

Barriers to Participation – Black and Minority Ethnic Groups

Key Facts

- According to the 2001 census, 8.3% of the population in Harlow are from a BME group
- Just over half of non-white Harlow residents are satisfied with the local sports provision, compared to seven out of ten white residents
- Less than one in five non-white residents in Harlow are a member of a sports club, compared to nearly one in three white residents

Main Barriers

- May not be able to use mixed sex facilities
- Assumptions about BME people - eg that all Asian girls aren't allowed to wear swimsuits - can limit their opportunities to take up sport
- Home and family responsibilities
- Previous negative experiences in sport due to ethnicity
- Cultural norms of behaviour appropriate to women and to older people
- May consider sportswear immodest

How can these barriers be addressed?

- Advertise via religious buildings, posters, radio and word of mouth
- Consider using only female instructors for female groups of participants
- Use images of Black and Minority Ethnic groups in promotional literature

Case Study

Alhijra Somali Community Association - Tottenham

This group started a new program in 2002 to build provide activities for females who face cultural barriers to mainstream activities. The Women & Girls sports group has weekly basketball, football and netball sessions run by female coaches who began as participants then gained coaching qualifications through the project. Two women also trained as volunteer walk leaders and the group organises monthly health walks. As well as this the project also runs weekly basketball sessions for juniors and senior men, with the senior team being the first Somali team to be represented in an organised league.

At first the group struggled to find female coaches, however by giving participants access to train on the Basketball Level One Coaching Certificate and Community Sports Leaders Award they were able to then coach their peers. The groups have proved to be a great success with 2,278 female participants in the year 2004-05 and numbers continuing to grow.



Sources / Further Information

Active People Survey - <http://www.webreport.se/apd/login.aspx>
Sport England Promoting Sport Toolkit www.sportengland.org/promotingsport
Sport England 'Sports Participation and Ethnicity in England' -
http://www.sportengland.org/ethnic_survey.pdf
Sporting Equals - <http://www.sportingequals.com/>
Sports Equality East 'Promoting Equality in Sport and Physical Activity' -
<http://www.sportengland.org/equality-proofing-a4-v1b.pdf>
What Works for Women - <http://www.whatworksforwomen.org.uk>
Women's Sports Foundation - <http://www.wsf.org.uk/>