Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and Swimming

Report prepared for Amateur Swimming Association

June 2012
1. Introduction

This report looks at the findings from a national survey conducted in partnership with Ethnos Consultancy to ascertain the interest in swimming from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and the barriers to access.

2. Research Aims

The research aims were:

- to determine the level of participation in sport and physical activity in general, and swimming in particular, amongst BME communities;
- to identify barriers to participation in sport and physical activity in general and swimming in particular amongst BME communities;
- to identify ways of overcoming barriers;
- to identify the extent of knowledge about ‘Big Splash’ and views about pop-up-pools.

3. Research Methodology

An online survey was conducted in February 2012, which was completed by a total of 735 respondents. The sample was devised to be representative of the UK’s BME population. The profile of respondents reflects those who have access to a computer and can use a pc.

4. Sample Profile

Gender & Age

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The profile of respondents comprised a slightly higher number of females. The age distribution reflects a relatively younger age profile with most of the respondents aged between 16 and 34 years.

Ethnicity & Faith

The sample reflects a diverse range of ethnic groups with the greatest response from the Indian groups compared to other groups. Broken down by faith the greatest number of respondents giving details of their faith were from the Muslim and Christian backgrounds.
5. Participation

85% of respondents confirmed that they have participated in some form of sport or physical activity in the past 12 months. The lowest participation is for the Bangladeshi groups.

Looking back over the last 12 months have you taken part in any sport or recreational physical activity? (%)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in Swimming (30 minutes +)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Amongst respondents who have participated in sport or physical activity in the past 12 months, three-quarters (75%) have participated in swimming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- However, only one in six people (17%) have been swimming in the past four weeks. This drops to one in seven for the Black population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A quarter of the ethnic minority population questioned have never been swimming.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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In the past four weeks, which of the following have you taken part in for at least 30 minutes continuously on each occasion: swimming? (%)
Frequency of Swimming in the last four weeks

- Amongst respondents who have been swimming in the past four weeks, around half swim once or twice a week.
- The Asian groups are more likely to swim less often compared to the Black groups.

How often have you participated in swimming over the past four weeks for at least 30 minutes continuously on each occasions? (%)

![Bar chart showing frequency of swimming]

6. Latent Demand

- Of all the sports identified in the survey, swimming was the number one activity people want to do more of.
- Almost six out of ten people state that they would like to swim more.

Which activities would you like to do more of (swimming)? (%)
7. Ability to Swim

- A third of all respondents do not go swimming because they cannot swim with a similar percentage of Asian and black people not being able to swim.

*I don’t go swimming because I cannot swim? (%)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Applies</th>
<th>Does not apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asians</strong></td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Barriers to participation

- For most respondents not having the time, expense and having other priorities are the main reasons for not participating in any sport or physical activity.
- For a third of Asian and a quarter of Black respondents having family to look after is a barrier to taking part in sport and physical activity.

*The following are reasons people give for not taking part in sport or active recreational activities. Please state which, if any, apply to you? (%)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have the time</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have other priorities</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too expensive</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have family to look after</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For half the respondents not having someone to go with acts as a barrier to participating in sport and physical activity.

Self concept of not being ‘sporty’ acts as a barrier for four out of ten respondents.

A third of Asian and a quarter of Black respondents feel too shy or embarrassed to participate in activities.

A third of Asians say they do not like to go to places where people show their body parts.

For almost a fifth (18%) of Asians not having their cultural or religious needs met is a factor in not participating in sport or physical activity.

9. Overcoming Barriers

How likely are you to do more sport or recreational activity if the following were available? (%)

- **Single sex facilities/sessions**
  - Black: 31%
  - Asian: 49%

- **Dress in accordance with cultural/religious needs**
  - Black: 6%
  - Asian: 35%

- **Facilities cater to your cultural/religious needs**
  - Black: 19%
  - Asian: 46%

- **Seeing more people from your ethnic/faith background**
  - Black: 31%
  - Asian: 42%

- **Having more family/friends taking part**
  - Black: 65%
  - Asian: 77%
Having single sex facilities is important for both Asian and Black respondents. Half of Asians and a third of Black respondents say they are more likely to participate in activities if single sex facilities were available.

Being able to dress according to one’s cultural or religious requirements is important for Asians but not so for Black respondents.

However, a fifth of Black respondents would like facilities to cater to their cultural or religious needs. This is also important for almost half of Asian respondents.

Seeing more people from one’s own ethnic or faith background can encourage people to participate in sporting activities.

Having family and friends participate can have a very significant impact on participation levels.

10. Satisfaction with local swimming facilities

- Although half (51%) of respondents are satisfied with swimming facilities in their local area, almost a quarter (22%) are dissatisfied.

How would you rate your satisfaction level with swimming provisions in your local area? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Likelihood of swimming if pop-up-pools available

- There is quite a lot of interest in pop-up-pools with half (51%) of all respondents saying they are more likely to swim if these were available.
- A quarter (24%) say they are a lot more likely to use them.
- There is slightly more interest in the pop-up-pools amongst Asian compared to Black respondents though the difference is small.

How likely are you to do more swimming if pop-up-pools were available in your local community? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A lot more likely</th>
<th>A little more likely</th>
<th>Makes no difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Knowledge of ‘Big Splash’

- A third of respondents had heard of the ‘Big Splash’ campaign.
- Four out of ten people had not heard of it and just over a quarter were not sure or did not know.

I have heard of the ‘Big Splash’ campaign to encourage people to swim more (%)
13. Summary and Conclusions

The majority of BME people (85%) had participated in physical activity in the previous twelve months. Of these, three quarters (75%) had taken part in swimming. However, only 17% had been swimming in the previous four weeks. This suggests that there are a lot of lapsed swimmers that could be encouraged to take up swimming again. There is a lot of motivation to do so with 59% of respondents saying they would like to swim more often.

A third of respondents do not go swimming because they cannot swim and a further quarter of respondents are dissatisfied with swimming facilities in their local area.

Lack of time, expense, self concept of not being sporty or not having anyone to go with are major barriers to participating in swimming. Barriers more prevalent amongst BME people include the requirement for single sex facilities, facilities catering for cultural or religious needs and, in the case of Asians, allowing them to dress according to their cultural or religious requirements. Catering for these requirements would encourage more BME people to participate in swimming. As more BME people take part in swimming, this would, in itself have a significant impact on BME participation levels.

Three quarters of BME respondents say they are more likely to participate in physical activity if their family or friends participated also. Therefore any efforts promoting family and friends swimming together is likely to be an effective way of increasing participation.

The interest in pop-up-pools should be tapped into and promoted appropriately within target communities. It is important that ASA ensures that marketing of campaigns like the ‘Big Splash’ reach BME audiences through appropriate channels of communication and the use of ethnic media.
14. Recommendations

■ A third of respondents don’t go swimming because they don’t know how to swim. More needs to be done by ASA to put on learner/taster sessions to help grow confidence and encourage people to swim.

■ Of all the sports identified in the survey, swimming was the number one activity people want to do more of. ASA can capitalise on this latent demand, however, it does need to ensure services are culturally sensitive and can meet the needs of BME communities.

■ Almost a quarter of respondents are dissatisfied with swimming facilities in their local area and these issues need to be explored further.

■ It is clear that the ‘Big Slash’ campaign is not reaching some BME target audiences, ASA should therefore review its marketing strategy in relation to ‘Big Splash’ to help engage BME audiences. Sporting Equals can provide support in adapting marketing literature and advising on the appropriate channels of communication and the best use of ethnic media.

■ There is scope for ASA and partners to promote swimming as a “family” friendly activity. This can be done through community engagement activity and links with schools and faith establishments.

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