

Leisure activities

Key facts from the Life Opportunities Survey - Wave one results, 2009/11(1)

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a large-scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain. Results from the full first wave of the survey were published on the 8th December 2011 and the information below presents some of the key findings from this report. The report and the key findings below update the interim findings that were published in December 2010 based on the first half of wave one interviews.

In addition to these results, presented in boxes are some of the previously published findings from the qualitative research that was commissioned to complement the statistics provided by the LOS(2).

The information below explores barriers to participation experienced by adults, aged 16 and over, to leisure activities. Eight leisure activities are shown by impairment status in Table 1 below.

Participation in leisure activities

Adults with impairment(3) were more likely than adults without impairment to experience barriers to participating in all leisure activities. In particular adults with impairment were more likely to experience barriers to participating in sport than adults without impairment (72 per cent and 54 per cent respectively).

Table 1: Participation in leisure activities by impairment status, 2009/11

Activity	Percentage of adults without impairment	Percentage of adults with impairment
Going on holiday	56	66
Visiting friends	39	47
Spending time with family	33	38
Playing sport	54	72
Charitable or voluntary work	65	67
Going to a museum or place of historic interest	58	68
Going to the theatre, cinema or other arts activity	53	63
Going to the library or archive	43	47

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave One Results, 2009/11

1 http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/los/index.php?page=los_wor

2 <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/life-opportunities-survey.php>

3 Please refer to the definition of impairment status included in Introduction of the Life Opportunities Survey Wave One Report, 2009/11.

Barriers to taking part in leisure activities

68 per cent of adults with impairment had at least one barrier to going to museums or historical places of interest compared with 58 per cent of adults without impairment.

Among all adults, the most common barriers to not being able to take part in most leisure activities were that they were too expensive or that people were too busy to take part. For example:

- 19 per cent of both adults with and without impairment reported that it was too expensive to play sport as much as they would like to
- 41 per cent of adults with impairment reported that they were too busy or didn't have enough time to go to a museum or historic place of interest as much as they would like to compared with 74 per cent of adults without impairment

Adults in the qualitative research described how their choices over what activities they took part in were dependent on cost and securing means of payment for those activities. For example, one adult with impairment was only able to attend the gym because his brother paid for his membership as a gift. Attending the gym kept him motivated and helped him to improve his muscle strength and as a result he is able to walk further and has more energy. His brother has renewed his membership, so he can continue to go to the gym for another year.

Difficulties with transport were more likely to have been a barrier for adults with impairment compared with adults without impairment. For example having difficulty with transport was a barrier to:

- going to a museum or place of historic interest (13 per cent and 5 per cent respectively)
- visiting friends (12 per cent and 5 per cent respectively)
- going to the theatre, cinema or other arts activity (10 per cent and 4 per cent respectively)

A lack of public transport was also identified as a key barrier by adults with impairment in the qualitative research. This was particularly regarded as a barrier to taking part in leisure activities in the evening, when adults with impairment were less confident in driving and public transport options were more limited.

Adults with impairment provided examples of other barriers to participating in leisure activities. For example:

- one adult with impairment remarked that the local social club had a wheelchair-accessible toilet for men, but not for women. As a wheelchair user herself, she had stopped attending.
- previous experiences of discrimination or inappropriate attitudes had caused adults with impairment to give up activities or even to stop going out. For example, the carer of a young female adult with impairment explained:

“People put her off sometimes. Because when you see her she looks perfectly normal, so I think people, when they hear her voice...Then she’ll start noticing everyone’s attention to herself, but she can’t understand, she goes, “Everybody’s looking at me.” She probably thinks she’s in a fishbowl. In society people can be quite cruel.”

Choice over use of free time

Adults with impairment were more likely than those without impairment to say they have little or no choice over how they spent their free time (27 per cent and 15 per cent respectively).

The qualitative research shows that having choice around leisure activities is linked to various factors, including the availability of transport to leisure activities, having access to equipment and assistance to make leisure activities more accessible and to having sufficient financial resources to afford to take part. Where adults with impairment lacked choice, they could find access to leisure activities outside of the home limited, as shown by the quote below.

“I spend about 24-and-a-half hours in the house, except on Thursdays when it’s 23.”