



**Port of London Authority:**  
**Active Thames Participation and Workforce Study**  
**August 2021**  
**Summary and Full Report**

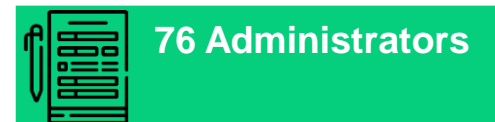
**MAYOR OF LONDON**



# Summary

# Research Overview

942 responses from:

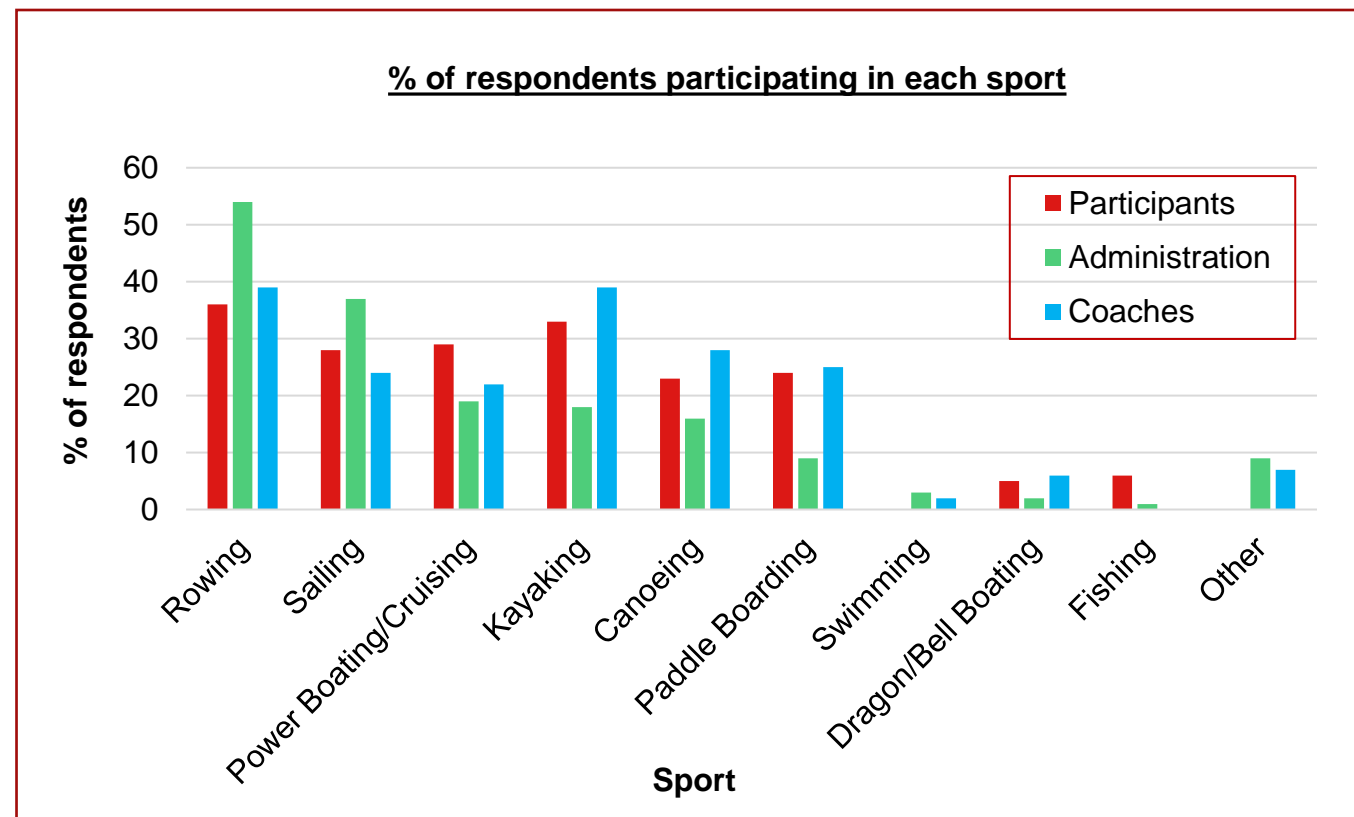


To enhance the understanding of motives, feelings and barriers to participation London Sport conducted two stages of research among three key groups.

**Stage 1:** A quantitative self-completion online survey. This was open to all and advertised across a range of digital platforms.

**Stage 2:** A qualitative online community consultation to explore issues in depth. Respondents signed up to this at the end of stage 1.

Responses came from across several sports, as shown in the graph opposite.

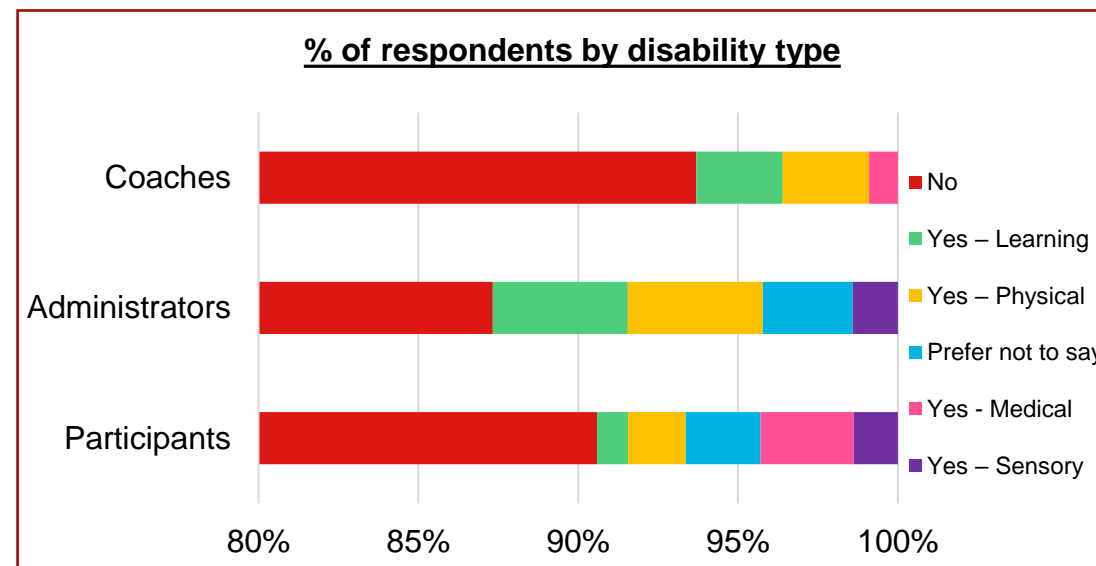
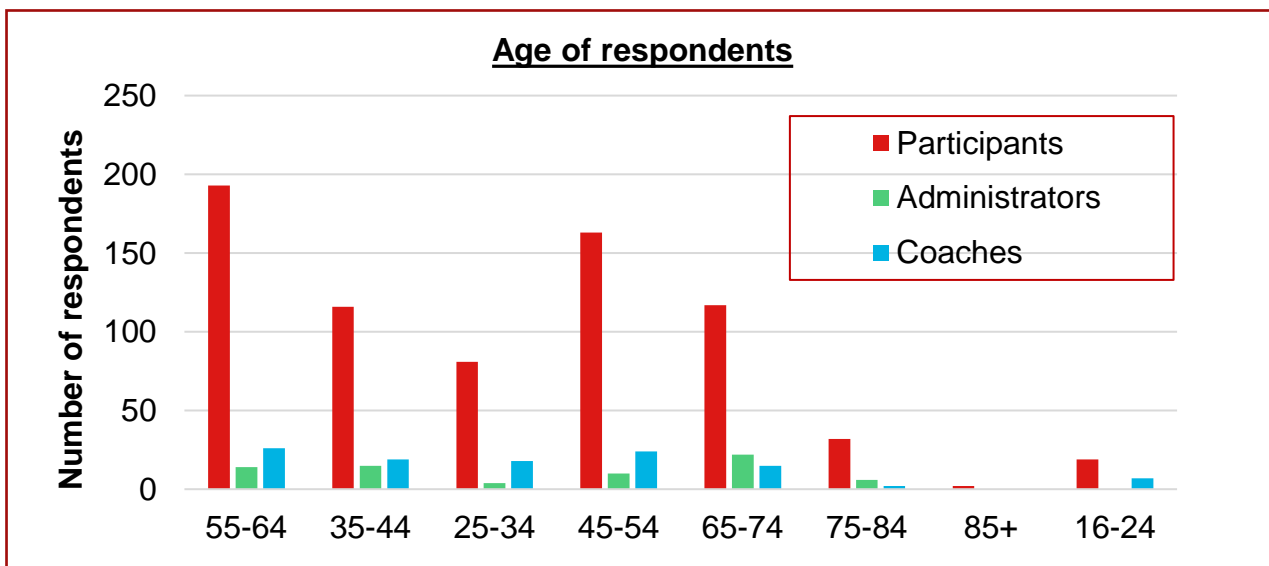


# Research Overview

Representatives from **214 organisations** responded across the three groups of participants, administrators and coaches.

Organisations included sports clubs, uniformed groups, charities, associations, schools, governing bodies and commercial providers.

Of these organisations, **139** deliver sport on waterways that feed participation into the tidal Thames and Estuary. This includes non-tidal waterways in Greater London, Kent and Essex such as docks and canals.



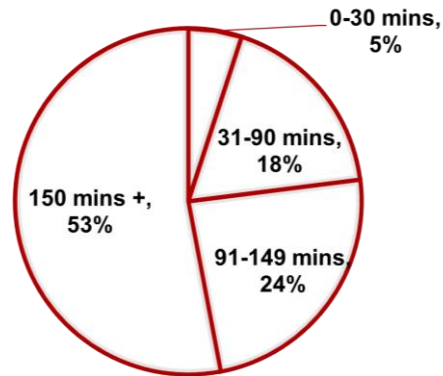
# Participants




751 Participants

- 60% Male, 40% Female
- 5% from ethnically diverse communities
- 70% under 45 years old
- 78% motivated to participate by social reasons
- 70% members of water sports clubs and 32% are members of national governing bodies (NGBs)

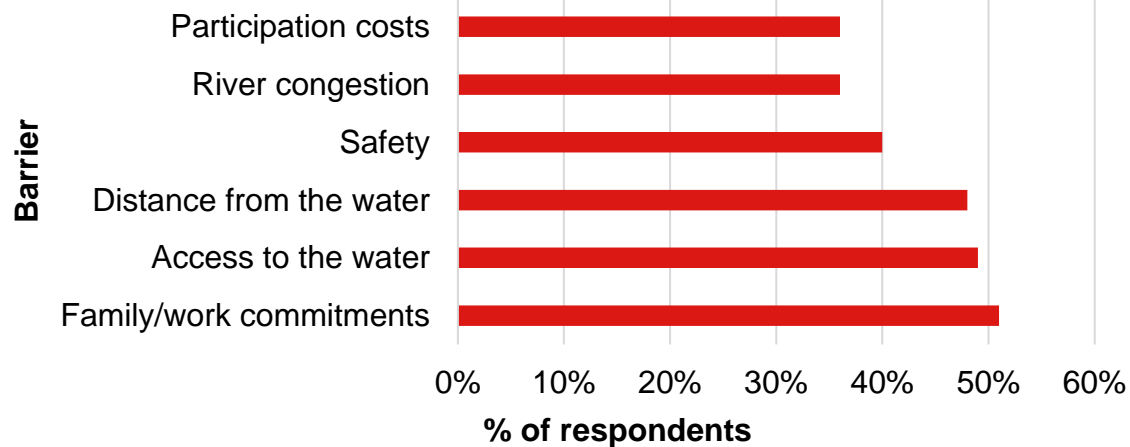
Amount of physical activity per week



Top 5 most important activities/facilities

- 
- Washing and toilet facilities (84%)
  - Group activities (65%)
  - Social events (61%)
  - Social space (53%)
  - Inclusive and community programmes (51%)

Top 6 Barriers to participation



% of respondents satisfied with key features within the current sporting offer



# Administrators

Administrators are mostly volunteers (78%). They are predominantly older adults who are administrators because they want to give back for what they've received from watersports and their clubs. Roles of respondents included more traditional functions (e.g. secretary) and technical (e.g. bargemaster).



## 76 Administrators

- 65% Male, 35% Female
- 3% from ethnically diverse communities
- 73% aged over 45 years
- 78% are volunteers
- 62% hold at least one other role:
  - 41% participants
  - 37% coach
  - 43% committee members
  - 38% event support

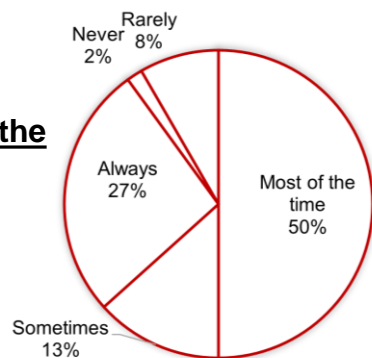
### Top 3 most commonly identified skill gaps

- Marketing and engagement (42%)
- Safeguarding, diversity & inclusion (38%)
- Mental health awareness/first aid (37%)

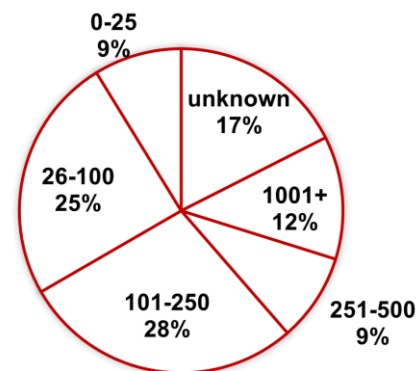
### Strategies and Policies

- 49% of administrators say that their organisation does not have a marketing strategy;
  - a further 14% do not know if a marketing strategy is in place or not.
- Almost half report no fundraising strategy (of which they are aware).
- A third report that (as far as they are aware) their organisation does not have an Equal Opportunities Policy.

### How often are there enough staff or volunteers for the day-to-day running of the organisation?



### Percentage of organisations with different sized memberships



# Coaches

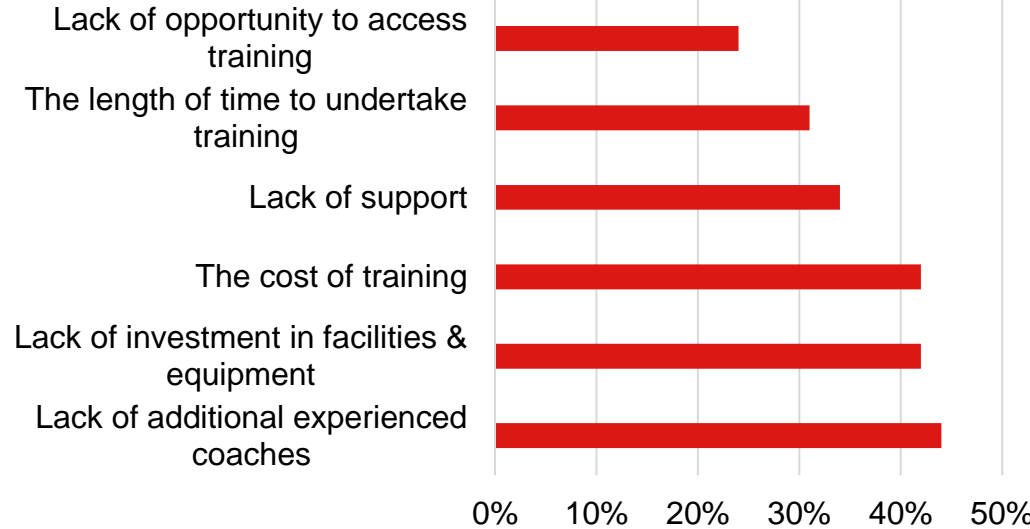
Overwhelmingly, coaches first came to watersports as participants. The desire to give back and help others to get the pleasure they have had from watersports is the most referenced reason for entering coaching. Over 70% are Head or Lead Coaches, and they coach frequently. They are confident in their ability to deliver a good experience. A lack of additional experienced coaches is limiting their effectiveness.



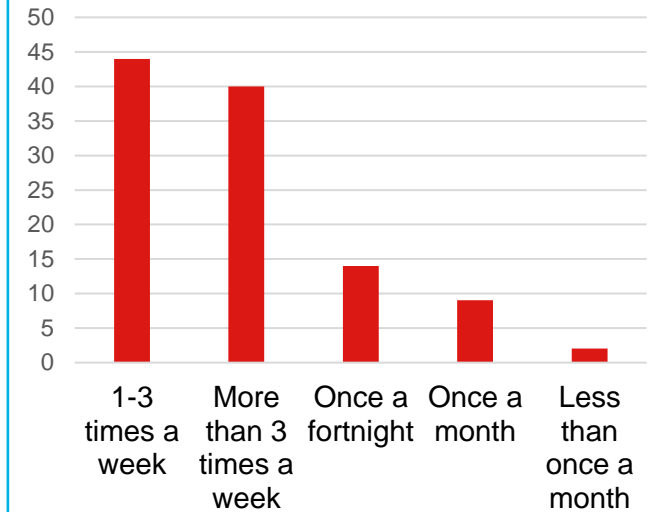
## 115 Coaches

- 73% Male, 27% Female
- 9% from ethnically diverse communities
- 39% aged over 45 years
- 52% are paid for at least some delivery, 48% are volunteers
- 62% hold at least one other role:
  - 42% administrators
  - 35% committee
  - 32% event
  - 25% marketing
  - 30% participant

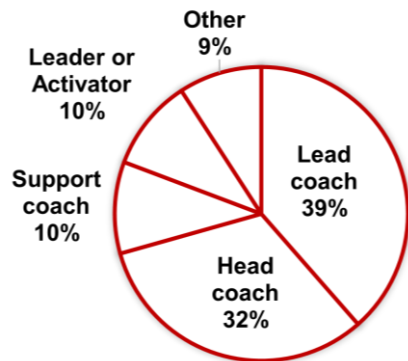
### Barriers to being an effective coach



### Frequency of coaching



### Coaching role within the club or organisation



### Confidence in their ability to deliver to different audiences

- Deliver a good experience for participants (100%)
- Understand what motivates current participants (95%)
- Tailor programmes to suit the profile and needs of participants (92%)
- Make programmes inclusive for people from different backgrounds and abilities (77%)
- Understand what the local community needs are for local sport and physical activity provision (57%)

# Diversity & Inclusion

Sport England recognise several groups that are less likely to engage in physical activity and sport. The same groups are under-represented within the Active Thames research findings across participants, administrators, and coaches. There are varying levels of confidence to deliver to these target groups. Positively there is a desire to coach more with all under-represented groups.



**751 Participants**  
5% from ethnically diverse communities

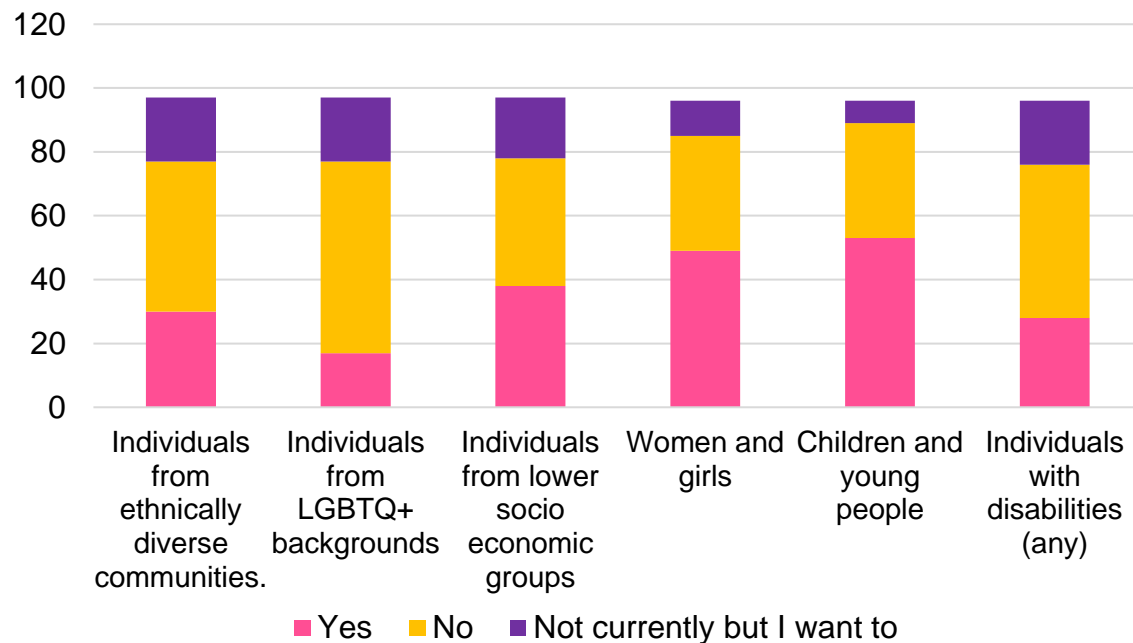


**115 Coaches**  
9% from ethnically diverse communities

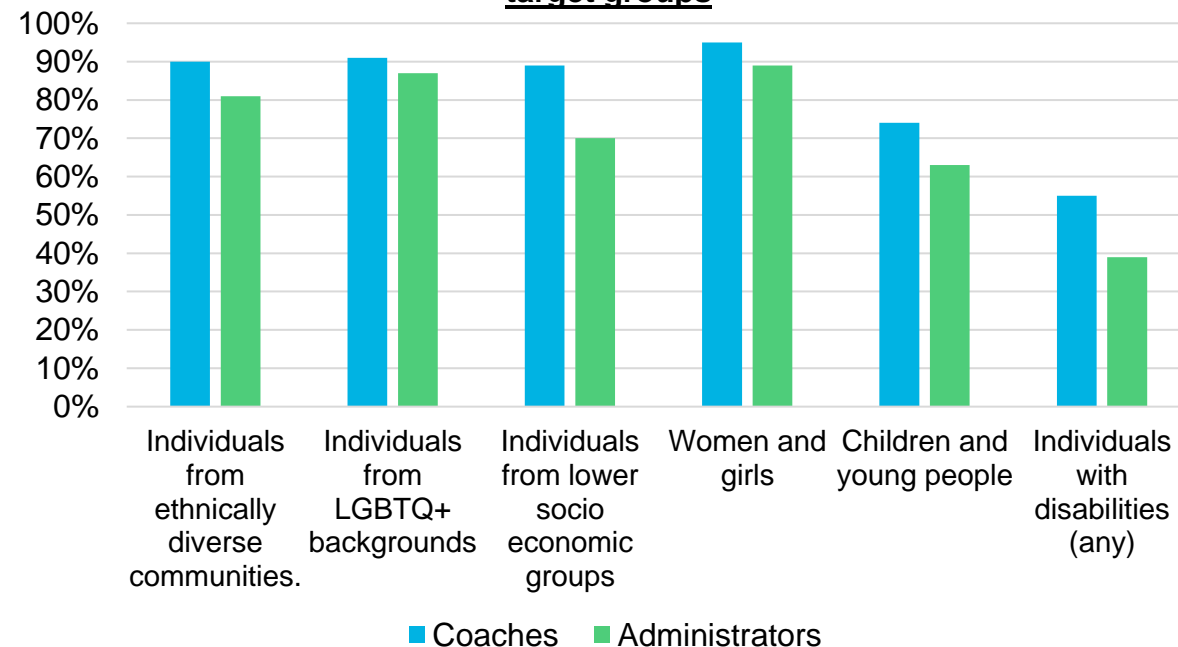


**76 Administrators**  
3% from ethnically diverse communities

**Current status of coaches working with target groups**



**Confidence levels of coaches and administrators on ability to delivery to target groups**





# Key Findings

**Volunteers are key** to the offering on waterways in London, Kent and Essex and there is huge club loyalty among coaches and administrators. The most commonly cited motivator in both groups is the desire “to improve things/help people”.

**Men are in the majority** among respondents in all three groups, particularly coaches, three quarters of whom are male.

There is **single-figure percentage minority ethnic representation** in each group.



## Participants

**58% of participants agree that diversity and inclusion should be a priority** for watersports and physical activity programme providers. 11% disagree.

A third of participants express a **lack of confidence that clubs and activity providers are inclusive** in participation opportunities in respect of individuals with disabilities and individuals from lower socio-economic groups, **and a quarter in respect of individuals from ethnically diverse communities.**



## Coaches

**At least a third** are not currently, but would like to, deliver coaching specifically targeted at individuals from:

- **ethnically diverse communities**
- **LGBTQ+ backgrounds**
- **lower socio-economic groups**
- **people with disabilities.**



## Administrators

Administrators said that their most commonly identified skills gaps are:

- **marketing & engagement (42%)**
- **safeguarding, diversity & inclusion (38%)**
- **mental health awareness/ first aid (37%).**

# Conclusions & Recommendations

There are three strongly linked challenges which the Active Thames programme faces in seeking to bring waterways users, coaches and administrators fully on board with a strategy for growth in the use of waterways for sport and physical activity:

## **1. The watersports community are not currently wholly convinced that there is scope for greater use of waterways.**

The issue here relates to safety and hours of peak use. Though there is an acknowledgement that many clubs are operating at well below full capacity in terms of numbers, it is felt by many that some waterways users display a lack of attention to safety and speed limits, and that this makes waterways participation more dangerous than it should be. The PLA is widely respected and well placed to instill greater confidence by more visibly enforcing rules and codes of conduct on waterways users whose actions put others at risk.

## **2. Organisations bringing in external help with recruitment, fundraising and reaching out to the community should not take over or downplay what they do.**

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the watersports community. The research strongly indicates that external support and guidance, particularly in respect of fundraising and marketing, will be welcomed. When professional expertise is offered though, they need to welcome it and to feel supported, not to find it intimidating and potentially critical of their past efforts. If they can be made to feel nurtured and valued, they will give a much warmer welcome to offers of help with promotion of their activities and expanding what they offer and to whom they offer it.

## **3. In order to significantly increase the diversity of participants, it is necessary to reach out to people in groups and in communities.**

There is a need to further promote the importance of reaching out to groups of people in order to ensure greater diversity. The oft-repeated “*everybody is welcome here*”, “*there is no prejudice in our club*” etc. is clearly genuinely meant. There is a lack of understanding among some, however, that even if every member would welcome the first ethnically diverse member with open arms, it is still a very big ask of the first ethnically diverse member to turn up alone and, therefore, that steps need to be taken to connect with wider communities in the first place.

# Conclusions & Recommendations

## 4. There are reservations about the suitability of clubs to be inclusive of children, disabled people and those with mental health challenges.

To counter these, the Active Thames Programme will need to:

- Provide specific training for coaches and administrators.
- Reflect the range and degree of disabilities in this training.
- Provide clarity around safeguarding rules and practices and fears of inadvertently falling short of what is required.
- Help evaluate accessibility of buildings and space.
- Recognise that some clubs can be helped to adapt, but others may not.
- Address the primary concern of fears for safety of children and vulnerable people. This is about how coaches can impart safety messages, confident that they will be followed.

## Growth Opportunities

Many in the watersports community may not originally be from the South of England, and discovered watersports outside of the UK. The community, regardless of demographics, may not necessarily be representative of population groups in their areas. This might in part explain, though not justify, the lack of ethnic diversity. **It may also demonstrate an even greater potential for growth** by reaching out to people in and around London and the South, particularly as children.

This opportunity increases given the Government's declared intention to add physical activity to the criteria against which state schools will be assessed (legislation is pending). This is a key opportunity to reach out to schools with a particular emphasis on the fact, referenced by a number of respondents, that many watersports activities require different skills and suit different body shapes to other athletic endeavours.

# Conclusions & Recommendations

## There is Much Goodwill

The **reservations referenced are not easy to address**. Carefully considered approaches are required to demonstrate a desire to help, in addition to establishing more formal programmes to meet the challenges. The PLA is in a good position; it is respected by waterways users and knocking at an open door in encouraging them to welcome greater numbers and a broader profile of users. Provided, they believe that existing waterways users will not be less safe on the water as a result.

**The Active Thames Partnership can play an important role in creating more opportunities for clubs to work together and communicate with each other**, something which was often advocated in the research- particularly by coaches.

The passion among users for sport and physical activity on the waterways is immense. The desire to spread the word is instinctive and there is a strong belief in the idea that fun and competition on the waterways, with wider participation and more diverse participants, can play a part in making **society feel inclusive and assist in breaking down barriers**.

There will be great enthusiasm for the benefits that larger membership numbers can bring in funding better facilities, training for coaches etc. The people who gave us the benefit of their time and opinions love spending time on the water and would love more people to join them if they are confident that it would be safe to do so. The benefits of extra revenue in improving facilities at clubs and along the waterways generally (toilets, changing facilities etc.) is also recognised and the further promotion/reiteration of this message can only be helpful to the Active Thames partnership in seeking a high level of collaboration for meeting its objectives.

# Full Report

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  - b) Coaches
  - c) Participants
4. Themed Outcomes:
  - a) Increasing participation
  - b) Engaging the workforce
  - c) Diversity and inclusion
  - d) Facilities

# 1. Research Background

In 2016 London Sport conducted initial research among key stakeholders to provide the Port of London Authority (PLA) with a summary of current and potential opportunities for sport and recreation along the tidal Thames. The final report, [Analysis of Sport and Physical Activity on the tidal Thames](#), informed the Thames Vision (2015-2035), the strategic framework for development of the tidal Thames. Key findings included:

- Participation in organised sport on the river was estimated to be around 19,000 individuals.
- Unused capacity was estimated at 40.6% which represented the potential for a further 13,000 individuals using the river.
- Financial concerns, lack of qualified instructors and lack of volunteers were the most restrictive barriers to organisations aiming to increase participation. Facility infrastructure and limited equipment were also highly restrictive.
- Support to improve access to the river, especially for disabled groups, was highlighted as a need.

Since then, *Active Thames* has been developed as a partnership programme with the support of PLA and key stakeholders, including London Sport, to maximise participation on the tidal Thames and inland waterways in London, Kent and Essex.

In 2021 the PLA worked with London Sport to gain further insight to shape the Active Thames programme and inform the vision refresh- Thames Vision 2050. Understanding participation, workforce and the impact of Covid-19 were key priorities.

## 2. Methodology

To enhance understanding of issues, feelings and barriers, London Sport has conducted two further stages of research among three key groups:

- Participants
- Administrative Workforce (inc. volunteers)
- Coaching Workforce (inc. volunteers)

The research comprised of:

- **Stage 1:** A quantitative self-completion online survey sent to a sample of people in all three groups which drew responses from 76 administrators, 115 coaches and 751 participants.
- **Stage 2:** A qualitative online community to explore issues in depth and to allow respondents to highlight key issues and help set the agenda. This ran for three weeks and encouraged interaction within groups between administrators, coaches and participants, with much probing and follow-up questioning from London Sport and PLA. Several participants made summary video recordings of their key opinions. There were 37 workforce respondents, representing 36 clubs, and 23 river users took part in this stage of the research.

This report presents the key findings and recommendations from the research.



# Research Group Findings

# Administrators

# 3a. Survey – Administrators

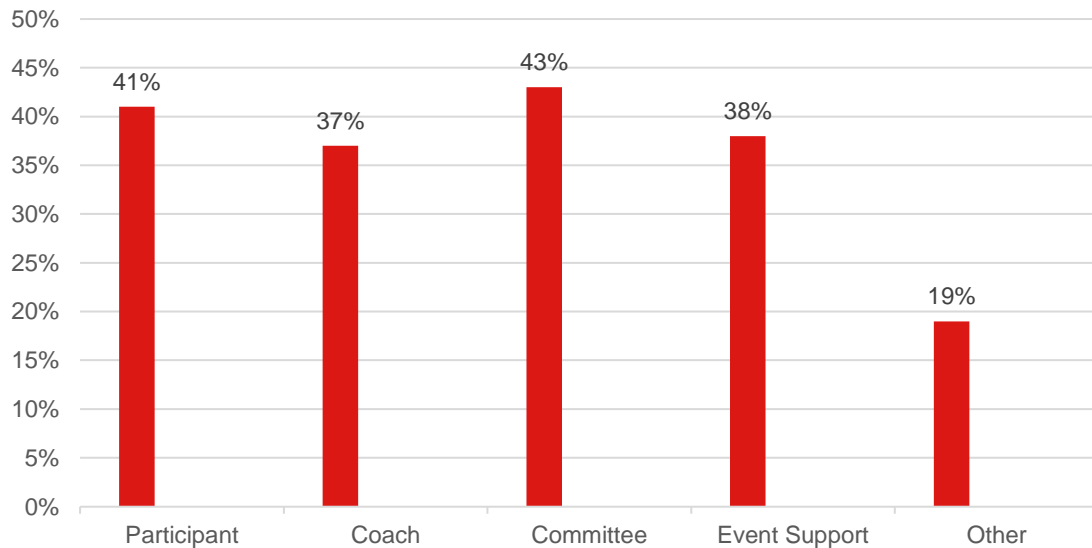
## Administrator Survey Respondent Overview:

Out of the 76 administrators that responded to the survey, the majority were volunteers (78%), male (65%), aged over 45 (73%), and held at least one other role (e.g. participant, coach, committee member etc.) within watersports (62%). Only 3% of respondents were from a non-white ethnic background, while 27% were aged <45 and 10% identified as having a physical, learning or sensory disability. The 76 administrators represent 56 organisations.

78% are volunteers, 16% are paid full time and 6% are paid part time.

There was good representation from across all the main watersports/activities and facilities with the majority coming from rowing (54%) and sailing (37%), followed by powerboating/cruising (19%), kayaking (18%) and canoeing (16%).

Administrators - Other Roles Held



Activity	Percentage
Rowing	54%
Sailing	37%
Power boating/cruising	19%
Kayaking	18%
Canoeing	16%
Paddle boarding	9%
Swimming	3%
Dragon/Bell boating	2%
Fishing	1%
Other	9%

## 3a. Survey – Administrators

### Survey Summary - Key Findings:

In the view of our administrators, the three most commonly identified skill gaps that need developing across administrative roles are:

- **Marketing and engagement (42%)**
- **Safeguarding, diversity & inclusion (38%)**
- **Mental health awareness/first aid (37%)**

The concern about marketing is further highlighted by the fact that 49% of administrators say that their organisation does not have a marketing strategy and a further 14% do not know if a marketing strategy is in place or not.

Almost half report no fundraising strategy (of which they are aware), but still 95% indicate that the organisation has strong enough reserves to cover running the organisation for three months.

There is much evidence of the need for improvement in the ability to reach out to a broader range of people, which is a concept that has wide support. However;

- A third of administrators tell us that (as far as they are aware) their organisation does not have an Equal Opportunities Policy in place.

# 3a. Survey – Administrators

## Survey Summary - Key Findings cont

Two thirds are not confident that their club has the ability to be inclusive of people with any disabilities; a third feel this way in respect of children and young people and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

<b>Very or fairly confident that club can be inclusive of the following populations:</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Individuals with disabilities (any)	39%
Individuals from LGBTQ+ backgrounds	87%
Individuals with long term health conditions	57%
Individuals from lower socio-economic groups	66%
Women and girls	89%
Children and young people	63%
Individuals from ethnically diverse communities.	81%

## 3a. Survey – Administrators

### Survey Summary - Key Findings cont.

- 71% say that their organisation offers participation opportunities for non-members.
- A 60/40 male/female split among participants is estimated.
- The estimated age split among participants is far more even than among staff and volunteers.
- 17% ethnically diverse participants are reported which is very different to the overwhelmingly white profile of staff and volunteers.

Half say that their organisation provides indoor facilities or activities:

Indoor facilities	Percentage
None	50%
Indoor rowing	28%
Gym/fitness	28%
Yoga/Pilates	12%
Indoor cycling/spinning	3%
Dance/Zumba	1%
Other	18%

In response to the question “How often do you have enough staff and/or volunteers for the day-to-day running of the organisation?”, only 20% answered ‘always’ in respect of administrative staff, rising to 77% when those answering ‘usually’ are added. The corresponding figures in respect of coaching staff/volunteers are 14% (always), rising to 65% (when those answering ‘usually’ are added).

10% think that not all administrative staff and volunteers have the relevant skills and experience. This view is taken by 12% in respect of coaching staff and volunteers.

## 3a. Survey - Administrators

### Survey Summary - Key Findings cont

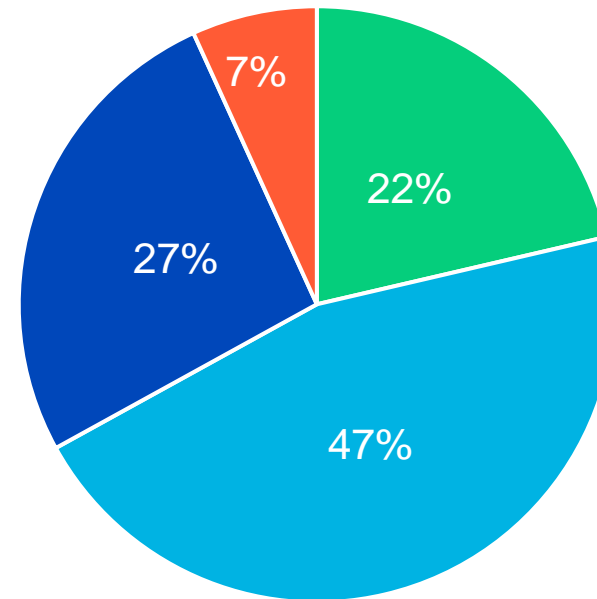
A number of areas were identified for which, it is felt, skills need to be developed across administrative roles.

#### Are there any skills that need to be developed across administrative roles?

Skill	Percentage
None	12%
Marketing & engagement	42%
Safeguarding / diversity and inclusion	38%
Mental health awareness/first aid	37%
Technical/sport knowledge	32%
Use of technology, e.g. IT	30%
First aid	28%
Programme planning	27%
Social and people skills	20%
General administration skills	18%
Behaviour change	17%
Local insight	17%
Other	10%

Many administrators do not feel that they have access to appropriate facilities whenever needed.

(Considering how often you need them) How often do you have access to appropriate facilities?



■ Always ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely

## 3a. Survey – Administrators

### Survey Summary – Key Findings cont.

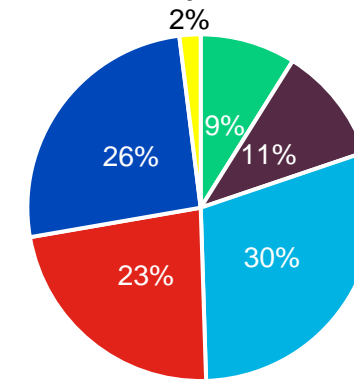
Almost all (98%) respondents indicated their organisation has the capacity to accommodate more members/participants, with 50% indicating that they were operating at no more than 60% of their maximum capacity.

While almost 70% of administrators felt they had access to appropriate facilities 'most or all of the time', just over 30% felt this was true only 'some of the time' or 'rarely'. Key facilities where organisations had lower accessibility included social space (69%), kitchen facilities (66%), function rooms (57%) and a bar area (47%). Some clubs are operating without any facilities at all, including access to drinking water.

The average score for marketing effectiveness of their organisation is 2.7 out of 5, with use of newer social media platforms and other marketing engagement methods limited:

Platform	Percentage
Website	91%
Email	81%
Facebook	79%
Newsletter	53%
Instagram	46%
Twitter	44%
Local media	19%
Other	5%

At what membership capacity does your club operate?



■ less than 20% ■ 21-40% ■ 41-60% ■ 61-80% ■ 81-99% ■ Full

Facilities	Percentage
Toilets	86%
Drinking water	81%
Showers	78%
Seating area/social space	69%
Kitchen facilities	66%
Function room	57%
Bar	47%
Other	17%
None of the above	7%



## 3a. Survey - Administrators

### Survey Summary - Key Findings cont

Other key findings reported by the administrative sample include:

- 76% are confident that they will have access to appropriate facilities for the next five years.
- 79% feel that their organisation has access to the IT equipment it needs
- 88% report access to a suitable space for committee/staff meetings
- 82% report that they have qualified first aiders
- 95% report that they have insurance
- 45% report that they have Disclosure/ Criminal Records Check (DBS)
- All respondents answering reported that someone has official responsibility for looking after finances
- 45% report no fundraising strategy
- 95% say that they have enough reserves to cover running the organisation for three months

## 3a. Survey - Administrators

### Survey Summary - Key Findings cont.

*Which of the following policies does your organisation have in place?*

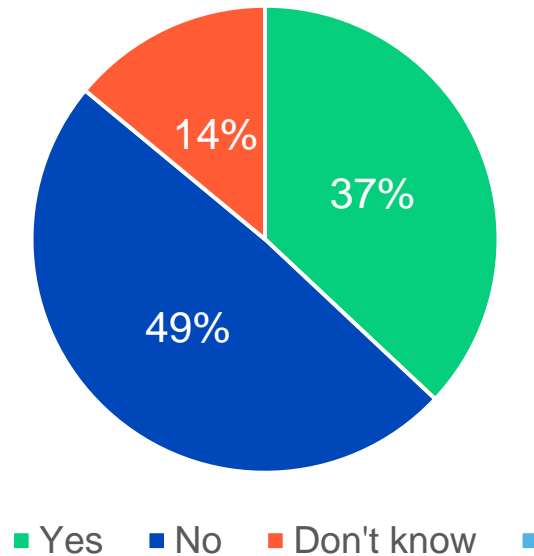
Policies	Percentage
Health & safety	87%
Safeguarding	84%
Data protection	82%
Equal opportunities	69%
Environmental	45%
Don't know	7%

*NB: Some respondents may not be aware of all the policies to which their clubs are subscribed.*

## 3a. Survey - Administrators

### Survey Summary - Key Findings cont.

Do you have a marketing strategy?



Platform	Percentage
Website	91%
Email	81%
Facebook	79%
Newsletter	53%
Instagram	46%
Twitter	44%
Local media	19%
Other	5%

As can be seen above, half our administrators are not aware of a marketing strategy at their club. There is, however, fairly extensive use of marketing tools like websites and emails.

- The average score for marketing effectiveness of their organisation is 2.7 out of 5.
- 44% report that they work closely with local support agencies e.g. Local Council, schools, youth organisations etc. 72% say they work closely with regional or national support agencies, e.g. London Sport, National Governing Bodies, GLA etc.

## 3a Survey – Administrators

### Survey Summary - Key Findings cont.

#### Covid-19

There are, as can be seen below, concerns about the, at least short-term, impact of Covid-19 as people start to return to the waterways.

Percentage agreeing that the following challenges will impact engagement post-Covid-19	Percentage
Rebuilding participant trust post-Covid19	45%
Loss of contact with participants over the last year	51%
Participant fears about exercising next to people	41%
Personal fears about exercising/coaching next to people	37%
Lack of participant interest after time off	39%
Participants have picked up new hobbies	37%
Participants cannot afford to take part	23%

## 3a. Online Community - Administrators

41% of our administrators are also participants. 37% are also involved in coaching.

It is the passion for what they have got from physical activity and club membership which, largely, drives them to take on administrative roles, most commonly as volunteers.

*“I love how different it is on the river compared to being off it.”*

*“I think sport can be a truly amazing thing for people to get involved in. It can help change lives, build skills, friendships and so much more. My role has allowed me to give many people access to rowing.”*

Largely, our administrators report membership vacancies, a desire to grow and give a warm welcome to the notion of a more diverse membership that is reflective of the community in their area. They, as much as any of our three groups, however, report the key concerns which are common barriers to these objectives throughout the research – lack of marketing knowledge, fears that greater numbers of participants will cause greater risk of accidents on the waterways, and fears around potentially devaluing the importance of volunteers.

*“At some point I could see the club looking for some paid Admin support, but the fact that volunteers do what they do helps in no small amount to give the club its sense of community - that people do things for others.”*

## 3a. Online Community - Administrators

If these concerns can be resolved to their satisfaction, however, there is no shortage of enthusiasm for the ambition to have a greater number, and more diverse population, of waterways users, nor for assistance from the PLA in bringing it about.

*“Canoe trails have the potential to massively improve local economies, bring tourism to an area, promote greater engagement with wildlife, flora and its protection, and promote outdoor activity that is accessible to many with mobility issues.”*

*“I think sport can be a truly amazing thing for people to get involved in. It can help change lives, build skills, friendships and so much more. My role has allowed me to give many people access to rowing.”*

*“We need help to market what we do, reach into local communities. Doing this with the PLA would I think be more beneficial than trying to do it as individual clubs (although obviously some of that goes on already). Could we club together to do some kind of digital marketing push as well with the PLA bringing in some expertise? I think this could also help reach some of the audiences maybe we don't reach at the moment.”*

# Coaches

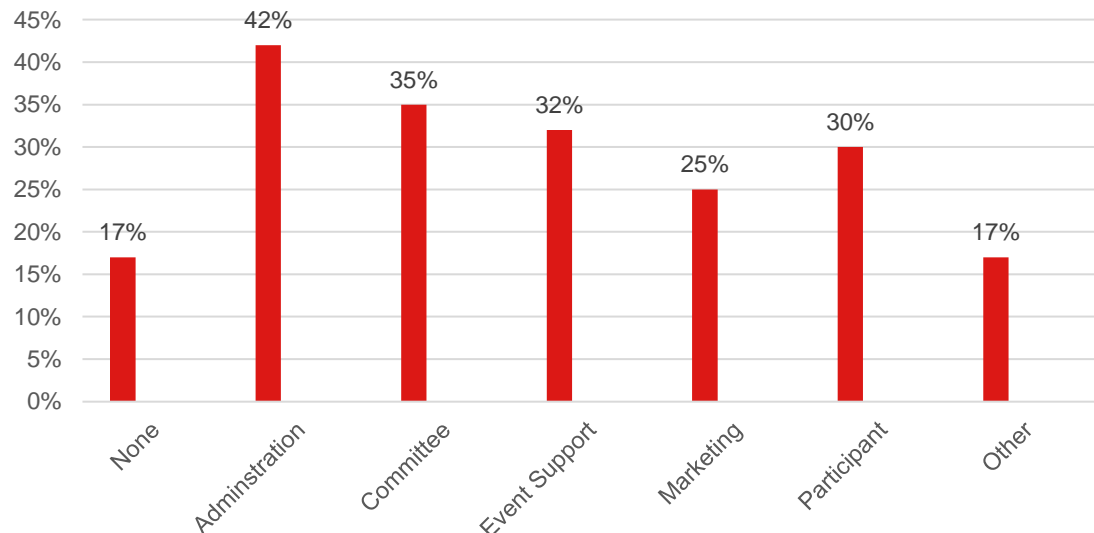
## 3b. Survey - Coaches

### Coaching Survey Respondent Overview:

Of the 115 coaches that responded to the survey, representing 63 organisations, there was almost an equal split of paid/mixed (52%) and volunteer respondents (48%). 73% were male, a higher proportion than among administrators were aged >45 (61%), and 62% held at least one other role (e.g. participant, administrator, marketing) within watersports. Only 9% of coaching respondents were from a non-white ethnic background, while 5% identified as having a physical, learning or sensory disability.

There was good representation from across all the main watersports/activities and facilities with the majority coming from kayaking and rowing (both 39%), followed by canoeing (28%), paddleboarding (25%), sailing (24%) and powerboating/cruising (22%).

Coaches - Other Roles Held



Activity	Percentage
Rowing	39%
Kayaking	39%
Canoeing	28%
Paddle boarding	25%
Sailing	24%
Power boating/cruising	22%
Dragon/Bell boating	6%
Swimming	2%
Fishing	0%
Other	7%

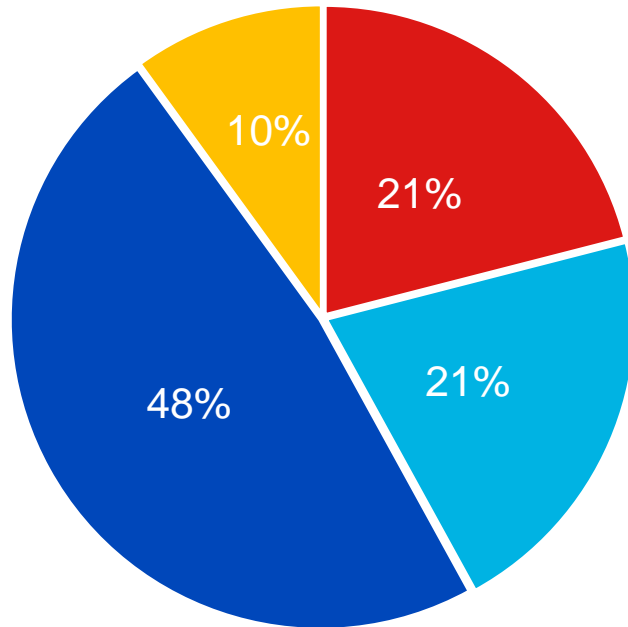


## 3b. Survey - Coaches

### Coaching Survey Respondent Overview:

The paid/volunteer split is much more even than among administrators.

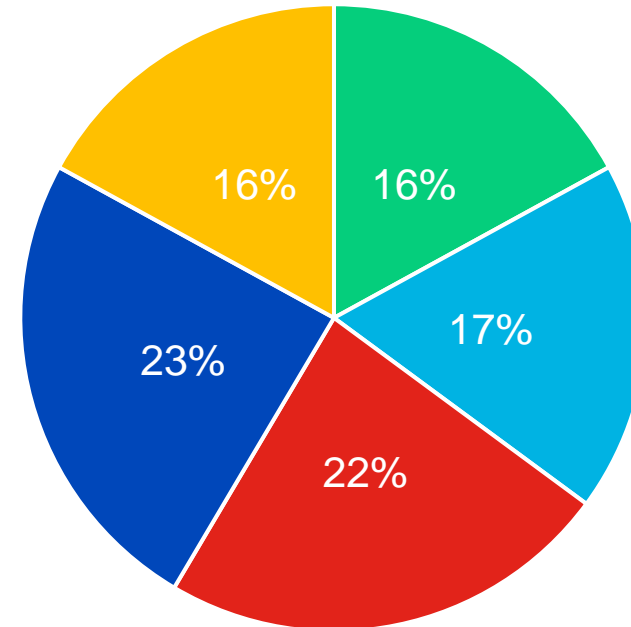
Coaches by Role Type



■ Paid full time ■ Paid part time ■ Volunteer ■ Mixed

There is a greater age spread than among administrators.

Coaches by Age



■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65+

62% have at least one other role. Many have several.

## 3b. Survey - Coaches

### Coaching Survey Respondent Overview

Our research drew a wide range of coaches in terms of seniority, experience and qualifications.

**What level of coaching qualification have you achieved, if any?**

Level of qualification	Percentage
No coaching qualification	9%
Activator/Leader	2%
Level 1 (or equivalent)	16%
Level 2 (or equivalent)	34%
Level 3 (or equivalent)	11%
Level 4 (or equivalent)	4%
Other	25%

**What is your coaching role?**

Coaching role	Percentage
<b>Head coach</b> - I plan sessions and organise other coaches, as well as delivering sessions myself	32%
<b>Lead coach</b> - I run sessions either by myself or with the support of other coaches	39%
<b>Support coach</b> - I help a more experienced/qualified coach	10%
<b>Leader or Activator</b> - I deliver sessions in an informal setting	10%
<b>Other</b> (please specify)	9%

**What level do you coach at?**

Coaching level	Percentage
<b>Performance/Elite</b>	25%
<b>Club</b>	74%
<b>Recreational</b>	60%
<b>Beginner</b>	66%

## 3b. Survey - Coaches

### Coaching Survey Respondent Overview:

Finance needs and staffing needs are the most frequently raised concerns in respect of an organisation's perceived ability to meet capacity and delivery needs.

**How confident are you in your/your organisation's ability to meet these capacity and delivery needs?**

Confident that delivery needs can be met	Percentage
Administrative needs	79%
Coaching needs	79%
Facility needs	63%
Equipment needs	69%
Staffing needs	52%
Finance needs	49%

### **Covid-19**

As with administrators, there are concerns among coaches about a lasting impact on behaviour of Covid-19.

Percentage agreeing that the following challenges will impact engagement post-Covid-19	Percentage
Rebuilding participant trust post-Covid19	39%
Loss of contact with participants over the last year	30%
Participant fears about exercising next to people	37%
Personal fears about exercising/coaching next to people	56%
Lack of participant interest after time off	44%
Participants have picked up new hobbies	37%
Participants cannot afford to take part	30%

## 3b. Survey - Coaches

### Survey Summary - Key Findings:

Coaches are overwhelmingly confident in their, and their club's, ability to deliver more inclusive coaching programmes to many diverse audiences. However, confidence levels were lower for children and young people (75%) and individuals with disabilities (55%).

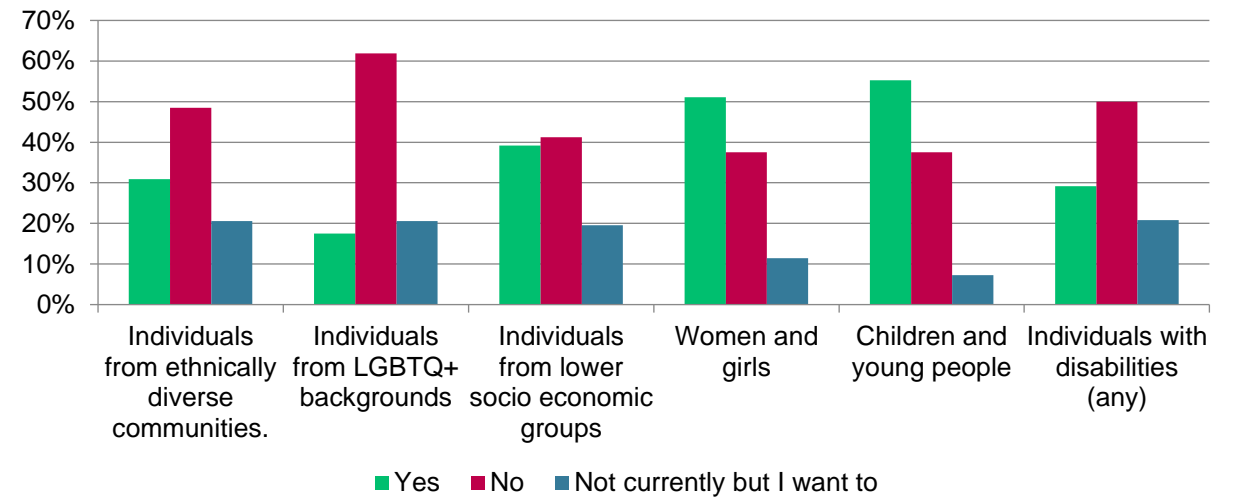
Only 57% are confident that they understand what the wider community needs are for local sport and physical activity provision.

However, on average at least a third of coaches who are not currently delivering targeted activities to any of the named groups say that they 'do not currently, but would like to, deliver coaching specifically targeted at':

- Individuals from ethnically diverse communities (43%).
- Individuals from LGBTQ+ backgrounds (33%).
- Individuals from lower socio-economic groups (48%).
- Individuals with disabilities (any) (42%).

Very or fairly confident that club can be inclusive	Percentage
Individuals with disabilities (any)	55%
Individuals from LGBTQ+ backgrounds	91%
Individuals from lower socio-economic groups	89%
Women and girls	95%
Children and young people	75%
Individuals from ethnically diverse communities.	90%

Do you deliver coaching specifically targeted at the following groups?



## 3b. Survey - Coaches

### Survey Summary – Key Findings cont.

A perceived shortage of financial and human (other coaches) resources are the most common factors in concerns about barriers to being a more effective coach.

Coaches further indicated that these same challenges (financial and staffing) were the main barriers to clubs/organisations being able to meet and grow delivery and capacity needs consistently. It was also felt that facility (31%) and equipment (37%) needs were further restricting club/organisational growth.

While findings from our administrator survey indicated low-level use of current/relevant social media and online platforms to grow engagement within that cohort, findings from our coaches survey indicate that they are more active online than administrators. However, use of newer platforms, and those used by younger and more diverse populations, could improve substantially.

Platform used for marketing	Percentage
Twitter	100%
Email	100%
Newsletter	100%
Website	73%
Facebook	66%
Instagram	42%

Barriers to being an effective coach	Percentage
Lack of additional experienced or qualified coaches	44%
Lack of investment in facilities and equipment	42%
The cost of training/qualifications	42%
Lack of support from employers, clubs or NGBs	34%
The length of time it takes to undertake qualifications/training/CPD	31%
Lack of opportunity to take additional training/CPD	24%
Other	13%

## 3b. Online Community - Coaches

Overwhelmingly, our coaches, both paid and voluntary, first came to watersports as participants. The desire to give back and help others to get the pleasure they have had from watersports activities is easily the most commonly referenced entry point into coaching.

*“I mostly get satisfied by the light bulb moment people get when something they are trying to learn finally clicks. After hours, weeks, months, however long it is, they finally understand what it is and they are filled with excitement and joy.”*

The suitability of waterways activities for people who may not be naturally gifted at other sports was also mentioned by several people.

*“Watching someone realise they have achieved something. Whether it is their first time out on the river in a boat managing their fear of the water or they have been rowing for years and finally made that tiny change to their technique. I took a novice crew to a local regatta. After the race one of the crew came to talk to me and said 'That is the first time I have ever won anything. I hated sport at school because I wasn't tall enough or fast enough or the right shape but rowing has made me feel different.' Sport can change lives and I feel very lucky and proud to be a part of it.”*

## 3b. Online Community - Coaches

Coaches share the key concerns about the practical application of steps needed to implement Active Thames which were expressed by administrators (and which are addressed in depth in the Themed Outcomes section of this report). They too are onboard in principle though and will be enthusiastic supporters if their concerns can be addressed.

*"Increased use would obviously have to balance giving more people opportunities on the river with ensuring safety especially in areas with a lot of river traffic or lots of hazards (e.g. we put a lot of work into safety, but in the past other river users haven't understood the risks of the river and other river traffic and there have been issues)."*

There is recognition of the importance of coaching qualifications and interest in obtaining (more of) them. Reservations would increase markedly however if this and/or a move to professional coaches felt like the start of a plan to move away from volunteer coaches who pass on what they have learnt over the years.

## 3b. Online Community - Coaches

Coaches, noticeably more than Administrators, speak of a value in greater cooperation between clubs on the waterways.

*“The club could look at inviting other water clubs to share the facilities - canoe, SUP. Space for equipment is limited so it would require investment to provide additional racking/cage facilities. The biggest hurdle is being able to reassure club members that encouraging more people onto the water can be managed safely.”*

They also seem to see more scope for helpful PLA intervention.

*“The PLA needs to set up an apprenticeship scheme to train up more canoe sport coaches, some of whom could then work on the Thames to deliver safe access for more people. This can be coordinated across three or four centres along the Thames. This way the PLA would be able to set a standard that satisfies their safety protocols. The PLA would be recognised as a standard to aim for. The funding for such schemes exists. An added bonus for the PLA is they would be seen to be an organisation that provides employment opportunities. All good publicity. That would increase usage in a safe and organised fashion.”*



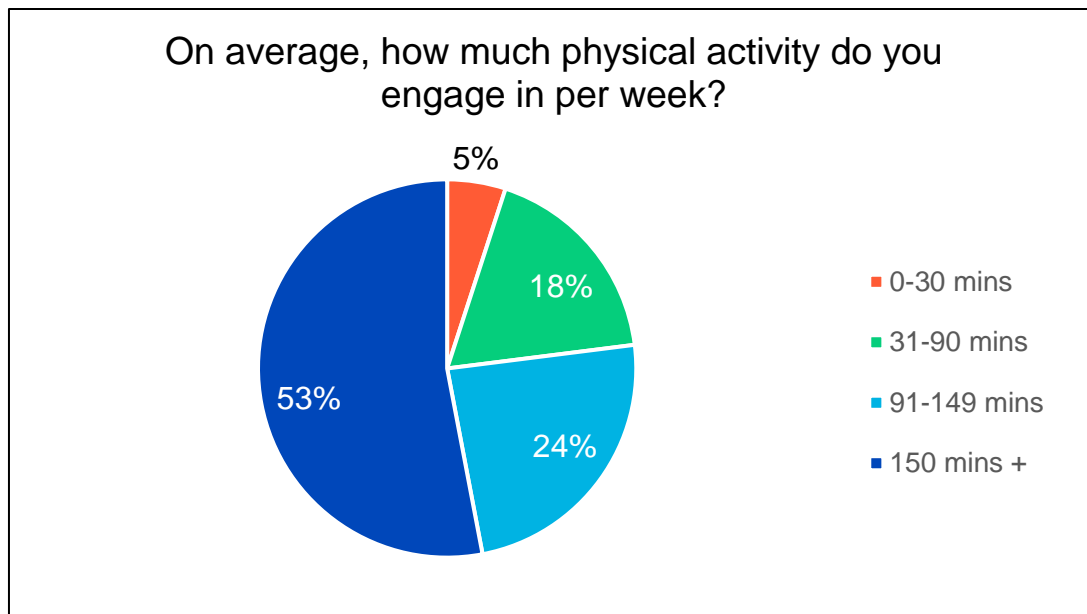
# Participants

## 3c. Survey - Participants

### Participant Survey Respondent Overview:

Of the 751 participants that responded to the survey, 70% were aged >45, 60% were male, 53% were active (>150 mins of physical activity per week) compared to only 5% inactive (<30 mins of physical activity per week), 70% were members of a watersports club and 32% members of an NGB, and more than three quarters (78%) were primarily motivated by the social benefits of participating in watersports activities. Only 5% of respondents were from a non-white ethnic background, while 9% identified as having a physical, learning or sensory disability.

There was good representation from across all the main watersports/activities and facilities with the majority coming from rowing (36%) and kayaking (33%), followed by powerboating/cruising (29%), sailing (28%), paddleboarding (24%) and canoeing (23%). Representatives from fishing (6%) and dragon/bell boating (5%) made up the sample.



Activity	Percentage
Rowing	36%
Kayaking	33%
Power boating/cruising	29%
Sailing	28%
Paddle boarding	24%
Canoeing	23%
Fishing	6%
Dragon/Bell boating	5%

## 3c. Survey – Participants

### Participant Survey Respondent Overview: cont

The social aspect of participation is far more important than the competitive aspect to most participants.

Motivations for participation	Percentage
I take part for the competition/to win	24%
I take part in physical activity to meet and socialise with others	78%
It is important that there is a variety of exercise to choose from	79%
It is important to me that facilities are clean and modern	64%
It is important to me that I receive support and advice whilst taking part	49%

## 3c. Survey – Participants

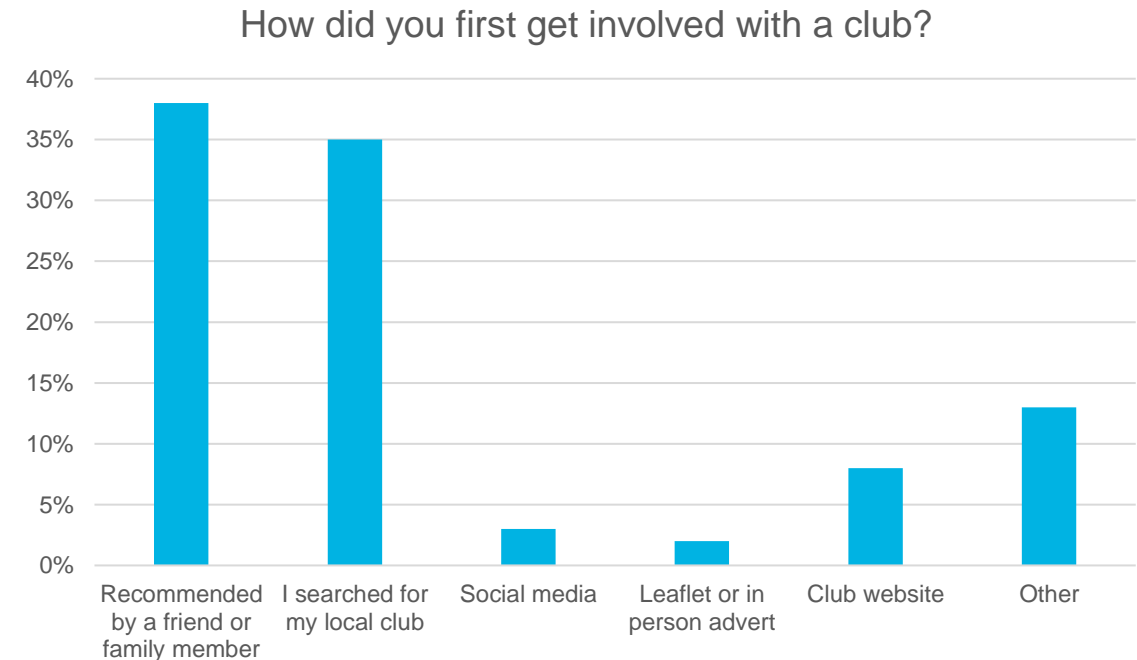
### Participant Survey Respondent Overview: cont

#### Which areas of blue space do you use for recreation?

Areas of space used	Percentage
Upper Thames (Teddington - Putney Bridge)	64%
Central Thames (Putney Bridge- Crossness)	37%
Lower Thames and Estuary (Crossness- North Sea)	27%
Docks	24%
Regents Canal	9%
Grand Union Canal	11%
River Lea	12%
Lakes/Basins/Reservoirs	18%
Other	8%

When asked at what level they currently participate at in their primary sport/activity on the water, 54% answer recreational and 39% club.

70% are members of a watersports club.



## 3c. Survey – Participants

### Survey Summary - Key Findings cont:

#### Impact of Covid-19 and other barriers

Clearly and unsurprisingly, Covid-19 has impacted very heavily on our participants.

#### In what ways has Covid-19 impacted your ability to be physically active?

Impact of Covid-19	Percentage
No impact	3%
Closure of facilities, clubs, and spaces	89%
Socially distancing when doing exercise	55%
Less interested in the activities available to me	8%
Not having the right equipment	12%
Caring commitments because of coronavirus	7%
Work commitments	13%
Concerned about health / safety	26%
I am less motivated	16%
Other (please specify)	10%

## 3c. Survey – Participants

### Survey Summary – Key Findings cont.

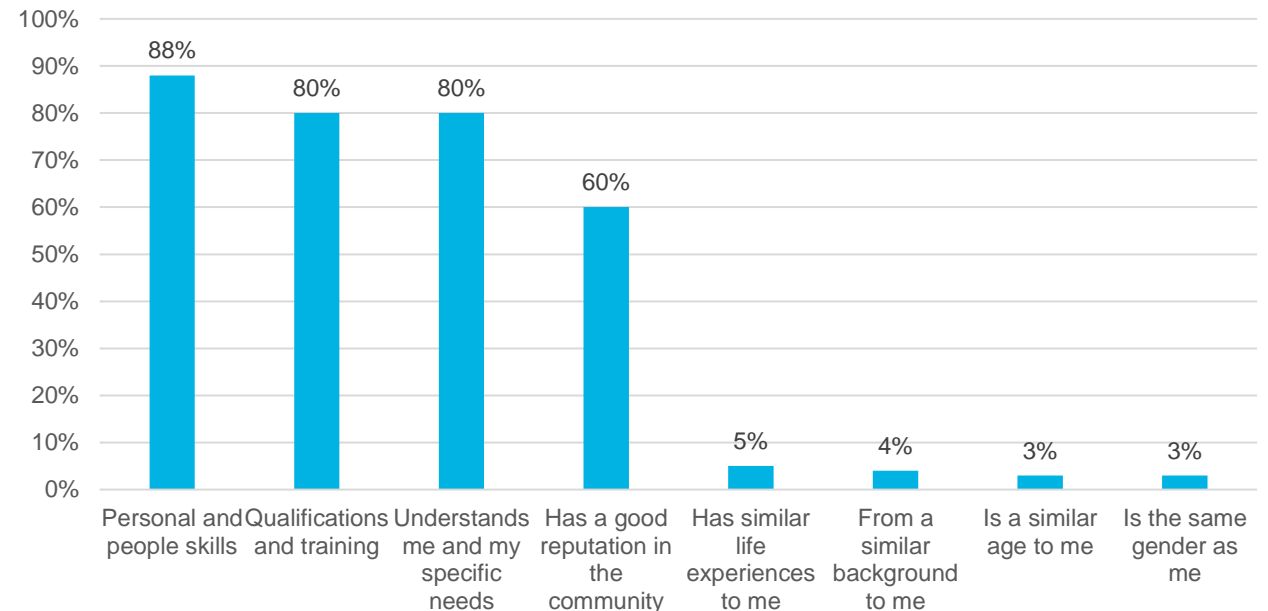
How satisfied are you with the below features relating to your participation on the tidal Thames and inland waterways?

Satisfaction with elements of participation	Percentage
Communication of opportunities	36%
General accessibility of sports/activities	47%
Opportunities to progress skills	48%
Quality of coaching	44%
Running and administration of activities	52%
Safety of activities	69%
Facilities and equipment available	51%

As can be seen above, there is significant scope for improvement in very many aspects of available facilities and services in the minds of participants.

A combination of personal empathy and people skills are key attributes in their coaches, rather than their demographic.

How important are the following attributes to you when looking for a coach/trainer?



## 3c. Survey - Participants

### Survey Summary - Key Findings cont:

Among participants, 58% agree that diversity and inclusion should be a priority for watersports and physical activity programme providers. Only 11% disagree.

However, the confidence expressed by participants in their clubs/organisations ability to be more inclusive of key groups was substantially lower than that expressed by administrators and coaches.

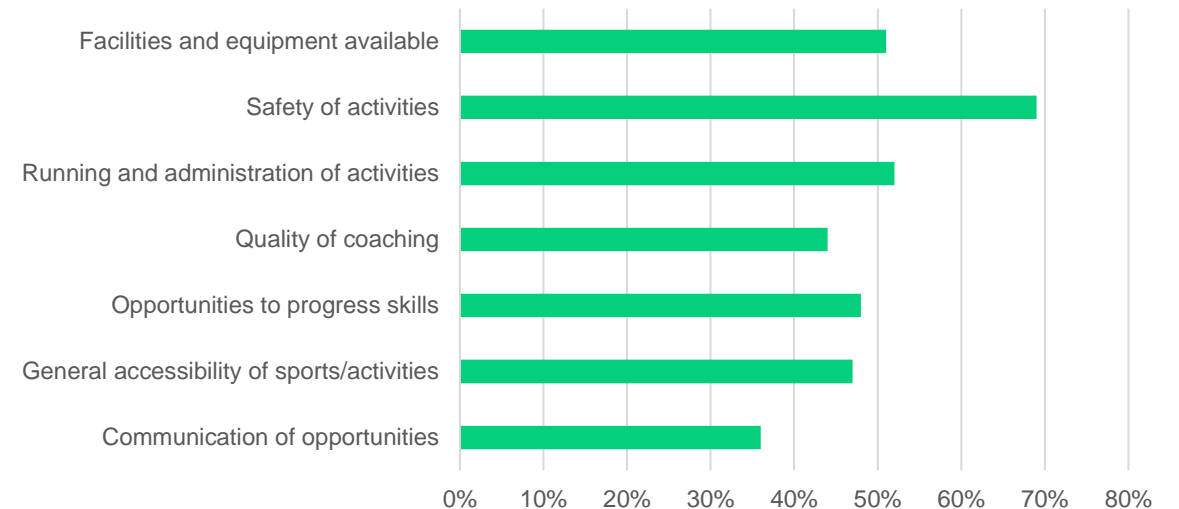
**Less than half of all participants are currently satisfied** with the following features of watersports provision:

- Communication (36%)
- Quality of coaching (44%)
- Accessibility of sports/activities (47%)
- Skill development opportunities (48%)

Overall, the satisfaction levels expressed by participants highlights particular concerns that do not match with coaches or administrators' self-perceptions of delivery. Of further note is the fact that 31% of participants are not currently satisfied with safety on the water.

Very or fairly confident that club can be inclusive	Percentage
Individuals with disabilities (any)	31%
Individuals from LGBTQ+ backgrounds	49%
Individuals from lower socio-economic groups	33%
Women and girls	66%
Children and young people	61%
Individuals from ethnically diverse communities.	45%

### Participants satisfied or very satisfied with provision



## 3c. Survey - Participants

### Survey Summary – Key Findings cont.

When it comes to finding a watersports club, respondents cited family/friend recommendations (38%) or personal search (35%) as the most influential methods. Online methods such as social media (3%) and club websites (8%) have been less effective, highlighting a link to low administrator and coach use of these platforms which have the potential to be effective in promoting organisations to local audiences.

Family/work commitments (51%), access to the water (49%), distance (48%) and safety (40%) were highlighted as the key barriers to further participation amongst our participant sample. Further areas of note included river congestion (36%) and participation costs (36%).

The most important activities and facilities that participants value are washing and toilet facilities (84%), group activities (65%), social events (61%), social space (53%) and inclusive and community programmes (51%).

Key Barriers To Participation	Percentage
General lack of motivation	17%
Lack of awareness about opportunities for me	29%
Lack of confidence finding new activities	19%
Family / work commitments	51%
Qualifications and training	20%
Cost of participation	36%
Distance from club / facility /water	48%
Limited access to the river (e.g. ramps, gates locked etc.)	49%
Limited or unsuitable equipment (e.g. number of boats etc.)	27%
River congestion	36%
Safety concerns (e.g. tidal changes, other river users etc.)	40%

Desired Activities/Facilities	Percentage
Group activities	65%
1:1 coaching/training	46%
Competitions and events	44%
Inclusive and community programmes	51%
Indoor exercise space (e.g.gym / yoga studio / indoor rowing)	36%
Social events	61%
Equipment hire	43%
Pay and play	37%
Social space within the facility	53%
Washing and toilet facilities	84%



## 3c. Online Community - Participants

The strong inter-relationship between administrators and coaches is less the case when we compare our participants with other groups. Unsurprisingly they tend to be younger than coaches and, particularly, administrators, as both groups tend to have found their way into those roles after enjoying participation. Participants do, however, tend to share the same key reservations about the ability to increase participation on the tidal Thames as administrators and coaches (though perhaps not as strongly). This primarily relates to safety on the waterways, but also to levels of knowledge and competence in marketing, fundraising and attracting a more diverse participant base, like the other two groups. They are, however, enthusiastic in principle about the aims\* of the Active Thames programme.

It is very noticeable how many of our participants did not grow up in the South of England. Many indeed were raised outside of the UK. This may, in part, explain the unrepresentatively low representation of ethnically diverse communities among waterways users. Even the white, male waterways users may not be representative of the white, male population in their area, suggesting even greater potential for growth in local waterways users.

*“Growing up outside of London I learnt to swim, sail, kayak, canoe, scuba dive and generally do water sports at local reservoirs, pools or ex-clay pits in the case of scuba diving. Rowing I fell in love with at university, and also eventually learnt to like running and cycling. I realised a year or two into living in London that I really missed being near the water and large green spaces, and relocated near to the river and re-started rowing.”*

\*The Active Thames programme brings together key strategic stakeholders including river user groups, Canal & River Trust and National Governing Bodies. It focuses on increasing recreational activity on and alongside the tidal Thames and inland waterways, and supporting the sustainability of the watersports sector across London, Kent and Essex.

## 3c. Online Community - Participants

The profound importance of good, encouraging coaches who can tailor their teaching to the skills and needs of individuals is very clearly demonstrated by very many of the responses from our participants.

*"The most important person in terms of making me want to come back was one of the coaches who taught me the basics of rowing. As getting involved with sport was something I was very apprehensive about doing in the first place, she put me completely at ease, got rid of any sense I might have had that I didn't belong there, allayed all fears I had that sport wasn't for me, and reassured me that though I was out of shape, this was no barrier to participation. If I'd had a less attentive and reassuring coach, I might have let my unfounded concerns get to me and would have been less likely to stay involved."*

The social element is absolutely key too.

*The camaraderie of participating in an activity with a group of people who enjoy the same thing (and therefore you have something, however intangible, in common with). And there's something I can't explain about being out on the water that gives me a huge sense of satisfaction and wellbeing. As Ratty in Wind in the Willows put it, 2...there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats'."*

## 3c. Online Community - Participants

Participants tend to think positively of the PLA and welcome its potentially greater involvement in activities at their club.

*“The PLA seems well respected by the formal organisations who use the river, but less known by the individual leisure user. Perhaps the PLA could broaden their regular updates to the leisure users (rather than just formal organisations or local clubs) - by linking their newsletter to websites that are water sports related for the Thames, involve leisure users through their local clubs, maybe link up with the river cleaning programmes - so the leisure users have a chance to get to know the PLA staff and their work.”*

*“The PLA could publish regular newsletters on safety, river use, river traffic etc. to the individual river user, not just formal organisations or local clubs. Link up and get involved with events that involve clubs, individuals and retail water sports shops, e.g. river clean ups, promotion days for waters sports on the river - organise an annual promotion day for water sports on the Thames, promote to beginners and skilled users, involve local clubs (to teach beginners on the day).”*

# Themed Outcomes

# Increasing Participation

## 4a. Increasing Participation

The key challenge here for the Active Thames Partnership is alleviating the concerns of waterways users that there may not be scope for greater participation on and around our waterways, without causing risks to the safety of individuals, particularly to potential novice waterways users.

*“More people - great, more people enjoying the waterways! The negative would be dealing with overcrowded stretches of river, particularly when people don't know navigation rules or are just floating about in a dinghy drinking beer, which could be dangerous. 90% of the time though it's just a lack of awareness.” Participant*

Many participants see the PLA as key to bringing this about through a double-pronged approach of:

- more rigid enforcement of the rules, particularly in relation to speed
- leading an education campaign to explain why strict rules are necessary.

*“More people would expose themselves to dangers that can harm them or be fatal due to lack of skills, and knowledge and understanding of the environment. So, it would be paramount to work on and facilitate how this knowledge can be accessible to them and how can it be obtained.” Administrator*

## 4a. Increasing Participation

*“It would be good to have the PLA more actively involved in patrolling our waters. Some of our dinghy sailors, particularly the children, can get worried by fast moving motor boats and jet skis. Although there is a speed limit sometimes it isn’t adhered to and the power craft can race through inshore disrupting sailing events.” Participant*

Some respondents refer to concerns that greater recreational use of waterways will also potentially impair some of the important commercial activities which take place on waterways.

*“Having lots of recreational craft potentially with limited experience could then cause hinderance to the commercial operation which also happen on the Thames.” Administrator*

Addressing this very key concern about greater numbers reducing safety is key to achieving buy-in from the waterways community. If this can be addressed, however, and hearts and minds persuaded that they need not be concerned, there is then strong enthusiasm for increasing participation and an appreciation that help is needed to achieve this. Key to this is help with marketing.

*“What would be incredibly useful is further support in marketing the opportunities on the Thames. Is there some digital marketing that could be done to focus on groups around clubs who might even think to look to join a club or try out a water sport?” Administrator*

## 4a. Increasing Participation

There is also recognition that, whilst clubs have a key role to play (and need help to play it), a bigger coordinated (PLA/NGB/local authority level) effort is also required. An example follows.

*"An awareness campaign through an annual open day nationwide could attract a diverse range of people - groups of friends or families could join the fun together. Those organisations with safe access to the waterways or sheltered docks could join this annual campaign to attract nervous newcomers in a safe environment, with qualified instructors on hand for demo sessions. Provide picnic space, so the visitors could stay on and watch the fun, rather than seeing the activity just as a sports session, instead of a fun group outing." Participant*

There is also a recognised need for help with fundraising and perhaps with instilling confidence that fundraising efforts and marketing efforts can reap substantial rewards with relatively low risk.

*"We could be offering more sessions for sure, but we definitely suffer from a lack of coaching availability and financial security. One feeds off of the other in a negative way. We might be able to secure coaches with more notice but since we don't know what bookings will be, we can't commit to the costs of the coaching. It's definitely something that if we had funding to offer sessions then I think the bookings would follow but it's too much of a financial risk right now (particularly after last year.)" Coach*



## 4a. Increasing Participation

*“Fundraising in and of itself requires bandwidth which we are short on at the moment. With more human resource (and the right skills) we could more effectively grow the membership (which is a large source of revenue) and explore other opportunities. Just at the moment, it's having the time to have a more concerted approach to fundraising in the first place that is the problem.” Administrator*

*“I think there are a few things the need to come together. Firstly, we need to make sure we have a compelling offer. Access to boats, and adequate facilities. We need to build the links out to schools and community groups - our club have started doing this through a few initiatives, but we shouldn't underestimate the amount of time and effort it requires, particularly for volunteer clubs like ours. Participant*

We had many enthusiastically conceived suggestions along those lines. Also frequently suggested was greater opportunities for clubs to work together – something which the PLA is seen to be well placed to facilitate.

*“We should encourage greater collaboration amongst local water sports groups and encourage more people to be vocal about recreation on the Thames.” Participant*

# Engaging The Workforce

## 4b. Engaging the Workforce

The Active Thames Partnership, as well as National Governing Bodies operating in watersports, are fortunate in that the concept of greater, often more professional, assistance from outside is cautiously welcomed by most of our participants. Where this can go wrong is if the outside assistance is seen as heavy-handed or worse critical of the efforts and contribution of individuals currently working/volunteering in clubs into which they feel a strong emotional investment. Being seen to work with, rather than thought to work against, these people is key to success.

*“We are a club run by volunteers. We prefer to maintain the level where all members are equal due to all being volunteers and playing equal membership. Paid roles would not work for us. We offer all members freedom to engage as much as they want, can or feel like it.” Administrator*

Many people are more open to professional expertise than the person quoted above, so long as current contributors remain encouraged and integral to the future and do not feel marginalised.

*“I was lucky to have some really inspiring coaches over the years. I volunteered for 20 years before finally deciding to pursue coaching more seriously. The opportunity to be out on the water enabling the rowers to do things to the best of their ability - physically and mentally - is a privilege. Many people gave up their time to help me learn to row and race. Now I volunteer at as many races on the Tideway as I can to give back to the sport that I love - launch driver, timekeeper, boating help, litter picker, whatever is needed.” Coach*

## 4b. Engaging the Workforce

There is also scope for more and better qualified coaches if support can be provided to achieve this and existing coaches who do not wish to take (further) qualifications can still be accommodated.

*“Supporting coaches and leaders’ development to generate more experienced people within the club able to take others on the water and to share their knowledge and skills.” Administrator*

*"Our biggest barrier is a lack of coaches. We have a few volunteers in addition to our coaches but getting them qualified is almost impossible (courses not run in our area, expensive, and nothing beyond L2 when we have people keen to advance their skills)." Coach*

*"Few of our coaches are qualified as the qualifications are long, expensive and sporadic." Coach*

In a sense, help with marketing and fundraising is potentially easier to give as fewer people at clubs feel equipped to deliver it.

*“We've just tried Facebook advertising, but it didn't really work, probably because we don't really know what we're doing! I guess a digital marketing course would be useful. Does that already exist do you know? And/or maybe some time with a consultant who could provide tailored advice to reach out to certain communities.” Administrator*

## 4b. Engaging the Workforce

*"I had resolved to take it up for some time, and looked into local clubs. However, opportunities to get involved were always inconveniently timed and located. There wasn't a huge amount on club websites about how to get involved, (other than an email or web contact form, it would have been nice to have a better idea about what would happen when one got involved so I knew more about what it was I was asking for!) and as it was something that I was apprehensive about doing in the first place this proved an additional barrier to participation. At the start of 2015 I saw a beginners' course with the London Otters on Meetup.com and signed up quickly!" Participant*

Responses here drew attention again to the fact that some form of coaches forum would have appeal to many.

*"Many coaches work solo or within a small group. There isn't a forum to meet other coaches and share experiences. It seems that much of the communication about safety for Thames Region rowing relies on managing to be on the right email distribution list." Coach*

*"Provide a mechanism for coaches to contact their peers and develop networks within and across sports." Coach*

# Diversity & Inclusion

## 4c. Diversity and Inclusion

It is important to state at the outset here that nothing that anyone said gave any indication that any form of prejudice or snobbery presents any kind of barrier here. Indeed, the concept of greater diversity was widely welcomed.

*“In my opinion there are only positives to be had from increasing diversity in participation, the biggest being a sense of connection. If the Thames does nothing else, it connects people and communities in a physical way, and it can also serve to connect us as a society.”* Participant

*“For me, the very best thing about London is its cultural diversity, arising from the rich mix of those who live and/or work here. It's how communities grow and evolve and how we learn from one another.”* Participant

*“The Thames is itself one of the most exciting and beautiful hearts of London and so for a truly diverse London community we must aim to have a diverse community sharing it. I think that sense of sharing and exploring a wild space on our doorsteps is such a valuable resource and aspiration.”* Participant

## 4c. Diversity and Inclusion

### What is preventing it from happening?

(1) Large numbers of people active on the waterways did not live in London when first exposed to it. Many indeed did not live in the UK. There must be a degree therefore to which white, male participants on London's waterways, are not even typical of white, male Londoners.

(2) There is a degree of failure to understand that it is not enough to say, and to wholeheartedly mean, that "everyone is welcome here", because this is still a huge ask of people who might potentially join a club, but feel that "nobody there is like me".

(3) Geography has its part to play. Clubs are often located in more affluent areas which tend to be more white and middle class than elsewhere. Clubs may often therefore be more representative of their immediate catchment area than they are of London as a whole.

*“Most sports coaches will have developed their love of the sport as a participant at school or as a young adult. Only a small number of schools have rowing in comparison to other sports, (football, athletics, basketball). There are far fewer community programmes so only a tiny proportion of children from London get the opportunity to try it. The majority of rowing clubs are based in Putney/Barnes/Chiswick/Richmond area - high proportion white middle class - which is where a lot of the young adult membership live. Only a few clubs have the resources, volunteers, or experience to provide outreach opportunities outside these communities which could attract a more diverse range of people into the sport.” Coach*



## 4c. Diversity and Inclusion

Though all of these are relevant, however, there is a single greater barrier.

(4) Lack of knowledge about how to reach out to women, ethnically diverse people, people who define as LGBT+, people from lower socio-economic groupings and people with disabilities. In this regard, the Active Thames programme is knocking at an open door at many clubs if it can provide advice and guidance on how to achieve this. There are some good, if broad, ideas which will benefit from more tailoring and finessing.

*“My daughter looked up local sports clubs and came across the Winchester Athletics Club. The website appealed to her because it welcomed everybody, it had social events and was written in an easy to understand and a chatty style. The advert made it easy to just go along and try the club without joining which my daughter found attractive. There was less emphasis in her eyes on victories and more on taking part and belonging.” Participant*

*“I think we need to be doing some targeted campaigns to specific groups. For example, we have around 50 boats based at our club. Not one of them is owned or skippered by a female. That doesn't seem very 2021! The good news is our NGB have campaigns we can adopt, once we have an offer to put on the table.” Participant*

*“One of the issues is a lack of female coaches so it is harder to feel it is possible to take up the sport. Some water sports can feel a bit strength based and macho, encouraging team-work could overcome this. Plus women only sessions at the start so women who feel less strong are not put off having a go.” Administrator*

## 4c. Diversity and Inclusion

There are, it has to be said, a number of great initiatives taking place in this regard already.

*“The team here all have the same ideals and goals. We know what we want to achieve and it isn't just about getting people to try new things, it is also to try and break down the real and imagined barriers to access. All of that would be easier with longer term funding and support that would allow us to plan for the future, develop our ideas and learn what works and what doesn't.” Administrator*

*“Working with a charity that exists to improve the lives of marginalised, young people in London has allowed me to use the skills I have learnt within the Rowing community, engaging individuals, especially young men on the edge of gangs and crime to introduce them to discipline through sport that elevates them to better outcomes.” Coach*

In respect of women, ethnically diverse people, people who define as LGBT+ and people from lower socio-economic groupings, there were no significant concerns expressed about having greater representation among memberships and waterways users. In respect of children and people with disabilities however, there were concerns expressed about lack of specialist knowledge and training techniques and consequent safety risks.

## 4c. Diversity and Inclusion

*We're still a relatively new club and don't have a particular programme or advice on mental health (beyond anecdotal feedback that rowing has helped members in this regard) or disability. We'd certainly be keen to work with potential new members on this, but at the moment it would be ad hoc. This is true also for children - we'd need specific equipment, safety protocols and personnel checks, and we just haven't found the bandwidth to do any of this yet." Administrator*

*"To be frank, we struggle with disabilities and have to make some pretty tough decisions about what level of disability we can cope with. We have run one course for visually impaired paddlers with success. We can cope with minor problems like Asperger's/Autism reasonably okay, but manhandling individuals who cannot support their own weight when trying to enter/exit a craft is usually more than we are equipped to handle without putting our coaches at risk." Coach*

# Facilities

## 4d. Facilities

We found some evidence of facilities being used for other purposes in downtime and others who spoke of cautious willingness to consider this. It feels uncomfortable to many however.

We found no shortage of dissatisfaction with facilities and desire for improvement if resources allow, which may of course happen if membership and participation increases. Key personnel at clubs should be reminded of the link between the two.

*“Provide public facilities - toilets, changing areas, secure bike parking.”*

*“We need a place to store valuables and other basic changing room / toilet facilities. A social area is nice to have.”*

*“From a facilities perspective, our premises need upgrading. Our club house is not accessible to anybody with mobility impairments, we do not have adequate shower and changing facilities to support bringing younger people in to the club, and we have no separate rooms for briefing training. The club is aware of all of these issues but they are all expensive to resolve.”*

There is considerable scope for more effective use of facilities in downtime and opening doors to non-members if people can be guided on how to do this without too many headaches.

The logo consists of a white shield-like shape with a pointed bottom, centered on a red background. Inside the shield, the words "LONDON" and "SPORT" are stacked vertically in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

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