



Breaking Barriers Toolkit – Section One

# Why disabled teenage girls?



In partnership with:

This section of the Breaking Barriers toolkit provides an overview of disabled teenage girls' participation in sport and exercise. You can use these statistics as evidence to support the development of your own sport or exercise offers aimed at disabled teenage girls.

## What is the need?

### Growing Population

Disabled females make up 12.2% of females aged 10-19 years old in England. This has increased significantly since 2011 when disabled females made up 6.8% of this age group.

**Source:** Office for National Statistics (2023), [Disability by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

### Wellbeing

Disabled girls score lower across well-being measures when compared to non-disabled girls. In the latest Active Lives data disabled girls (aged 5-16 years old) score on average 5.5 out of 10 for happiness compared to non-disabled girls who score 7.1 on average.

**Source:** Sport England (2023), [Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Academic Year 2022-23](#)



## Participation

The Youth Sport Trust's Girls Active Survey found that disabled girls, in school years 3-6, take part in 60 minutes or more of physical activity for an average of 3.6 days per week. As disabled girls get older, their participation in physical activity decreases to 3.2 days per week for girls in school years 7-13.

**Source:** Sport England (2023), Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Academic Year 2022-23

64% of disabled teenage girls say they don't take part in sport or exercise regularly.

**Source:** Access Sport, Breaking Barriers: Supporting Disabled Teenage Girls to be Active Research Project 2024

## Enjoyment

Enjoyment of physical activity decreases during teenage years. 85% of disabled girls, aged 7-11 years old, report enjoying physical activity compared to 66% of disabled girls aged 11-18 years old.

**Source:** Sport England (2023), Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Academic Year 2022-23

The Youth Sport Trust found that 66% of disabled teenage girls enjoy physical activity. This is lower than both disabled boys aged 7-18 years old (79%) and non-disabled teenage girls (71%).

**Source:** Youth Sport Trust (2023), Girls Active National Report

## Confidence

Disabled girls (ages 5-16) are less likely to feel confident playing sport and exercising compared to non-disabled girls. 67% of disabled girls feel confident playing sport and exercising compared to 80% of non-disabled girls.

**Source:** Sport England (2023), Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Academic Year 2022-23