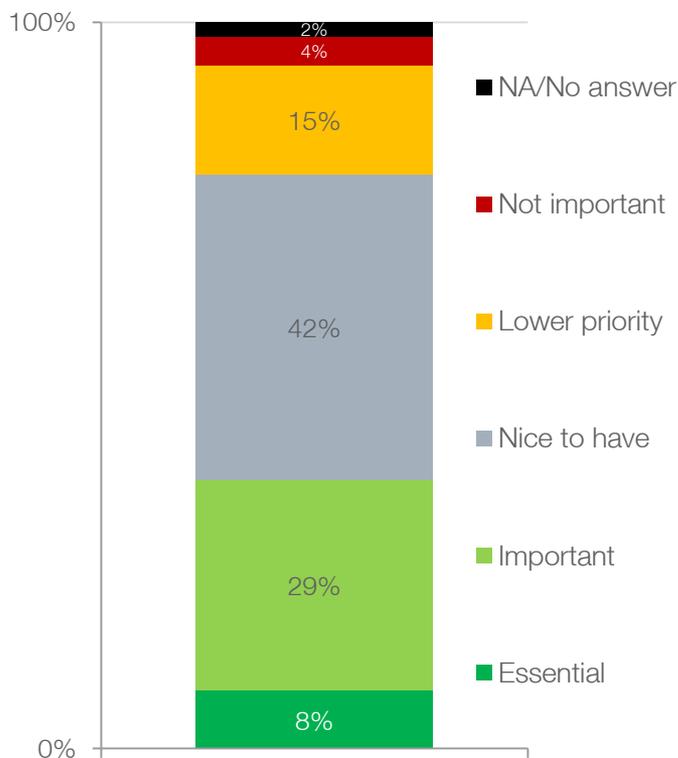
"As a sport with a large proportion of student participants we feel it is essential that a way of tracking participation amongst those without landlines is essential and should be included from the start." **Sport NGB**

"Replacing landline interviews with online and mobile interviews is essential for the longevity of the survey. Given that the Government's strategy targets young people now a move to more modern forms of technology is vital 1 in 3 (32%) 16-24 year old households are mobile only, so youngsters will be missed by focusing on landlines and face to face interviews- especially the more sporty ones who are out and about." **Other national organisation**

"Being physically active and doing sport... are socially highly desirable behaviours and... respondents may tend to lie... to make themselves look better or get positive recognition from the interviewer... If the face-to-face interviews are to be household interviews, there is also the problem with certain demographic groups being far more reachable/likely to be at home and answer the door than others. Interviewer influences in telephone interviews are easier to control... and people are likely to care less what 'the stranger on the other end of the line' thinks of their sports engagement." **Other public sector**

Q: In the section below you can provide your views on the priorities for the things we measure, our technical approach and the outputs from the survey
Base: 204 responses

Communicating results: Around a third of respondents would like to see the same output as currently. There is also demand for continued reporting of various indicators (e.g. frequency, satisfaction)



Sport data published in same way as currently on Sport England and DCMS websites (e.g. press releases, reports and Excel spreadsheets)

Free text (verbatim) responses:

37% consider it is important/essential to continue publishing results in the same format as currently. This appears lower priority than other suggestions. Seven respondents specifically requested previous measures such as NI8, satisfaction and volunteering are retained.

There were some requests for information that is already collected, (e.g. number of activities, reasons for non-participation, competitive sport, local demographics) perhaps implying communication of this information could be improved or more detail is desirable.

There were a small number of queries or misconceptions about data collection (eg, ensuring telephone interviews are carried out on different days and at different times of day, including evenings and weekends). This currently takes place while adhering to the Market Research Society's code of conduct which states that call must not be made to a household before 9am weekdays and Saturdays and 10am Sundays and calls must not be made after 9pm any day except by appointment. We also have a robust non-response strategy where, if there is no answer at the household/on the phone, up to 8 repeat calls are made to a household for a TP face-to-face interview and numbers are tried a maximum of 40 times before being classified as 'dead' for an APS landline telephone interview.

There were comments around seasonality of data collection, particularly for those in education settings.

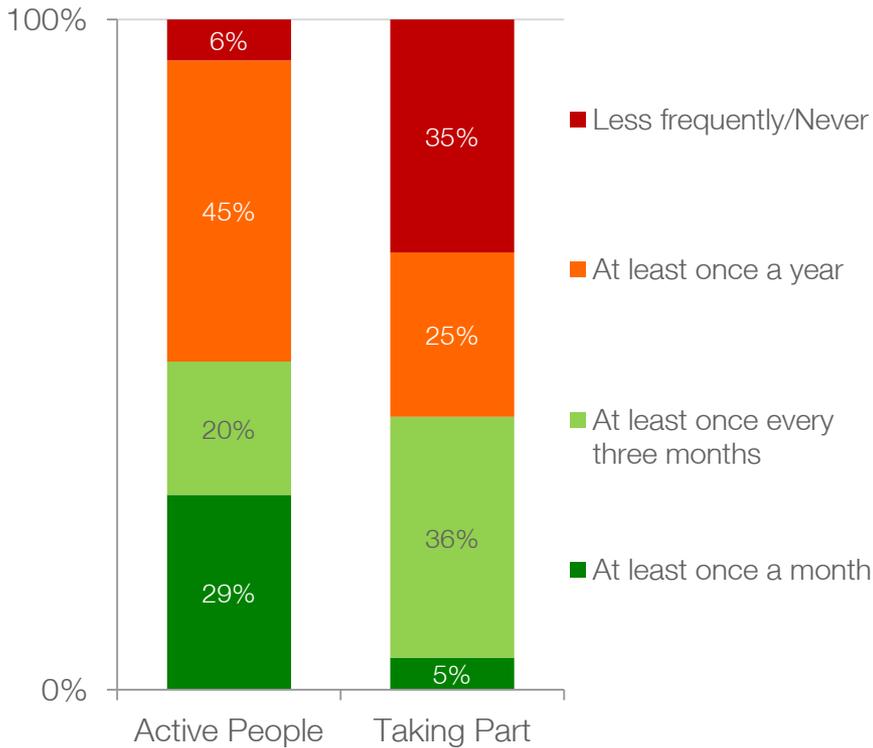
"Concerns regarding sampling of student populations, seasonality and the fact a minor change might make a big impact and the non collection of people who spend extended periods abroad (e.g. seasonnaires or retired people)." **Sport NGB**

"Why August collection? Holiday time may give better adult results, out of term time more informal activity by students but mostly less as school sport and activities free!! ...summer lowers rates & more informal which will skew results." **Academic**

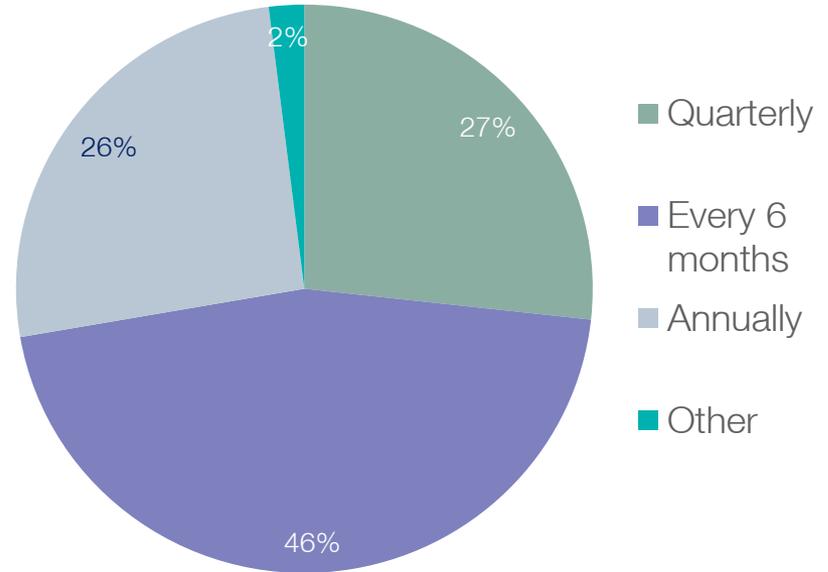
"Those authorities with larger or smaller communities should be reflected in the outputs and the collection of data." **Education**

Q: In the section below you can provide your views on the priorities for the things we measure, our technical approach and the outputs from the survey
Base: 204 responses

Timing of survey results: Respondents use APS results more frequently than those from TP¹. There is demand for sport results to be released six monthly



Q: Which results do you currently use and how often?
Base: 197 / 168 responses

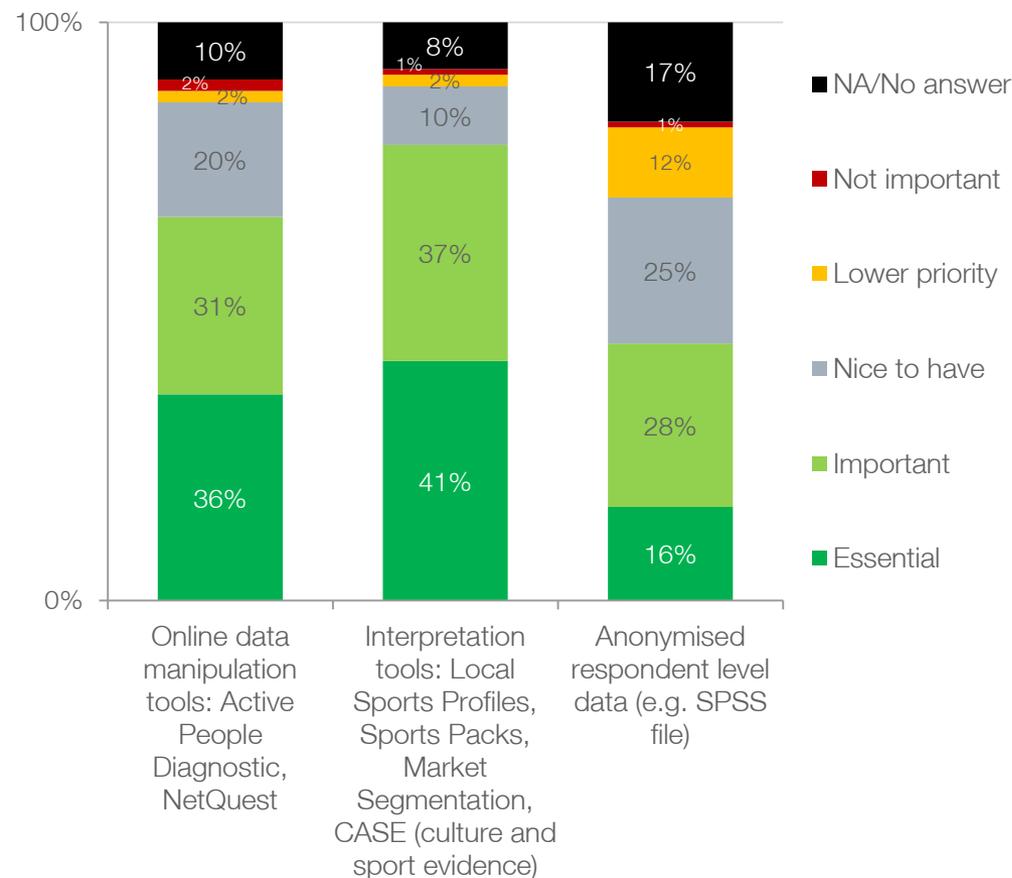


“Every two years to lower costs”
“As soon as is possible”
“...happy with 6 monthly – but... look at trends ...and own NGB data at least quarterly.”

Q: How often would you like the new sports results to be published?
Base: 197 responses

1. Please note, the survey was about sports participation results and so there are other TP users who are less likely to have responded to the consultation.

Data tools: There is demand for tools to support the use of data and results and some interest in respondent level data



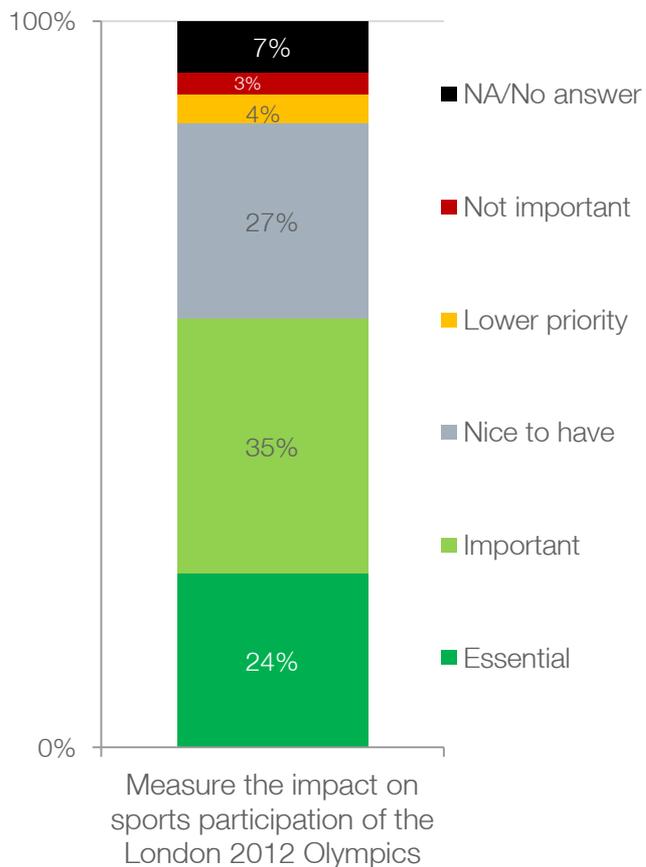
Free text (verbatim) responses:

There is considerable interest in both access to diagnostic tools and / or ready to analyse datasets. However, these need to be easier to use and updated in a more timely manner.

There is a general desire for tailored outputs (targeted analysis or sport specific data) meeting respondent's specific needs and support to understand the data.

Respondents noted the complicated nature of the data set and highlighted the importance of clearer communication or support to understand the measures and a need for help with analysis.

Olympic effect: Measuring the impact of the Olympics is considered important by over half of consultees



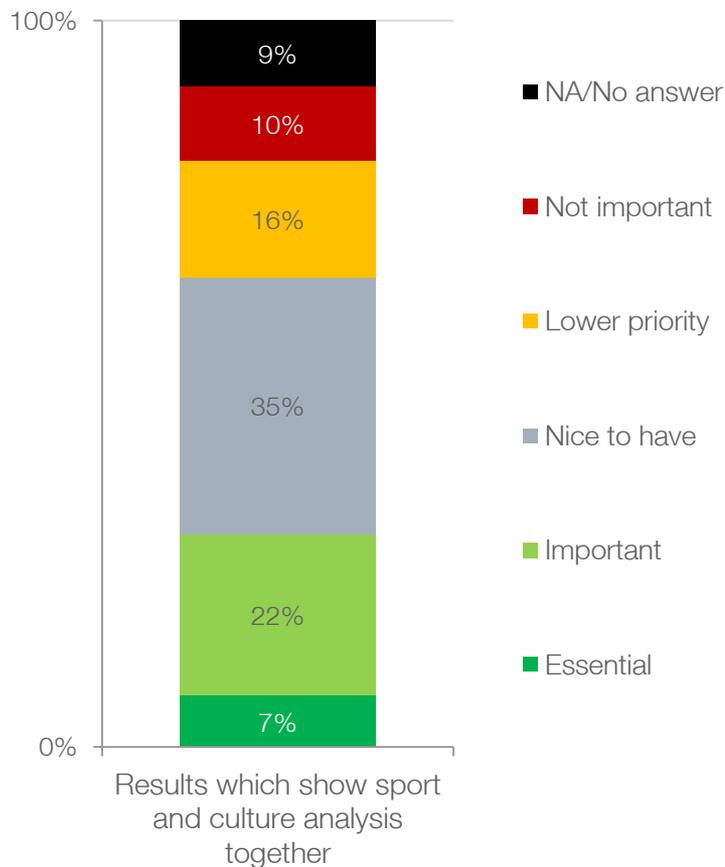
Free text (verbatim) responses:

There is support for monitoring the impact of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games on sports participation in England. Some respondents believe this means the timing of the changes to the surveys is inappropriate given the risk to continuity of results.

“The timing of changing these surveys could not be worse as it will be impossible to know for sure if changes in sports participation (should there be any) are a result of changes in the way data is collected or down to other factors such as the Olympic legacy initiatives... Even if weights are applied to even things out, there is still going to be some statistical error. This could be widely avoided if both surveys were continued and results integrated... or at least the Active People survey was continued in the same way... data is always more valid if it comes from more than one source. The truest value is likely to be somewhere between the two survey’s results.”

Other public sector

Cross cultural data: There is demand for continued provision of sport alongside other cultural activities in Taking Part



Free text (verbatim) responses:

Although less important to a large proportion, there is support for cross-cultural data, showing sport and culture results together¹.

Some expressed an interest in comparative data (e.g. to other local authorities or other markets), while others sought for the data to be presented in line with other data sources.

“...Comparisons with LA ONS neighbours and overlaying APS data with local health and other important local data.” **CSP**

“The way the results are presented to NGB’s should be enhanced to ensure the sport understands out of the once a week figure what proportion are once a week all year, once a week for part of the year etc. The seasonality breakdown should be provided also to understand month by month changes and also the total number of ‘whole’ people involved as well as the sum of monthly participants to give the AP number baseline.” **Sport NGB**

Q: In the section below you can provide your views on the priorities for the things we measure, our technical approach and the outputs from the survey
Base: 204 responses

1. Please note, the survey was about sports participation results and so there may be others who use cross-cultural data who are less likely to have responded to the consultation.

Other issues: Verbatim responses also reveal a desire for wider and deeper data collection

Additional elements:

- There is a large amount of interest in a longitudinal element to track participation at an individual level and better understand retention, drop-off and transition issues.
- There is also a desire for more qualitative information to better understand participation habits, trends and a deeper understanding of reasons for non-participation. There is some expectation that the face-to-face element will provide this.
- There were some specific requests around ensuring the survey methodology allowed for data collection from disabled people.

In respondents' own words:

“Longitudinal impact of developing a sporting lifestyle. E.g. Active team sports, especially Rugby Union & Rugby League, see marked drop off in mid 20s, but impact of playing for formative young adult years is a lifetime commitment to training. These sports are far more important in developing lifestyle patterns.”

Research agency/consultancy

“The surveys should include longitudinal panels in order to show how change is occurring rather than a series of parallel snapshots.”

Sport NGB

“Face to face interviews will allow more qualitative data to be clawed and will be vital in analysing peoples behaviour in sport.”

CSP

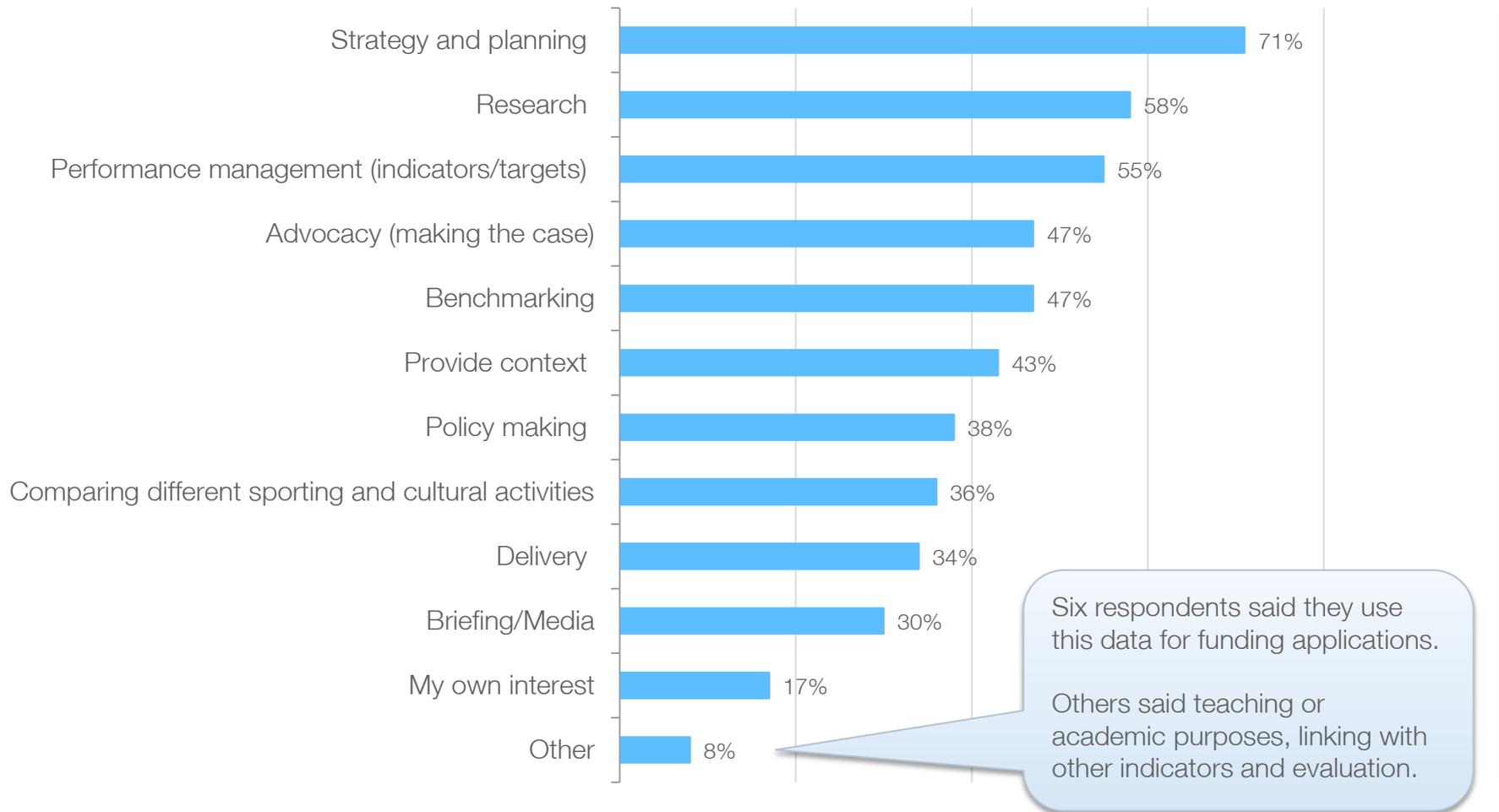
“I would want re-assurance that face to face interviews take into account need of disabled people”

Other national organisation

“Concerns about how you are going to make the surveys accessible to deaf people... Concerns about how are you going to inform deaf people that the survey is accessible .”

Sport NGB

Use of sport data: The data is used for multiple purposes by each user



Q: What do you currently use the data for? (respondents could choose more than one)
Base: 204 responses