



# **The Coaching Panel 2015**

**A report on coaches and coaching in the UK**

**May 2015**

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## Executive Summary

This report represents the findings from the largest survey of coaches ever conducted across multiple sports in the UK, possibly in the world. By comparing the results with a previous survey in 2008, we are able to report with confidence on what has changed – and what has not.

The results provide robust evidence to support Sports Councils, Governing Bodies of Sport and other organisations in refining their workforce strategies, coach education and development. Although this summary captures the key findings, together with our comments related to the implementation of the UK Coaching Framework, we urge you to read the whole document and apply it to your work.

### The key messages

#### ***More appropriately qualified and skilled coaches***

The most common route into coaching is for ex-participants wanting to give something back. The number of people who start because they want a coaching career has increased four-fold since 2008.

Of all the sources of learning available, coaching qualifications have the biggest long-term impact. More coaches are qualified at Level 2 than lower or higher levels, and just over half of coaches expect to take another qualification within the next year.

#### ***A more diverse workforce***

Sports coaching remains a predominantly male activity, with only 28% of coaches being women. This emphasises the importance of initiatives designed to increase the under-representation among women and minority ethnic groups. Nearly three quarters of coaches are over 35 and fewer young people are entering coaching.

The proportion of full-time coaches has doubled since 2008, although coaching remains a predominantly volunteer activity, with 80% of coaches volunteering at some time during the year. On average, volunteers coach for four hours a week, although over 10% give up more than 10 hours per week.

#### ***A culture of self-improvement***

The most common way for coaches to develop is by learning on-the-job, especially by working with a more experienced coach. More than 80% of coaches had undertaken some continuing personal development (CPD) over the past 12 months. They are most likely to be looking for technical information. Coaches typically use five different sources for informal learning and recognise that the impact of internet-based learning is often short-term.

#### ***A better-supported workforce***

Recruitment into coaching remains informal, with three quarters of people finding out about coaching opportunities through their local club. The sports club remains the hub of coaching, with two-thirds of sessions organised there. A typical session lasts 90 minutes and involves two coaches working with 20 participants. Coaching within schools represents the second most popular location at 9%.

More than 80% of coaches feel supported by their governing body or other agency, although this proportion is much smaller among highly-qualified coaches.

## 1 Introduction

At the end of 2014 and start of 2015 sports coach UK surveyed over 3,700 coaches across the UK. This report shows what we learnt from speaking with coaches.

### About the coaches

- Coaching remains a predominantly male occupation and very little has changed since 2008<sup>1</sup>. Similarly the proportion of disabled coaches or coaches from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are not what you would expect, given overall trends in sport participation.
- Since 2008 the average starting age for coaches has increased from 26 to 30. In particular the proportion of younger people starting to coach has decreased from 50% to 40%.
- 80% of coaches contribute at least some of their time as volunteers. The majority of volunteers coach for between one to six hours per week with the most common time spent coaching being one to two hours.

### Entry in to coaching

- By far the most common route into coaching is by ex-participants wanting to give something back to sport or help their club/team.
- More parents are getting involved in coaching, although their children are not the only motivation to coach as they also tend to be ex-participants.
- Since 2008 the percentage of coaches who start because they want a career in coaching has jumped from 5% to 21%.
- Recruitment into coaching remains a very informal process. 73% of coaches first found out about the coaching opportunity because they were already involved in the club or knew someone there.

### Coaching sessions

- 70% of coaching sessions are organised by a sports club. If there was such a thing as a typical session, it would last 90 minutes and involve two coaches working with 20 participants.
- Around 60% of people who receive coaching could be described as competitive participants. 24% of coaching is with beginners/improvers while 17% can be described as recreational or sport that happens for fun with no competitive element.
- There continues to be trend in sport where lower qualified coaches are more likely to work with younger participants. There is a culture where coaches 'learn their trade' with children.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2008 we conducted a similar piece of research with coaches that allows for comparisons over time.

## **Developing as a coach**

- 84% of coaches had undertaken some form of continuing personal development (CPD) in the last 12 months. On average, coaches use around five different sources of informal learning sources.
- We can say with confidence that the most common way for coaches to develop is learning on the job – talking to and observing other coaches and reflecting on their own coaching.
- The last few years have seen an increase in the use of technology in coach development. This is especially true for the internet and more specifically watching videos online. However these all come with a health warning that the impact they make is typically short term.
- The most popular type of information that coaches look for is technical information – eight out of ten coaches had looked for this information in the last year. This was followed by planning sessions (77% of coaches sought this) and information about coaching delivery such as listening, providing feedback and providing instruction.

## **Supporting coaches**

- Overall 83% of coaches feel supported by their governing body or other agencies such as sports coach UK and Home Country Sports Councils. This is a slight increase on the previous year when the figure was 79%.
- While feelings of support across all levels of qualified coach have increased since 2014, the trend remains that there is a drop-off in feeling of support as the level of qualification increases and this is particularly acute at level 4.
- The most popular idea to improve support for coaches is access to a more experienced coach. This proved more popular than mentoring (40% compared to 33%) and perhaps reflects that many coaches are after a less formal relationship than mentoring. Coaches would like to see more workshops run at their local club.

## **The future and stopping coaching**

- Overall optimism about the future is the same as last year with 39% of coaches expecting to do more coaching.
- 5% of coaches intend to do less coaching in 2015 which is a similar proportion as in 2014.
- The most common reasons for thinking about stopping coaching are related to health (and in particular coaches getting older) and family (either starting a new family or children stopping sport).
- About a quarter of reasons given for wanting to stop are system related – a lack of support or disillusionment, although these often come hand-in-hand.
- Work related reasons and a lack of time are the two most commonly cited reasons for actually stopping coaching.

## **2 Some questions to emerge from this report**

The impact of research is not only measured in what new information it provides, but in the questions it raises.

### **What will happen now more coaches are starting later in life?**

Since 2008 the average age at which people start coaching has increased from 26 to 30. This has been caused primarily by fewer young people under 24 coming into coaching (down from 50% to 40%). The effect of this change will only become clear over a longer period of time but it is possible to foresee a knock-on impact on retention.

There is now a greater emphasis on people starting coaching through their children. Other research confirms a relationship between in a child stopping sport and coaching drop-out. Does the increasing number of coaches who start through their children also increase the likelihood of coaches stopping?

### **Is new technology the future of coach development?**

There are significant differences in the impact of different forms of CPD. Some can be seen as providing the foundations of coaching – qualifications, talking with other coaches and observing other coaches all make a significant impact on coaching. Alongside these are other sources that provide an important top-up or answer a question that has come up in coaching practice. These often use technologies such as internet searches, online learning and watching videos online and it is important to recognise them as add-ons to existing foundations, rather than a replacement.

Discussions around coach development need to move away from an either/or debate around formal and informal methods. What is the best combination of foundations and new technology?

### **How can we better support experienced coaches?**

Although feelings of support are improving, there remains a trend that the longer you remain a coach, the less supported you are likely to feel. In the desire to recruit and develop new coaches are others being ignored? This is certainly the feeling among experienced coaches and begs the question: What more can be done to make experienced coaches feel more supported?

### **Are more/different initiatives needed?**

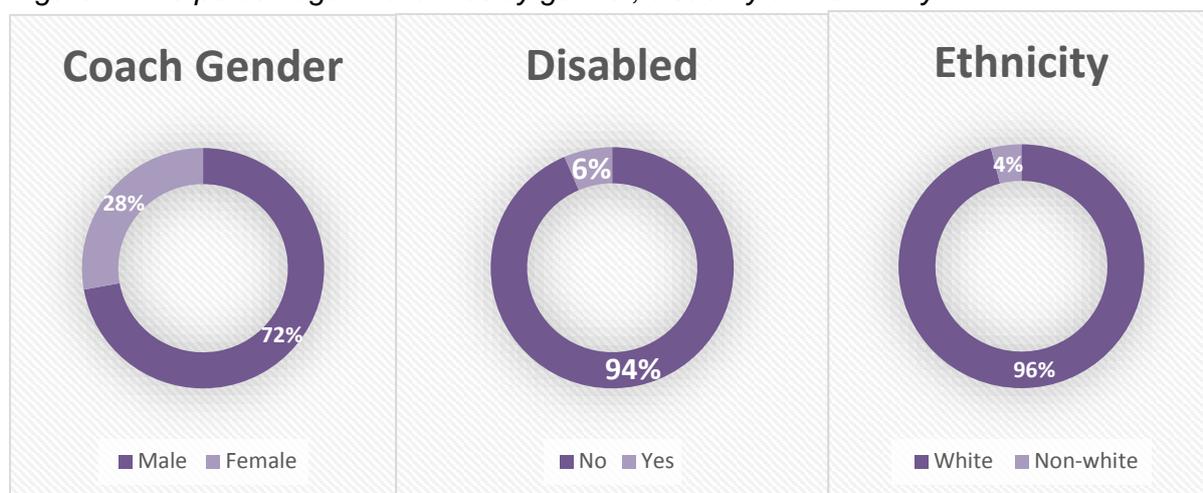
Since 2008 we have identified *help with cost of development opportunities* and *help with finding appropriate opportunities to coach* as areas where coaches do not feel supported. As a result, a number of agencies have provided funding opportunities and set up coach employment / deployment schemes. The fact that this is still a recurrent theme suggests that many coaches are not aware of these or that they are not sufficient. What more can Governing Bodies, County Sports Partnerships and others do to signpost opportunities, both for funding and for deployment?

### 3 Coach Demographics

#### 3.1 Coaching and comparisons with national trends

The three images below show that coaching is predominantly a male activity and coaches will tend to be White and not disabled. These figures have remained within the same range since first recorded in 2008 (70% to 75%) and at a national level coaching is not representative of society or the sporting population. If you consider that 30% of sports clubs say they cannot find enough coaches<sup>2</sup> there is a strong argument for recruiting additional coaches from these under-represented groups to help fill the gaps.

Figure 1: The percentage of coaches by gender, disability and ethnicity

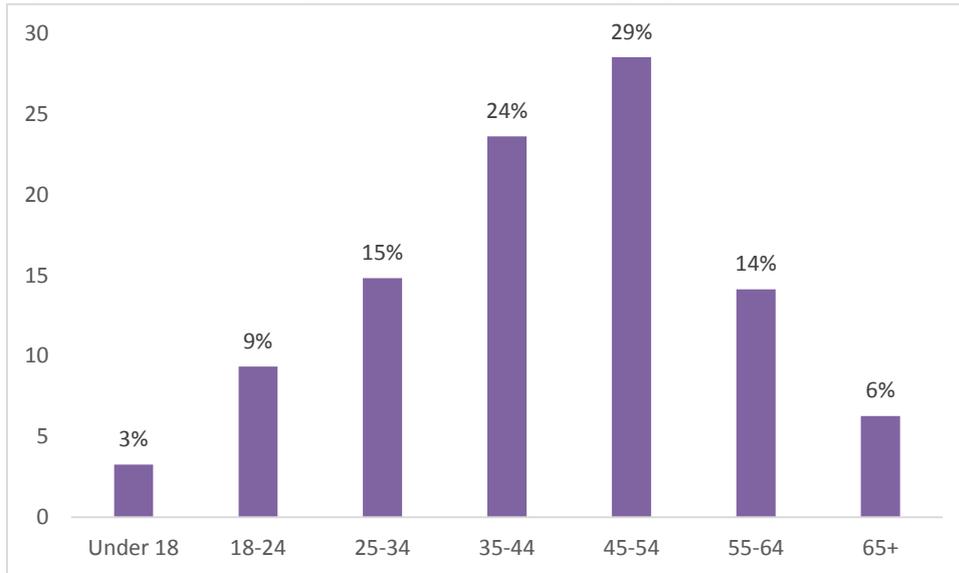


#### 3.2 The coaching population

Figure 2 shows that nearly three-quarters of the coaching population are aged over 35. From other data, we suspect this sample under-estimates the younger coaching workforce but it is typical of previous findings that older coaches are more likely to engage with coaching research.

<sup>2</sup> In a survey by the Sport and Recreation Alliance in 2013 30% of clubs stated that they had difficulties recruiting coaches.

Figure 2: The percentage of coaches in each age group



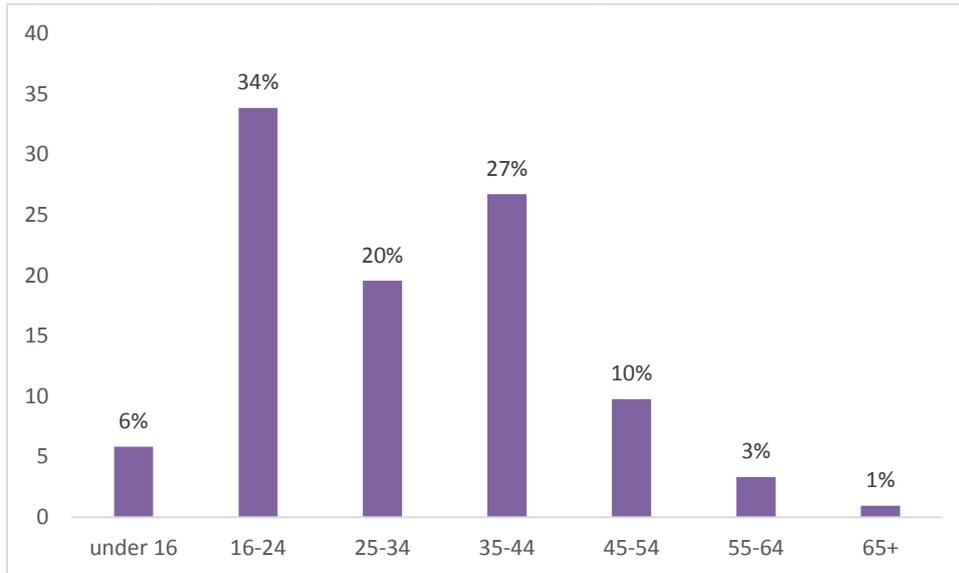
### 3.3 Entry age into coaching

Previous research has identified that there tend to be two peak entry periods into coaching - around the late teens and early thirties. This research confirms the twin peaks theory. As figure 3 shows, the two key age groups for starting coaching are 16-24 (34%) and 35-44 (27%). However the latest figures also point to a trend that the age of these peaks is getting older. In particular the second entry stage has moved towards mid- rather than early thirties.

This trend is demonstrated by the fact that since 2008 the average starting age for coaches has increased from 26 to 30.

Another interesting trend has been that the decrease in the percentage of coaches who start coaching before the age of 25 - from 50% in 2008 to 40% in 2015. While some of this can be explained by population trends (the proportion of young people in the overall population is declining due to an increase in older age groups) there still appears to be a downward trend of fewer young people entering coaching.

Figure 3: Age at which coaches start coaching



### 3.4 Coaching roles

Coaching remains a predominantly volunteer activity. 80% of coaches will volunteer at some time in the year. 58% of coaches are purely volunteers and 23% are a combination of volunteers who get paid for some coaching (or vice versa). 10% of coaches are solely part-time and 10% are paid full-time.

Figure 4: Coaching roles

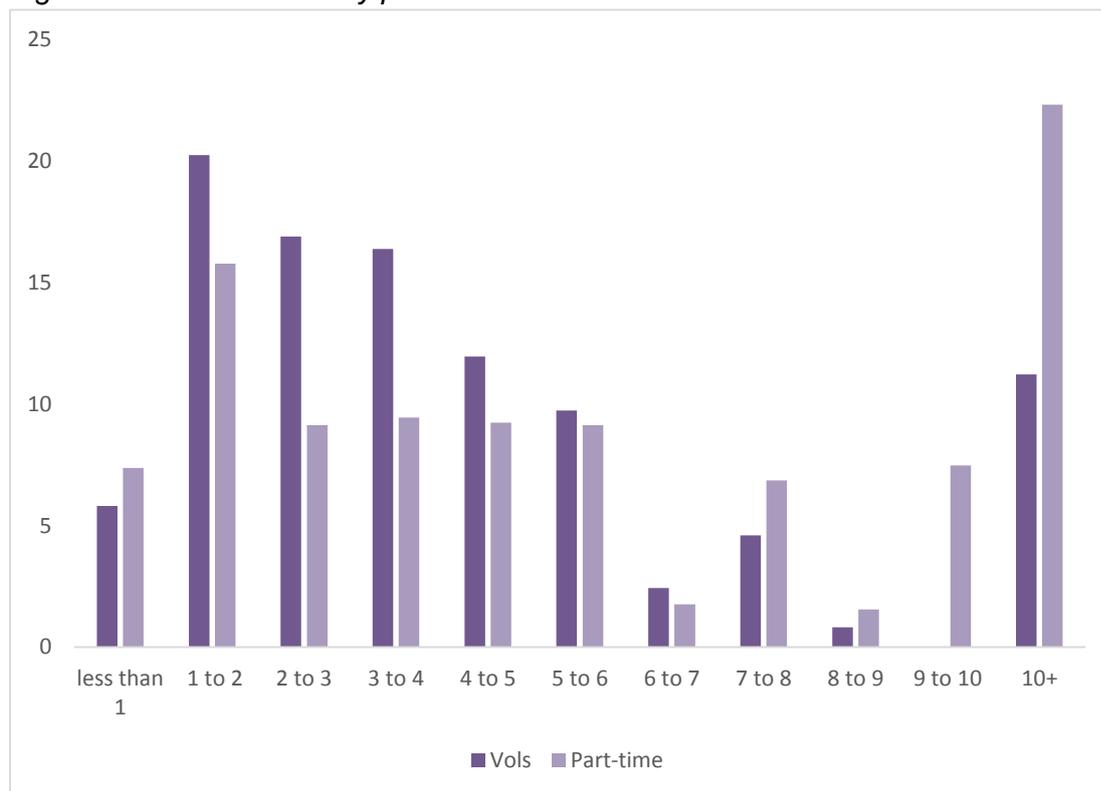


On average volunteers coach four hours per week, part-time coaches five hours and full-time coaches 30 hours. However, these average figures hide a more interesting and complex picture of how much time volunteers and part-timers spent coaching.

Figure 5 shows that 11% of volunteers give up more than 10 hours per week. To put this in context, research suggests that the average time spent volunteering in general is three hours per week.<sup>3</sup> The most common time spent coaching is one hour per week (20% of volunteers) while the majority will coach between one to five/six hours per week.

With part-time coaches we see two extremes. 22% of part-time coaches are doing over 10 hours per week while 23% do less than two hours. Part-time coaches are an under-researched group of the coaching workforce and more work is required to understand the contribution they make. Analysing results for this group separately is a project that has emerged from this report.

*Figure 5: Hours coached by part-time and volunteer coach*



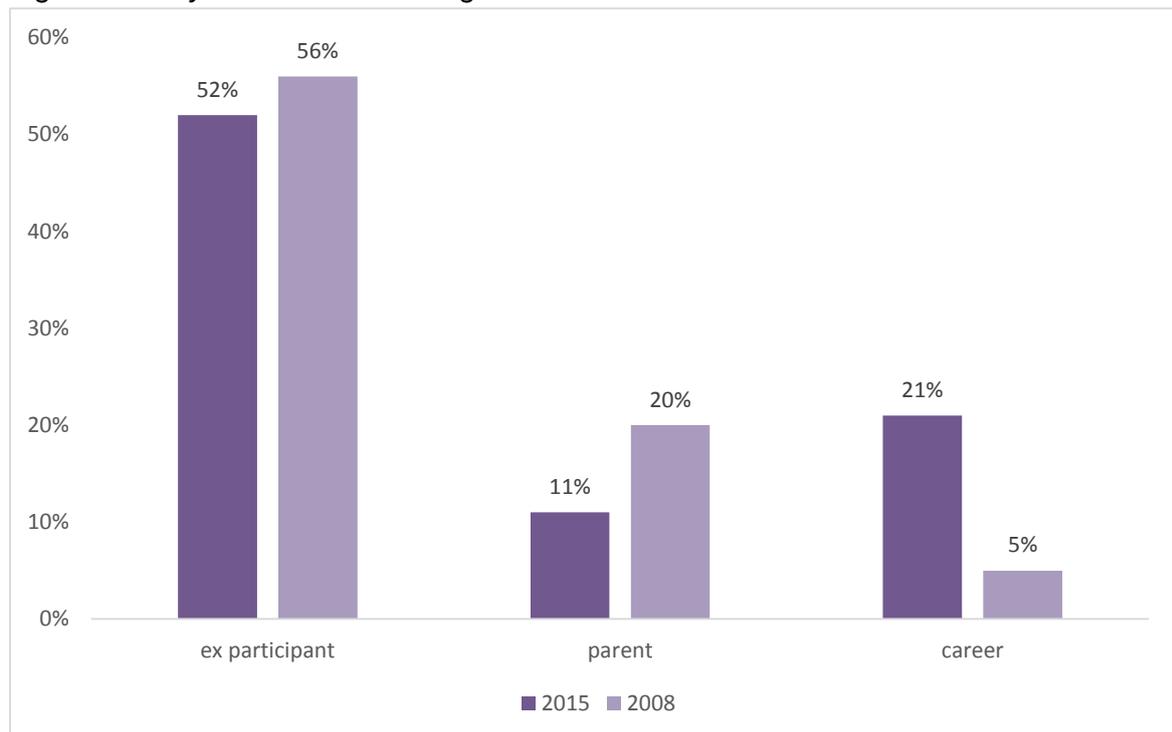
<sup>3</sup> This figure is based on research that showed those who regularly participated in formal volunteering spent an average of 12.6 hours volunteering in the four weeks before the interview. <http://timebank.org.uk/key-facts>

## 4 Entry into coaching

By far the most common route into coaching is by ex-participants wanting to give something back to sport or help their club/team. Just over half of all coaches say this is the reason they started which is similar to the 56% who said this in 2008. Two other reasons to start coaching have witnessed significant changes since 2008:

- The percentage of coaches who start because they want a career in coaching has jumped from 5% to 21%.
- The percentage of coaches who **only** started coaching because of their children has declined from 20% to 11%.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 6: Entry routes into coaching



This second point is interesting. A smaller proportion of people are getting involved in coaching solely because their children play; at the same time the percentage of coaches who give children as one (of many) reasons to coach has increased from 20% to 33%. A part of this can be explained by the fact that coaches are starting later in life. Average starting age has increased from 26 to 30 and therefore more coaches will likely have children.

However the data also suggests that as clubs are recruiting new coaches, they are turning more to parents who are ex-participants. On the one hand this can be seen as a positive trend. Previous research has shown that coaches who come through the ex-participant route are more likely to have thought about coaching or coached while still playing. This means

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<sup>4</sup> Coaches who only started coaching because of their children is a unique group among coaches. This group only have one reason to coach and that is their children. Other coaches may also have children who play sport but they will have other reasons to coach. This is an important distinction as research has shown that the 'parent' group have different training needs than others.

they probably have a head start, in terms of knowledge and experience, on parents who have never played the sport before.

The downside of this trend is that parent coaches often stop coaching when their children stop playing that sport. Therefore retention rates for coaches may be influenced by decisions made by their children.

#### **4.1 Career coaches**

21% of coaches started coaching as a career option but it is interesting that only 10% of coaches are paid full-time. More research into this group would be interesting to see if those who start coaching for a career become disillusioned at a lack of opportunities and drop out or whether they continue to coach in a different capacity.

Starting a career is the most important motivation for coaches aged under 35 while a child's involvement is the least important motivation. However with the 35-44 age group these roles are reversed and starting a career is the least important motivation (with children now the most important).

#### **4.2 The recruitment process**

73% of coaches first found out about the club/organisation where they coach either by being involved in the club already or by knowing someone there. This highlights the informal nature of coach recruitment and is supported by the fact that only 5% became involved by responding to an advertisement. Given that 30% of clubs state that they have difficulties recruiting coaches<sup>5</sup> this does raise the question of whether additional approaches to recruitment should be tried.

## 5 Coaching Sessions

While any analysis of coaching sessions will tend to generalise (different sports are likely to have different session structures) it is still worthwhile trying to shed more light on what actually happens when a coach is present in a sporting session. If there was such a thing as a typical session, it would last 90 minutes and involve two coaches working with 20 participants.

In this section we answer a series of questions about coaching sessions. It is based on analysis of 4,500 coaching sessions.

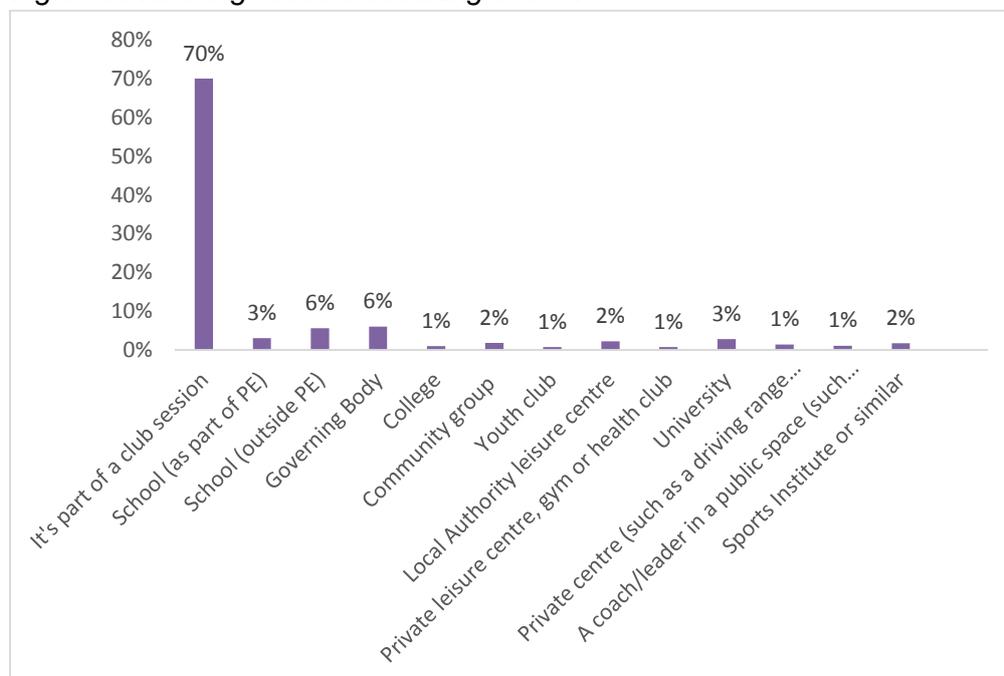
### 5.1 Where does coaching happen?

Sports clubs are the key area where coaching happens. Around 70% of sessions are organised by a club. In previous surveys we had worded the question around where the session took place rather than who organised it. This had caused us to underestimate the role of clubs as it was possible that a club session took place in a school or leisure centre and was recorded as one of the latter.

By analysing data from this year and previous surveys we now know that around 13% of club coaching sessions are using leisure centre facilities and 11% using schools.

Figure 7 shows how club sessions dominate where coaching happens. After this schools account for 9% (both as part of PE and outside) with the remaining coaching split between a series of different locations, none of which individually account for more than 5% of total coaching.

Figure 7: Who organises a coaching session



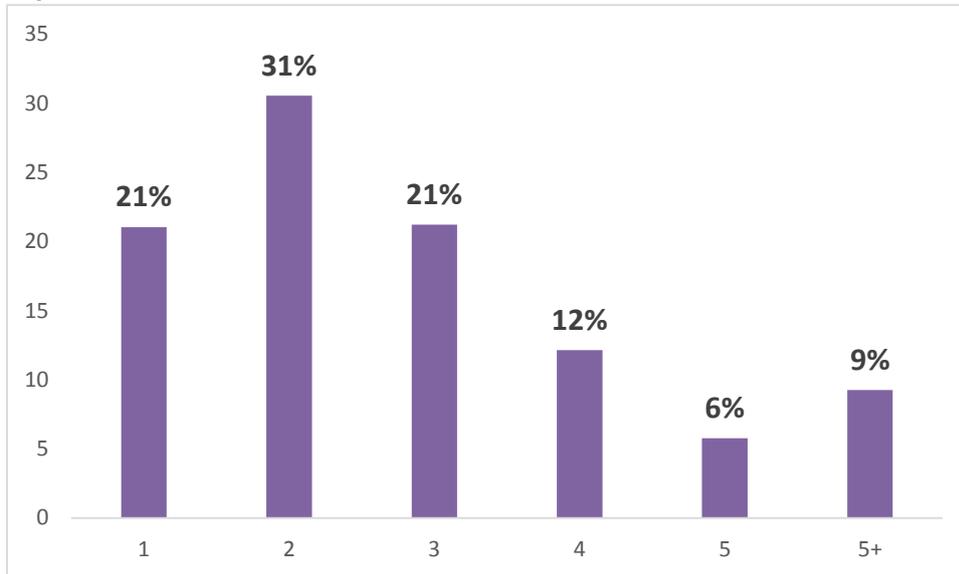
### 5.2 How many coaches are in a session?

The median number of coaches in a session is two but as figure 8 shows, a typical session has somewhere between one and three coaches. One figure that stands out is the 21% of

sessions that only have one coach. Is there a contingency plan if that coach is unavailable? We know from previous research that the exit from coaching is often unexpected; this does suggest that around a fifth of coaching sessions are vulnerable to unexpected events.

It also shows that recruiting new coaches should not only be about filling areas where there are currently no coaches but also increasing the numbers of coaches in a session.

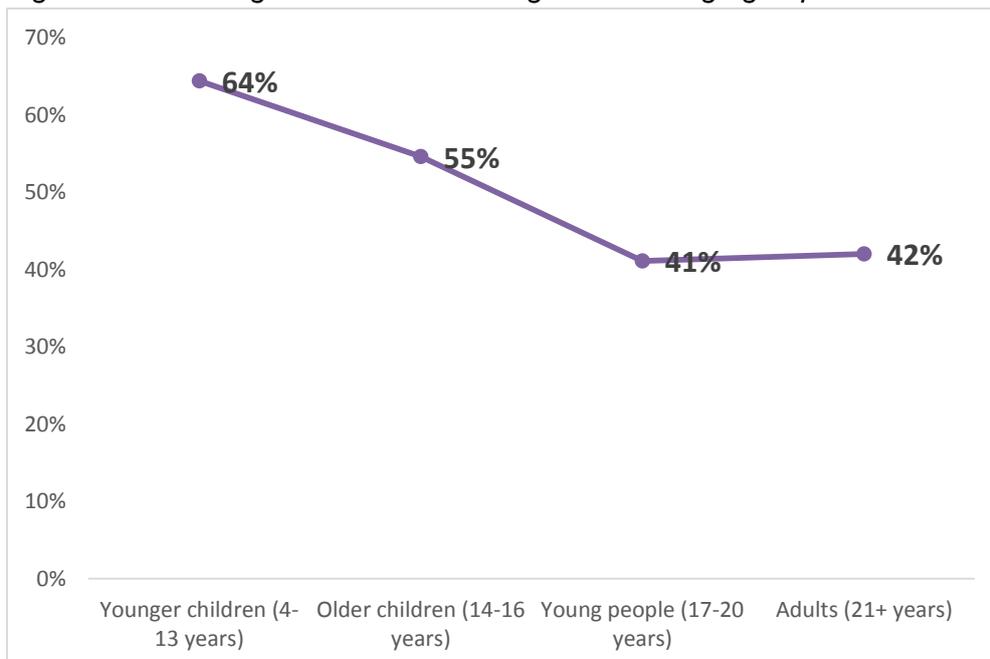
Figure 8: Number of coaches in a session



### 5.3 Who is being coached?

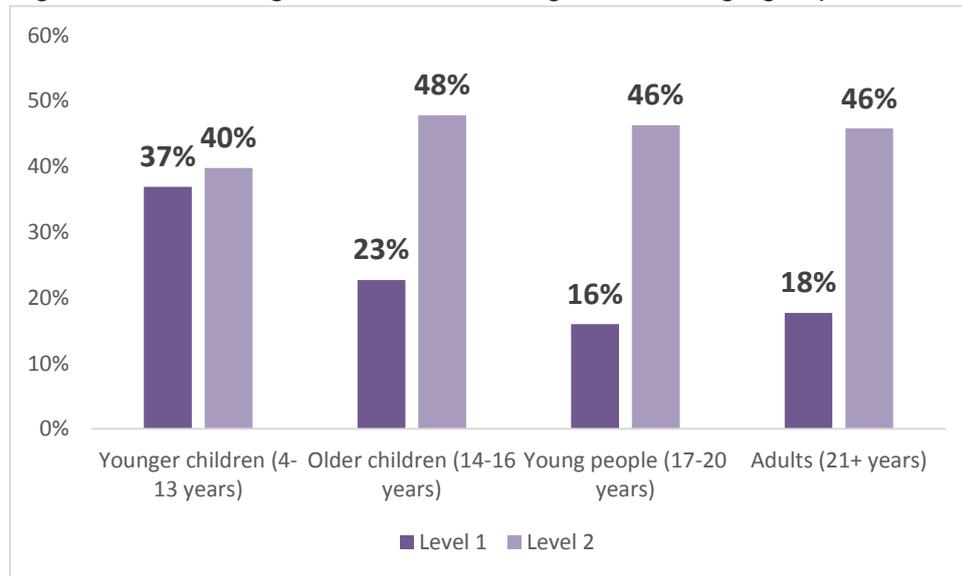
Coaches are most likely to work with younger people and the trend is that less coaching happens as the participants get older.

Figure 9: Percentage of coaches working with each age group



There continues to be trend in sport where lower qualified coaches are more likely to work with younger participants. There is a culture where coaches ‘learn their trade’ with children. While this trend may help coaches develop, it seems strange that young children starting out on their sporting journey, and who are the most impressionable, are often exposed to inexperienced coaches. It appears the expert coach of children remains a long way off in sport.

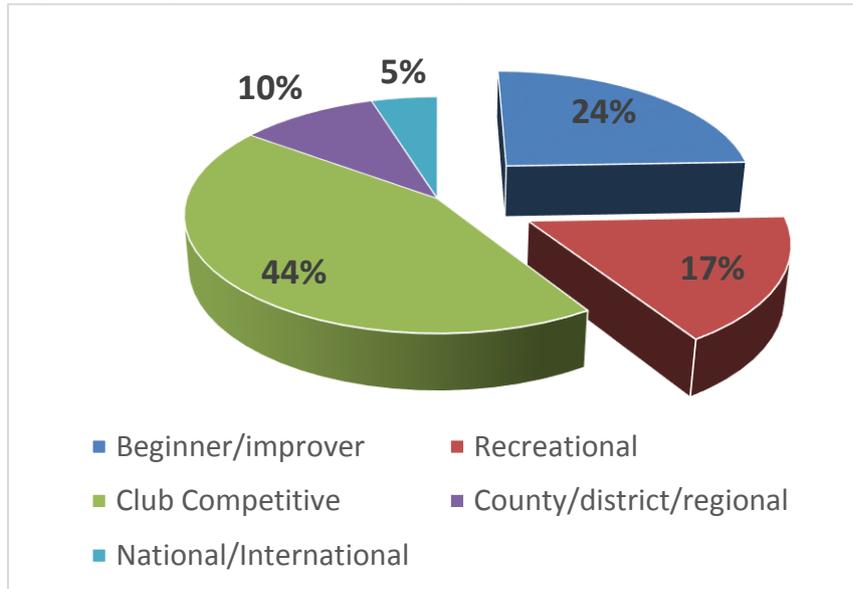
Figure 10: Percentage of coaches working with each age group



#### 5.4 At what level are people being coached?

Research over time has provided a consistent picture of who is being coached in terms of the level of participant. Around 60% of coaching could be described as competitive in that it involves participants ranging from club competitions to representative levels such as county/district/regional and up to national or international. 24% of coaching is with beginners/improvers while 17% can be described as recreational or sport that happens for fun with no competitive element.

Figure 11: Type of participant being coached

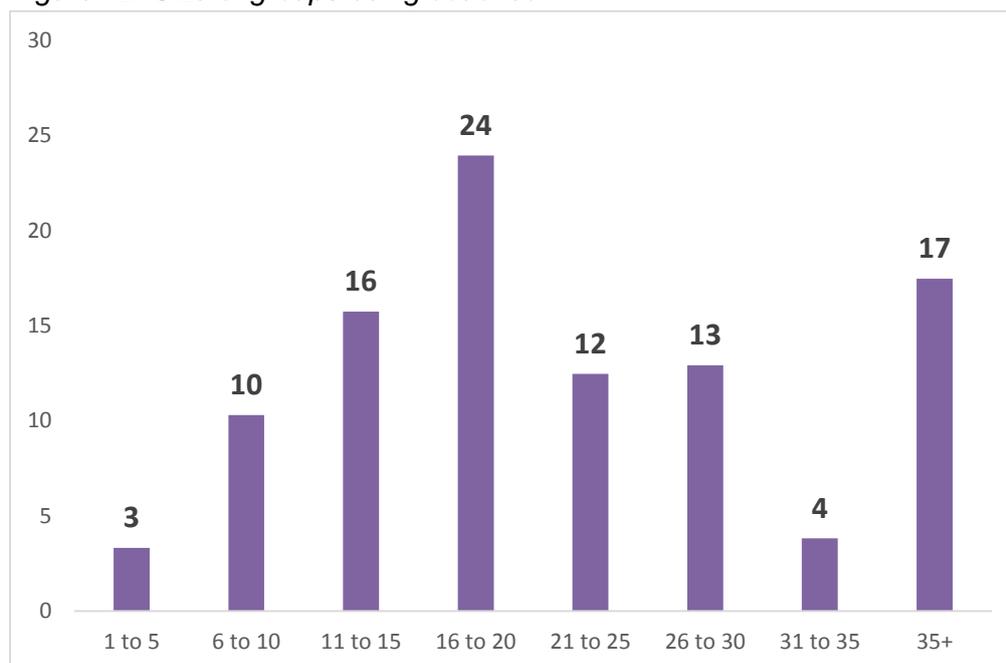


### 5.5 How many people are being coached?

The median number of participants in a session is 20. Considering what was said earlier about the average number of coaches, the data suggests a ratio of one coach to 10 participants. This is perhaps the most difficult area to draw overall conclusions about, as individual sports and team sports can have such differences in the number of people in a session.

Figure 12 shows that 16 to 20 participants is the most common number of people in a session; almost one quarter of sessions involve this many people. While 20 people is the median number of participants, the graph shows that the remainder of sessions are not evenly distributed around the mean (the classic bell curve). Instead it shows a higher proportion of sessions above the average, suggesting coaching is primarily a group activity. 17% of sessions also involve more than 35 people, showing how often coaches are working with large groups. It is often here that a parent's help becomes particularly important.

Figure 12: Size of groups being coached



### 5.6 How long does the session last?

On average a coaching session lasts 90 minutes and 60% of all sessions fell between one and two hours long. A third of sessions last for less than an hour and only seven percent of sessions last for more than two hours.

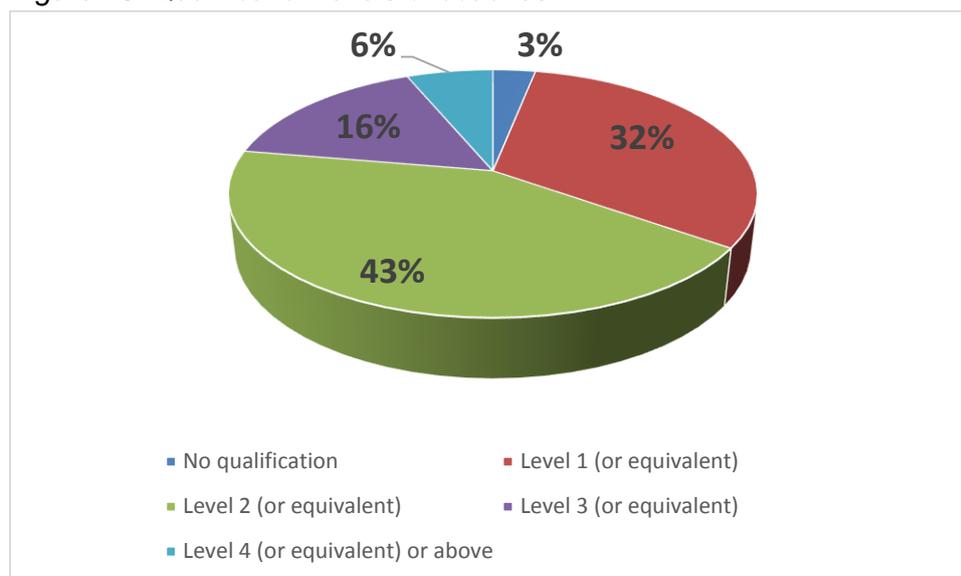
### 5.7 How many coaches work with disabled participants?

19% of coaching sessions included disabled participants. When we asked what proportion of participants in these sessions were disabled we found that 12% were disability sessions (in that all participants were disabled) and the remainder involved a mix of disabled and non-disabled participants. Half of these sessions included around 10% of disabled participants and the median figure was that 13% of participants were disabled. In other words, when there is a mix of disabled and non-disabled participants in a session around 13% will be disabled.

## 6 Developing as a coach

The coaches who took part in this research represent a good mix of qualifications. The most common qualification was Level 2 (43%) followed by 32% of coaches with a Level 1 and 16% with a Level 3. Just over half of coaches expect to undertake another qualification in the next year. The lower the qualification currently held by a coach the more likely they are to be thinking about another qualification.

Figure 13: Qualification levels of coaches



### 6.1 Continuing Personal Development<sup>6</sup>

84% of coaches had undertaken some form of CPD in the last 12 months. This figure is higher than 2014 when 76% of coaches had undertaken CPD. The results show that although the majority of coaches are volunteers with many different priorities in their life, they are still committing time to think about their development. On average coaches use around five different sources of informal learning sources discussed in this chapter.

Three sources of learning consistently appear as the most important to coaches in our research. We can say with confidence that the most common way for coaches to develop is learning on the job – talking to and observing other coaches and reflecting on their own coaching. As such the quality of these discussions, observations and reflections will often determine how much a coach develops.

The fourth and fifth most common sources of learning show the increasing use of technology. In 2008 56% of coaches used the internet (and it was towards the bottom quarter of any list of sources used). However now 69% of coaches use the internet and it ranks fourth in terms of usage.

This year we also included an option of watching videos online (Youtube or others) and this was used by 66% of coaches. Previous research from 2012 suggested that only 20% of coaches were watching videos online, so this appears to be a real growth area in CPD.

Other forms of technology such as social media and online learning remain less popular with under a third of coaches using these.

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<sup>6</sup> For the purpose of this research continuing personal development (CPD) is defined as either a formal piece of learning (an organised and structured presentation of learning to a coach) or more non-formal/informal learning (mentoring, talking to other coaches, searching the internet) that is sustained over time and makes an impact on coaching.

Table 1: Sources of learning used by coaches

Source of learning	Used by coach
Talking to other coaches	82%
Observing/working with other coaches	78%
Reflecting on coaching sessions	70%
Searching/using the Internet	69%
Watching videos on the Internet (YouTube or others)	66%
Feedback form athletes or players	64%
Other coaching workshops	59%
Reading books	51%
Coaching qualifications	47%
Coaching conferences	35%
Mentoring	30%
Online learning courses	29%
Social Media (Twitter, Facebook linkedin)	29%
FE/HE Qualifications (related to coaching or sport)	6%
Formal distance learning	3%

Although exact like-for-like comparisons are difficult due to changes in definitions of sources of learning (and the emergence of new forms of learning), four areas that have seen a significant downward trend in recent years (more than 20 percentage points) include: coaching qualifications, reading books, mentoring and coaching conferences.

## 6.2 The impact of different types of learning

When coaches are asked how much of an impact a learning source made on their coaching, we see that coaching qualifications stand out as the most useful – 78% of coaches who had undertaken a qualification last year thought it made a significant impact on them. It is a strange twist that the learning that makes the most impact is actually in decline in terms of use.

A more positive result is that two of the most popular sources used – talking to and observing other coaches – are also felt to make a significant impact (61% and 66% respectively). However the third most commonly used source of reflection is marginally lower in terms of impact, suggesting it may be more difficult to achieve results in this area.

Although technology is increasing in use by coaches, it appears to be a learning source that makes more of a short term impact than a significant impact. At present it is unclear why this is the case – the statistics can identify a trend but more research is needed to understand the underlying causes of the trend. For example, it might be that the internet is most useful for solving small problems and therefore it makes sense that the impact should be short term. Alternatively it may be that the internet is not delivering what coaches want or need. These are questions that future research needs to ask.

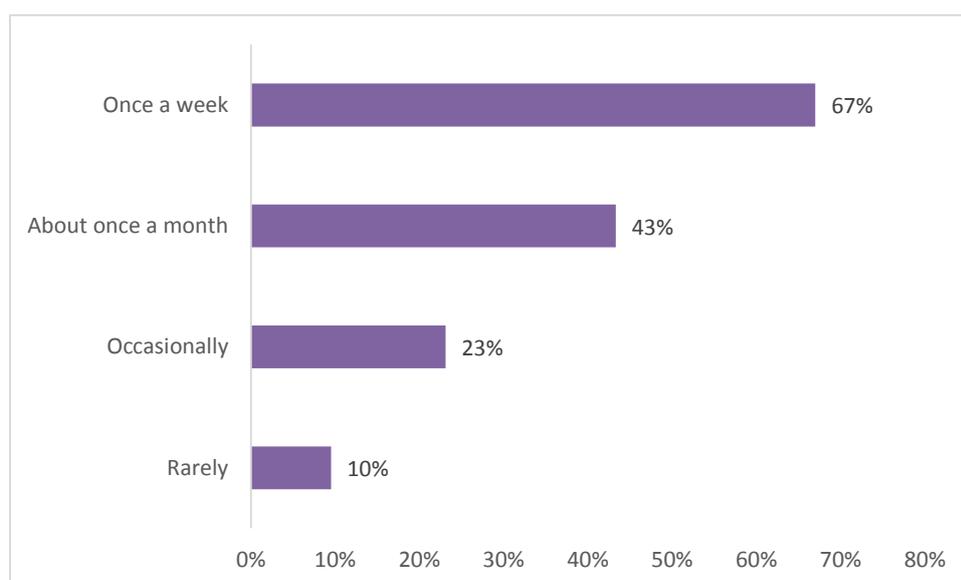
One theory we could discount was age. Across all age groups there was little difference in the impact made by technology. This is consistent with previous research that showed coaches' attitude to and ability with technology was similar across age groups.

Table 2: Impact of different learning sources on coaching

	Not at all	A little	It made a short term impact	It made a significant impact
Coaching qualifications	1%	9%	12%	78%
Observing/working with other coaches	0%	12%	22%	66%
FE/HE Qualifications (related to coaching or sport)	2%	17%	17%	64%
Talking to other coaches	0%	14%	25%	61%
Mentoring	2%	16%	24%	59%
Reflecting on coaching sessions	0%	14%	28%	58%
Other coaching workshops	1%	18%	30%	51%
Formal distance learning	6%	20%	29%	45%
Reading books	1%	25%	33%	41%
Coaching conferences	3%	24%	34%	39%
Watching videos on the Internet (YouTube etc)	1%	27%	40%	32%
Searching/using the Internet	1%	29%	39%	31%
Online learning courses	4%	30%	40%	26%
Social Media (Twitter, Facebook linkedin)	3%	33%	39%	24%

One other interesting point to emerge in this area was how the frequency of use can make a difference to how useful a source of learning is. The diagram below is typical of the analysis of all informal types of learning. In this case it shows all coaches who agreed that reflection makes a significant impact on their coaching split by how often they reflect. 67% of coaches who reflect every week state this makes a significant impact whereas 23% of those who reflect occasionally think it makes a significant impact.

Figure 14: How often coaches who said reflection makes a significant impact on their coaching actually used it.



### 6.3 Information sought by coaches

The most popular type of information that coaches look for is technical information – eight out of ten coaches had looked for this information in the last year. This was followed by planning sessions (77% of coaches sought this) and information about coaching delivery such as listening, providing feedback and providing instruction.

This year was the first time that technical and tactical information had been different options and it is interesting to see the difference between the two. While 88% of coaches sought technical information, only 58% sought tactical information. This is perhaps not surprising as previous research has shown that coaches place greater emphasis on developing people rather than winning.

Information options that coaches were less likely to look for such as managing other coaches or long-term decision making is understandable given that these are tasks usually undertaken by a smaller group of more senior coaches. However other information that was sought by fewer than half of respondents included responsiveness, decision making and contingency planning. These are areas that were included in the research because they were considered valuable to developing as a coach and not necessarily restricted to a senior coach. This begs the question of whether more work is required to promote the benefits of different topics to a wider coaching audience.

45% of coaches had sought information on coaching new or different groups of people. This suggests coaches are not just working with one type of participant throughout their career.

*Table 3: Information sought by coaches*

<b>Information sought</b>	<b>%</b>
Technical knowledge	80%
Planning sessions: structure, format, content	77%
Listening	72%
Providing feedback	71%
Providing instruction	66%
Motivating athletes	64%
Observation and analysis	60%
Tactical knowledge	58%
Evaluating sessions/programmes	57%
Questioning	56%
Self-reflection and critical thinking	54%
Goal setting with players/athletes	53%
How to develop players over time	53%
Understanding my athletes/players and their motivation	51%
Responsiveness/adaptability to situation/person	49%
Long term planning (over a season, year, cycle)	47%
Decision making	47%
Using facilities, equipment or health and safety issues	45%
Coaching new/different groups of people	45%
Contingency planning (what if scenarios)	34%
Managing or organising other coaches	33%

## 6.4 Information preferences by qualification

Listing the information preferences of coaches with different qualifications provides an interesting insight on how a coach develops. Table 4 pivots around Level 2 coaches – this is understandable as Level 2 coaches account for the largest group in the sample and their results are most likely to revert to the mean. On either side of the Level 2 coach we can imagine the less experienced/qualified coach (no qualifications or Level 1) and the more experienced/qualified coach (level 3+).

When you look at the type of information coaches are **more likely** to look for you, see that the variety of topics sought is greater among more qualified coaches. Conversely with less experienced coaches there is a greater number of subjects that they are **less likely** to look for. This is perhaps typical of a coach looking to gain the basics (planning and instruction) as she starts her career and then looking for new information (long-term planning, motivation and self-reflection) as her experience and role increases.

*Table 4: Information coaches are more or less likely to look for based on their qualification level*

Qualification	More likely to look for information on	Less likely to look for information on
<b>No qualification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning sessions: structure, format, content</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Responsiveness/adaptability to situation/person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating sessions/programmes</li> <li>• Goal setting with players/athletes</li> <li>• Technical knowledge</li> <li>• Tactical knowledge</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• How to develop players over time</li> <li>• Observation and analysis</li> <li>• Self-reflection and critical thinking</li> <li>• Managing or organising other coaches</li> <li>• Questioning</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning sessions: structure, format, content</li> <li>• Providing instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term planning (over a season, year, cycle)</li> <li>• Providing instruction</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term planning (over a season, year, cycle)</li> <li>• Tactical knowledge</li> </ul>	
<b>Level 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term planning (over a season, year, cycle)</li> <li>• Tactical knowledge</li> <li>• Understanding my athletes/players and their motivation</li> <li>• Self-reflection and critical thinking</li> <li>• Managing or organising other coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning sessions: structure, format, content</li> <li>• Using facilities, equipment or health and safety issues</li> <li>• Providing instruction</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term planning (over a season, year, cycle)</li> <li>• Goal setting with players/athletes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning sessions: structure, format, content</li> <li>• Using facilities, equipment or health and safety issues</li> <li>• Providing instruction</li> </ul>

- Understanding my athletes/players and their motivation
- Self-reflection and critical thinking
- Managing or organising other coaches
- Questioning

*Note: This table shows areas where coaches are more or less likely to look for information. In other words, it is where they deviate from the average. This does not mean that coaches are not looking for this type of information but rather they are more or less likely than average.*

Of course a coach's development does not follow a linear pathway of qualifications matching experience. There are many coaches who are considered experienced and expert who may have chosen to only gain a level 2 qualification. Therefore these results should only be viewed as indicative of how the information sought by coaches can change over time.

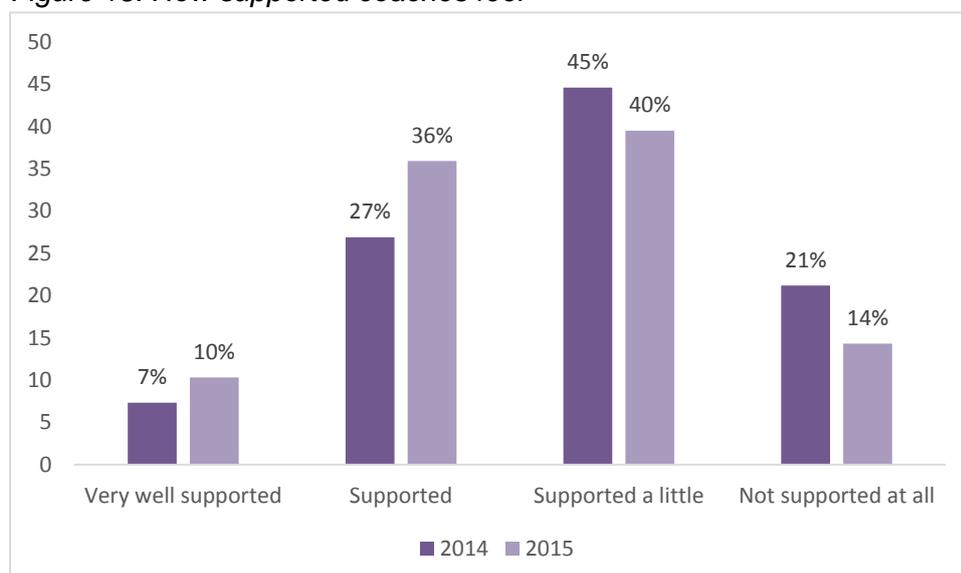
## 7 How supported do coaches feel?

Overall 83% of coaches feel supported by their governing body or other agencies such as sports coach UK and Home Country Sports Councils. This is a slight increase on the previous year when the figure was 79%. When you look at the detail behind this overall figure, you also see a positive trend emerging.

This year we have seen an increase in the percentage of coaches feeling *very well supported* and *supported* accompanied by a decrease in those feeling *supported a little* and *not supported at all*. In the 2014 Coaching Panel report we stated how important it was to move those feeling *supported a little* towards the more positive result of *supported* and *very well supported*. This appears to have happened in 2015.

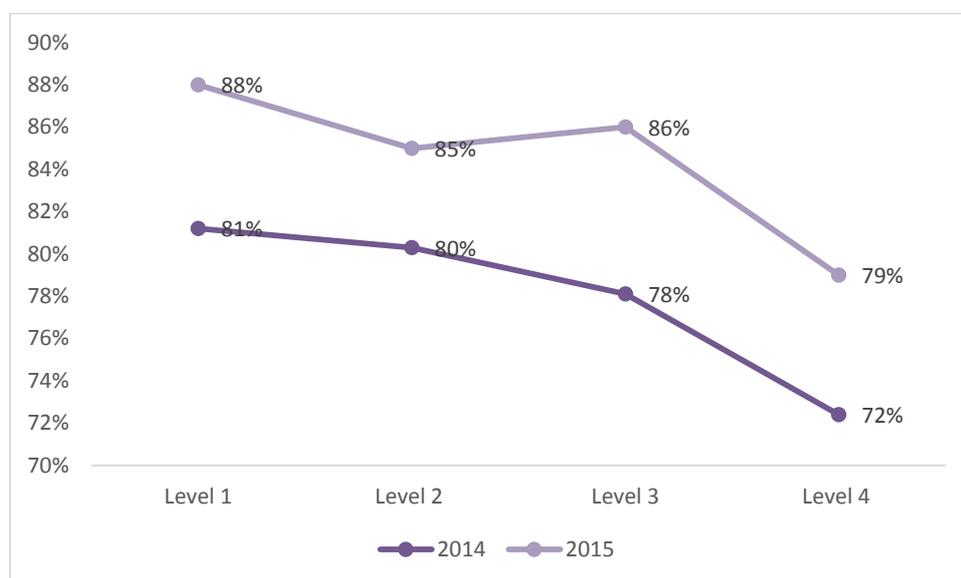
The reason why it is important to move coaches away from *supported a little* is that an analysis of data from last year's showed that those in this group were twice as likely to be thinking of stopping coaching as those who responded more positively. Therefore this progress (from 45% to 40%) should continue to be a focus.

*Figure 15: How supported coaches feel*



Feelings of support differ by the qualification level of the coach. This is likely to reflect a trend previously identified that the longer someone spends coaching, the less supported they feel. While feelings of support across all levels have increased since 2014, the trend remains that there is a drop-off in feeling of support that is particularly acute at level 4.

Figure 16: How supported coaches feel by level of qualification



## 7.1 How to make coaches feel more supported?

One way to make coaches feel more supported is to address areas where they currently feel less supported. Year after year research has identified *help with cost of development opportunities* and *help with finding appropriate opportunities to coach* as areas that coaches do not feel supported with. If this trend is ever to be broken, it needs to be prioritised.

In previous surveys we have asked coaches what type of initiatives would increase their feelings of support. This year we selected the most common ideas and asked coaches to choose which would make the greatest impact.

While there was no one idea that appealed to more than half of coaches - demonstrating that there is no one thing that will increase support - some interesting points emerged.

- The most popular idea is access to a more experienced coach. This proved more attractive than mentoring (40% compared to 33%) and perhaps reflects that many coaches seek a less formal relationship than mentoring.
- Coaches would like to see more workshops run at their local club. This addresses issues of lack of time or cost that come up time and again in research around workshops. This idea also allows coaches to see how experienced workshop tutors would use the space they coach in every week.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively inviting a more experienced coach to a club may kill two birds with one stone.

<sup>7</sup> For an example of this approach see a case study on the sports coach UK website. <http://www.sportscoachuk.org/sites/default/files/Bringing-coach-development-to-life.PDF>

- Similar concerns about the cost of coaching CPD are shown with other popular ideas such as funding for CPD events and linking opportunities to qualifications.

*Table 5: What would make coaches feel more supported?*

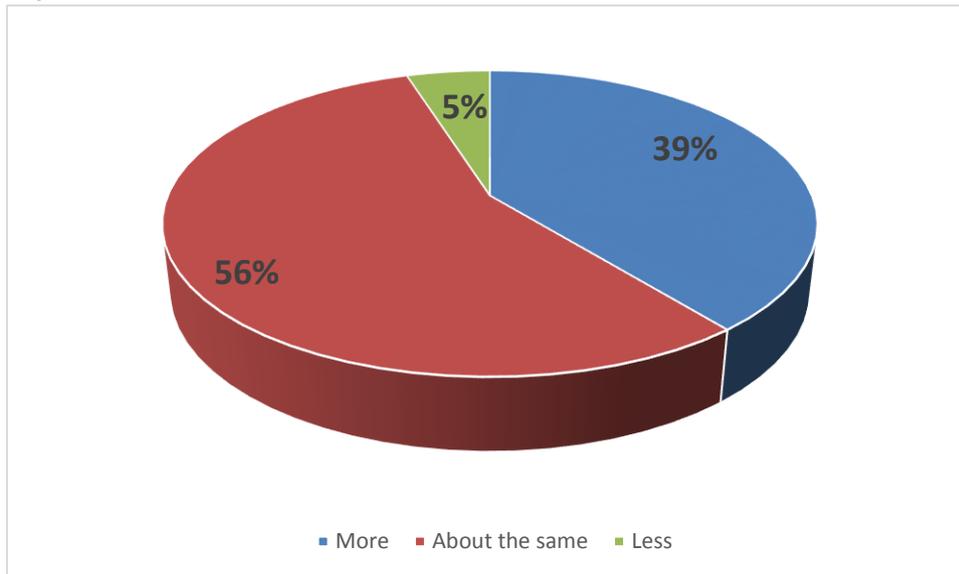
<b>Idea</b>	<b>%</b>
Access to a more experienced coach from time to time (rather than formal mentoring)	40%
Workshops run at my local club	36%
CPD opportunities linked to qualifications	36%
Conferences with experienced coaches presenting	35%
Funding for CPD learning events	34%
Mentoring support to help make me a better coach	33%
Coaching templates online eg. session planners, evaluation & reflection forms	32%
Workshops that include flexible learning options	29%
Opportunities to discuss coaching with other coaches online	13%

## 8 Future coaching and stopping coaching

39% of coaches expect to do more coaching in 2015, this is down slightly from last year (41%) but the Net Future Activity Score<sup>8</sup> which we introduced last year has remained the same at 34%. Therefore we can conclude that the overall optimism about the future is the same as last year.

5% of coaches intend to do less coaching in 2015 which is a similar proportion as in 2014.

Figure 17: Coaches' expectations for more, less or the same amount of coaching this year

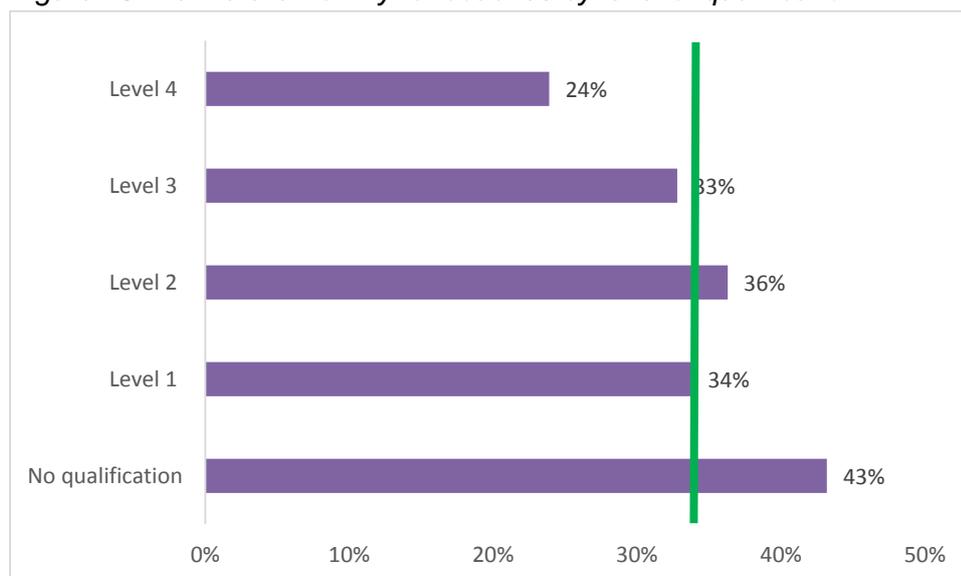


Net Future Activity across the different levels of qualifications shows that those with no qualifications are the most optimistic about the future while the level 4 coaches are least optimistic. Beyond that, other coaches tend to be around average.

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<sup>8</sup> Net Future Activity Score is a simple way to measure overall confidence about future coaching. The percentage of coaches expecting to do less coaching is subtracted from the percentage of coaches expecting to do more coaching.

Figure 18: Net Future Activity for coaches by level of qualification



Note: the green line is the average score (34%)

The most common reasons for thinking about stopping coaching were related to health, or often more appropriately, getting older and feeling it was time to stop. This is possibly not surprising given the age profile of coaches, with one-fifth over 55.

The second most common reason was family. This could either be related to starting a new family and therefore having less time to coach or stopping coaching because their children had stopped playing the sport or moved to a higher level.

These two reasons are understandable given the volunteer nature of the sport and the profile of coaches. From previous research we also know that other coaches will drop out for these same reasons in 2015 although they will not see it coming.<sup>9</sup>

Away from personal reasons to stop coaching, the main *system related* reasons are a lack of support and disillusionment (these two are often linked together) and issues with the costs associated with coaching.

Table 6 shows a breakdown of reasons why coaches are thinking about stopping coaching. The results are based on analysis of comments from coaches and as such the reasons should be considered as broad categories.

<sup>9</sup> A four year study of coaches by sports coach UK found that 80% of people who dropped out of coaching had not intended to do so in the previous year.

Table 6: Reasons why coaches are thinking about stopping coaching in 2015

Reason	%
Health	22
Family	20
Work	13
Lack of support	13
Disillusioned	12
Money/cost	11
Time	5
Lack of opportunities	5

### 8.1 The exit from coaching

This research also collected information from 120 coaches who had stopped coaching in the last year. Work related reasons are the most common reasons to stop along with a lack of time. It is interesting that the main reasons why people are thinking about stopping in the future (health and family) are not the main reasons why they actually stop.

Table 7: Reasons why coaches stopped coaching in 2014

Reason	number	%
Work related reasons (eg extra work commitments, new job)	35	27
Lack of time	33	25
Lack of support from my club	18	14
Lack of opportunity to coach	16	12
Health reasons	15	12
Internal politics at the club	15	12
Lack of support from the sport	14	11
Family reasons (eg become a parent)	12	9
Education (eg moved to university, time needed for studying)	11	8
My role in sport is now more managing coaches	10	8
Issues with parents	3	2

*Note: The percentages total more than 100% because some coaches gave more than one reason for stopping*

## **Conclusion**

This was the largest survey of coaches ever conducted by sports coach UK and has improved our understanding of what coaches do and how they feel about it. Alongside new insights we have also seen a number of familiar issues re-appear.

With that in mind, we would urge you not to put this report down now that you have read it. If we are to improve the world in which coaches operate, we need to act on these findings rather than merely read about them.